



Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Proposed City of Elk Grove Sphere of Influence Amendment (LAFCo File No. 09-10)

Date: September 27, 2010

To: Public Agencies and Interested Parties

From: Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Elk Grove Sphere of Influence Amendment Project

Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project identified below. The City of Elk Grove has submitted an application to LAFCo to amend its Sphere of Influence.

The project description, location, and probable environmental effects of the proposed City of Elk Grove Sphere of Influence Amendment (SOIA) are described in the attached materials. An Initial Study has not been prepared, and in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d), Sacramento LAFCo has determined that an EIR will be required for the project. Therefore, Sacramento LAFCo is soliciting comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information, which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR when considering permitting or other approvals. Because of time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than **30 days** after receipt of this notice.

Please provide your written response to the address shown below by **4:00 p.m., October 27, 2010**. In addition, kindly provide the name of a contact person in your agency.

Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission
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Sacramento, CA 95814-2836
Attn: Mr. Don Lockhart, AICP, Assistant Executive Officer
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ELK GROVE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AMENDMENT

1.1 - Project Location

The project area is generally located south-southwest of the existing City of Elk Grove boundaries (Exhibit 1). More specifically, the area to be included in the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) is generally described as the areas south of Bilby Road, Kammerer Road, and Grant Line Road, extending south to Eschinger Road and Cosumnes River; east towards Cosumnes River and just past Freeman Road; and west towards Interstate 5 (I-5) and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks (Exhibit 2). The proposed boundary does not reach the Cosumnes River east of State Route 99 but follows the 100-year FEMA floodplain. The proposed SOIA area is located on the Elk Grove, California, United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map,¹ Township 6 North, Range 5 East, Section 13 (Latitude 38°21'37" North; Longitude 121°23'02" West).

1.2 - Existing Conditions

Currently, the project area within the proposed Sphere of Influence Amendment (SOIA) boundaries is largely developed with agricultural uses. The existing land uses for the proposed SOI area are primarily agricultural and are determined by the Sacramento County (County) General Plan. The current land use and zoning designations, as defined by the County's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, are described in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Existing Land Use

Agricultural Cropland	5,645
Agricultural Cropland-RCA	463
Agricultural Residential	27
Commercial/Office	14
General Agriculture (20 acre)	1,521
Intensive Industrial	34
Low Density Residential	87
Natural Preserve	78
Total	7,869
Source: City of Elk Grove, Sphere of Influence Amendment Application, 2010.	

¹ The SOIA area is located in four different quadrants and various townships and ranges. This topographic description is a general representation of the project site.

Table 2: Existing Zoning

A2 ^a	53
Agricultural-20 acres (AG20)	302
Agricultural-40 acres (AG40)	53
Agricultural-80 acres (AG80)	7,328
Agricultural Residential-2 acres (AR2)	18
Agricultural Residential-10 acres (AR10)	50
Limited Commercial zone (LC)	8
Heavy Industrial (M2)	20
Single Family Zone (R-1-A)	35
RR	2
Total	7,869
Notes:	
^a Multiple zoning designations: Agricultural-40 acres (AG40), Agricultural-80 acres (AG80)	
Source: City of Elk Grove, Sphere of Influence Amendment Application, 2010.	

1.3 - Project Description

The proposed project consists of an application to Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) to amend the City of Elk Grove's SOI. The current SOI is coterminous with the City boundary. The amended SOI would include an additional 7,869 acres generally described as the areas south of Bilby Road/Kammerer Road and Grant Line Road, as shown in Exhibit 2. Current land use projections indicate that future growth will require additional lands outside of the city boundary.² The City's available residential, industrial, and commercial land inventory is in the process of building out and may be unable to accommodate all anticipated growth within the City. As a result, the City needs to establish a direction to accommodate its anticipated future growth by defining the area for long-term planning. No specific land use developments are proposed at this time in conjunction with this proposed SOIA. The City may begin comprehensive planning of the area after the approval of the SOIA.

Nearby communities of interest include the communities of Bruceville, Old Town Franklin, Point Pleasant, and Wilton. Bruceville and Point Pleasant are south of the proposed SOIA area. Old Town Franklin is immediately adjacent to the City and is included within the proposed SOIA area. Wilton is located across the Cosumnes River outside of the proposed SOIA area.

