

CHAPTER ONE: SPECIFIC PLAN INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER ONE: SPECIFIC PLAN INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

1.1.1 Purpose

Specific Plan I covers the first stage of development within Mountain House, a 4,791-acre new community in southwestern San Joaquin County. This Specific Plan addresses 1,348 acres of the overall community, including three of the 12 neighborhoods planned for Mountain House and a complementary balance of commercial, industrial and public uses.

The Mountain House Master Plan provides the overall development framework for the community. Mountain House is intended to be a new community offering a desirable environment for living and working. Primary goals call for a balance of jobs, housing, and services to establish a self-contained community; a reduced use of single-occupancy vehicles through transit and efficient land use and circulation design; and a strong emphasis on residential neighborhoods organized around local schools and parks. Furthermore, the community is intended to provide its own services and result in positive economic impact on the County.

Specific Plan I implements Master Plan goals and objectives by providing more detailed provisions for land use, design, infrastructure and implementation. In conformance with the procedure laid out by the County for the development of new communities, this Specific Plan is consistent with the land use assumptions, requirements and policies laid out in the Mountain House Master Plan.

Specific Plan I is intended to accomplish the following:

- Establish the land uses, development standards, zoning, and design guidelines for development within the first Specific Plan Area of Mountain House;
- Provide detailed plans for infrastructure and services to support these land uses, and provide for efficient extensions to future Specific Plan areas within Mountain House;
- Ensure that environmental resources are protected and that potential environmental impacts are adequately addressed;
- Describe implementation measures including phasing, service provisions, and administration of the Specific Plan;
- Provide appendix references to detailed background studies, comprehensive technical regulations, and other resources.

State law also allows Specific Plans to be policy (and adopted by resolution), regulatory (and adopted by ordinance), or a combination of the two. This Specific Plan is a combination of the two.

1.1.2 Organization of the Specific Plan

The chapters of this Specific Plan are organized to correspond with the chapters of the Master Plan. Wherever possible, the Specific Plan refers to the Master Plan rather than repeating provisions which are identical. Therefore, the user should have a Master Plan available when reading this Specific Plan.

Appendices to the Specific Plan provide additional technical and background information, and are organized to correspond to the appropriate chapter.

This Specific Plan assigns preliminary names to streets and other features of the project. These place names are for working purposes only. Final names will be determined during the Tentative and Final Map subdivision process.

1.2 PLANNING CONTEXT

1.2.1 New Community Planning Process

In 1992, San Joaquin County formulated a planning process for new communities that utilizes a Master Plan and phased Specific Plans to implement the General Plan. The Master Plan and Public Financing Plan address the entire new community area, with the intent to ensure adequate financing and provision of infrastructure and services. The purpose of phased Specific Plans is to allow each such plan to respond to prevailing conditions over the buildout of Mountain House.

1.2.2 Relationship to County Plans

San Joaquin County General Plan

The Mountain House new community is located entirely within unincorporated San Joaquin County, and development within the community is subject to the San Joaquin County General Plan 2010 and its implementing ordinances.

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65454, a Specific Plan shall be consistent with the local government's general plan. By County policy, a Specific Plan in a new community must also be consistent with the Master Plan and Public Financing Plan.

Development Title and Other County Ordinances

Provisions of the San Joaquin County Development Title and other County Ordinances shall apply to Mountain House. The General Plan and Development Title will identify provisions that may be unique to the Mountain House community and reference specific requirements for the community.

Mountain House Master Plan

The Mountain House Master Plan addresses the entire 4,791-acre Mountain House community and provides overall goals and objectives, land use and development standards, and provisions for governance, administration, public services and infrastructure.

This Specific Plan implements and is consistent with the Master Plan provisions. Where appropriate and to avoid repetition, this Specific Plan refers to provisions of the Master Plan.

Public Financing Plan (PFP)

The Public Financing Plan (PFP) is a separate document prepared in association with the Master Plan. The PFP identifies needed public services, facilities, costs, and funding alternatives to implement the Master Plan. The PFP is based upon the policies, land use data, public facility and service standards, cost estimates and phasing plans identified in the Master Plan.

