

4.1 LAND USE

4.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This section contains a discussion of the existing land use and planning setting for the project site and surrounding area. An analysis of potential land use and planning impacts associated with the proposed project is also provided.

ON-SITE LAND USE

The project site is located in the City of Rocklin, south of Interstate 80 and east of Sierra College Boulevard. The undeveloped project site contains gently sloping terrain, covered with annual grasses and dotted with rock outcroppings, seasonal wetland features and scattered trees and shrubs. The project site and vicinity are predominantly large open spaces historically used for orchard production.

SURROUNDING LAND USE

Interstate 80 borders the project site directly to the northwest. Adjacent to the project site, Interstate 80 is a 6-lane highway. Areas north and east of Interstate 80 consist of retail-commercial uses along Sierra College Boulevard and a residential subdivision along Hunters Drive (Exhibit 4.1-1). The residential subdivision is located within the incorporated boundaries of the Town of Loomis. In general, areas north of the project site include pockets of development interspersed within open grasslands and scattered oak woodlands.

Areas east of the project site consist of large areas of relatively undeveloped land interspersed with rural residences, oak woodlands and Secret Ravine Creek ¹. A development application has been submitted on the land within the City of Rocklin located directly east of the project site. Identified as the Rocklin 60 residential development, this proposed project includes the subdivision of approximately 57 acres to accommodate a maximum of 179 single-family residential units. East of this proposed Rocklin 60 development is the Town of Loomis, which in this area includes rural-scale residential areas and the Indian Creek Golf Course.

Areas south of the project site consist of large areas of open grasslands and dense oak woodlands with Secret Ravine Creek ranging between 300 and 800 feet south of the project site. A small abandoned residence is located approximately 400 feet south of the project site and 100 feet east of Sierra College Boulevard (Exhibit 4.1-1). To the south and southwest of the project site is the Rocklin campus of Sierra College.

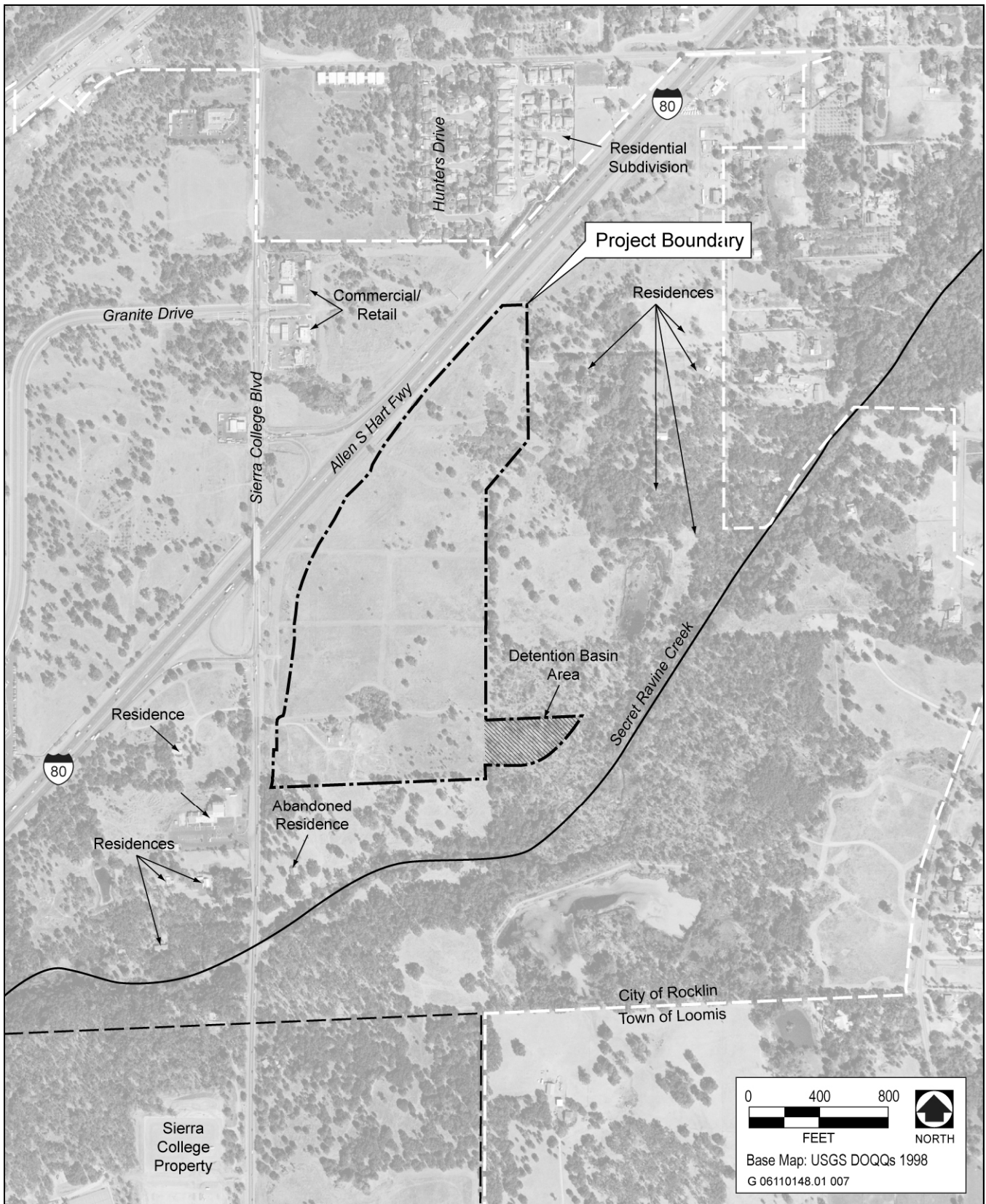
Sierra College Boulevard borders the project site to the west. The Sierra College Boulevard/Interstate 80 interchange, which as of this writing (Fall 2007) is in the process of being reconstructed, is located along the site's northwestern corner. Areas west of Sierra College Boulevard consist of grasslands and oak woodlands interspersed with rural residences, the Lifehouse Church, and Interstate 80 (Exhibit 4.1-1).