The City of Elk Grove and the County of Sacramento are working collaboratively to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would incorporate the "joint vision" shared between the

² City of Elk Grove, Sphere of Influence Amendment Application. Please reference 8/26/10 application LAFC No. 09-10.

City and County regarding the future planning and preservation activities within the City's proposed SOI area.

1.3.1 - Proposed General Plan and Zoning

The City's General Plan designates the proposed area as the Urban Study Area. The Urban Study Area designation envisions the areas in which future growth, to some extent, could occur. The General Plan does not identify a formal land use plan for these areas but lays out policies to guide the study of future development in cooperation with the public and other agencies and parties. No specific land use designation or rezoning is proposed or required at this point. Current land uses are anticipated to remain the same until such land planning occurs, and a prezone and annexation application is approved.

1.4 - Project Background

Over the course of 2007, the City Council initiated the process of comprehensively planning the Urban Study Areas as outlined in the City's General Plan. The initially identified boundary for the City's SOI was the same as the Urban Study Area boundary extending south of the existing City limits to the edge of the 100-year flood plain boundary. However, prior to submitting its application to LAFCo, the City discussed the proposed boundaries, development standards, and planning and zoning requirements with the County, pursuant to Government Code Section 56425(b). The City complied with this requirement by meeting with County staff during four city-county meetings between December 2007 and February 2008. During the meetings, the City and County staff discussed a number of mutual concerns, including lands needed to accommodate projected growth, drainage and flooding issues, future growth outside of the 100-year floodplain, infrastructure and municipal services, open space, agricultural users, and coordination with the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP). Based on the discussions, the SOI boundaries were then amended to the proposed SOIA boundaries extending only as far as Eschinger Road to the south.

The proposed SOIA includes the area that connects to I-5 at the Hood-Franklin interchange. This area was not included in the Urban Study Area, but it is included in the proposed SOIA because it will serve as a logical gateway from I-5 to the City, with portions of this area likely to urbanize.

A draft MOU was previewed by the City Council on November 18, 2009 and by the Board of Supervisors on December 2, 2009. The draft MOU and Joint Vision documents were presented to the public through four public outreach meetings in March 2010. The Final MOU is still in the process and will be available at a later date.

1.5 - Required Approvals and Intended Uses

The proposed project would require the following discretionary approvals and actions:

- Sphere of Influence Amendment –Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission

In the event of various subsequent land use entitlements, various local, state, or federal approvals or permits may be necessary, pursuant to applicable laws and regulations.

1.6 - Environmental Review

1.6.1 - Potential Environmental Effects

Sacramento LAFCo has reviewed the proposed project, as described in Section 15060 of the CEQA Guidelines, and determined that an EIR should be prepared. Based on this preliminary review, Sacramento LAFCo has identified that the EIR will analyze the potentially significant adverse environmental effects of the proposed SOIA. The following environmental issues will be evaluated in the EIR:

Aesthetics – The EIR will evaluate the existing aesthetics, light, and glare conditions within the proposed SOIA boundaries and evaluate potential impacts that may occur from future development and land use activities contemplated by the City of Elk Grove.

Agriculture – The EIR will evaluate the conversion of agricultural land to urban uses and will identify any indirect impacts on surrounding agricultural lands, such as potential land use conflicts and the potential to induce future conversion of surrounding agricultural land to urban uses.

Air Quality – The EIR will include a discussion of the regional and local air quality setting, and current air quality management efforts such as the City’s Climate Action Plan. The setting will include the environmental and regulatory setting for air quality, including state and regional emissions inventories, legislation, guidance, and programs.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions – The EIR will include a discussion of the potential for increased greenhouse gas emissions within the context of AB 32 and SB 375, which require the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to set regional targets for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles for target years 2020 and 2035. In addition, the discussion would include the Climate Change Scoping Plan adopted by ARB, which provides sector-specific, emission reduction measures and goals.

Biological Resources – The EIR will evaluate the proposed SOIA and its relationship with the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP), and determine what species will need to be managed and how those resources will be monitored within the confines of the proposed SSHCP. Given the proximity of Preserve and Refuge lands, agricultural lands within the proposed SOIA provide foraging habitat for a number of species, including the State-listed as threatened Swainson’s hawk, which nests in mature riparian habitat along the Cosumnes River and forages in grasslands and row crop habitats. The potential for occurrence of special-status plant or wildlife species will be evaluated, based on existing information, and the presence of any habitats considered sensitive and/or tracked by the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), such as riparian and oak woodland, or by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be documented.

