

CITY OF RANCHO CORDOVA



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING Wednesday, February 26, 2025

**5:30 PM – Regular Meeting
David B. Roberts Council Chambers**

**City Hall
2729 Prospect Park Drive, Rancho Cordova**

How to Observe or Listen to the Meeting:

- Online via Zoom: <https://cityofranhocordova.zoom.us/j/87563639433>
Webinar ID: 875 6363 9433
- By phone: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782
Webinar ID: 875 6363 9433

Public Comment

Members of the public who wish to address the Planning Commission may do so in person during the meeting by completing and submitting a Speaker Card to the Planning Commission Clerk.

Members of the public who wish to provide public comment via email will need to submit comments to PlanningClerk@cityofranhocordova.org no later than 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Written comments received no later than 3:00 p.m. will be distributed to the Planning Commission, filed in the record, and will not be read aloud. All comments submitted later than 3:00 p.m. will be distributed to the Planning Commission.

AGENDA

1. PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING - CALL TO ORDER ROLL CALL

Planning Commission Members - Surender Devarapalli, Dave Huhn, Tegan Knifton, Rehana Rehman, Cynthia Stauss, and Chair Lee Frechette

2. SPECIAL CEREMONIES - SWEARING IN OF NEWLY APPOINTED PLANNING COMMISSIONER

The Clerk will conduct the swearing in of Elliott Stevenson.

3. PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING - ROLL CALL

Planning Commission Members - Surender Devarapalli, Dave Huhn, Tegan Knifton, Rehana Rehman, Cynthia Stauss, Elliott Stevenson and Chair Lee Frechette

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chair will call on someone in attendance to lead the Pledge.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public wishing to address the Planning Commission for any matter not on the agenda may do so at this time by completing and submitting a Speaker Card to the Planning Commission Clerk.

For items on the agenda, speakers will be called by the Chair at the point on the agenda when the item will be heard. Speakers are encouraged to keep comments to three minutes or less and to state name and community of residence.

Under the provisions of the California Government Code, the Planning Commission is prohibited from discussing or taking immediate action on any item not on the agenda unless it can be demonstrated to be of an emergency nature or the need to take immediate action arose after the posting of the agenda.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS - ROLL CALL VOTE

None.

7. CONSENT PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS - ROLL CALL VOTE

None.

8. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

None.

9. REGULAR CALENDAR ITEMS

9.1. **Subject:** Planning Commission Training - Introduction to Planning.

Recommendation: No formal action will be taken. Staff will present information related to various training topics and address any questions that may arise.

9.2. **Subject:** Housing Law Discussion.

Recommendation: Receive presentation.

10. COMMISSION COMMENTS/IDEAS/QUESTIONS

11. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

12. ADJOURNMENT

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SPECIAL MEETINGS LISTED BELOW ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE/CANCELLATION WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE.

Public documents related to items on the open session portion of this agenda, which are distributed to the Planning Commission less than 72 hours prior to the meeting, shall be available for public inspection at the time the documents are distributed to the Planning Commission. Documents are available for inspection at the Planning Office located in Rancho Cordova City Hall.

The agenda items are accessible on the City's website at www.cityofranchocordova.org on Fridays prior to the Regular Planning Commission Meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

March 12, 2025	5:30 PM Regular Meeting
March 26, 2025	5:30 PM Regular Meeting
April 9, 2025	5:30 PM Regular Meeting
May 14, 2025	5:30 PM Regular Meeting
June 11, 2025	5:30 PM Regular Meeting
July 9, 2025	5:30 PM Regular Meeting
August 13, 2025	5:30 PM Regular Meeting
September 10, 2025	5:30 PM Regular Meeting

If you have any technical questions related to the agenda items, please contact City Hall at (916) 851-8700.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, to participate in this meeting, please contact the Planning Office at (916) 851-8750 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING OF AGENDA

I, Kelly Whitman, Planning Commission Clerk for the City of Rancho Cordova, declare that the foregoing agenda for the February 26, 2025 Regular Meeting of the Rancho Cordova Planning Commission was posted and available for review on February 21, 2025 at City Hall of the City of Rancho Cordova, 2729 Prospect Park Drive, Rancho Cordova, California, 95670. The agenda is also available on the city website at www.cityofranchocordova.org.

Signed February 21, 2025 at Rancho Cordova, California.



Kelly Whitman
Planning Commission Clerk

MEMORANDUM



ITEM 9.1.

DATE: February 26, 2025
TO: Planning Commission Members
FROM: Arlene Granadosin-Jones, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: **PLANNING COMMISSION TRAINING - INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING**

RECOMMENDATION

No formal action will be taken. Staff will present information related to various training topics and address any questions that may arise.

RESULT OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

No formal action will be taken. Staff will present information related to various training topics and address any questions that may arise.

BACKGROUND

In order to provide additional training and support to the Planning Commission with their roles and responsibilities, City staff will present various topics and materials relevant to the review of projects and plans. This training session will provide an introduction to Planning documents and other regulatory standards.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Presentation