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

On-site Land Use Designations

The City of Rocklin General Plan (1991) designates land uses within the City. The General Plan includes two designations for the project site, Retail Commercial (RC) and Medium Density Residential (MDR). The majority of the project site is designated RC with approximately 1.23 acres along the site's eastern boundary designated as MDR (Exhibit 4.1-2). The Land Use Element of the General Plan identifies RC lands as those designated for retail commercial uses, including business and professional uses. The Land Use Element identifies MDR lands as those designated exclusively for single family residential development, with a minimum 6,000 square foot lot area

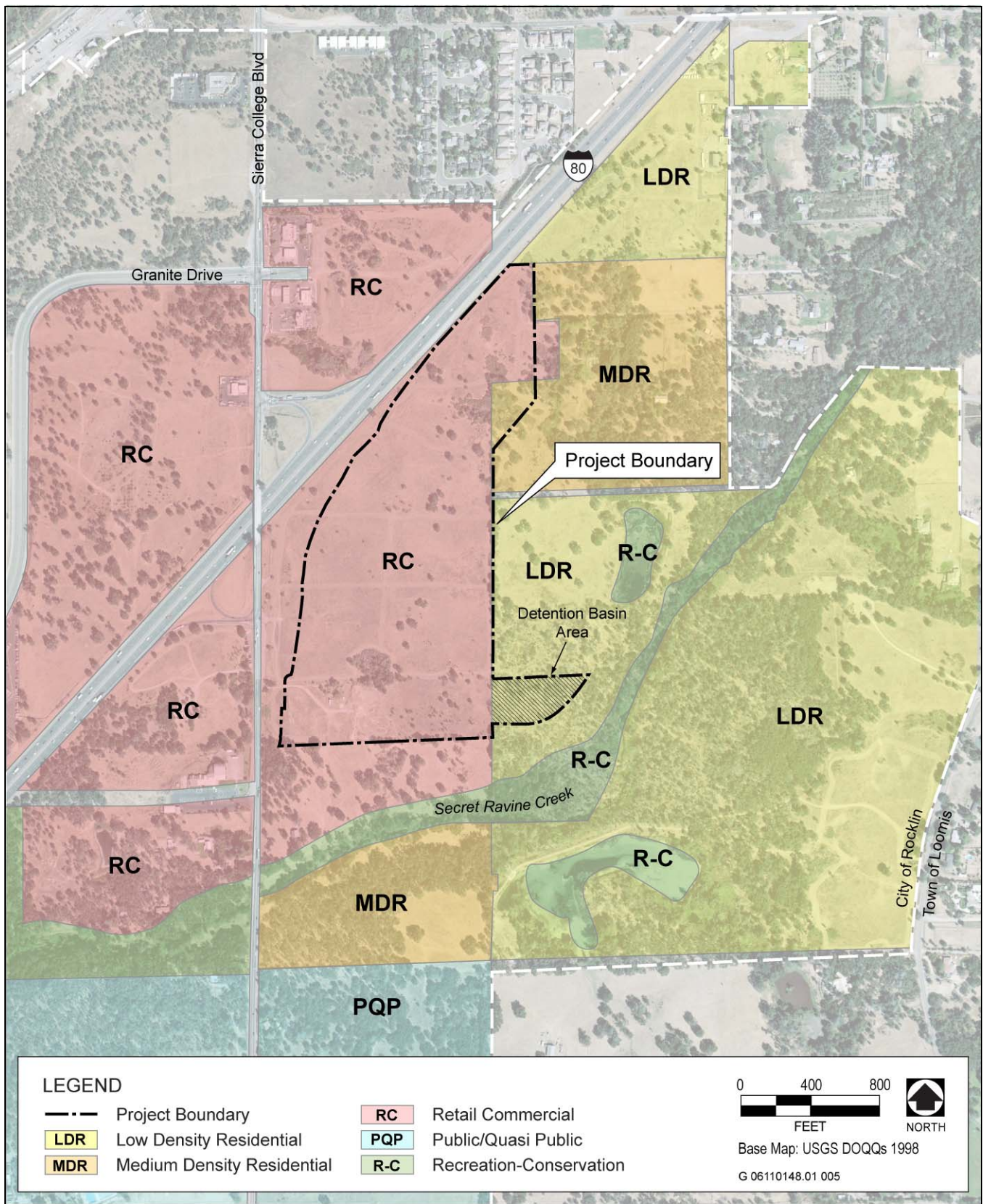
¹ For a detailed discussion of Secret Ravine Creek, see page 4.10-3 in Section 4.10 of this Draft EIR.



