

# City of Willits

## Land Use Element Update

### Discussion



City Council Presentation & Discussion

August 28, 2024

**PLANWEST**  
PARTNERS, INC. 

# Land Use Element Update Prior Meetings

## ▶ **Advisory Committee Meetings**

▶ January 30, 2023; February 27, 2023; March 21, 2023; July 31, 2023

## ▶ **Public Open House**

▶ March 29, 2023: 11:30 am – 2:00 pm & 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm

## ▶ **City Council Meetings**

▶ April 10, 2023; June 21, 2023



# Community Outreach



**TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO TAKE THE SURVEY!!**

**SURVEY CLOSES MAY 1ST**




**WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK**

**SCAN ME**



Scan the QR code with your phone to fill out our online survey and share your input.


## Survey



City of Willits | General Plan Land Use Element Update

**COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE**

Let us know what you think!



TAKE THE SURVEY!

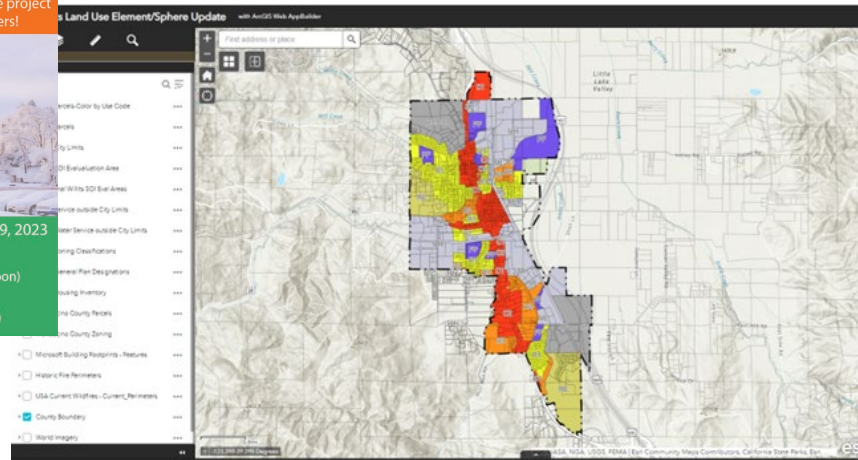
Come learn about the project and talk to the planners!

**WHERE:**  
Willits Community Center  
111 East Commercial Street

**MORE INFO AT:**  
[www.willitslanduseupdate.com](http://www.willitslanduseupdate.com)

**Wednesday, March 29, 2023**  
**TWO SESSIONS:**  
11:30-2:00pm (afternoon)  
--OR--  
5:30-8:00pm (evening)

## Open House



## WebGIS Application

## Welcome



The City of Willits is in the process of updating its General Plan Land Use Element. The Land Use Element will identify available land inside and outside the existing city boundary to accommodate housing and business/employment growth over the next 20 years or more. Together with Zoning Amendments, the Land Use Element will establish policies and programs to regulate construction and development within the City and will serve to streamline the development approval process.

## What should the future of Willits look like?

We are very interested to learn about your expectations, priorities, and concerns about Willits. Be sure to sign up for project updates, submit comments, or fill out a property owner zone change request to be considered as part of this planning process. Follow this link to [Land Use Element Update Frequently Asked Questions](#).

[Sign up for Project Updates](#)

## Web Page

<https://willitslanduseupdate.com/>

## Quick Links

- [Get to Know Willits Land Use & Zoning](#)
- [Property Owner Zone Change Request](#)
- [Sign up for Project Updates](#)
- [City of Willits Homepage](#)
- [Community Meetings](#)

## News & Announcements

- [Land Use Element Process and Timeline](#)
- [Email to the Project Update Email List \(8/23/2024\) \(pdf\)](#)
- [City of Willits General Plan Land Use Element Draft Programmatic EIR \(pdf\)](#)
- [City of Willits General Plan Land Use Element Draft Programmatic EIR Appendices \(pdf\)](#)
- [Public Review Draft City of Willits Land Use Element Update \(June 26, 2024\) \(pdf\)](#)
- [June 21st Willits City Council Special Meeting - General Plan Land Use Element Update Workshop](#)
- [Willits Land Use Element Survey Summary](#)
- [Notice of Preparation for the Program Environmental Impact Report](#)

# Land Use Element Approval Process & Timeline

- ▶ Public Review Draft Land Use Element (LUE) Released 6/26/2024
- ▶ Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Released 7/25/2024
- ▶ Public Comments on Draft EIR Due 9/9/2024
  
- ▶ Council Hearing #1: Proposed SOI & Land Use Policy 8/28/2024
- ▶ Council Hearing #2: Proposed Land Use Changes 9/11/2024
  
- ▶ Prepare & Distribute Final EIR 10/10/2024
  
- ▶ Council Hearing #3: Final EIR Certification & LUE Adoption 10/23/2024

# Land Use Element Update Description

- ▶ Comprehensive Update to the City of Willits Land Use Element, that includes:
  - ▶ A Planning Area with policies relating to areas outside the City that bear relation to City planning
  - ▶ Policy changes to expand the supply for housing, commercial, and industrial development, to provide for land use flexibility and compatibility, and to ensure community and environmental health and sustainability
  - ▶ Land Use Map and Designation changes to support residential and commercial development, for open space, to best reflect the use and character of existing neighborhoods
  - ▶ Expanded Sphere of Influence to include areas with City utility service, areas planned for development by the County and may be appropriate for the City to expand when the City's land supply is not adequate to support the needs of the City

# Land Use Element Update Objectives

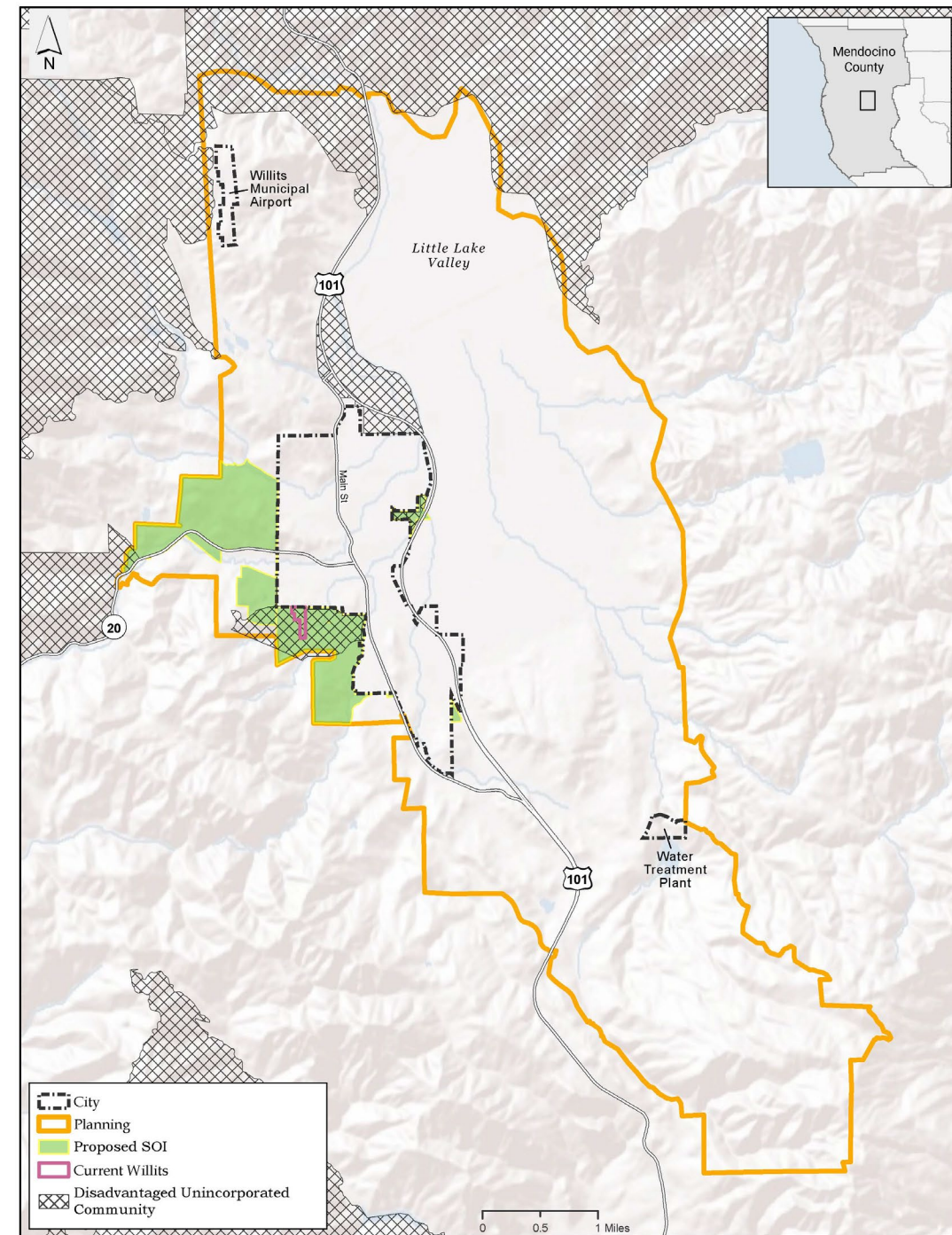
1. **Accommodate Growth.** Plan for a range of potential population growth levels within the City.
2. **Encourage Infill.** Facilitate infill development and commercial vitality.
3. **Expand the City SOI.** Define an expanded Sphere of Influence that includes appropriate areas around the City for potential future residential development to help ensure an adequate City supply of developable land.
4. **Provide Adequate Facilities and Services.** Adequate Ensure adequate public utilities, services, infrastructure, and a street network that supports all users and plan for phased improvements to support existing, and new land planned for residential and commercial development.
5. **Provide Expanded Parks.** Plan new and sustain existing parks and recreation facilities for the entire community, especially underserved areas.