Planning Commission Training

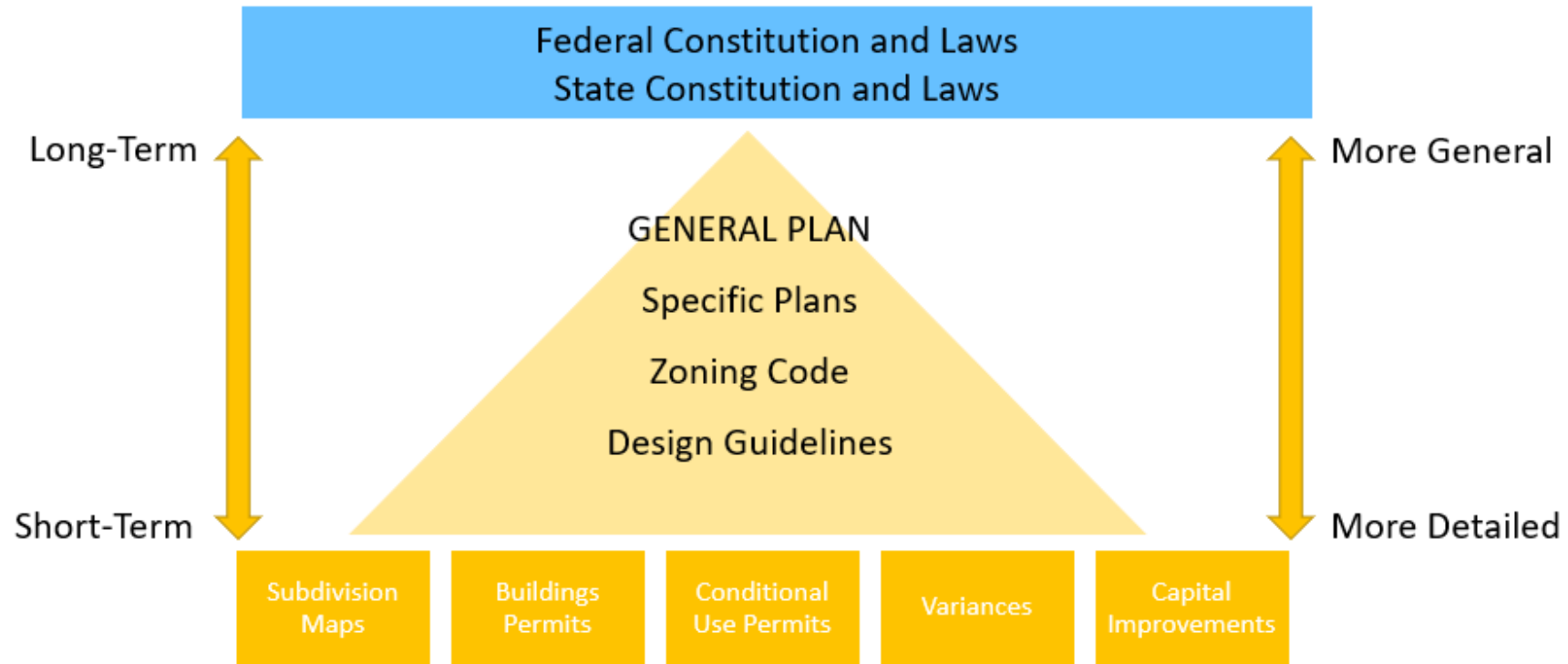
Introduction to Planning

Wednesday, February 26, 2025



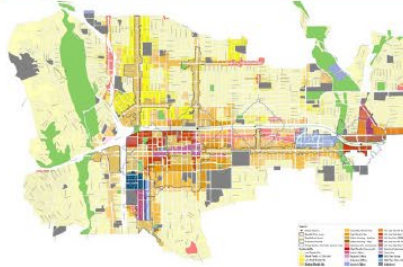
Purpose of Tonight's Meeting

- General Plan and required eight elements
- Specific Plans and Special Planning Areas
- Title 23 Zoning Code
- CEQA
- Role of the Planning Commission



- Required by State law
- The “constitution” for planning, development, and conservation
- Provides long-range vision (20- to 30-year horizon)
- Basis for local land use decisions and other policies
- Identifies important community issues

LAND USE



HOUSING



CIRCULATION



CONSERVATION



OPEN SPACE



NOISE



SAFETY

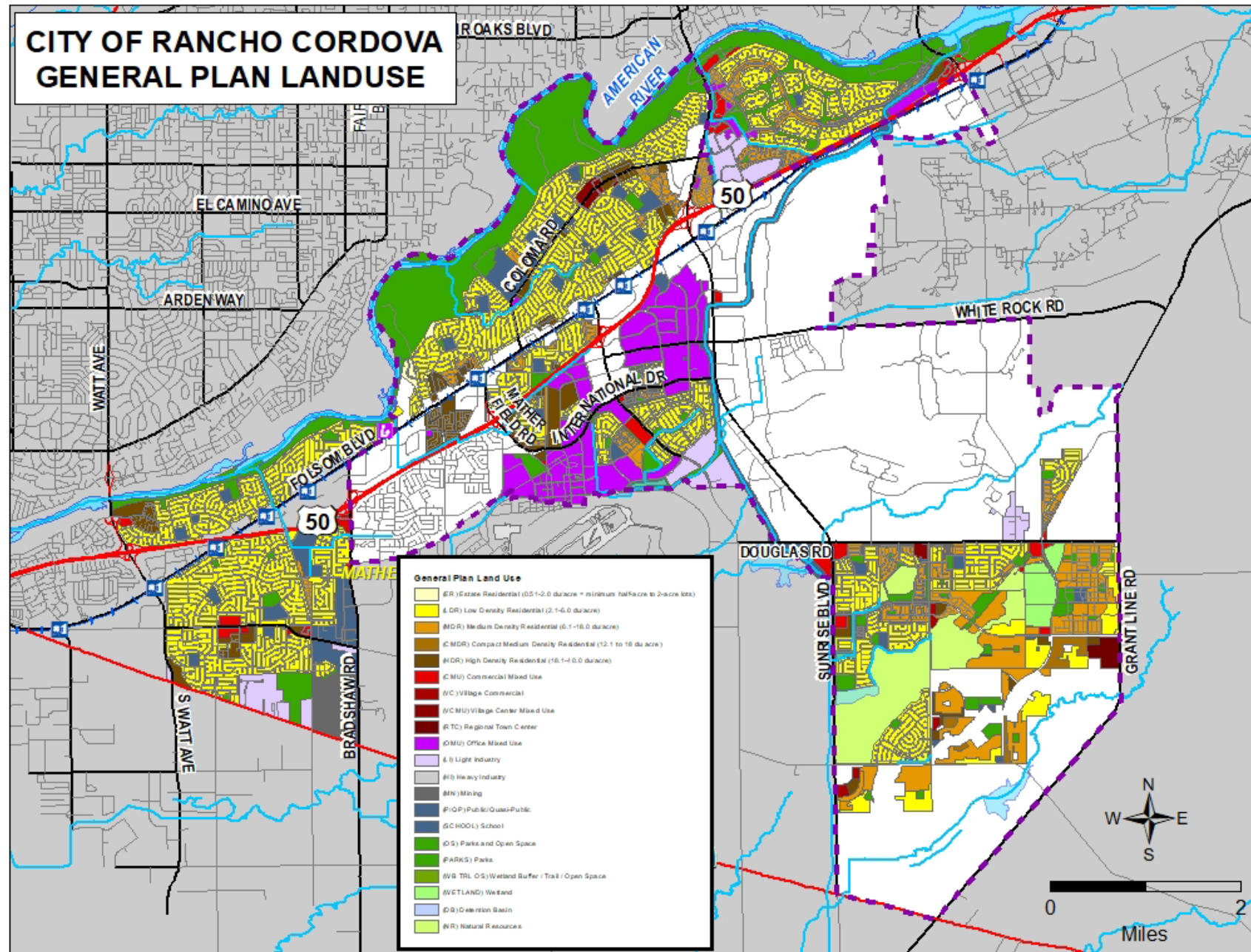


AIR QUALITY



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE







II LAND USE

- Protection of any existing water rights necessary to maintain agricultural uses and retain such water rights for ongoing use on the agricultural land; and
- Interests in the agricultural land shall be held in trust by the City and/or an entity acceptable to the City, in perpetuity.

Policy LU.1.11 – Proper buffering for the Kiefer landfill of a 2,000-foot buffer around the permitted footprint of the landfill shall be required. Where appropriate, land use density, buffers, or other measures should be used when planning future land uses near the landfill.

GOAL LU.2 - ESTABLISH GROWTH PATTERNS BASED ON SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES AND THE CITY BUILDING BLOCKS CONCEPT.

Policy LU.2.1 - Ensure future land use and growth within the Planning Area adheres to the City's nine smart growth principles, as described in this Element.

- **Action LU.2.1.1** - Amend the Zoning Code and Citywide Design Guidelines to include the City's smart growth principles as appropriate.

Policy LU.2.2 - Promote new development and redevelopment in accordance with the building blocks concepts of neighborhoods, villages, and districts.

- **Action LU.2.2.1** - Identify the building block components of neighborhoods, villages, and districts in the existing areas of the City and encourage redevelopment using the building blocks principles.