1.2.3 Environmental Review

Prior to the approval of a General Plan amendment for Mountain House, the County certified a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) on the entire project in 1992, and a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) in early 1993. An EIR has also been prepared for the entire project in conjunction with the proposed Master Plan and this first Specific Plan.

Each application of a discretionary approval following adoption of the Master Plan, Specific Plan, and any associated General Plan amendments, will be reviewed to determine what, if any, further environmental review is required by the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) with respect to that approval. CEQA includes a variety of provisions defining the necessity and scope of further environmental review when an EIR has previously been certified for a project. CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines provide that certain types of projects consistent with previously adopted General Plans or zoning may require only limited further environmental review.

In those circumstances when CEQA would require further environmental review for a project consistent with the General Plan, Specific Plan, or zoning, the form of such further environmental review may range from a negative declaration, to a supplemental or subsequent EIR. The precise need and scope of environmental review for projects consistent with the Specific Plan can best be determined at the time such further approvals are processed.

1.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

1.3.1 Specific Plan Area and Context

Region and Vicinity

The Specific Plan Area is located within the proposed Mountain House community at the western edge of San Joaquin County, northwest of the City of Tracy (Figure 1.1: Vicinity Map).

Specific Plan Area and Subareas

The Specific Plan Area includes 1,348 acres of the overall 4,791-acre Mountain House community. The Specific Plan Area consists of three subareas, as described below (see Figure 1.2: Specific Plan Area and Subareas Map). Figure 1.3: Ownership Map describes the land ownership pattern within Mountain House.