## Land Use Element Update Objectives (continued)

- 6. Provide for a Vital Downtown & South Main Street.** Facilitate the vitality of Downtown and South Main Street by improving important City gateways and by defining flexible land use regulations to encourage adaptive re-use of existing structures and design standards that improve the streetscape and create a comfortable atmosphere for walking, biking, outdoor seating and gathering.
- 7. Provide a Logical Land Use Map.** Define a Land Use Map and policy that minimizes the number of non-conforming uses and protects existing communities from incompatible uses, reduces energy consumption, and vehicle miles travelled.
- 8. Streamline Permitting.** Streamline the permitting process and maximize opportunities for housing development to address the local, regional and statewide housing shortage, especially infill development within current city limits.
- 9. Protect Natural Resources.** Protect and conserve natural resources and avoid hazards.

# Proposed Planning Area

- ▶ Lands within and outside City limits that bears relation to City land use planning
  - ▶ All areas with City facilities and resources
  - ▶ Development using City services
  - ▶ Important resources for the City (e.g., Little Lake Groundwater Basin)
  - ▶ Developable land near the City that likely requires City services
- ▶ Proposed Land Use Element Policies to request
  - ▶ Notification by County and LAFCo of new development or organizational proposals
  - ▶ County agreement on new development standards



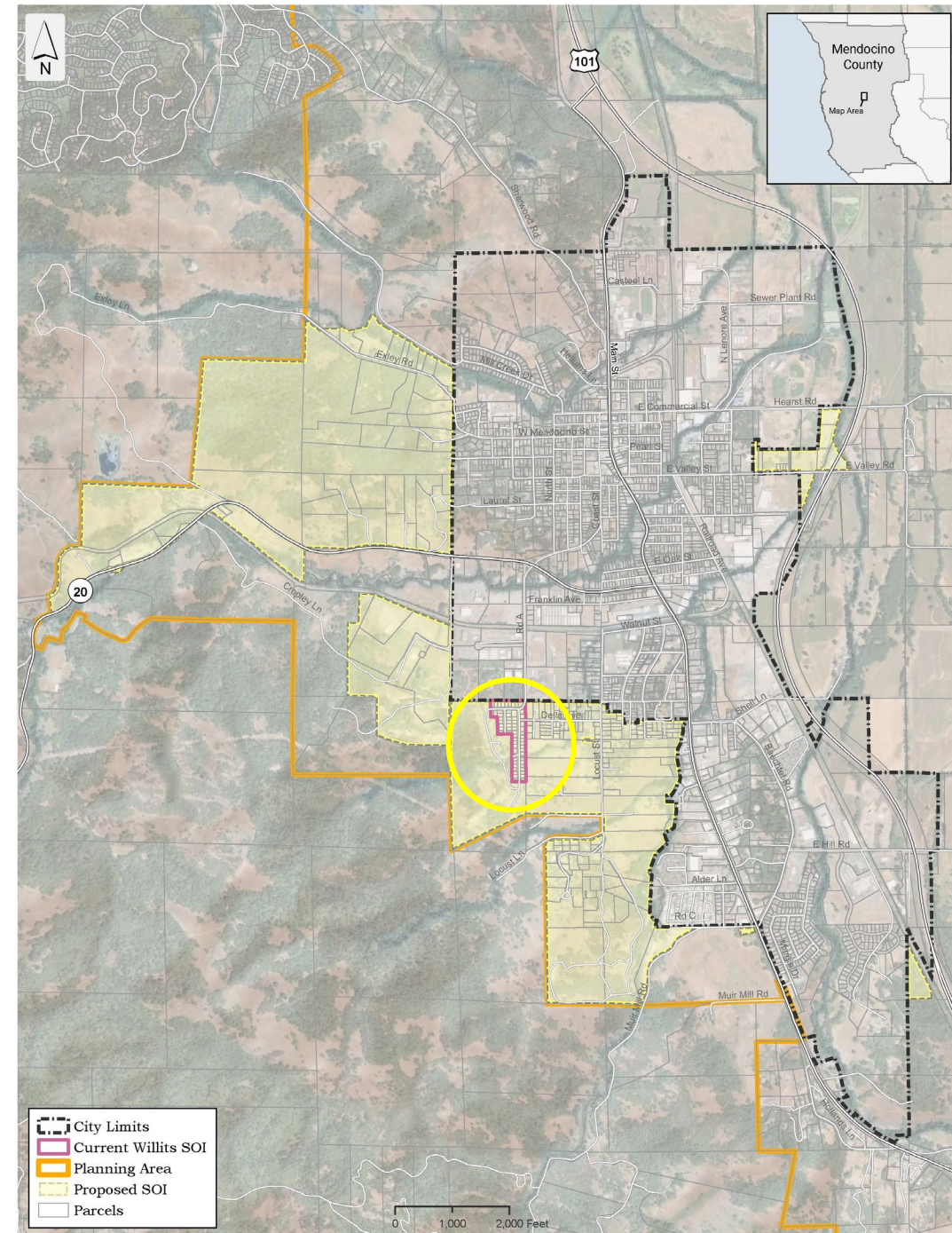


# Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI) Expansion

- ▶ A plan for the probable *physical boundaries* and *service area* of a local agency, as determined by LAFCo
- ▶ Existing City of Willits SOI includes 12 fully developed acres along Meadowbrook Drive served by City wastewater and water
- ▶ SOI Planning Must consider LAFCo priorities:
  - ▶ The presence of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities
  - ▶ Present and planned land uses and need for services in the area
  - ▶ Present and planned capacity of public facilities and services
  - ▶ The presence of Agriculture and Open Space Lands

# Proposed SOI Expansion Area

- ▶ Existing SOI provides no City growth potential
- ▶ Staff, Advisory Committee, and consultants evaluated:
  - ▶ County land use designations, in particular ag land
  - ▶ City out of agency services and infrastructure
  - ▶ Natural resources & hazards
  - ▶ Proximity to the City
  - ▶ How areas may contribute to a logical City boundary
- ▶ The Proposed SOI is approximately 886 acres and divided into seven distinct areas



# 1. Muir Mill Road

**Description:** An approximately one-acre parcel at the intersection of SR 20 south and Muir Mill Road that is planned for multiple family residential uses by Mendocino County and fully improved

City water service is provided via 8 inch main, Hydrants near parcel, 6-inch sewer main within 700 feet

**DUC:** No



	General Plan	Zoning
Existing County	Suburban Residential (SR)	Suburban Residential (S-R )
Proposed City	Residential-Medium Density (R-M)	Multiple-Family Residence (R3)

## 2. East Valley Street

**Description:** 3 acres between the east City boundary and U.S. 101 along East Valley Street and comprised of 15 parcels, several planned by the County for multiple family residential development

City water service is provided through 8 inch main with fire hydrants Sewer main less than 800 feet from most parcels

**DUC:** Yes



	General Plan	Zoning
Existing County	Suburban Residential (SR) / Agricultural Lands (AG-40)	Multiple-Family Residential (R-3 ) /Agricultural (A-G 40)
Proposed City	Agricultural - General (A) / Residential-Medium Density (R-M) / Industrial-General (M-G) / Public- Service (PS)	Agricultural - General (A) / Multiple-Family Residence (R3) / Heavy Industrial (MH)

### 3. Locust Street Area

**Description:** 325 acres comprised of 145 parcels containing the Sherwood Valley Rancheria, manufactured homes and single-family residences to the northeast, and large-lot rural residential parcels in the lower three-quarters.

City water service throughout and sewer service provided in northern urban service area.

**DUC:** Yes



	General Plan	Zoning
Existing County	Suburban Residential (SR)	Suburban Residential (S-R)
Proposed City	Residential-Low Density (R-L) /Residential-Medium Density (R-M)/Residential-Suburban (R-S)	Single-Family Residence (R1)/ Medium Density Residence (R2)/Residential-Estates (RE)

## 4. West SR 20

**Description:** A 278-acre area extending approximately 1.25 miles west of Willits on either side of State Route 20 containing sloped rural residential land, bottom grazing land, an RV park, and vacant industrial area with 30 parcels 18.0 acres.