Source: EDAW 2007

Surrounding Land Uses

Exhibit 4.1-1



Source: City of Rocklin 2007, Adapted by EDAW in 2007

Land Use Map

Exhibit 4.1-2

per dwelling unit, except in a Planned Development zone where clustered housing can be considered or in the designated old town area.

The General Plan further defines these land use designations as follows:

Retail Commercial

The purpose of the Retail Commercial land use designation is defined in Table 5 (page 44) of the General Plan (1991) as follows:

- ▶ To provide appropriately located areas for retail stores, professional offices, supportive commercial uses and amusement uses in a concentrated area for the convenience of the public and in mutually beneficial relationships to each other.
- ▶ To provide areas for retail and service establishments intended to meet daily convenience needs of residential areas.
- ▶ To provide areas for highway traveler services and uses normally associated with travelers and vacationers.

Table 5 further defines the character, density and compatible zoning for the Retail Commercial land use designation as follows:

Character: Retail trade services that should be grouped for comparison shopping. Easily accessible, compatible and geared for the neighborhood local and regional needs. Also, highway commercial uses geared for tourist or highway travel.

Density: Minimum lots from 10,000 square feet with a floor area yield equal to 25% of the lot area.

Compatible Zoning: Commercial (C-1, C-2, C-4, C-H), Historic District (H-D), Business Professional (B-P), and Planned Development (PD).

Medium Density Residential

The purpose of the Medium Density Residential land use designation is defined in Table 5 (page 43) of the General Plan (1991) as follows:

- ▶ Provide areas for single family homes on urban lots, including town-houses and condominiums.
- ▶ To allow for accessory uses and non-residential uses which compliment single family neighborhoods.
- ▶ To discourage non-residential uses which are incompatible with single family neighborhoods.

Table 5 further defines the character, density, population per acre and compatible zoning for the Medium Density Residential land use designation as follows:

Character: Areas where single family residential structures do not exceed 2 stories in height or cover more than 40% of the site.

Density: Minimum lots from 5,000 square feet to 12,500 square feet with 3.5 to 8.4 dwelling units per acre.

Population Per Acre: 9 to 21 persons (assuming an average population per household of 2.5).

Compatible Zoning: Residential (R1-5, R1-6, R1-7.5, R1-10, R1-12.5) and Planned Development (PD).

Surrounding Land Use Designations

The General Plan land use designation for properties to the north, west and south of the project site is Retail Commercial. The land use designations to the northeast and east include Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential. A strip of Recreation-Conservation designated land associated with Secret Ravine Creek extends from east of the project site to the southwest. Low Density Residential designated land is located east of Secret Ravine Creek and Medium Density Residential designated land is located south of Secret Ravine Creek.