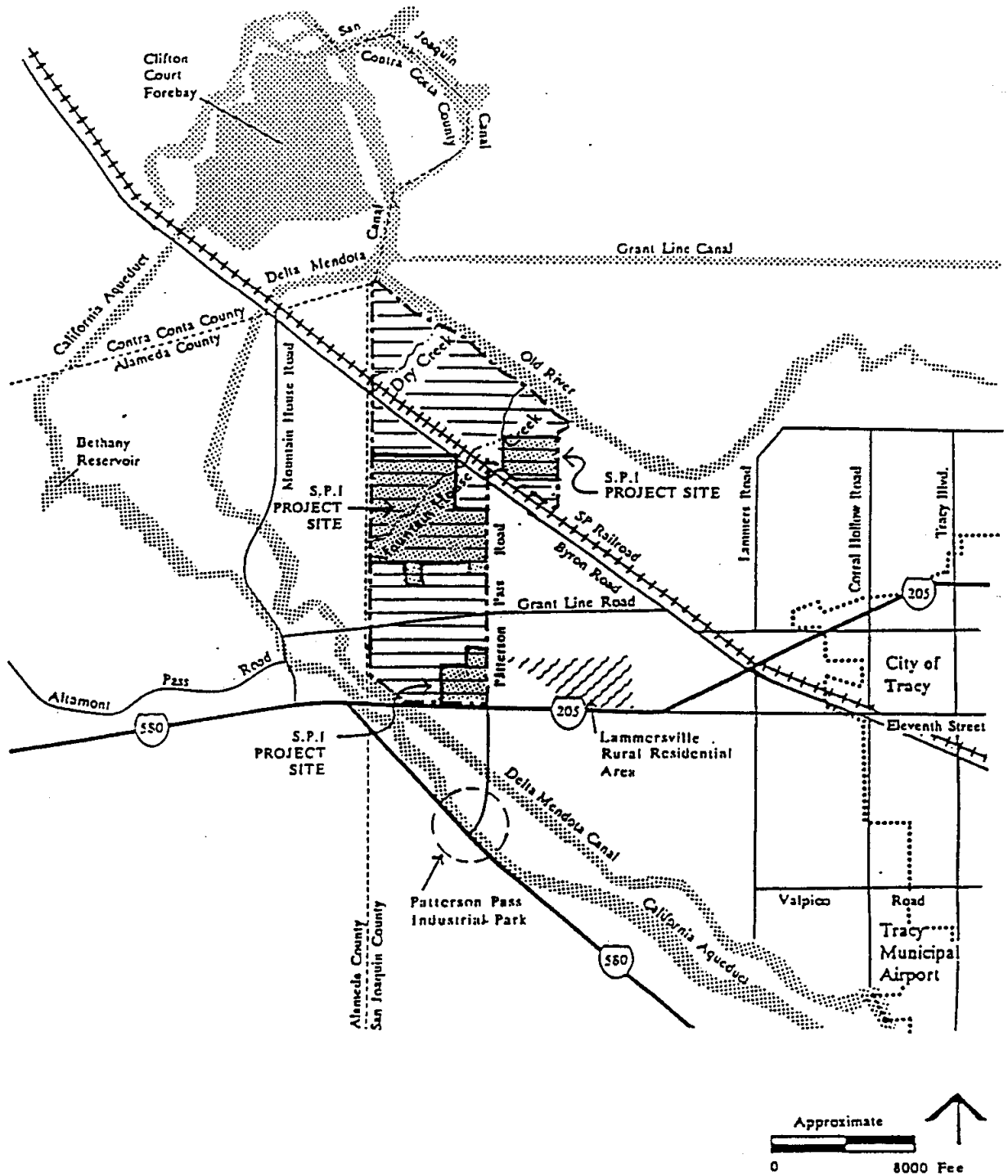


FIGURE 1.1 – VICINITY MAP

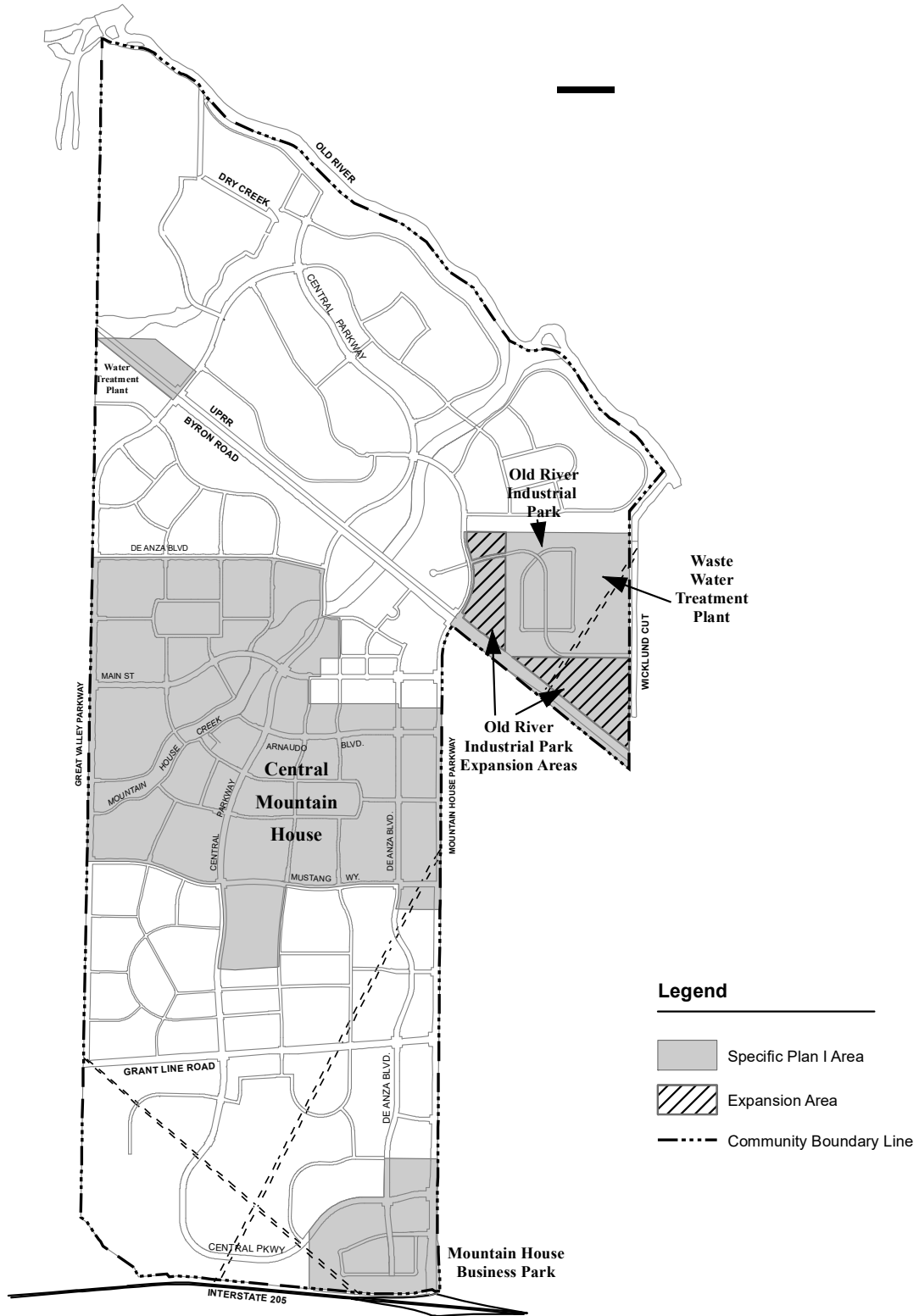


FIGURE 1.2 SPECIFIC PLAN AREA AND SUBAREAS MAP

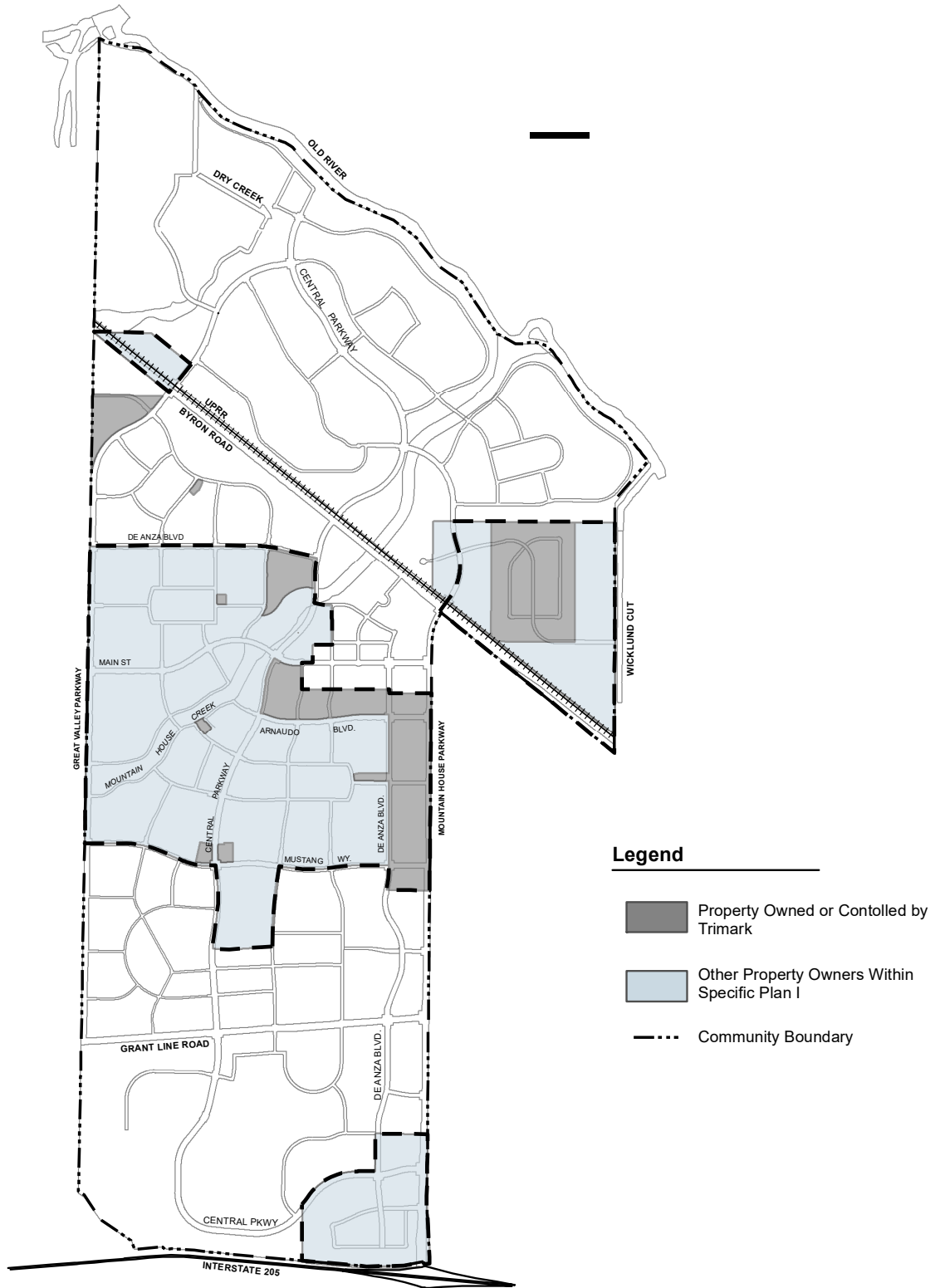


FIGURE 1.3 – OWNERSHIP MAP

Central Mountain House Subarea:

This 1,040-acre subarea is located centrally within the Mountain House community. It is bounded by Marina Boulevard on the west and Mountain House Parkway on the east, and it includes three residential neighborhoods (Neighborhoods E, F, and G), portions of the Mountain House Creek corridor, and portions of the Patterson Pass business corridor.

Mountain House Business Park:

This 143.5-acre subarea is located at the Patterson Pass freeway interchange in the southeast corner of the Mountain House community.

Old River Industrial Park:

This 164.5-acre subarea is located in the northeastern portion of the Mountain House community, between the Old River and Byron Road.