City water line extends along length of SR 20 and service is provided to most developed parcels

**DUC:** NO



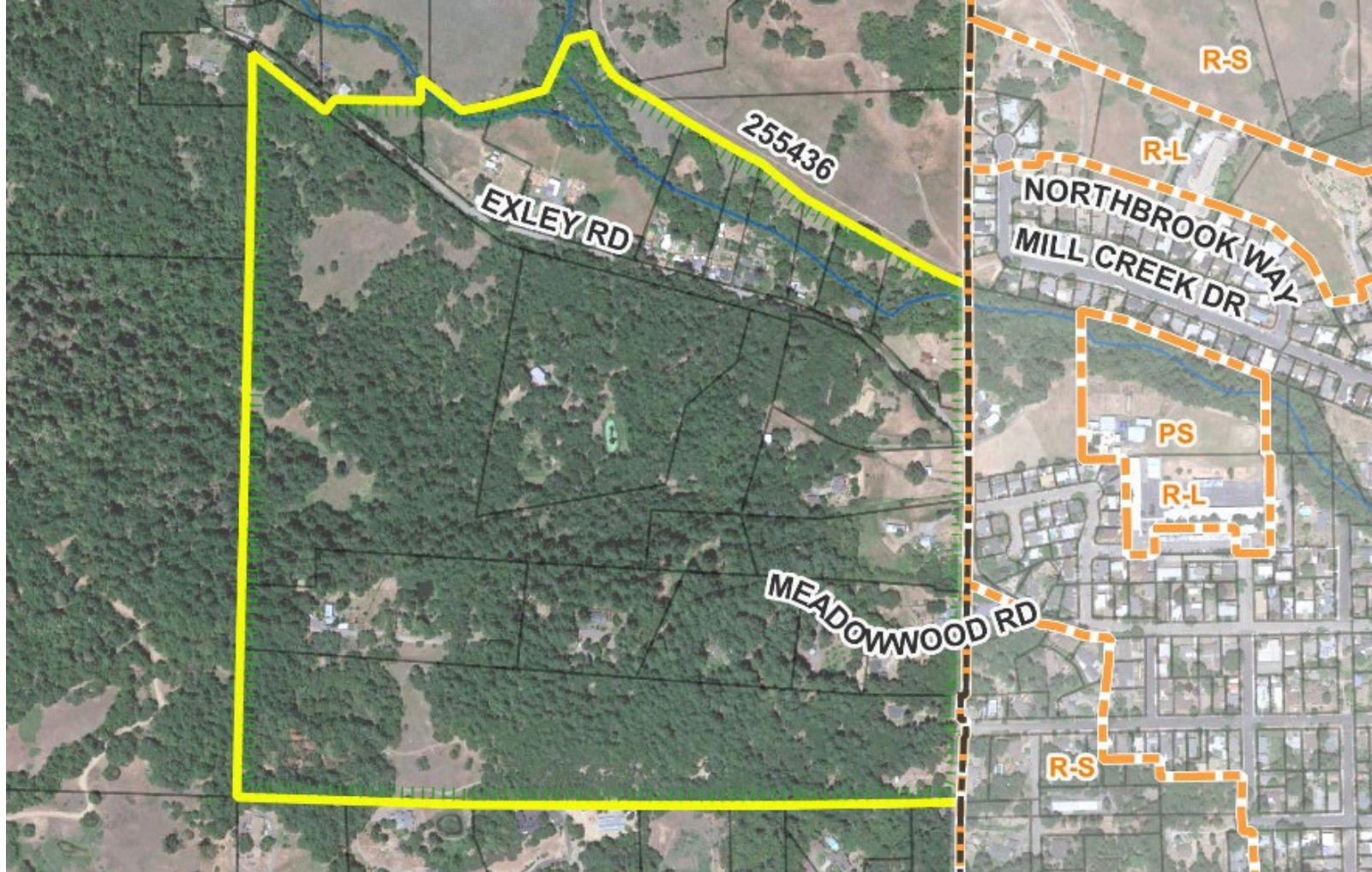
	General Plan	Zoning
Existing County	Rural Residential (RR-5) / Public Lands (PL) / Industrial (I)/ Remote Residential (RMR 40)	Rural Residential (RR5:PD) / Public Facilities (PF) / I-2 General Industrial (I2) / Upland Residential (UR 40)
Proposed City	Residential-Low Density (R-L) / Residential-Suburban (R-S) / Commercial-General (C-G) / Industrial-General (M-G) / Public - Service (P-S)	Single-Family Residence (R1) / Residential-Estates (RE) / Heavy Commercial (C2) / Heavy Industrial (MH)

## 5. Mill Creek Area

**Description:** An area west of Mendocino Avenue with mostly developed parcels along Exley Road and Meadowood Road containing 148 acres within 23 parcels, most receive City water service. The proposed Land Use Designation and Zoning would be set to match the current County plan and zone, five-acre minimum.

City water service is provided to most developed parcels

**DUC:** No



	General Plan	Zoning
Existing County	Rural Residential (RR-5)	Rural Residential (RR5)
Proposed City	Residential-Suburban (R-S)	Residential-Estates (RE-B-5)

## 6. Cropley Lane

**Description:** An approximately 90-acre area consisting of seven parcels containing industrial development and served by City water. Properties are designated as Industrial by the County and located adjacent to existing industrial development within the City.

City water service through private lateral to one parcel.

**DUC:** No



	General Plan	Zoning
Existing County	Industrial (I)	General Industrial (I-2)
Proposed City	Industrial-General (M-G)	Heavy Industrial (MH)



## 7. East of Grove St

**Description:** A vacant eight acres parcel containing an area with rolling terrain east of the Haehl Creek subdivision area.

No City or on-site services

**DUC:** No



	General Plan	Zoning
Existing County	Remote Residential (RMR 20)	Agricultural (A-G 40)
Proposed City	Residential-Suburban (R-S)	Residential-Estates (RE)

# Planning Area

**GOAL LU-1**...ensure logical and appropriate annexations that maintain a compact City boundary as well as surrounding open space, working lands and natural resources and support disadvantaged communities.

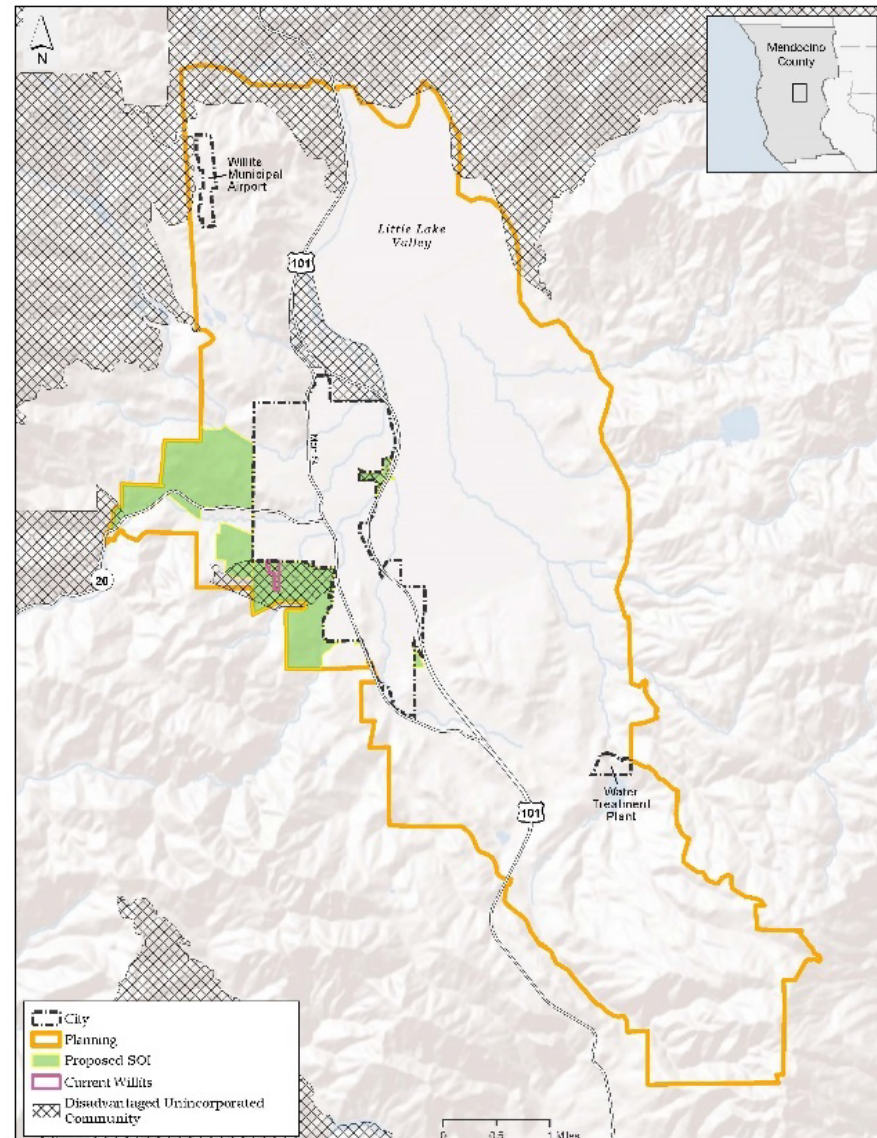
## Policies

- LU-1.1 PLANNING AREA
- LU-1.2 SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
- LU-1.3 COUNTY GENERAL PLAN LAND USE WITHIN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
- LU-1.4 AREAS OF INTEREST
- LU-1.5 DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

## Implementation Measures

- LU-1A NOTIFY AGENCIES OF PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
- LU-1B SEEK APPROVAL OF THE EXPANDED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.