Existing Zoning Designations

On-site Zoning Designations

The City of Rocklin Zoning Ordinance identifies the zoning designations within the City. The City's Zoning Map identifies the zoning on the project site as Retail Business (C-2), Planned Development - Commercial (PD-C), and Unclassified (UN) (Exhibit 4.1-3). The Retail Business zoning allows retail business establishments with all uses to be conducted entirely within a building and no outside storage or display permitted. The Planned Development - Commercial zoning is intended to provide the means for greater creativity and flexibility in environmental design than is provided under the strict application of the zoning and subdivision ordinances, while at the same time protecting the public health, safety and welfare and property values. The specific purposes of the PD zone are to:

- ▶ Promote and encourage cluster development on large sites to avoid sensitive areas of property;
- ▶ Encourage creative and innovative design on large sites by allowing flexibility in property development standards;
- ▶ Encourage the preservation of open space;
- ▶ Accommodate various types of large scale, complex and phased developments;
- ▶ Establish a procedure for the development of large tracts of land in order to reduce or eliminate the rigidity, delays, and conflicts that otherwise would result from application of zoning standards designed primarily for small lots.

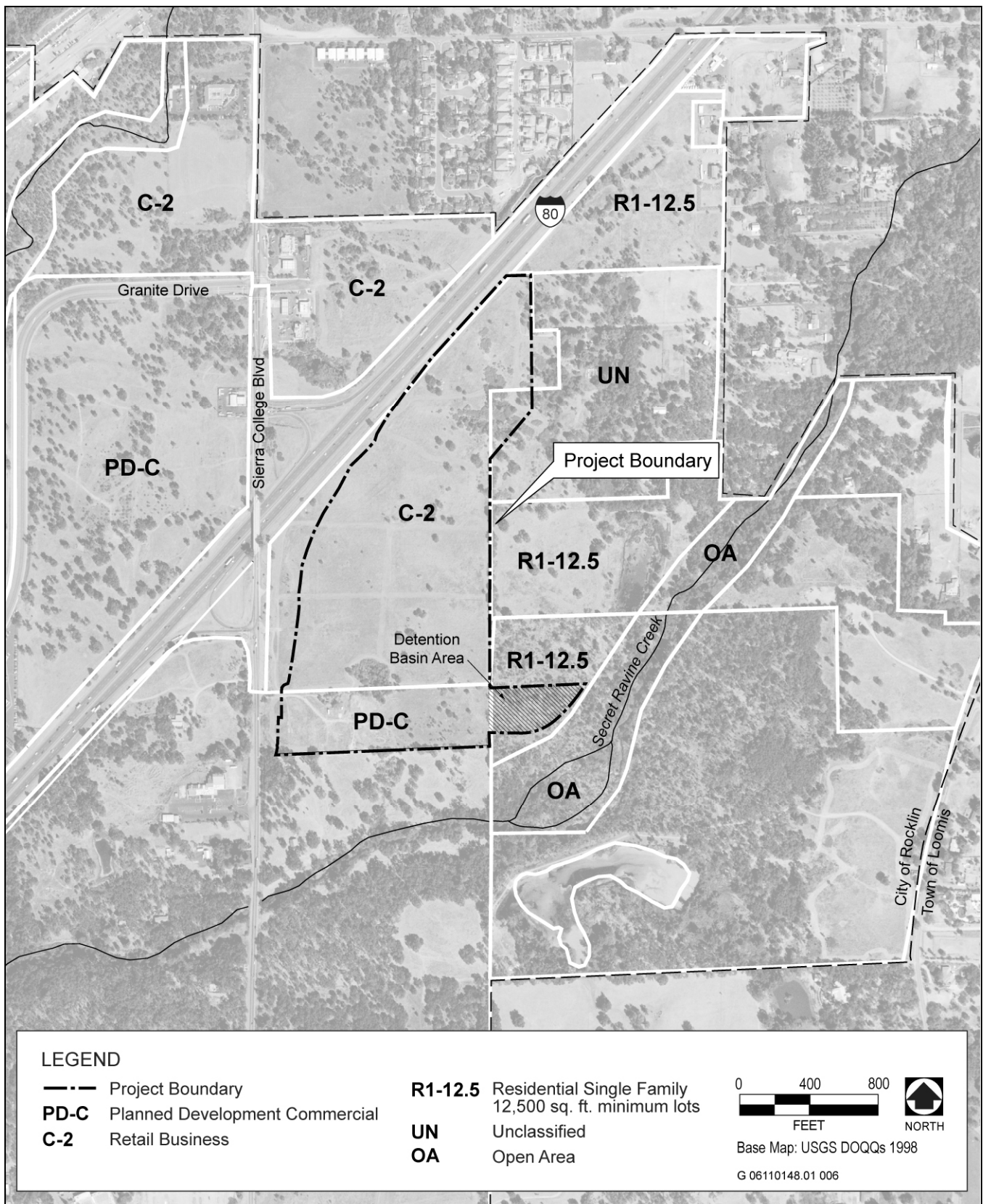
Development within a PD-C zone requires the submittal of a general development plan that identifies the proposed pattern of land uses and a list of permitted uses. The detailed components of the general development plan submittal are identified in the Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 17.60). The Unclassified zoning designation is discussed in Section 17.06.120 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Surrounding Zoning Designations