Other improvements not included in these subareas consist of raw water pumping and conveyance, a water treatment plant located north of Byron Road, and other infrastructure improvements. These are discussed in the relevant chapters of this Specific Plan.

Williamson Act Contracts

Within the Specific Plan Area, approximately 186 acres are not under Williamson Act contract, 358 acres are within the cancellation area approved by the County Board of Supervisors on February 25, 1993, and 195.5 acres are subject to Williamson Act Notices of Nonrenewal, due to expire in December of 1997 and 1998. No additional cancellations will be required for development of the project.

Figure 1.4: Williamson Act, Specific Plan I Area illustrates the status of Williamson Act lands within the Specific Plan Area. The initial phases of residential development will occur on lands not under Williamson Act contract and/or on lands which were approved for cancellation on February 25, 1993. Specific Plan I does include some residential lands that will remain under Williamson Act contract. These lands will only be developed after expiration of Non-renewal contracts with expirations in December 1997.

The 160 acres of Old River Industrial Park is under a Williamson Act non-renewal contract that will expire in December 1998. The wastewater treatment plant located on these lands does not require contract cancellation as it is exempt by law as a public facility. The remaining Industrial lands within the park will not be developed until after non-renewal contract expiration.

All other lands within Specific Plan I are not under Williamson Act contract. These include the water treatment plant and the Mountain House Business Park at Mountain House Parkway and I-205.

1.3.2 Site Character

Pre-development Land Use and Infrastructure

The Specific Plan Area consists of agricultural lands used primarily for field and row crops such as alfalfa, corn and beans.