- ▶ Planning Area includes resources important to the City, areas with the City services, and logical growth areas
- ▶ Request notification by County and LAFCo of new development or organizational proposals and County agreement on new development standards



# Planning for Growth

**GOAL LU-2**...promote growth within infill and redevelopment sites near neighborhood commercial areas.

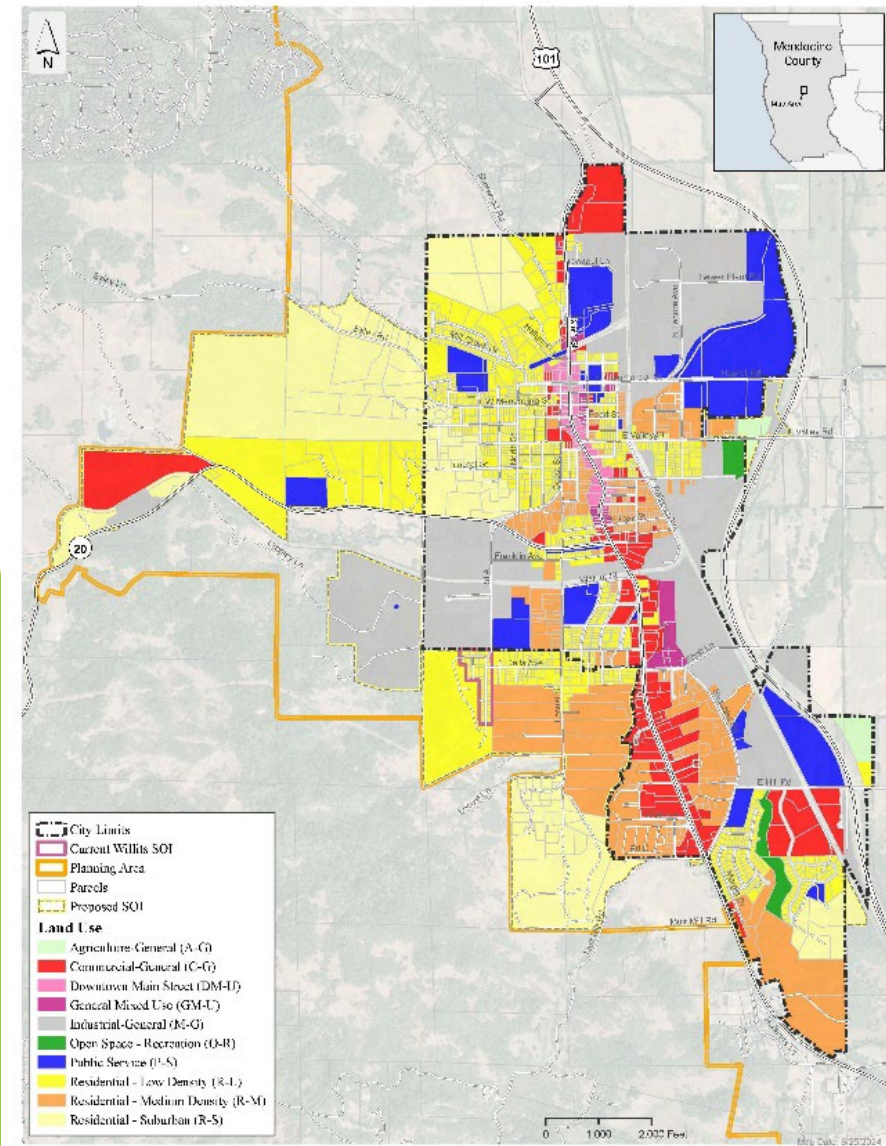
## Policies

- LU-2.1 PLANNED GROWTH
- LU-2.2 INFILL DEVELOPMENT
- LU-2.3 LAND USE CHANGES
- LU-2.4 ANNEXATIONS

## Implementation Measures

- LU-2A POPULATION AND GROWTH
- LU-2B RESIDENTIAL LAND SUPPLY

- ▶ Plan for buildout population of 7,500 – consistent with current utility planning
- ▶ Prioritize growth in infill areas and areas served by existing infrastructure and services
- ▶ Expand SOI to plan additional land for potential future annexation
- ▶ As necessary, make additional land use changes within the City or potential annexations to accommodate growth



# Character, Vitality, and Sustainability



**GOAL LU-3...** achieve a community design that promotes neighborhood vitality, health, energy efficiency, and conservation.

## Policies

- LU-3.1 COMPLETE STREETS
- LU-3.2 CITY GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS
- LU-3.3 MIXED USE AREAS
- LU-3.4 IMPROVE NORTH-SOUTH CONNECTIVITY
- LU-3.5 SPECIFIC PLANNING
- LU-3.6 PROMOTE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY
- LU-3.7 CONSIDER PUBLIC HEALTH IN LAND USE
- LU-3.8 FARMERS MARKET
- LU-3.9 ENERGY CONSERVATION AND REDUCTION
- LU-3.10 PLAN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE
- LU-3.11 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTIONS
- LU-3.12 PARKS AND RECREATION

## Implementation Measures

- LU-3A WILLITS GATEWAY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM
- LU-3B ENERGY CONSERVATION AND GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTIONS.
- LU-3C PARK ENHANCEMENT.

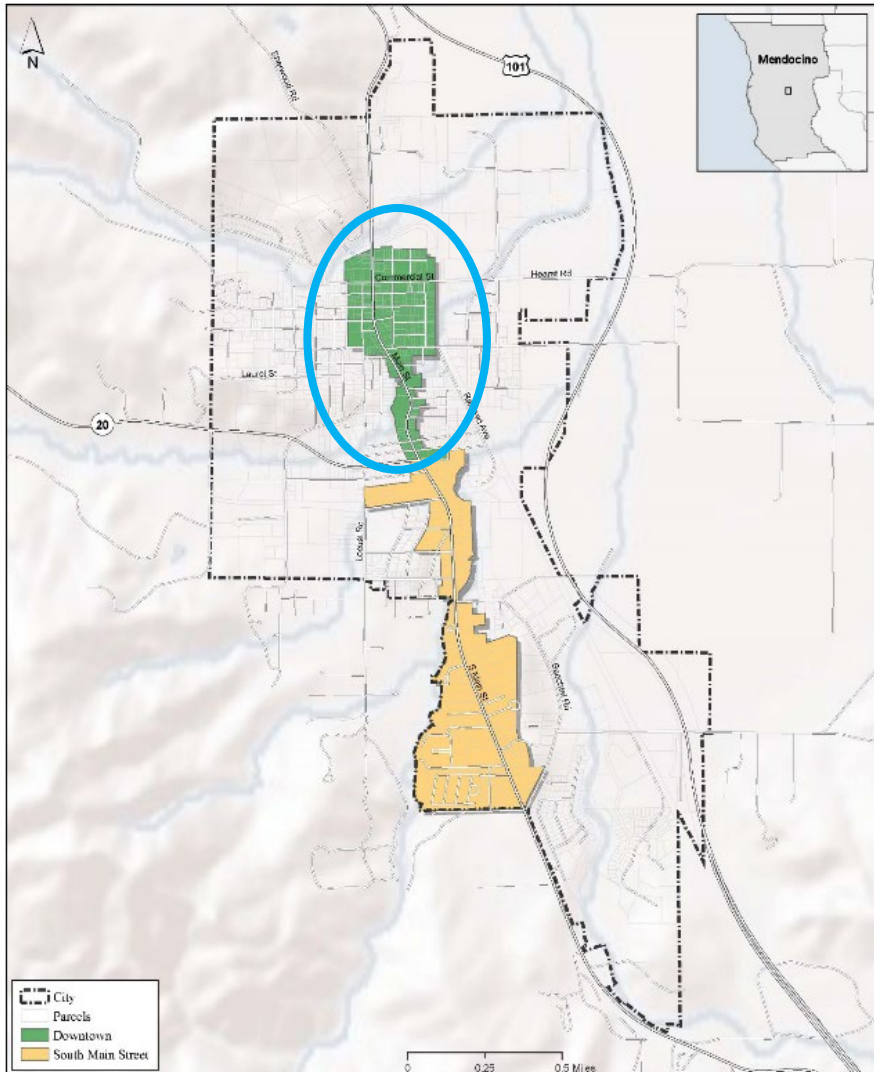
# Character, Vitality, and Sustainability



**GOAL LU-3...** achieve a community design that promotes neighborhood vitality, health, energy efficiency, and conservation.

- ▶ Emphasize access to public spaces for events, such as the Farmers Market, and equitably expand opportunities for trails, parks, and recreational facilities throughout the City
- ▶ Promote physical activity, and encourage businesses and service providers to create a healthy food system, including local organic food production and community gardens
- ▶ Create welcoming and comfortable streets and improved connectivity by improving north/south connectivity for all modes of travel
- ▶ Apply a Complete Streets framework in all applicable and feasible transportation projects
- ▶ Plan for climate change, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and encourage energy conservation