Policy LU.2.3 - Encourage the clustering of similar uses into areas or districts that have common needs and that are compatible with one another, in order to maximize their efficiency and identity for Rancho Cordova. Uses to consider clustering include the following:

- Entertainment area (Performing Arts Center, local theaters, and studios);
- Sports/recreation facilities (e.g. bowling alleys and major sports facilities);
- Hospitals and other care facilities;
- Youth activity centers;
- Amphitheatres; and

Cross reference:
LU.1.5

Cross reference:
UD.1.1

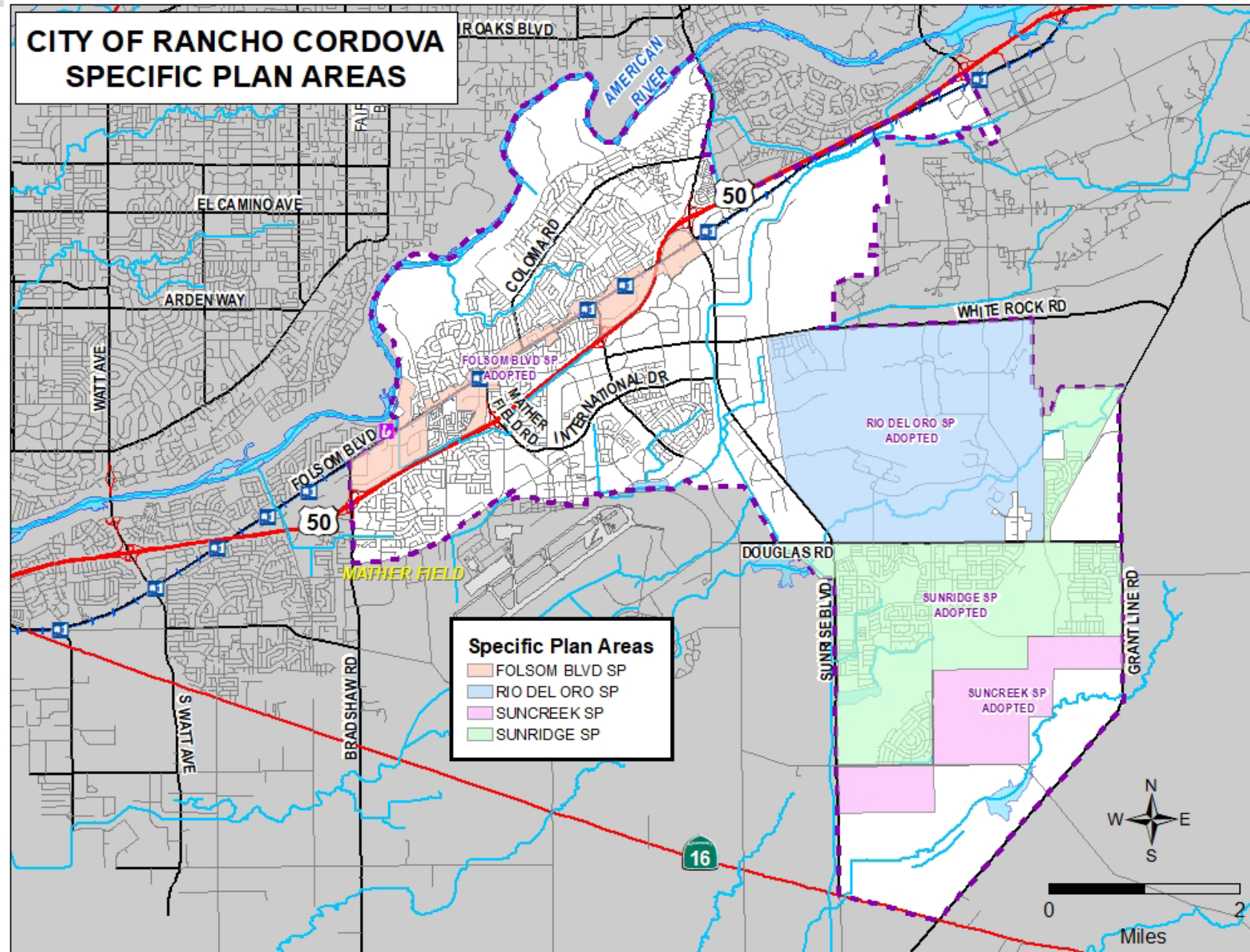
Cross reference:
ED1.3.1

GOALS are overall statements of community desires and are comprised of broad statements of purpose or direction.

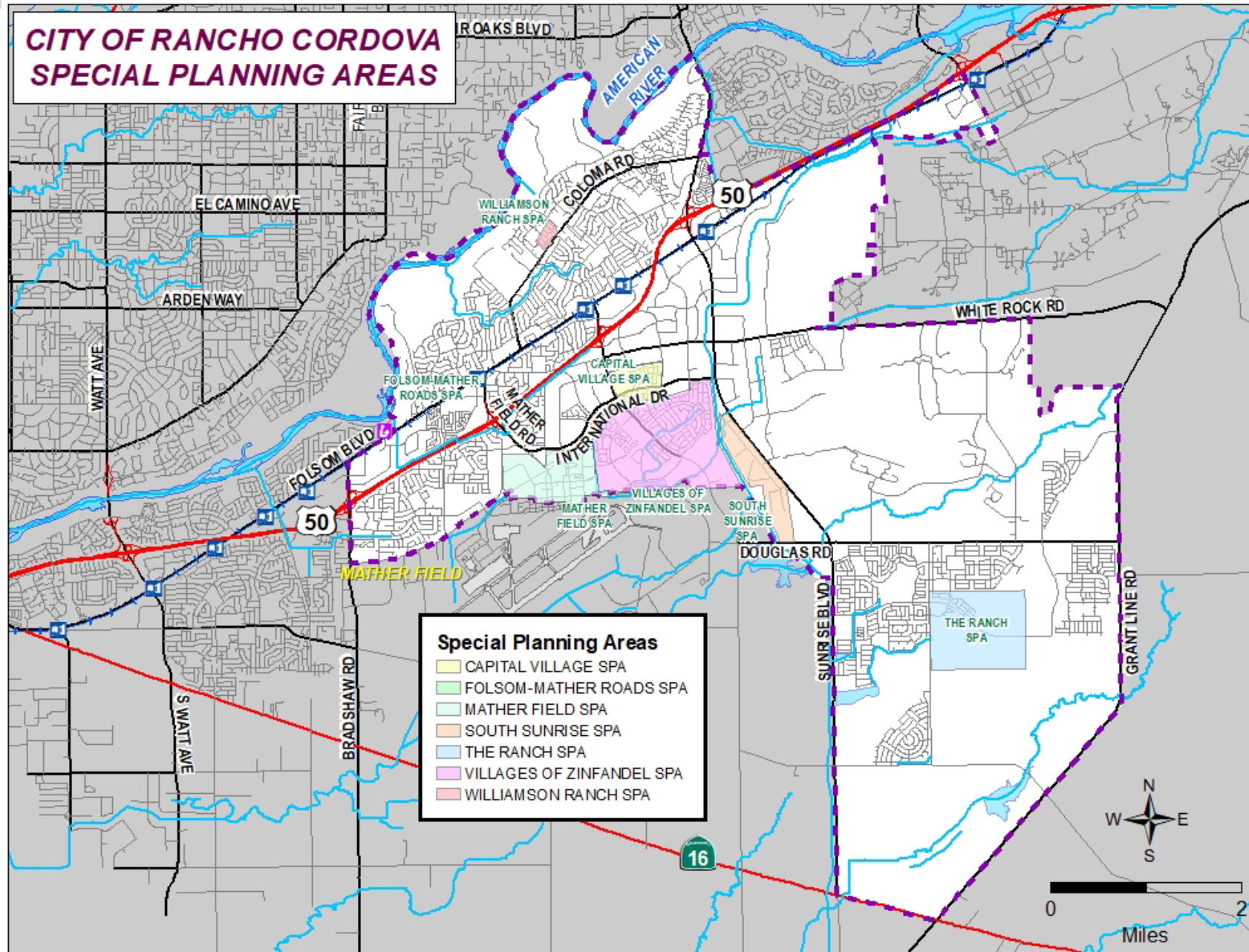
POLICIES serve as guides to the decision makers in reviewing development proposals and making other decisions that affect the future growth and development of the City.