Land uses to the west and north, respectively, of Interstate 80 are zoned Planned Development - Commercial (PD-C) and Retail Business (C-2). Land northeast and east of the project site is zoned Residential with a 12,500 square-foot net minimum lot size (R1-12.5) and Unclassified (UN). Along Secret Ravine Creek to the east and to the south the land is designated Open Area (OA). To the south and southwest of the project site is the Sierra College Campus, which has a zoning designation of Planned Development-Community College (PD-CC).

4.1.2 REGULATORY SETTING

The Planning and Zoning Law of the California Government Code mandates that each city and county planning agency prepare and adopt a general plan for the physical development of the lands within that city or county's jurisdictional boundaries. The general plan is required to address and establish policies for specific planning issues or elements. By establishing these policies, codes, and ordinances, the local governing body is provided a tool by which to measure and regulate the future development and planning decisions that face the community.



Source: City of Rocklin 2007, Adapted by EDAW in 2007

Zoning Map

Exhibit 4.1-3

Zoning is generally considered to be the primary tool for implementing the General Plan. Because of this, State law requires that the zoning ordinance be consistent with the General Plan. This means the land uses allowed by the zoning ordinance must be compatible with the goals, policies and land use designations specified in the General Plan. To further strengthen the consistency requirements, the State Subdivision Map Act requires that tentative and final subdivision maps cannot be approved unless the design and improvements are found to be consistent with the General Plan.

CITY OF ROCKLIN GENERAL PLAN

The City of Rocklin's General Plan is designed to identify the direction the City will take concerning its future development and to serve as a long-term guide for the orderly growth and development of the City of Rocklin. It forms the basis for zoning, subdivision regulation, and other planning decisions on the location, intensity and design of public facilities and land use.

The primary tool for implementation of the General Plan is through what is known as the consistency requirement. All discretionary land use approvals must be found to be consistent with the goals and policies contained in the General Plan, as well as the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Map. The consistency requirement is enforced by denying projects that are inconsistent or by redesigning and/or conditioning projects to bring them into conformance with the General Plan. In this manner, the provisions of the General Plan are applied and implemented in the design and construction of development projects.

The General Plan goals and policies were largely developed to address and minimize the potentially significant environmental impacts of development under the General Plan Land Use Map. These goals and policies seek to preserve and enhance the special environmental amenities of the City of Rocklin while providing for new development to serve the housing, economic, and social needs of the community and the region. It is expected that the goals and policies will operate to avoid significant environmental impacts of development in most cases. Nevertheless, some environmental impacts were found in the EIR prepared for the General Plan to be significant and unavoidable. These included potential impacts on regional air quality, visual impacts associated with the loss of open space, and the cumulative regional impacts on traffic circulation and biological resources.

The Land Use Element plays a central role in the General Plan. It provides a description of the existing pattern of land use and establishes a pattern for future land use. It also sets City policy on population density and intensity of development, is the basis for determining service requirements, and establishes policy on annexation and development phasing. The Land Use Element identifies specific goals and policies for residential, commercial, and industrial uses as well as goals and policies for land outside of the City, for land use consistency and for land use coordination. The goal and policies for commercial land uses would be applicable to the proposed project. The specific commercial land use policies applicable to the proposed project are identified below under the goal for commercial land use.