Cultural Resources – The EIR will include a cultural resource impact assessment. The EIR will describe the existing cultural resources on the project site and affected offsite areas, and will evaluate the potential impacts on these cultural resources, including the potential to affect undiscovered resources. The EIR will also include consultation with California Native American tribes to assess potential impacts that could result from the proposed SOIA.

Geology and Soils – The EIR will evaluate the geologic, soil, and seismic conditions within the proposed SOIA and evaluate potential impacts that may occur from future development and land use activities contemplated by the City of Elk Grove.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials – The EIR will identify potential hazards and hazardous materials on properties within the proposed SOIA boundaries, review agency hazardous materials databases, and conduct limited site reconnaissance if necessary. The EIR will evaluate the proposed SOIA’s potential hazards and hazardous materials impacts and recommend mitigation measures where necessary.

Hydrology and Water Quality – The EIR will evaluate the hydrologic and water quality conditions within the proposed SOIA boundaries and evaluate potential impacts that may occur from future development and land use activities contemplated by the SOIA. The proposed SOIA boundary does not include lands located within the 100-year floodplain east of State Route 99 and along the Cosumnes River.

Land Use and Planning – The EIR will evaluate the consistency of the Sacramento County General Plan land use designations with the land use designations of the City of Elk Grove General Plan for the proposed SOIA. Additionally, the EIR will evaluate other adopted land use plans and policies, such as habitat conservation plans, agricultural preservation plans, specific plans, community plans, and any other relevant planning and land use documents that have a bearing on the proposed SOIA.

Mineral Resources – The EIR will evaluate the potential for development and land use activities contemplated by the City of Elk Grove to interfere or restrict mineral extraction operations or the availability of such resources.

Noise – The EIR will describe the potential construction and operational noise impacts and will compare these impacts with applicable noise thresholds.

Population, Employment, and Housing – The EIR will evaluate impacts on population and housing. Of particular concern is the potential for future development within the proposed SOIA to induce substantial direct population growth that exceeds the projections of either the Sacramento County General Plan or the Sacramento Area Council of Government’s population forecasts.

Public Services and Recreation – The EIR will incorporate the determinations of the concurrently prepared Municipal Services Review for the proposed SOIA Area that was submitted with the City’s 8/26/10 application (LAFC No. 09-10). The EIR will also evaluate

existing public service and recreation facilities and service levels within the SOIA boundaries and evaluate potential impacts that may occur from future development and land use activities contemplated by the SOIA Application. This review will include potential impacts to any affected special districts.

Utilities – The EIR will evaluate existing utility systems within the proposed SOIA boundaries and evaluate potential impacts that may occur. Of particular concern is the availability of potable water (Sacramento County Water Agency Zone 41, Elk Grove Water Works, and Omochumne-Hartnell Water District, and private wells) and wastewater services, collection and treatment (Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District) and Sacramento Area Sewer District (SASD) to the General Plan area.

Transportation – The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on local and regional transportation facilities, including several freeway segments and ramps. Issues of concern will include impacts on intersection and roadway operations, parking, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.