ACTIONS are the implementation steps necessary to ensure the goals and policies are carried out.

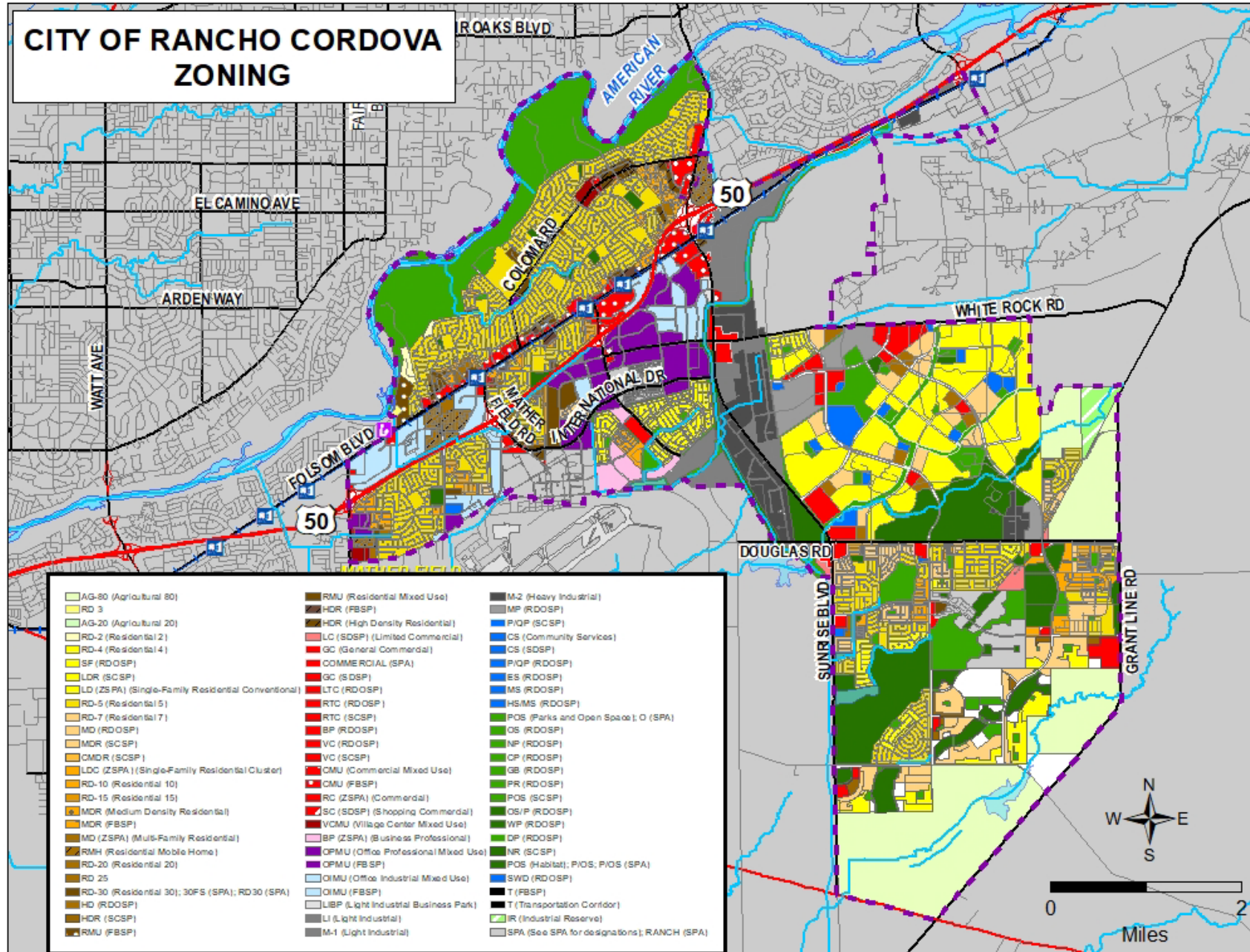
- Planning tool to implement the General Plan
- Regulatory document for a specific geographic area
- City has:
 - Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan
 - Rio Del Oro Specific Plan
 - Suncreek Specific Plan
 - Sunridge Specific Plan



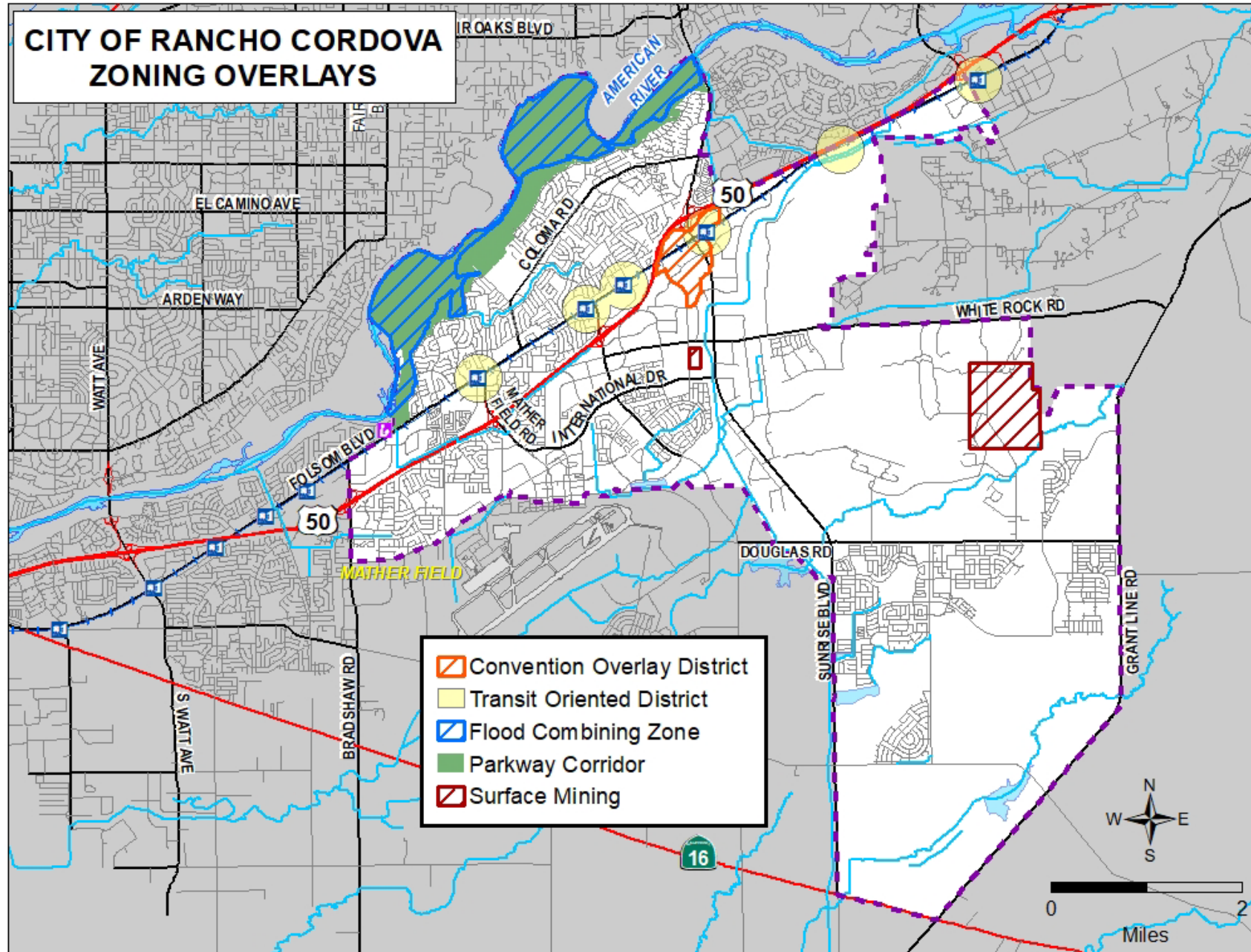
- Established when conventional or uniform zoning regulations do not adequately address unique land use characteristics **or**
- Established when wanting to create a community with varying standards, that would not generally be allowed under existing codes.
- City has:
 - Capital Village SPA
 - Folsom-Mather SPA
 - Mather Field SPA
 - South Sunrise SPA
 - The Ranch SPA
 - Villages of Zinfandel SPA
 - Williamson Ranch SPA