Goal for Commercial Land Use

To retain and renew existing commercial land uses and designate sufficient new commercial areas to meet future City needs.

Policies

18. To approve designation of sufficient commercial land to meet the future needs of the City.
19. To ensure that adequate parking and access are included in approved commercial development plans.
20. To avoid "strip commercial" land uses in newly developing areas by encouraging the "village concept" of grouping commercial land use in village core areas.

21. To minimize conflicts between new commercial land uses and other land uses, especially residential, park, and recreational uses.
22. To require that commercial land uses be buffered from incompatible land uses and protected from encroachment by residential or other incompatible uses through the use of techniques including, but not limited to, landscaping, soundwalls, berms, fencing, open space setbacks, greenbelts, and building orientation.
23. To promote flexibility and innovation in commercial land use through the use of planned unit developments, developer agreements, specific plans and other innovative development and planning techniques.
29. To encourage the development of a Regional Mall and other regional shopping facilities, within the City of Rocklin.

The other elements of the General Plan include Open Space, Conservation and Recreation; Circulation; Community Safety; Noise; Public Services and Facilities; and Housing. The goals and policies included within these elements are described in the individual sections of this EIR, as appropriate (e.g., the policies included in the Noise Element are described in Section 4.4, Noise).

Rocklin Municipal Code

Title 17 of the Rocklin Municipal Code constitutes the zoning ordinance of the City of Rocklin. The zoning ordinance regulates land uses on individual parcels. In addition to zoning, other ordinances in the Rocklin Municipal Code regulate land development and are relevant to the proposed project. The Rocklin Subdivision Ordinance specifies the content of a tentative parcel map and accompanying application materials. The Rocklin Subdivision Ordinance also establishes the review and approval process for subdivision applications filed within the City of Rocklin. The Rocklin Tree Ordinance seeks to protect oak trees in excess of six inches in diameter. Any activity that results in the removal or disturbance of such oak trees on undeveloped property requires a permit from the City. The Flood Plain Development Ordinance requires that all new construction on parcels partially or completely within a flood plain, be constructed outside of the 100-year floodplain. The finished floor elevation must be certified by a civil engineer or licensed land surveyor to be two feet above the 100-year flood elevation. And finally, the Grading and Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance and the Stormwater Runoff Pollution Control Ordinance regulate stormwater and prohibit non-stormwater discharges except where regulated by a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit.

POLICY CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION

Consistency with Land Use and Zoning Designations

The City of Rocklin General Plan designates the majority of the land uses on the site as Retail Commercial (RC) with a 1.23-acre area designated as Medium Density Residential (MDR) (Exhibit 4.1-2). The project's proposed commercial uses would be inconsistent with the site's Medium Density Residential land use designation. However, the proposed project includes a general plan amendment that would convert the Medium Density Residential land use designation to Retail Commercial.

The City of Rocklin Zoning Ordinance identifies the site zoning as Retail Business (C-2), Planned Development - Commercial (PD-C), and Unclassified (UN). The proposed project may be inconsistent with the Retail Business zoning, although it would not conflict with the Unclassified zoning designation because no definition is provided in the Zoning Ordinance for this designation. The proposed project includes a rezone of the entire site to PD-C (Planned Development Commercial). With implementation of the general plan amendment and rezone, the proposed project would not conflict with the site's land use or zoning designations.

Consistency with General Plan Goals and Policies

The City of Rocklin General Plan identifies a variety of goals and policies applicable to the proposed project. The focus of this analysis is on the proposed project's consistency with the specific goal and policies related to commercial development. Other project-applicable General Plan goals and policies are described in the individual sections of this EIR, as appropriate (e.g., the policies included in the Noise Element are described in Section 4.4, Noise).

Goal for Commercial Land Use

To retain and renew existing commercial land uses and designate sufficient new commercial areas to meet future City needs.

The proposed project would include the development of commercially-designated land. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this goal.

Policies

18. To approve designation of sufficient commercial land to meet the future needs of the City.

The proposed project includes a general plan amendment that would convert a 1.23-acre area designated as Medium Density Residential (MDR) to Retail Commercial. The approval of this general plan amendment would provide additional commercially-designated land within the City, consistent with this policy.