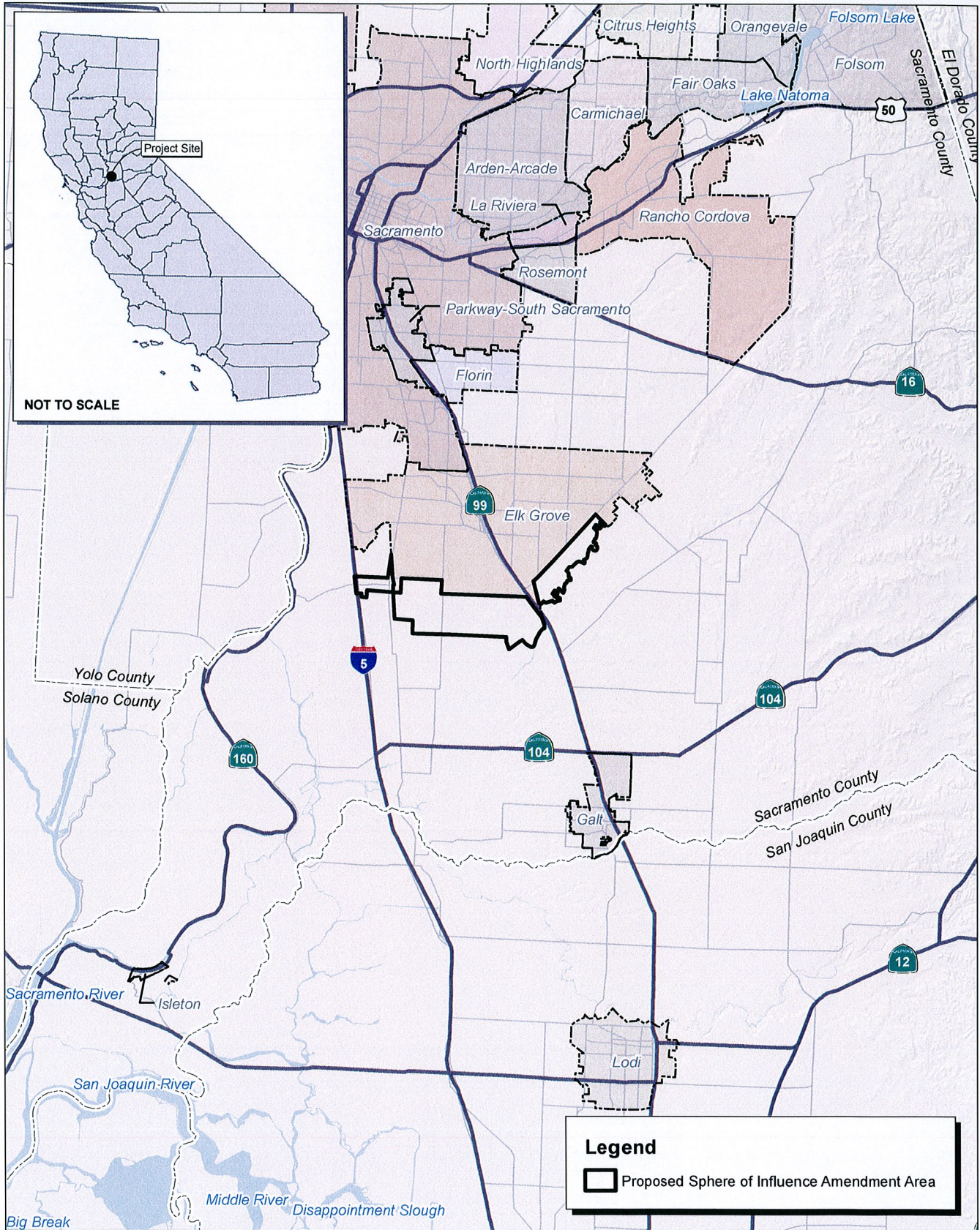
The EIR will analyze all of these issues and provide a determination of impact significance. At present, Sacramento LAFCo lacks sufficient information to make conclusive determinations on significance. Sacramento LAFCo will consider the written comments received in response to this Notice of Preparation in determining the topics and scope to be assessed in the Draft EIR.

1.7 - Scoping Meeting

A public scoping meeting will be held at **6:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 26, 2010**, at the following location:

City of Elk Grove
City Council Chambers
8400 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA, 95758

At this meeting, agencies, organizations, and members of the public will be able to review the proposed project and provide comments on the scope of the environmental review process.



Source: Census 2000 Data, The CaSIL, MBA GIS 2010.