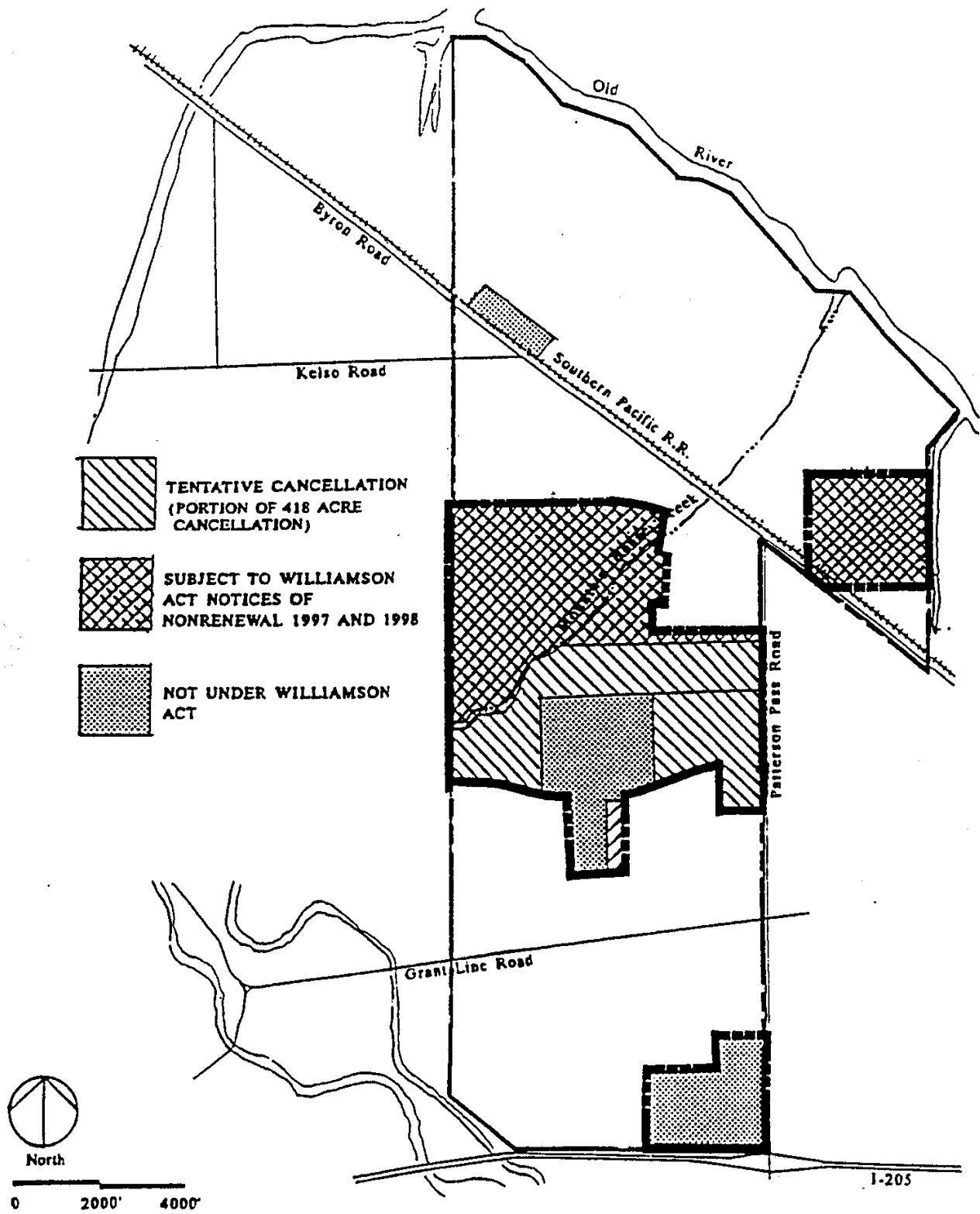


FIGURE 1.4 – WILLIAMSON ACT, SPECIFIC PLAN I AREA

Major highway access to the Specific Plan Area is available from Interstate 580 and Interstate 205. Local road access is available via Grant Line Road, Mountain House Parkway, and Byron Road, all of which connect to I-205 and other points. Byron Road passes through the Mountain House area, connecting the City of Tracy with Brentwood located to the northwest in Contra Costa County. Kelso Road, Von Sosten Road, Bethany Road and Wicklund Road intersect the three main roads noted above within the Mountain House area.