19. To ensure that adequate parking and access are included in approved commercial development plans.

The site planning component of the Development Guidelines identifies the parking design criteria for the site. The purpose of the parking design criteria is to provide a sufficient number of stalls to accommodate the demands of the shopping center and the allowable uses throughout the site. The parking design allows shared parking and cross access within the site. For single tenant retail commercial buildings with 60,000 square feet or greater, four parking spaces would be required for every 1,000 gross square feet of floor area. For office and multi-tenant retail commercial with 60,000 square feet or greater and retail commercial, restaurant, and office buildings with less than 60,000 square feet, five parking spaces would be required for every 1,000 gross square feet of floor area. Uncovered sales areas are required to provide 10 parking spaces for the first 5,000 square feet of unconditioned sales area plus one additional space for each additional 1,000 square feet up to a maximum of 20 spaces. Compact parking would be restricted to 30% or less of the total required parking and handicap parking would be provided consistent with the City of Rocklin Building Codes and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Adequate disabled-person access between the handicap parking stalls and the proposed buildings, and access into and within the buildings would be required per ADA requirements. With the implementation of these parking design criteria and compliance with applicable ADA requirements, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.

20. To avoid "strip commercial" land uses in newly developing areas by encouraging the "village concept" of grouping commercial land use in village core areas.

The proposed project would not properly be considered "strip commercial" because the project incorporates the "village concept" by grouping multiple commercial land uses in one core area. The project site is divided into two primary building districts identified as the Retail Promenade District and the Retail Village Clusters District. The Retail Promenade District includes the large retail tenants along the site's eastern property line while the Retail Village Clusters District includes three separate Village Clusters immediately adjacent to Interstate 80 and Sierra College Boulevard. In addition, the project includes the implementation of Development Guidelines that would establish and control the design character for the entire project. The Development Guidelines address site planning, landscaping, architecture, exterior lighting and signage. All development at the site would be required

to comply with the guidelines. By implementing the village concept and consistent development guidelines throughout the project site, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.

21. To minimize conflicts between new commercial land uses and other land uses, especially residential, park, and recreational uses.

As described above, the proposed project includes the implementation of Development Guidelines that would establish and control the design character for the entire project. These Development Guidelines address the compatibility of the proposed project with the adjacent land uses through the implementation of landscape buffering and the construction of screening walls along the eastern property line to shield existing and proposed future residential uses from the project's commercial operations. With the implementation of these development guidelines, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.

22. To require that commercial land uses be buffered from incompatible land uses and protected from encroachment by residential or other incompatible uses through the use of techniques including, but not limited to, landscaping, soundwalls, berms, fencing, open space setbacks, greenbelts, and building orientation.

As addressed above, the project includes measures to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.

23. To promote flexibility and innovation in commercial land use through the use of planned unit developments, developer agreements, specific plans and other innovative development and planning techniques.

The proposed project includes implementation of a General Development Plan that includes detailed Development Guidelines for the project site. With the implementation of the General Development Plan, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.

29. To encourage the development of a Regional Mall and other regional shopping facilities, within the City of Rocklin.

The proposed project includes the development of a regional shopping center. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.

Consistency with Retail Commercial Density Requirements

With implementation of the proposed general plan amendment, the entire site would have a land use designation of Retail Commercial. The City of Rocklin General Plan identifies the density for this land use as a floor area yield equal to 25% of the lot area. Based on the approximately 55.1-acre project site, this would equate to a floor area yield of 600,365 square feet. The total site acreage includes the approximately 49.5-acre development site and the approximately 5.6-acre detention basin. The project proposes a total of 543,500 square feet of building space. This would represent a floor area yield of 22.63%. The project's floor area yield would be less than allowed on the site. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the allowable density identified in the General Plan for the project site.

4.1.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, an impact to land use is considered significant if the proposed project would:

- ▶ Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, a specific plan, the zoning ordinance, a habitat conservation plan or a natural community conservation plan) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; or
- ▶ Physically divide an established community.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

IMPACT **Consistency with Applicable Plans.** *The proposed project would not conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Therefore, no impacts associated with plan consistency would be anticipated.*

4.1-1

The City of Rocklin General Plan identifies policies that are intended to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental effects. These policies are identified in the applicable resource sections throughout this document and are identified as follows:

Several policies in the City of Rocklin General Plan (1991) address natural resource protection. Specific action plans and policies included in the Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element of the General Plan that apply to the preservation of natural resources include the following:

Action Plan

- ▶ *The City will apply open space designations to all lands located within 50 feet from the edge of the bank of all perennial and intermittent streams and creeks providing natural drainage, adjacent to areas consisting of riparian habitat. The City will designate a buffer area greater than 50 feet for perennial streams when it is determined that such a buffer area is necessary to adequately protect drainage and habitat areas. In designating these areas as open space, the City is preserving natural resources and protecting these areas from development.*

The City has established the Recreation-Conservation (R-C) zoning designation along Secret Ravine Creek. The creek is located approximately 300 feet south of the project site at its closest point. The project development is located completely outside of the R-C designated area. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with this Action Plan policy.