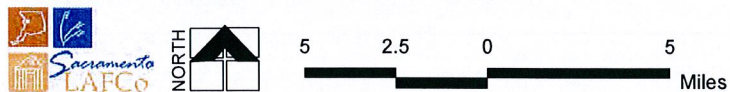
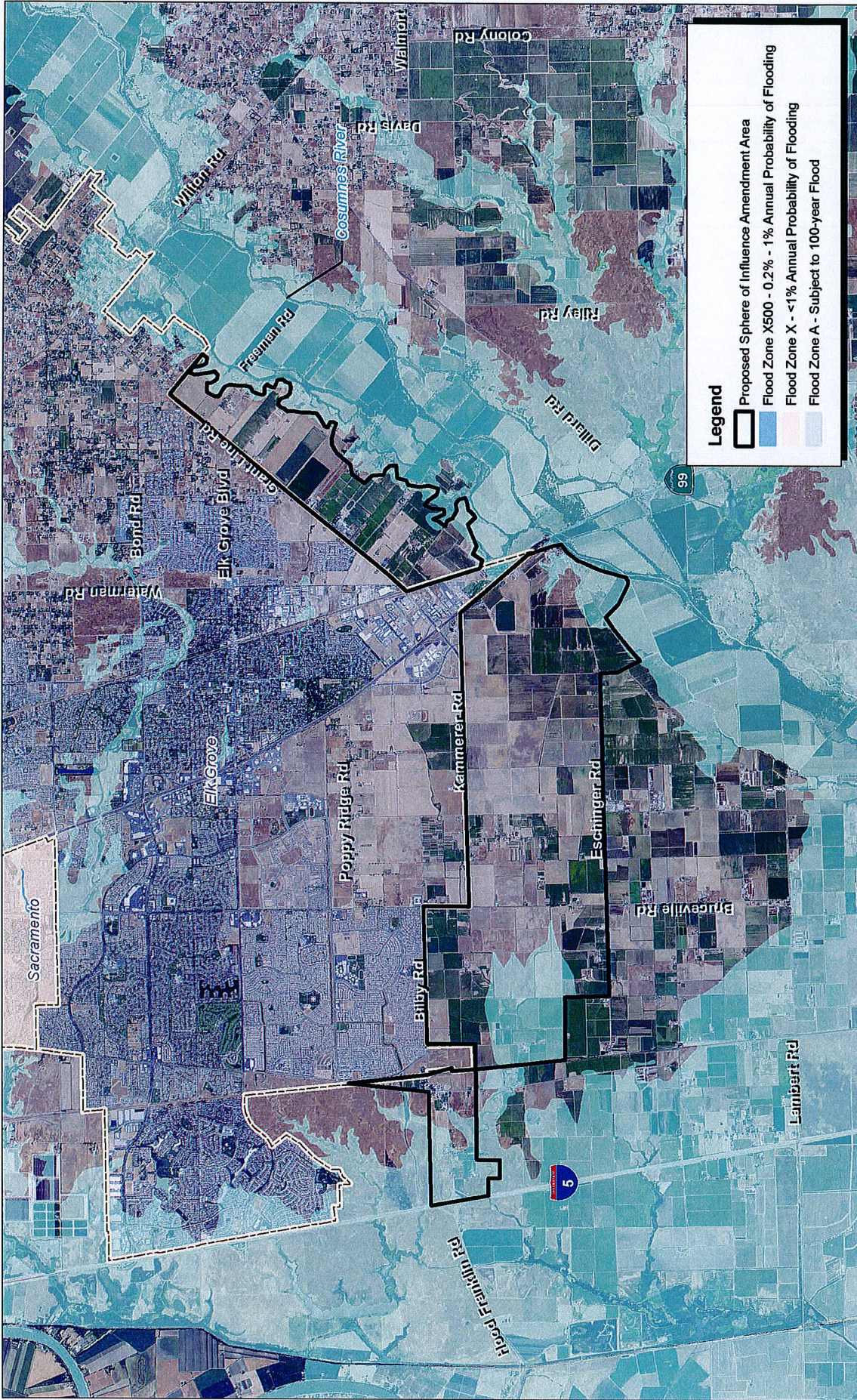


Exhibit 1 Regional Location Map



Legend

- Proposed Sphere of Influence Amendment Area
- Flood Zone X500 - 0.2% - 1% Annual Probability of Flooding
- Flood Zone X - <1% Annual Probability of Flooding
- Flood Zone A - Subject to 100-year Flood

Source: Sacramento County NAIP, 2009, County of Sacramento, City of Elk Grove, 2009. FEMA MSC and Q3 Data.

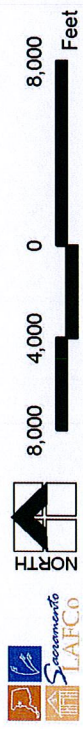


Exhibit 2 Local Vicinity Map Aerial Base