Agricultural water is supplied to the southern and central portions of the Specific Plan Area from the Byron Bethany Irrigation District. The north sector is supplied from the Westside Irrigation District. The Master Plan provides further discussion of water supply.

Electrical utilities and pipelines include PG&E's Rio Oso-Tesla Line, a 230 kV tower line which crosses the southeastern corner of the Central Mountain House Subarea. This line is contained in a 75-foot wide easement from southwest to northeast. Parallel and adjacent to this is another PG&E right-of-way that is 192.5 feet in width. This right-of-way was originally intended to accommodate the Rancho-Seco Tesla Tower Line Facility. The Rancho Seco power plant has been permanently closed but PG&E has indicated that they wish to retain the right-of-way.

An 8-inch diameter high pressure gas main traverses the Mountain House area from north to south and crosses the eastern portion of the Central Mountain House Subarea. A 50-foot wide easement crosses the southwest corner of the Mountain House Business Park Subarea. The easement accommodates a natural gas pipeline owned by PG&E, an oil transmission pipeline owned by Chevron USA Inc., and a second PG&E gas pipeline.

Figure 1.5: Potential On-Site Sources of Public Hazards identifies the location of potential public safety hazards in the Specific Plan Area.

Environmental Conditions

The Specific Plan Area consists of gently sloping terrain ranging from a maximum elevation of approximately 165' feet along I-205 at the Mountain House Business Park, to approximately 10 feet at the northeast corner of Old River Industrial Park. Topographic features are limited to areas along Mountain House Creek. Predominant views are across open fields and grazing lands, occasionally interrupted by fences, transmissions lines, and other built features. Windmill-covered hills are visible two miles to the west.

Mountain House Creek traverses the central Specific Plan Area and drains a 15-square mile watershed located to the west and south. The creek is seasonal or intermittent in its natural condition but has very low flows year-round due to possible leakage from the Delta Mendota Canal and California Aqueduct or springs within the watershed. A network of small ditches drains the interior of the Specific Plan Area, with the majority of runoff directed by ditches to farm drains along Mountain House Parkway.

Trees and vegetation are generally confined to isolated portions of the Mountain House Creek corridor, windrows along existing roadways, and agricultural fields or farmsteads.

The wetlands delineation for Mountain House, as verified by the Army Corps of Engineers, identified emergent and seasonal marsh along Mountain House Creek within the Specific Plan Area. An emergent marsh approximately 5.18 acres in size is located within Neighborhood G along Mountain House Creek. This emergent marsh was created historically by construction of a low-level dam across Mountain House Creek. The dam has deteriorated to the point that the spillway has been undermined and the channel has begun to headcut upstream into the emergent marsh. Ultimately, if left unchecked, this headcutting will result in the elimination or substantial degradation of these emergent wetlands.

Seasonal wetlands comprising approximately 2.14 acres in size are located within Neighborhood E along Mountain House Creek near the western boundary of the Specific Plan Area.

Mountain House Creek has been channelized in the past for agricultural purposes, and is periodically maintained. At present, it is incised as much as eight feet and has near-vertical sides. As a result of its channel configuration and maintenance activities it is largely devoid of established vegetation.

Along Mountain House Creek in Neighborhood E, there are several expanses of pasture which have been subject to flood irrigation for many years. While the plants in these areas are considered to be wetland species, the soils are not indicative of wetlands and the hydrology necessary to support wetlands would not be present, absent the irrigation. Such areas are not considered to be wetlands for purposes of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Subsurface geological investigations at the Specific Plan Area indicate that the majority of the near-surface sediments consists of silt and clay. No evidence of landslides or mudslides has been mapped within or immediately adjacent to the project site. Soil types are predominantly silty clay and clays developed on gently sloping alluvial fan sediments. Soils have low erosion potential.