# Downtown



**GOAL LU-4...**activate Main Street as the vibrant commercial and cultural core of the City.

## Policies

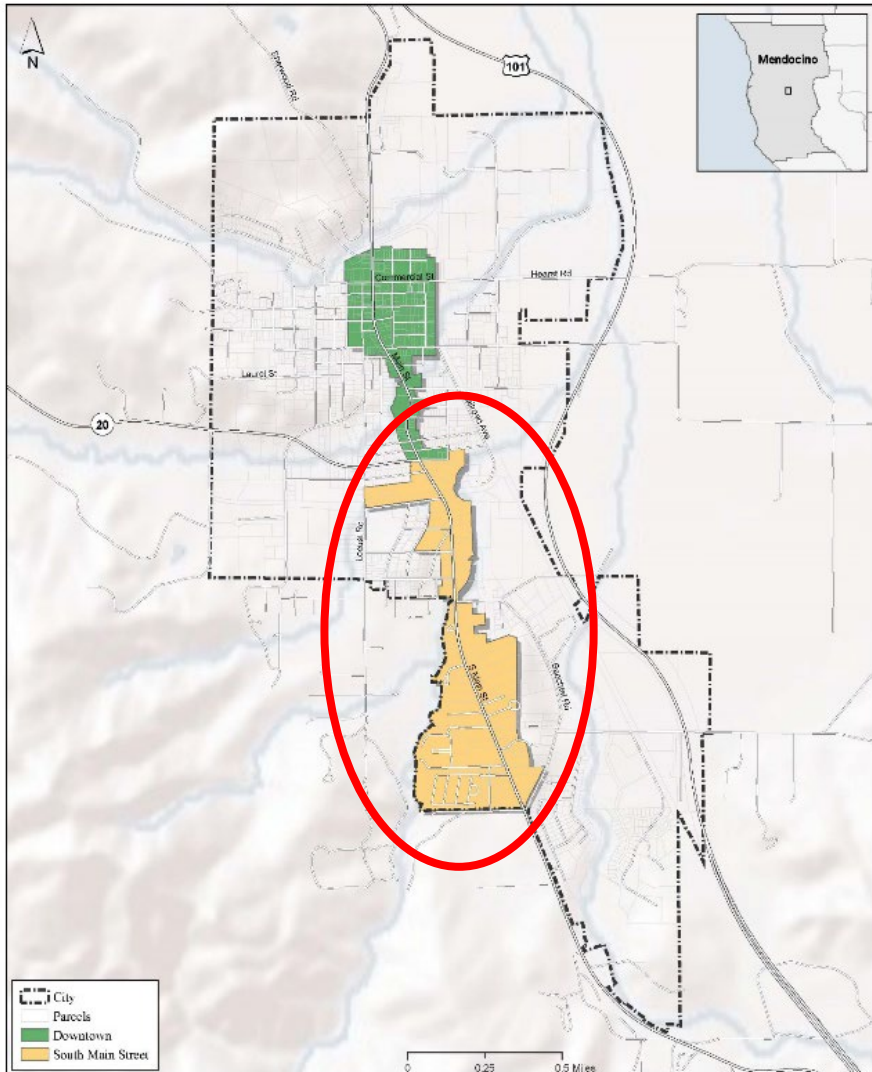
- LU-4.1 CITY OF WILLITS MAIN STREET
- LU-4.2 MAIN STREET MIXED USE LAND USE DESIGNATION
- LU-4.3 ADAPTIVE REUSE OF COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES
- LU-4.4 OFF-STREET PARKING
- LU-4.5 DOWNTOWN GATHERING AND STREET ACTIVITIES
- LU-4.6 SLOWING TRAFFIC
- LU-4.7 MAIN STREET SHOP FRONTS

## Implementation Measures

- LU-4A MAIN STREET MIXED-USE ZONE.
- LU-4B DOWNTOWN ACTION PROGRAM.

- ▶ Maintain the traditional downtown core of the City
- ▶ Provide flexibility to allow for the adaptive reuse and revitalization of existing commercial structures
- ▶ Add a Main Street-specific Mixed-use Zone

# South Main Street



**GOAL LU-5...** maintain South Main Street as the City's southern gateway and important employment center for the City.

## Policies

- LU-5.1 FOCUSED SOUTH MAIN STREET PLANNING
- LU-5.2 SOUTH MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENTS

## Implementation Measures

- LU-5A SOUTH MAIN STREET STRATEGIC PLAN.

- ▶ South Main Street serves as the City's southern gateway
- ▶ This area contains important businesses and residential areas and represents substantial infill development and employment growth potential
- ▶ Focused planning in partnership with businesses, property owners, and Caltrans is likely needed to improve the appearance of the City's southern gateway and facilitate ongoing commercial vitality

# Land Use Compatibility & Flexibility



**GOAL LU-6...provide for compatibility between uses and greater zoning flexibility to respond to changing conditions and opportunities.**

## **Policies**

- LU-6.1 LIMIT INCOMPATIBLE AND CONFLICTING USES
- LU-6.2 COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT
- LU-6.3 PROTECT LONG-STANDING COMPATIBLE USES IN OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS
- LU-6.4 INTERIM AGRICULTURAL USES
- LU-6.5 MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING
- LU-6.6 ZONING FLEXIBILITY
- LU-6.7 SUPPORT HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

## **Implementation Measures**

- LU-6A ZONING REGULATIONS.

- ▶ Older uses are often located in incompatible zones
- ▶ Add flexibility in the Zoning Regulations to allow long-standing uses to continue
- ▶ incorporate standards to protect vulnerable uses from excessive noise and other nuisances, while protecting businesses



# Coordinate with Local Communities



**GOAL LU-7...** establish enduring partnerships and consider the needs of all communities in City decision making.

## **Policies**

- LU-7.1 SHERWOOD VALLEY RANCHERIA
- LU-7.2 TRIBAL CONSULTATION
- LU-7.3 BROOKTRAILS TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
- LU-7.4 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
- LU-7.5 NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

## **Implementation Measures**

LU-7A TRIBAL CONSULTATION.

- ▶ Coordinate with the Sherwood Valley Rancheria and Brooktrails Township CSD on land use, infrastructure, and services planning
- ▶ Consult with the Sherwood Valley Rancheria and local tribes
- ▶ Provide for meaningful involvement in policy and land use decisions for all neighborhoods and residents

# Protect Natural Resources



**GOAL LU-8**...ensure that land use decisions protect and sustain important natural resources and limit exposure to hazards.

## **Policies**

- LU-8.1 RIPARIAN BUFFER AREAS
- LU-8.2 NOT NET LOSS OF WETLANDS RESULTING FROM DEVELOPMENT
- LU-8.3 RIPARIAN AREA LAND USE OVERLAY
- LU-8.4 PROTECT OAK TREES AND WOODLANDS
- LU-8.5 PRESERVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS

## **Implementation Measures**

- LU-8A STREAM AND RIPARIAN COMBINING ZONE.
- LU-8B OAK TREE PROTECTIONS.

- ▶ New development protections for riparian areas & wetlands consistent with the Conservation and Open Space Element
- ▶ Incorporate the objectives of the City's Urban Forest Management Plan into the City Zoning Regulations
- ▶ Discourage the premature conversion of ag lands in the SOI areas

# Implementation Maintenance



**GOAL LU-9**...ensure the effective use and implementation of Land Use Element Policy and the Land Use Map.

## **Policies**

- LU-9.1 LAND USE MAP
- LU-9.2 ZONING MAP AND REGULATIONS
- LU-9.3 PERIODIC GENERAL PLAN REVIEW
- LU-9.4 WEB-BASED LAND USE MAPPING
- LU-9.5 PLANNING COMMISSION
- LU-9.6 STREAMLINING DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL
- LU-9.7 EMERGENCY EVACUATION
- LU-9.8 MILITARY OPERATING AREAS

## **Implementation Measures**

- LU-9A COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE.
- LU-9B ZONING CONSISTENCY.
- LU-9C GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT.
- LU-9D GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE.

# Implementation Maintenance



**GOAL LU-9**...ensure the effective use and implementation of Land Use Element Policy and the Land Use Map.

- ▶ A comprehensive program of General Plan maintenance that identifies the role of the Land Use Map and the requirement for Zoning Map and Regulations consistency
- ▶ Require, consistent with state law, that subdivisions provide alternative evacuation routes or a Fire Marshal determination that access and egress are adequate
- ▶ Consider forming a Planning Commission
- ▶ Consider adding additional permit types to streamline the process for approving minor exceptions to development standards

# Planning Area



**PLANNING AREA.** Request that applications for development or changes in organization within the Planning Area received by Mendocino County and the Local Agency Formation Commission be referred to the City for review and comment. Urge the County to implement measures to protect areas within the Planning Area not planned for development, including the watersheds and groundwater recharge areas. *(Source: New Policy)*

**SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.** Annexations to the City may only be approved when such lands are within the approved Sphere of Influence and the annexation is consistent with the goals and policies of this plan. *(Source: New Policy)*

**COUNTY GENERAL PLAN LAND USE WITHIN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.** Seek agreement with Mendocino County on interim land use designations and zoning classifications for Sphere of Influence areas, including development standards, that include the application of an urban reserve designation to ensure that any development prior to annexation is consistent with the Willits General Plan and does not prevent attainment of planned densities. *(Source: New Policy)*

**AREAS OF INTEREST.** The City of Willits defines its Area of Interest to be the portions of the Planning Area outside the SOI, and existing land use and future development within Areas of Interest could have a direct impact on health, safety, and welfare of City residents. The City shall request that responsible agencies, including Mendocino County, the Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission, and Caltrans give special consideration to the recommendations and comments of the City of Willits. *(Source: New Policy)*

# ning Area



**DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES.** Consider Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs) in the City's SOI during infrastructure and services planning and, as appropriate, ensure that identified DUCs are included in all project proposals. *(Source: New Policy)*

## Implementation Measures

**NOTIFY AGENCIES OF PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY.** Provide copies of the City of Willits Planning Area showing City Designations to the Mendocino County Planning and Building Services and Transportation Departments, the Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission, and Caltrans, and request that proposals to intensify land uses, such as general plan and amendments or subdivisions and roadway improvements or water service extensions that would expand capacity or that could impact the Planning Area's resources be referred to the City of Willits for review and communicate the City's position on these matters to the local decision-making body.