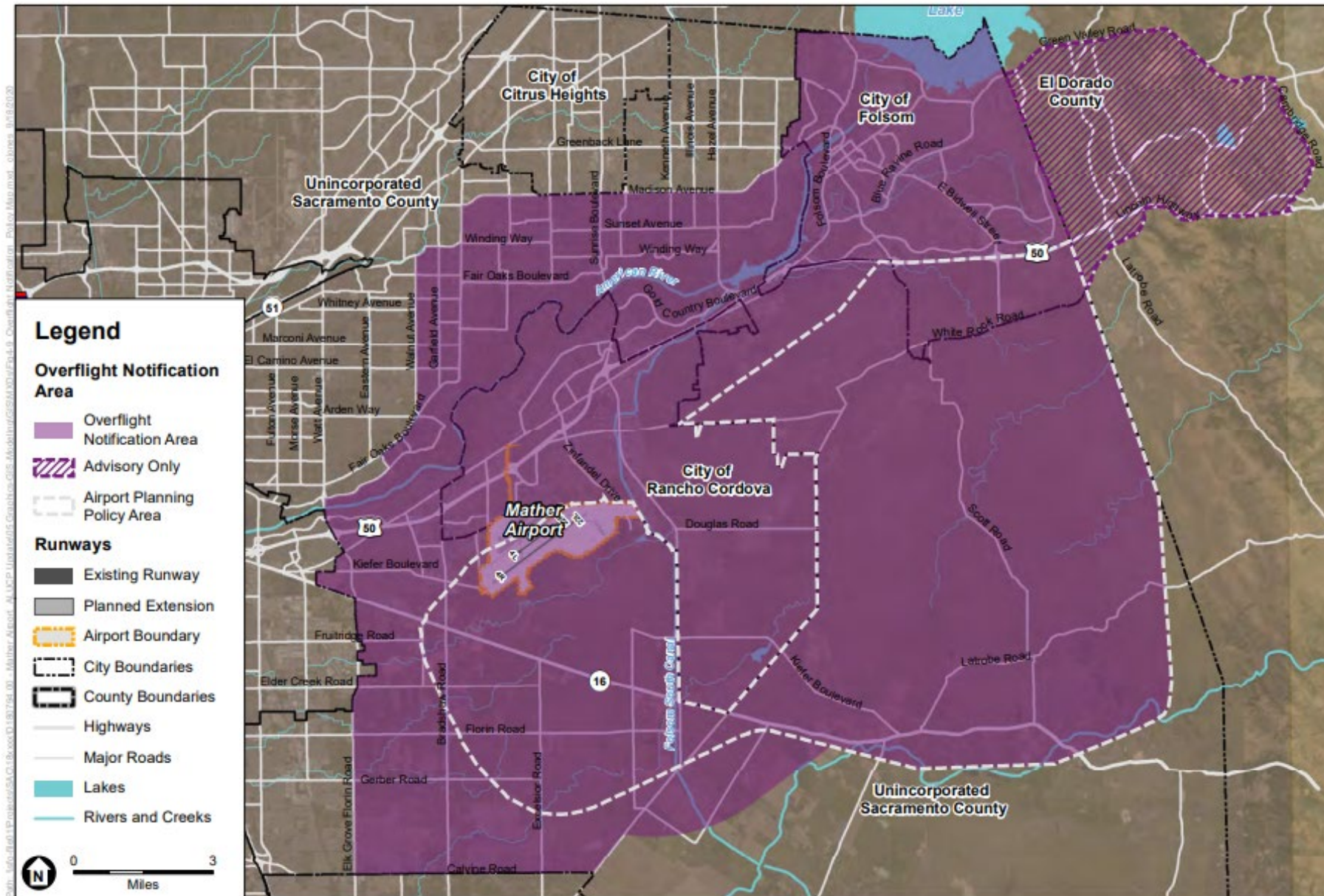


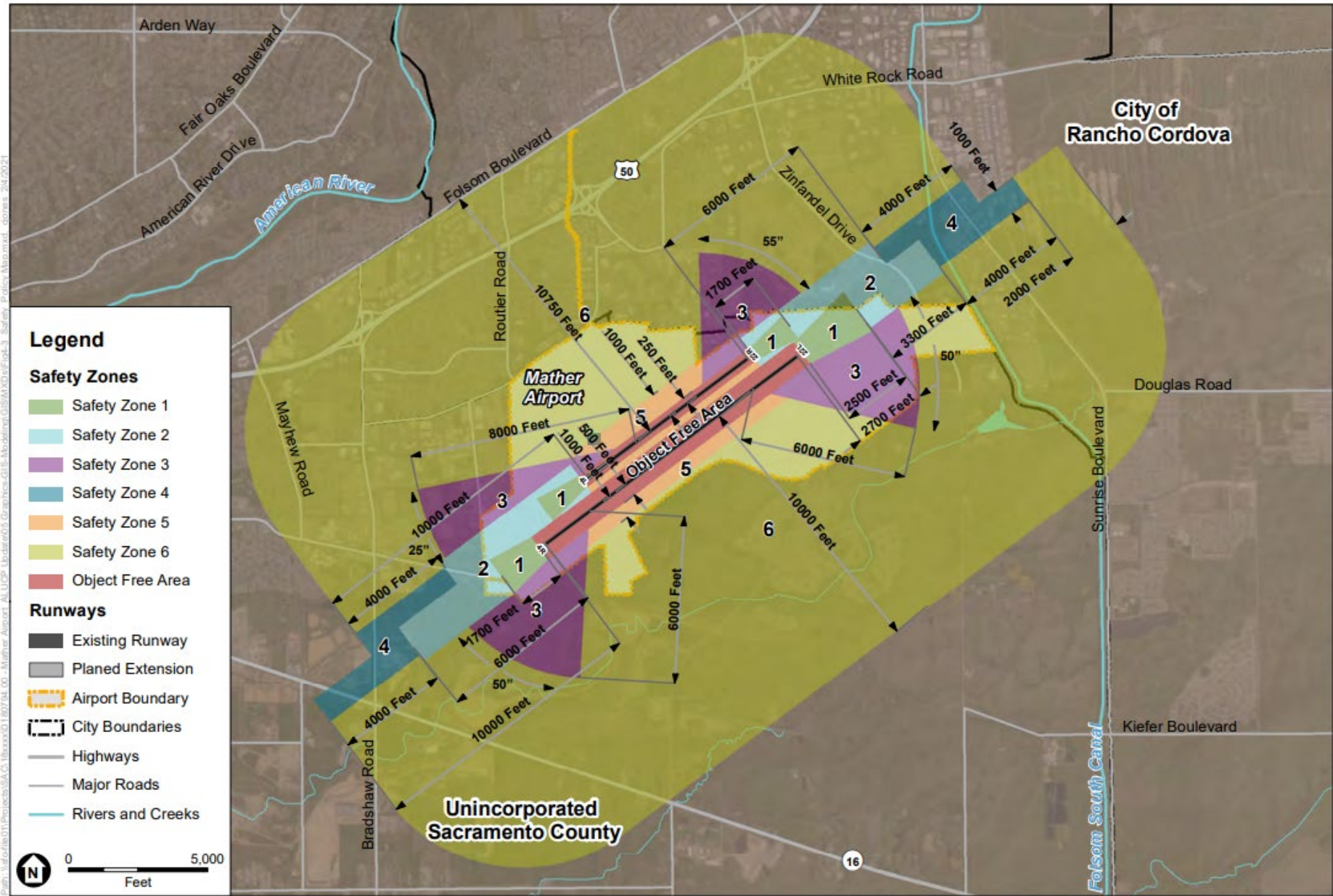
- The purpose of this zoning code is to set forth and coordinate city regulations governing the development and use of land in accordance with the City of Rancho Cordova General Plan.
- Lists each ministerial, discretionary and legislative permit and process
- Sets forth rules for each zoning district
- Permitted, Conditionally Permitted and Prohibited Uses
- Development regulations such as, density, setbacks, height, parking, lighting, landscaping, etc.
- Specific Use Provisions