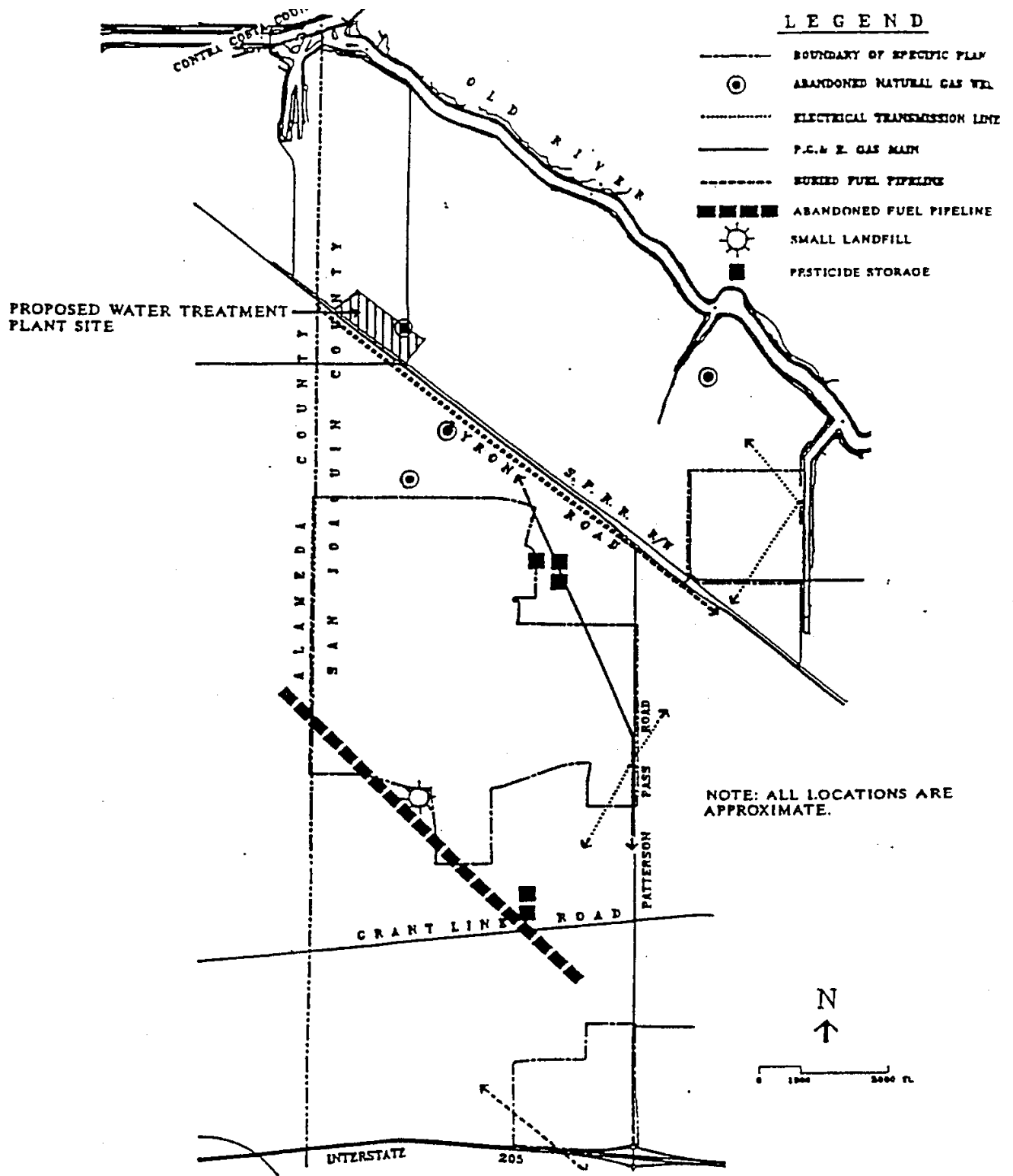


FIGURE 1.5 – POTENTIAL ON-SITE SOURCES OF PUBLIC HAZARD