**SEEK APPROVAL OF THE EXPANDED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.** Submit an application to the Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission to expand the City of Willits Sphere of Influence to add the areas shown in Figure 3-1 consistent with Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission policy and State law. Seek approval to add possible Areas of Interest for Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission designation so that notice is provided of other governmental actions that may impact the City of Willits.

# ning for Growth



**PLANNED GROWTH.** Continue to plan for a buildout population of approximately 7,500 residents and programs that can effectively respond to a range of potential growth rates that could occur during the Plan planning period. (Source: Existing Policy 1.210, modified)

**INFILL DEVELOPMENT.** Land within areas of the City served by utilities, transportation infrastructure, and services represent the best opportunity to support affordable housing and employment development, and greenhouse emissions. Encourage incremental development of vacant and underutilized infill areas that are appropriately scaled and enhance existing neighborhoods within the City. (Source: Existing Policy 1.230, modified)

**LAND USE CHANGES.** During the consideration of proposals for changes in land use, priority shall be given to those that result in the greatest public benefit, which may include opportunities for employment growth, providing for the community's housing needs, or addressing unmet needs for parks and recreation facilities. (Source: Existing Policy 1.260, modified)

**ANNEXATIONS.** Monitor the supply of land within the City that is planned for residential, commercial, industrial, and public service uses and, as appropriate, encourage annexations of land adjacent to the City that support the preservation of open space lands, promote orderly development in a manner consistent with the General Plan, contribute to the City's fiscal stability, and that create a logical City boundary; result in the efficient use of services and utilities; and support a transportation network that, in combination with an appropriate mix of land uses, minimizes vehicle trips by promoting walking, bicycling, and transit. (Source: Existing Policy 1.240, modified)

# Planning for Growth

## mitigation Measures



**POPULATION AND GROWTH.** As part of the annual General Plan progress report, provide the City Council with a report on the City population in comparison to the buildout population contained in this General Plan using data such as City estimates based on permits, the Department of Finance annual population estimates, the Census Bureau decennial census counts and American Community Survey estimates. Where the Director of Community Development determines that actual rates of growth could result in a total population level that exceeds that included in this General Plan during the planning period, the City Council shall be informed of the need to amend the Land Use Element.

**RESIDENTIAL LAND SUPPLY.** Maintain an inventory of vacant and underutilized land planned and zoned for residential use within the City and apply priority weighting based on the proximity of the land to utilities, services, schools, streets, and transit, and relative ease of development (topography and constraints relating to hazards and natural resources). For higher priority infill lands, periodically reach out to landowners and seek their:

- level of interest in development,
- concerns regarding development; and
- potential constraints affecting development or landowner needs to proceed with development.

Additionally, during the annual General Plan progress report, provide the City Council with a report on the inventory of vacant and underutilized land planned and zoned for residential use and the potential need for changes to General Plan policy or Zoning standards, incentives, or other City programs that may be needed to facilitate development consistent with the General Plan.



# Character, Vitality, and Sustainability



**COMPLETE STREETS.** Consistent with Circulation Element Policies 2.230 and 2.260 that seek to enhance the network for walking and biking and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips, the design, construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance efforts on the City's streets, bridges, pathways, and sidewalks, shall create a comprehensive, integrated transportation network that is safe, accessible, comfortable Complete streets accommodate and welcome users of all ages, races, ethnicities, incomes, and physical abilities, and all modes of transportation, particularly those walking, biking, and using transit. The City shall apply a Complete Streets framework to applicable and feasible transportation projects to allow the safe, comfortable, convenient and accessible use of streets for all street users. (Source: New Policy)

**CITY GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS.** Highway 101, State Route 20, and County streets serve as important gateways and welcome travelers to the City and its downtown. Designate, construct, and maintain well-designed and maintained City Gateways as identified in the Willits Main Street Corridor Enhancement Plan. The City should partner with businesses and the residents in the gateway neighborhoods and Caltrans and the County to establish attractive and welcoming entries to the City that encourage visitors to Willits, support the neighborhoods in which they are located, and can be efficiently and practically maintained. (Source: Existing Policy 1.250, modified)

# Character, Vitality, and Sustainability



**MIXED USE AREAS.** Encourage development that creates vibrant and walkable areas, reduces greenhouse emissions, and promotes economic development within downtown and neighborhood areas by implementing the land use designations that support a range of commercial, office and residential uses; enable the flexible reuse of existing structures and vacant land; and ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses, particularly residential uses, through site, landscape, and building design features. (Source: New Policy)

**IMPROVE NORTH-SOUTH CONNECTIVITY.** Encourage the establishment of new north-south transportation corridors between central and southern Willits, such as the conceptual Baechtel Road – Railroad Avenue corridor. North-south transportation corridors should be planned to support all modes of transportation, enhance City infrastructure, improve emergency evacuation, and accommodate future residential, commercial, and industrial development.

**SPECIFIC PLANNING.** Consider using specific plans, as defined in California Planning and Land Use Law, as a means of implementing the objectives of the General Plan and to refine the City's vision for specific areas, as well as to create a policy and regulatory document that may either provide greater flexibility in development or enforce regulations, and for providing certainty to property owners and the residents of the City. (Source: New Policy)

# Character, Vitality, and Sustainability



**PROMOTE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY.** Ensure that all residents have access to spaces, events, and programs that support physical activity, and encourage businesses and service providers to create a healthy food system, including local organic food production and community gardens, which supports all residents. (Source: New Policy)

**CONSIDER PUBLIC HEALTH IN LAND USE.** When reviewing proposals for changes in land use and development, public health, welfare, and safety must be considered. (Source: New Policy)

**FARMERS MARKET.** Support the expansion of the Willits Farmers Market and facilitate its location at Budweiser Park or other appropriate locations in close proximity to downtown and neighborhood areas. (Source: New Policy)

**ENERGY CONSERVATION AND REDUCTION.** Encourage the installation of renewable energy systems and encourage city-wide reductions in energy consumption. (Source: New Policy)

**PLAN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE.** Plan for the public health implications of climate change, including potential sea level rise and temperature effects, and work with state and county public health agencies to identify necessary strategies to reduce, adapt to, and increase resiliency to potential impacts and implement programs to achieve City-wide reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. (Source: New Policy)

# Character, Vitality, and Sustainability



**GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTIONS.** Evaluate new larger-scale residential, commercial, and industrial for compliance with state regulations and require feasible mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (Source: New Policy)

**PARKS AND RECREATION .**Consistent with the Public Services and Facilities, Parks and Recreation Element 5.230 and 6.350, equitably expand opportunities for trails, parks, and recreational facilities throughout Willits support the role of the City of Willits as a regional parks provider and consider evaluating the feasibility of forming a recreation and parks district that extends beyond City boundaries to finance facilities that support the that may be provided by the City. (Source: New Policy)

## *mitigation Measures*

**WILLITS GATEWAY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM.** Review and revise the gateway strategies identified in the Main Street Corridor Enhancement Plan and seek grant funding and local public-private partnerships to implement a comprehensive program of gateways to celebrate Willits history and character, welcome visitors, and support local businesses and attractions.

# acter, Vitality, and Sustainability

## ation Measures

**ENERGY CONSERVATION AND GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTIONS.** Modify the Zoning, Subdivision, and Building ns and other land use policy to implement:

an assessment of GHG emissions for large scale discretionary residential, commercial and industrial projects, and require feasible mitigation;

A GHG Emissions threshold of significance for discretionary projects for use in future GHG emissions analyses;

programs to facilitate the installation of renewable energy systems, such as solar arrays, and the development of battery storage and micro grid capacity for storing renewable power through amendments to the Zoning regulations; and

A city-wide program such as a greenhouse gas reduction plan that will meet the State's 2030 objective of 40 percent below 1990 emissions levels and 2045 goal of carbon neutrality.



# acter, Vitality, and Sustainability

## ation Measures



**PARK ENHANCEMENT.** Prepare and implement a public spaces, parks, and recreation strategic plan that:

- addresses gaps in the geographic distribution of pocket, neighborhood, in community parks in the City, especially within disadvantaged communities;
- identifies and implements needed public gathering areas within the downtown area and commercial areas;
- includes master planning for important park properties;
- defines and sets forth a program to implement a complete, convenient, and safe network of walking and biking pathways throughout the City; and
- incorporates a funding strategy that may include approaches for public-private partnerships; priorities and linkages for state and federal grants; City development and use fees; and the creation of a regional district with an ongoing revenue source that includes all users who benefit from City parks.