- Established to supplement the use regulations and/or development standards of the applicable underlying base zoning district.
- The City has
 - Convention Overlay District
 - Transit Oriented District
 - Flood Overlay
 - Parkway Corridor
 - Surface Mining
 - **Mather Airport







- Inform decision-makers about environmental effects.
- Identify ways to avoid environmental damage.
- Prevent avoidable environmental damage.
- Disclose why a project is needed, even if it results in environmental damage.

Certifying an environmental document does NOT approve the project.

- **Exemption**
 - Available when project meets one of many criteria found in State law
- **Negative Declaration (ND)**
 - If project found to have no significant effect on the environment
- **Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)**
 - Specifies revisions to project plans that can avoid or mitigate effects
- **Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**
 - If project would have significant effects that cannot be eliminated through redesign or mitigation.

GP:

Specific Plan:

Zoning:

Overlay:



GP: Folsom Boulevard Planning Area (FBPA)

Specific Plan:

Zoning:

Overlay:



GP: Folsom Boulevard Planning Area (FBPA)

Specific Plan: Folsom Boulevard SP

Zoning:

Overlay:

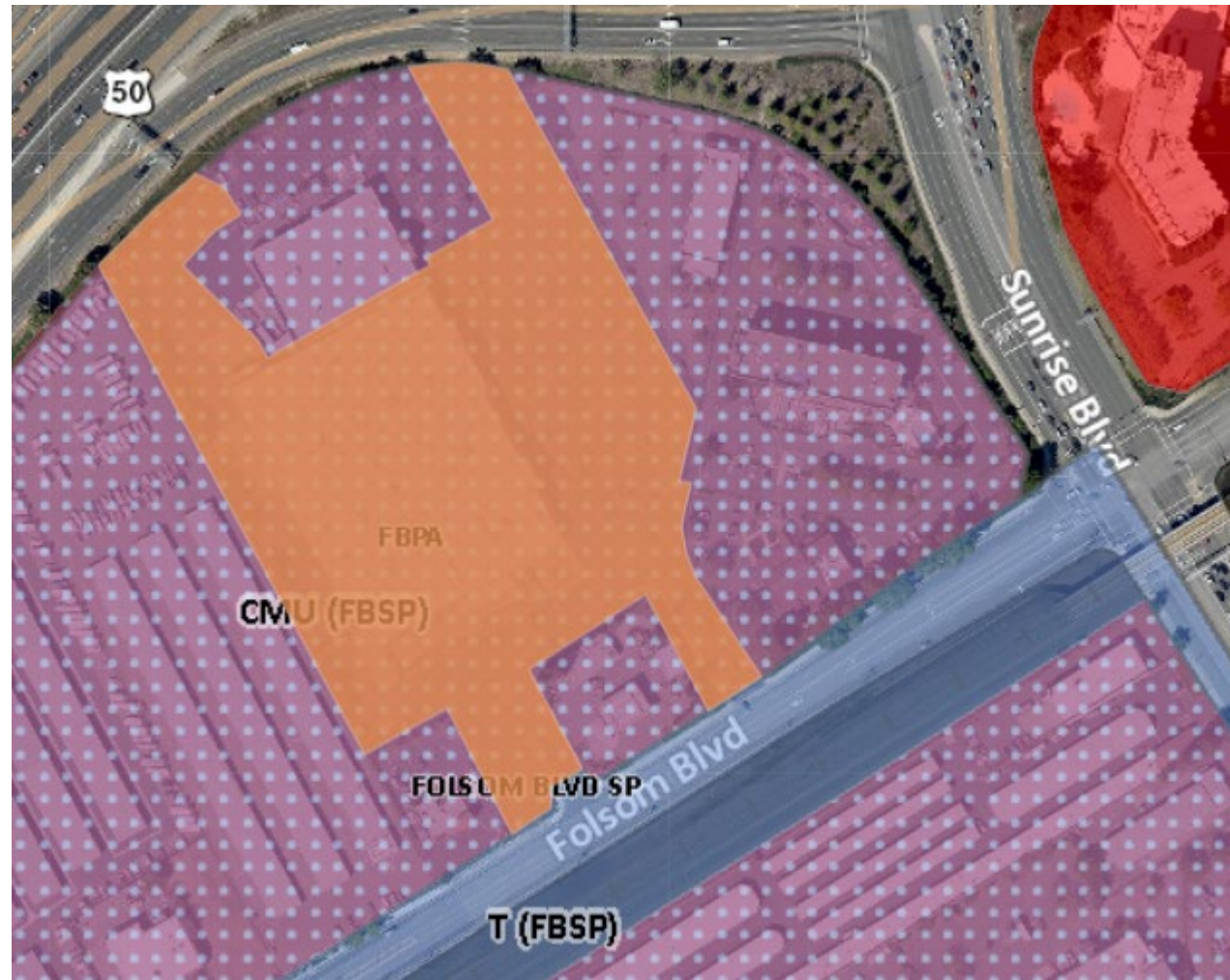


GP: Folsom Boulevard Planning Area (FBPA)

Specific Plan: Folsom Boulevard SP

Zoning: Commercial Mixed Use (FBSP)

Overlay:

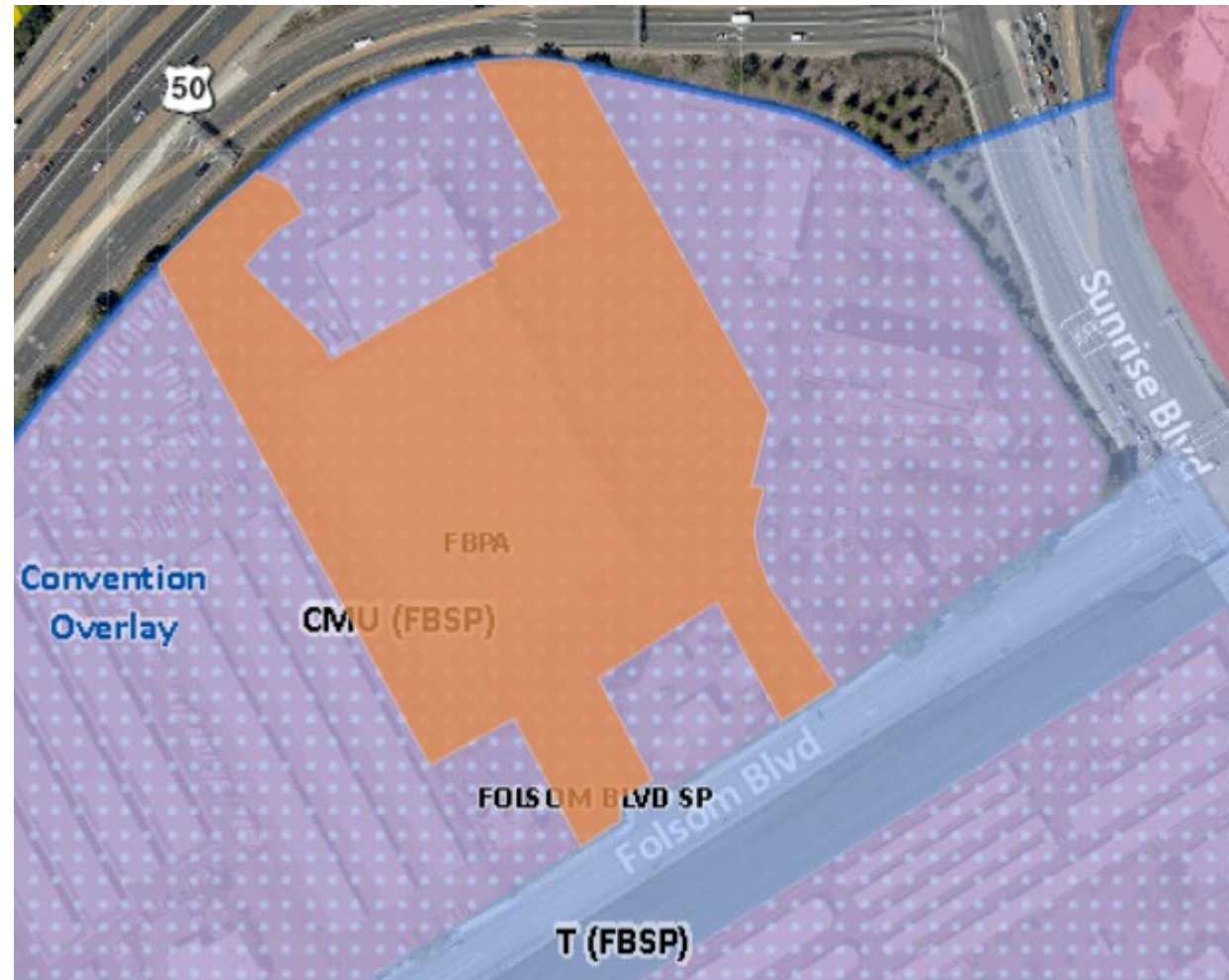


GP: Folsom Boulevard Planning Area (FBPA)

Specific Plan: Folsom Boulevard SP

Zoning: Commercial Mixed Use (FBSP)

Overlay: Convention Overlay



Long Range Planning

- Creation and/or Amendment of Plans and Regulations
 - General Plan, Specific Plans, Zoning Code
- Make Recommendation to City Council

Current Planning

- Discretionary Entitlements (CUPs, Design Review, Variances, etc.)
- Findings Required
 - Objective
 - Subjective
- Commission Action



- Planning Commission acts as a body.
- Accomplished through a majority of the body voting on a matter.
- Majority of the full body (4 of 7)
- May be a Final Action
 - Findings are Required
 - May be appealed to City Council



THANK YOU

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION



MEMORANDUM



ITEM 9.2.

DATE: February 26, 2025
TO: Planning Commission Members
FROM: Stefan Heisler, Housing Manager
SUBJECT: HOUSING LAW DISCUSSION

RECOMMENDATION

Receive presentation.

RESULT OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Planning Commission will receive a presentation from the staff regarding prominent housing laws passed in the last few years.

BACKGROUND

The California State Legislature has adopted numerous laws in recent years aimed at addressing the current statewide housing crisis. These laws have affected how local jurisdictions plan for housing, review housing development applications, and in some cases limit local control in approving or denying projects.

This presentation will focus on the following new laws: SB 35, changes to the state's Housing Accountability Act, SB 330, changes to Density Bonus Law, changes to General Plan Housing Element rules, SB 6 & AB 2011. A brief description of these new laws is provided below, further details are provided in the attached presentation.

SB 35 allows for a streamlined ministerial approval process of multifamily residential projects that satisfy certain requirements. This law applies to all jurisdictions that have not issued building permits for their annual share of the current regional housing needs allocation, and is in effect for Rancho Cordova and nearly all jurisdictions in California. Housing Accountability Act changes include new limitations on when a jurisdiction can deny approval of a housing project and certain project review timelines. SB 330 similarly modifies the Housing Accountability Act to limit denials for qualifying projects and provides a new preliminary application pathway that locks in development standards that can be used to review a certain project.

Density Bonus Law provides a standard ability for developers of affordable units to receive specific density bonuses to build additional units within their development projects, and incentives that provide relief from certain local development standards. Recent changes have increased the amount of bonuses, incentives, and waivers available.

Changes to the General Plan Housing Element highlighted in this presentation include changes from AB 1397, which allow projects including a specified amount of affordable housing to go through a by-right approval process when proposed for sites that have been identified for lower-

income housing in the current, and the two previous, housing element cycles.

SB 6 & AB 2011 are new complementary laws passed in 2022 that automatically permit housing uses in a broader range of principal use areas (e.g. office, retail, or parking), require prevailing wages, and require projects to comply with various other development standards. These two laws differ in which housing projects qualify, where they are located, and other labor standard requirements.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Presentation

Housing Law Update

February 26, 2025

Overview

- In recent years, the Legislature has adopted numerous laws aimed at addressing the housing crisis
- Some of the laws limit local control for qualifying projects
 - **Often for projects with an affordable component, but not always**
- These laws are being used more and more by developers



Overview

Topics that will be covered in this presentation

- Overview of affordable housing income restrictions
- SB 35
- Housing Accountability Act / SB 330
- Density Bonus Law
- Ministerial Approval under the Housing Element
- SB 6 and AB 2011

Affordable Housing 101



Affordable Housing 101

- Housing that is required to be rented/sold at affordable prices to households with incomes of no greater than certain level
- Key Measurement is Area Median Income (AMI)
 - Above Moderate Income = More than 120% AMI
 - Moderate Income = Less than 120% AMI
 - Low Income = Less than 80% AMI
 - Very Low Income = Less than 50% AMI
- In Sacramento County, for a family of four, the median income is \$117,900 (2024)

Affordable Housing 101

- For rental units, the tenant's housing cost (rent + utilities) cannot exceed a set value:
 - For a Very Low-income unit, the monthly housing costs may not exceed 30% of 50% of AMI divided by 12
- For ownership units, there is a cap on resale price or equity sharing to ensure continued affordability
- Deed restrictions lay out specific requirements for 45 or 55 years

SB 35



SB 35

- **Allows** for streamlined ministerial approvals of multifamily residential projects that satisfy certain requirements
- Applies in cities that have issued fewer building permits than their share of the regional housing needs (“RHNA”) by income category
 - SB 35 applies in Rancho Cordova and almost every city in California.