- ▶ *The City will require a restricted easement recorded over any property that contains areas designated for preservation, including wetlands, vernal pools, and rare, threatened and endangered species habitat. Such easements would restrict the use and type of structures located within them, when such action does not conflict with the permitting requirements of other agencies.*

The project site does not include any areas designated for preservation and does not include any development within the R-C designated area along Secret Ravine Creek. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with this Action Plan policy.

Policies

- ▶ *Policy 1. To encourage the protection of natural resource areas, scenic areas, hilltops, open space areas and parks from encroachment or destruction by incompatible development through the use of conservation easements, buffers, setbacks or other measures. Developments shall be required to provide usable land areas outside of conservation easements or established natural resource buffers.*

The project site is set back approximately 200 feet from the R-C designated area along Secret Ravine Creek. Therefore, the proposed project would not encroach upon the natural resources within this R-C designated area and would not conflict with this policy.

- ▶ *Policy 2. To encourage the protection of wetlands, vernal pools, and rare, threatened and endangered species of both plants and animals through either avoidance of these resources or implementation of appropriate mitigation measures where avoidance is not feasible, as determined by the City of Rocklin.*

Mitigation measures have been identified in Section 4.12, Biological Resources, of this Draft EIR to minimize the project's impacts on wetlands and rare, threatened and endangered species. These measures include the avoidance and/or replacement of sensitive resources affected by project implementation. With the implementation of these mitigation measures, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.

- ▶ *Policy 4. To encourage the protection of oak trees, including heritage oaks, and other significant vegetation from destruction.*

Mitigation measures have been identified in Section 4.12, Biological Resources, of this Draft EIR to minimize the project's impacts on oak trees. These measures include the replacement of lost oak trees consistent with the City of Rocklin Tree Ordinance Requirements. With the implementation of these mitigation measures, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.

- ▶ *Policy 15. To provide adequate yard areas and building setbacks from creeks, riparian habitat, hilltops, and other natural resources.*

The project site is set back approximately 200 feet from the R-C designated area along Secret Ravine Creek. Therefore, the proposed project would not encroach upon the natural resources within this R-C designated area and would not conflict with this policy.

- ▶ *Policy 19. To minimize the degradation of water quality through requiring implementation of techniques such as, but not limited to, the prohibition of grading, placement of fill or trash or alteration to vegetation within designated stream setback buffer areas, and requiring the installation of measures which minimize runoff waters containing pollutants and sediments from entering surface waters. Measures for minimizing pollutants and sediments from entering watercourses may include oil/grit separators, detention basins and flow reduction devices.*

Mitigation measures have been identified in Section 4.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, of this Draft EIR to minimize the project's impacts on surface water quality. These measures include the implementation of Best Management Practices. With the implementation of these mitigation measures, the proposed project would be consistent with this policy.

The following goal is included in the City of Rocklin General Plan Noise Element:

- ▶ *Goal: To protect residents from health hazards and annoyance associated with excessive noise levels.*

Noise mitigation measures have been identified in Section 4.4, Noise, of this Draft EIR to ensure that project-generated noise levels do not exceed applicable noise standards for residential uses. With the implementation of these mitigation measures, the proposed project would be consistent with this goal.

Because the proposed project would not conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, **no impacts** associated with plan consistency would be anticipated.

Mitigation Measure 4.1-1 Consistency with Applicable Plans

No mitigation measures would be necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

The project would not cause any plan consistency impacts.

IMPACT 4.1-2 **Physically Divide an Established Community.** *The proposed project would not be expected to physically divide an established community. Therefore, **no impact** on an established community would occur with project implementation.*

The proposed project includes the development of an undeveloped site. The project site is not located within an established community and does not include any physical links (i.e., roads) connecting Sierra College Boulevard to the established rural residences to the east. Therefore, the development of the project site would not physically divide an established community and **no impact** on an established community would occur with project implementation.

Mitigation Measure 4.1-2 Physically Divide an Established Community

No mitigation measures would be necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

The project would not physically divide an established community.