# ntown



**CITY OF WILLITS MAIN STREET.** Maintain the traditional downtown core of the City of Willits that is located on Main Street between Commercial and Oak Street as a place for employment, goods and services, gathering, and community events. (Source: New Policy)

**MAIN STREET MIXED USE LAND USE DESIGNATION .** Apply the Main Street Mixed Use Land Use Designation to property that generally fronts along the Main Street core between Commercial Street and Oak Street and allow for a mix of commercial, office and residential uses; enable the flexible use of existing commercial structures; encourage building design, sidewalk, plaza area, and street designs to slow traffic to provide a comfortable environment for walking, biking, outdoor seating and gathering. (Source: New Policy)

**ADAPTIVE REUSE OF COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES.** Enable the adaptive reuse and revitalization of existing commercial structures on Main Street by establishing flexible and appropriate lot standards, including reducing or eliminating on-site parking requirements. (Source: New Policy)

**OFF-STREET PARKING.** Consider implementing a “park once” program for Downtown, that includes incentives within the Main Street Mixed-Use area to reduce or eliminate parking mandates to lessen regulatory barriers to the reuse and revitalization of downtown buildings, and that implements the recommendations of the Downtown Specific Plan and the Willits Circulation and Parking Improvement Plan and provides for ongoing monitoring and management to balance the interests of all users. (Source: New Policy)

# ntown



**DOWNTOWN GATHERING AND STREET ACTIVITIES.** Implement the recommendation of the Downtown Plan relating to public spaces and identify appropriate sites for downtown plaza areas and gathering spaces for street fairs and other outdoor activities within the downtown and consider encouraging seasonal markets to locate in a central downtown area or on a side street and implement a feasible program to establish markets. (Source: New Policy)

**SLOWING TRAFFIC.** Continue to evaluate modifications to Main Street design to slow traffic and provide a comfortable atmosphere for outdoor seating and gathering, walking, and biking, while considering the needs for pedestrians. (Source: New Policy)

**MAIN STREET SHOP FRONTS.** Protect and enhance the commercial frontages along Main Street between Commercial Street and Oak Street and encourage mixed-uses where commercial uses are typically located along the street and create a comfortable environment for shopping, gathering, and walking. (Source: New Policy)



# ntown

## ation Measures



**MAIN STREET MIXED-USE ZONE.** Prepare and implement a Main Street Mixed-Use Zone that includes:

A range of allowable uses, including commercial, office, service, and residential;

Review, update, and implement as appropriate the Willits Downtown Design Guidelines, for the Main Street Mixed Use Zone, which generally include requirements for commercial uses along building frontages that allow residential and commercial uses behind and above within the area north of California Street and allow residential uses on the ground floors between California and Oak Streets;

Simple and clear design standards for ministerial projects that can be implemented using a checklist format; and,

A “park once” parking monitoring and management program for vehicles that reduces or eliminates on-street parking requirements and encourages gathering, walking, and biking, and may include sidewalk and streetscape improvements; incentives for the shared use of existing private off-street parking areas; maximizing the efficiency of on-street parking; improved signage and parking information; the evaluation of a shuttle system, parking permits, restrictions, and pricing; and planning for new public parking lots.

# Downtown

## Circulation Measures



**DOWNTOWN ACTION PROGRAM.** Implement a program that prioritizes actions and recommendations from City of Willits planning documents for the Downtown Area, identifies and secures needed funding, and develops a schedule for implementation, and includes:

Identifying and forming an ad-hoc Downtown working group including City staff, business and property owners, and the Willits Chamber of Commerce.

Reviewing identified actions and recommendations that have not been fully implemented from prior City of Willits planning documents for the Downtown Area and adjacent areas, including:

- Willits Main Street Corridor Enhancement Plan
- Downtown Specific Plan
- Willits Circulation & Parking Improvement Plan
- Willits Downtown Design Guidelines
- Willits Bicycle & Pedestrian Specific Plan
- Willits Downtown Streets & Alleys Connectivity Study

Refining and prioritizing identified actions and recommendations.

Identifying the likely cost of actions, if any, and the most feasible funding sources, including local and regional private sources, public-private partnerships, regional/state/federal grant programs.

Preparing a schedule for implementation that includes timing, responsibility, and necessary steps.

# h Main Street



**FOCUSED SOUTH MAIN STREET PLANNING.** Consider conducting focused planning for the South Main Street partnership with businesses, property owners, Caltrans and other appropriate organizations, to identify ways to facilitate ongoing commercial vitality and as a means of implementing desired improvements and Land Use Policy specific to this area. (Source: New Policy)

**SOUTH MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENTS.** In cooperation with property owners and Caltrans, develop and implement street design standards, including lane configuration, coordinated landscaping, signage, street lighting, wider sidewalks, safe crossings, and bike lanes, to enhance and beautify the streetscape and building facades to support businesses and to provide a safer, and more enjoyable atmosphere for shopping, walking, biking, sitting and gathering, consistent with any City Complete Streets policies. (Source: New Policy)

# h Main Street

## ation Measures

**SOUTH MAIN STREET STRATEGIC PLAN.** In close cooperation with South Main Street businesses, property neighborhoods, and Caltrans, prepare a South Main Street Strategic Plan that is sensitive to the varying that exist along the street (such as heavy commercial areas, shopping centers, visitor serving uses, and al neighborhoods), and serves as an ongoing, cooperative, and inclusive planning strategy. Form an ad-hoc group to develop a South Main Street Strategic Plan that addresses in particular:

Complete streets planning and network connectivity.

Convenient access to businesses and homes.

City gateway planning and improvements.

Signage and streetscape improvements.



# Use Compatibility & Flexibility



**LIMIT INCOMPATIBLE AND CONFLICTING USES.** Minimize potential land use conflicts by applying appropriate designations and implementing appropriate development standards and buffers through modifications to the regulations to limit adverse impacts from future development on surrounding properties. (Source: Existing Policy 1.220, modified)

**COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT.** On lands designated for industrial or commercial uses, buildings and accessory uses should be sited and designed to limit potential conflicts with adjacent residential land uses. (Source: Existing Policy 1.280, modified)

**PROTECT LONG-STANDING COMPATIBLE USES IN OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS.** To minimize the number of non-conforming uses and to protect the ability of owners of integral long-standing uses in older neighborhoods to finance improvements or the sale of property using conventional financing, apply appropriate Land Use Designations and Classifications and provide additional flexibility to the range of allowable uses. (Source: New Policy)

**INTERIM AGRICULTURAL USES.** Encourage agricultural activities on lands designated for industrial use as well as other large vacant properties until such time as the lands are utilized for their intended purposes. (Source: Existing Policy 1.290, modified)

# Use Compatibility & Flexibility



**MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING.** Facilitate new “Missing Middle Housing” construction, defined as a mix of types including duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, in a manner consistent with Senate Bill 9 within areas currently zoned for single family residential uses and located within an Urban Cluster as defined by the U.S. (Source: New Policy)

**ZONING FLEXIBILITY.** Provide greater flexibility in the range of permitted and conditionally permitted uses in commercial and residential areas to allow residences on upper floors and behind shop fronts or consider establishing a neighborhood commercial combining zone that may be applied to residential zones and includes a specific list of allowable uses, clear performance standards, and a variety of permitting pathways to allow needed commercial uses in close proximity within residential areas. (Source: New Policy)

**SUPPORT HOME-BASED BUSINESSES.** Review and update standards for home-based businesses, or home occupations to allow greater flexibility where such uses are compatible. Allow home-based businesses as principally permitted uses where all performance standards specified in the Zoning Regulations are met and a business license is obtained. Allow for an increase in the scale and range of allowable home-based business types in residential zones where potential nuisances are addressed through the permit approval process. (Source: New Policy)

# Use Compatibility & Flexibility

*ation Measures*

**ZONING REGULATIONS.** Update the Zoning Regulations to:

Add performance standards for industrial and heavy commercial development adjacent to residential areas to provide buffers, landscaping, and screening that minimize noise, light, glare, and other impacts;

Increase the range of allowable uses and the incorporation of performance standards to limit potential impacts; and

Update the standards for home-based businesses to increase the range of allowable home-based business types in residential zones where potential nuisances are addressed through the permit approval process.



# Coordinate with Local Communities



**SHERWOOD VALLEY RANCHERIA.** The Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians is a valuable partner and neighbor to the City of Willits. Regularly coordinate with representatives of the Sherwood Valley Rancheria on land use, municipal, infrastructure, and services planning and seek partnerships, where appropriate, to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes on projects that promote the welfare of the City and the Sherwood Valley Rancheria. (Source: New Policy)

**TRIBAL CONSULTATION.** Coordinate with local Native American tribes in City land use and service planning to ensure that consultation occurs during discretionary project review for the identification, protection, and mitigation of adverse impacts to significant cultural resources. (Source: New Policy)

**BROOKTRAILS TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT.** The City of Willits and the Brooktrails Township Community Services District (CSD) partner to provide wastewater services, and City businesses, streets, and other services to support Brooktrails Township residents. The City should continue to coordinate closely with the Brooktrails CSD on infrastructure and services planning and work together on mutually beneficial projects such as trails and parks and recreation. (Source: New Policy)

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.** Consider environmental justice issues as they are related to potential health impacts associated with land use decisions on residents regardless of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, income, or economic status, or geographic location. (Source: New Policy)



# Coordinate with Local Communities



**NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING.** The City shall provide for the fair treatment and meaningful involvement in land use decisions and policies for all people regardless of income, gender, age, race, color, national origin and shall evaluate and avoid, reduce, or mitigate disproportionate adverse health and safety impacts from these decisions on disadvantaged communities. (Source: New Policy)

## *mitigation Measures*

**TRIBAL CONSULTATION.** Consistent with State law, Native American Tribes shall be consulted during the process of the General Plan and CEQA review for the identification, protection and mitigation of adverse impacts on significant cultural resources. Consultation on ministerial permits shall be initiated if it has been determined the project may create a substantial adverse change to a significant cultural resource.