SB 35

- For projects larger than 10 units, at least 10% of the units must be affordable to households making below 80% of AMI
- In cities that have met above-moderate income RHNA goal, 50% of the units must be affordable to households making below 80% of AMI

SB 35

- Project site must have zoning or general plan land use designation that allows residential
 - If mixed-use, at least 2/3 of the square footage must be residential
- Project must comply with all **objective** zoning and design standards
- Project must comply with certain other standards, including site and labor standards

SB 35

- **Objective standards** involve no personal or subjective judgment by a public official and are uniformly verifiable
 - Height limits
 - Density
 - Setback requirements
- **Subjective standards** involve personal or subjective verifiable
 - Conforms with neighborhood character
 - Uses similar materials to surrounding buildings

SB 35

- 60 days from project submittal to determine if the project conflicts with any “objective planning standards” (90 days if the project is more than 150 units)
 - Deemed compliant if response not timely given
- Any other review must occur within 90 days (180 days for a large project)
- Ministerial Approval process, so CEQA does not apply

Housing Accountability Act



Housing Accountability Act

- Existing law that has been on the books for a number of years
- Law's importance has grown in recent years
- Developers and “YIMBY” groups increasingly used HAA as tool to challenge housing project denials

Housing Accountability Act

- Jurisdiction cannot disapprove of housing project or approval at a lower density if it complies with applicable, objective standards in place at the time the application is **deemed complete**
- Jurisdiction must identify inconsistencies in writing within 30/60 days, depending on the number of units

Housing Accountability Act

- City can only deny a project or approve it with lower density if a preponderance of the evidence in the record demonstrates:
 - Project would have a “specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety”
 - “Significant, quantifiable, direct, and unavoidable impact, based on objective, identified written public health or safety standards, policies, or conditions as they existed on the date the application was deemed complete”
 - No feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the adverse impact

Housing Accountability Act

- Very difficult standard to meet to deny a project
- Violations subject to fines of \$10,000 per unit (minimum)

But

- Projects are still subject to a discretionary review process, and City can impose conditions of approval that don't make a project infeasible
- Subject to CEQA review

SB 330 – Housing Crisis Act of 2019

Modifies Housing Accountability Act

- Jurisdiction cannot disapprove of housing project/approval at a lower density if it complies with applicable, objective standards in place upon complete **preliminary application**
- Preliminary application requires less than a full, complete application
 - Must contain information required by jurisdiction's checklist, which can only require certain, limited information

SB 330 – Housing Crisis Act of 2019

Modifies Housing Accountability Act

- Locks in standards earlier in the development process
 - Fees can be adjusted in accordance with the existing CPI escalator
- Complete application required within 180 days
 - Construction must start within 2.5 years (3.5 years if affordable)
- Changes to the project allowed, including increasing the number of units or square footage by up to 20%
 - Project must still comply with standards in place at the time the preliminary application submitted

SB 330 – Housing Crisis Act of 2019

- **Prohibits** changes to a parcel on which residential use is allowed to a “less intensive use,” including “anything that would lessen the intensity of housing,” such as:
 - Reduction in height or density
 - Increased setback requirements or maximum lot coverage requirements
- **Prohibits** jurisdiction from enforcing subjective design standards established after January 1, 2020

SB 330 (cont.)

- **Prohibits** more than five “hearings” of any kind for projects that meet all applicable, objective standards after the application is deemed complete
 - Includes public hearings, workshops, study sessions, or similar meeting
 - Includes appeals
 - Includes meetings of the City Council, Planning Commission, or any subcommittee

Density Bonus Law



Density Bonus Law

- Developers who build a certain percentage of affordable units in a project are entitled to a specific density bonus
 - For example: If density for a parcel is 20 units/acre and developer received a 10% density bonus, project could have a density of 22 units/acre
- The greater the percentage of affordable units, the larger the density bonus
- Inclusionary units count toward bonus

Density Bonus Law

Affordable Unit Percentage	Very-Low Income Density Bonus	Low Income Density Bonus	Moderate Income Density Bonus
5%	20%	-	-
8%	27.5%	-	-
10%	32.5%	20%	5%
13%	35%	24.5%	8%
15%	35%	27.5%	10%
20%	35%	35%	15%
25%	35%	35%	20%
30%	35%	35%	25%
35%	35%	35%	30%
40%	35%	35%	35%
100%	80%	80%	35%

Density Bonus Law

- Qualifying projects are also entitled to up to **5 incentives** depending on the percentage of affordable units
 - An incentive (or concession) is a reduction in site development standards or a modification of zoning code/design requirement
 - Examples include decreased parking, increased height, elimination of required amenities or architectural standard
- Density Bonus projects are also subject to maximum parking requirements, which can be further decreased through the use of an incentive
 - One bedroom or smaller -> 1 space
 - 2-3 Bedrooms -> 1.5 spaces

Density Bonus Law

- Density Bonus projects are also entitled to **waive** any development standard that **would physically prevent** the project from being built at the permitted density and with the granted incentives
 - Waiver does not require elimination of “amenities”
- There is no limit to the number of waivers a project may receive

Density Bonus Law

- City is required to grant the density bonus, concession or waiver unless it would:
 - Violate state or federal law
 - Have a “specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety”
 - Not result in identifiable and actual cost reductions (for incentives only)
- Municipal Code designates **City Council as approving authority**
- Project receiving bonus, concession, or waiver is **consistent with objective standards**

Ministerial Approval Under Housing Element



Ministerial Approval Under Housing Element

- “Policy H.1.6 – Allow housing developments with at least 20 percent affordable housing by-right on lower-income housing sites that have been counted in previous housing element cycles, consistent with AB 1397”
- Applies to sites identified in housing element that was in the past two housing elements but not developed
- Cannot be subject to conditional use permit or other discretionary review, except for design review

Ministerial Approval Under Housing Element

What is “by right” or “use by right” approval?

- Not subject to conditional use permit or any other discretionary review
- Not subject to CEQA review
- Design review is allowed, however,
 - It must remain “non discretionary”
 - Limited to reviewing the design merits of the project
 - Can call for a project to make design-related modifications

SB 6 & AB 2011



SB 6 & AB 2011

- New laws allow housing on sites where office, retail, or parking are a principally permitted use
 - Cannot be on or adjacent to industrial site if residential uses are not allowed on the industrial site
- AB 2011 creates streamlined ministerial approval process for projects that are either:
 - 100% Affordable to lower income households; or
 - Along “commercial corridor”
- SB 6 does not create ministerial approval process, but projects are subject to HAA

SB 6 & AB 2011

- Projects must have a minimum density of 30 units/acre
- Projects must comply with various other development standards, for site and project
 - For some standards there is requirement specified in the laws
 - For other standards the requirement is taken from a specified City zoning district
- All projects must pay prevailing wage, SB 6 projects must use “skilled and trained workforce”

Questions?