# Protect Natural Resources



**RIPARIAN BUFFER AREAS.** Streams, wetlands, and their associated riparian habitats should be conserved in planned for development. Require project applicants located adjacent to streams to include appropriate measures for natural occurring stream channel and native riparian vegetation preservation, appropriate measures to stabilize stream banks, and prevent erosion and the discharge of sediment. (Source: New Policy and relates to Conservation and Open Space Policies in Section 3.200 and Mitigation Measures 4.731 and 4.733)

**NO NET LOSS OF WETLANDS RESULTING FROM DEVELOPMENT.** To ensure that no net loss of wetlands result from development consistent with Conservation and Open Space Mitigation 4.736, the presence of potential wetlands in the vicinity of a proposed project shall be determined during the review process for discretionary projects and for final building and grading permit applications, when the proposed building development activity involves new construction or expansion of existing structures or grading activities. Wetland delineation by a qualified professional is required when wetland characterization and limits cannot be easily determined based on available information or identified during a pre-site inspection. (Source: New Policy)

# Protect Natural Resources



**RIPARIAN AREA LAND USE OVERLAY.** Apply an overlay to the Land Use Map, consistent with Conservation Plan Space Element Implementation Measure 3.320 identifying streams, known wetlands, and their associated habitats within the City to be protected during development. Prohibit development within a buffer area to protect resources that is established on either side of the stream and subject to the following criteria:

A combining zone for stream and riparian areas shall also be established and applied to parcels adjacent to streams and subject to the Riparian Area Land Use Overlay that specifies protective criteria consistent with this policy.

Buffers may be reduced or eliminated where the City determines, based on factual findings and in consultation with CDFW, that the reduction will not result in significant adverse effects to the water quality, dependent biological resources, or ecological functional capacity of the aquatic resource of interest.

For ministerial projects that are located on land planned R-L, C-G, GM-U, DM-U containing occupied structures or on vacant parcels that are substantially surrounded by developed parcels where improvements are located within the buffer area, exceptions to these standards may be allowed after a site evaluation has been conducted by City staff and factual findings are made that development is sited to minimize potential impacts to streams, wetlands, and associated riparian resources; does not involve the removal of native riparian vegetation; and the incorporation of performance standards relating to the revegetation of locally-appropriate riparian species and the implementation of best management practices for erosion control.

# Protect Natural Resources



**PROTECT OAK TREES AND WOODLANDS.** Integrate important tree protections from the Urban Forest Management Plan into the Zoning Regulations and establish an oak tree and oak woodland retention and protection for new development that emphasizes the avoidance, minimization, or mitigation of oak tree and oak woodlands removal. (Source: New Policy)

**PRESERVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS.** The City shall discourage urban development on unincorporated lands within its Sphere of Influence until annexed by the City. The City shall support County land use regulations that support the viability of local agriculture in the Little Lake Valley. (Source: New Policy)

## *mitigation Measures*

**STREAM AND RIPARIAN COMBINING ZONE.** Amend the Zoning Regulations to establish a Stream and Riparian Combining Zone with standards consistent with the Conservation and Open Space Element and the Land Use Element to protect all streams, riparian areas, and wetlands from new ministerial and discretionary development. Amend the Zoning Regulations to apply the Stream and Riparian Combining Zone to notify the public that specific standards apply for all development within such areas.

**OAK TREE PROTECTIONS.** Consistent with Urban Forest Management Plan, adopt Zoning Standards to protect oak trees as part of new ministerial and discretionary development.

# Implementation and Maintenance



**LAND USE MAP.** Maintain and implement the General Plan Land Use Map, Figure 2-1, which applies the Land Use Designations and specifies the allowed land uses by geographic location and the density of allowed uses within each designation to all land within the City of Willits. (Source: New Policy)

**ZONING MAP AND REGULATIONS.** Ensure that the Zoning Regulations are consistent with the policies of the General Plan and the Zoning Map is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Map. (Source: New Policy)

**PERIODIC GENERAL PLAN REVIEW.** Periodically review and update the General Plan for consistency with state law and comprehensively review and update the General Plan or specific Element(s) to coincide with the state-mandated Housing Element periodic update cycle or every seven years. (Source: New Policy)

**WEB-BASED LAND USE MAPPING.** Consider developing and maintaining a web-based land use mapping system to display General Plan, Zoning, administrative, service, environmental resource, and hazard maps and to allow the public to access vital land use and service information. (Source: New Policy)

**PLANNING COMMISSION.** Consider appointing and maintaining a Planning Commission to actively involve residents in the City planning process, to relieve City Council members from the review of more mundane applications, and to streamline the process of planning approval. (Source: New Policy)

# Implementation and Maintenance



**STREAMLINING DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL.** Consider modifying the Zoning Regulations to add additional types that can be approved by the Community Development Director to streamline the process for approving exceptions to development standards. (Source: New Policy)

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION.** Prohibit subdivisions in neighborhoods having only one access or that are prone to isolation if access roads are impacted, until alternative evacuation routes are established or where the Council has determined that access and egress are adequate. (Source: New Policy)

**MILITARY OPERATING AREAS.** Provide notification to the appropriate military departments for discretionary development projects that may have the potential to affect military special use airspace areas, as required by state law. (Source: New Policy)

# Implementation and Maintenance



## *Implementation Measures*

**COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE.** The City shall actively pursue funding for the preparation of a Comprehensive General Plan Update to ensure that all General Plan Elements are revised to reflect the priorities and needs of the community and are consistent with State law.

**ZONING CONSISTENCY.** Following the adoption of the Land Use Element, revise the Zoning Regulations to reflect the changes to allowable uses and development standards and to re-establish consistency with the policies of the General Plan and amend the Zoning Map to achieve consistency with the General Plan Land Use Map.

**GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT.** A General Plan Annual Report shall be prepared by the Community Development Department by April 1 of each year pursuant to State law and shall be presented to the City Council in a public meeting.

**GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE.** The City shall review public works projects for conformity with the General Plan. The City shall not acquire, dedicate, dispose, vacate or abandon real property unless in conformance with this Plan and State law.

# Muir Mill Road



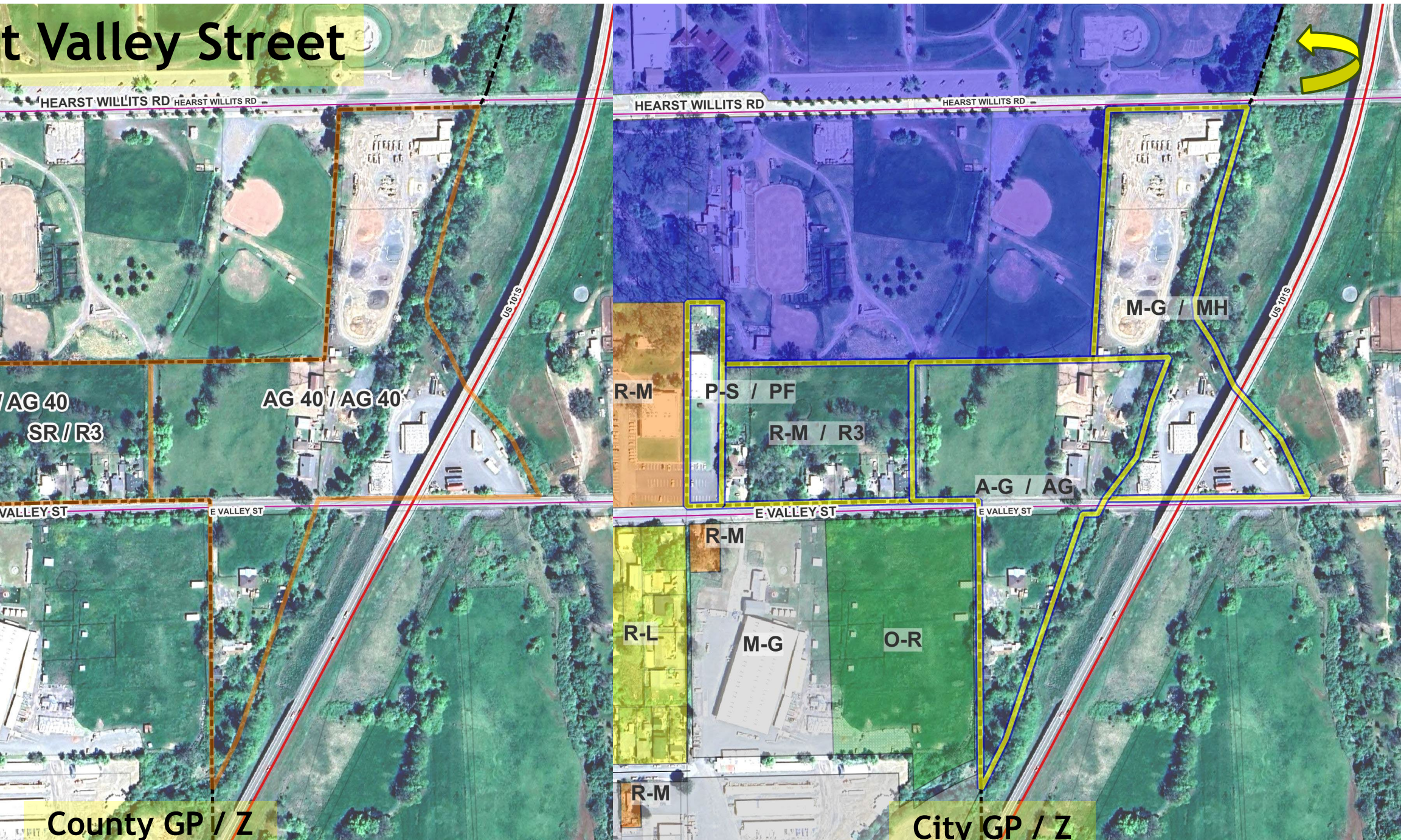
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# t Valley Street

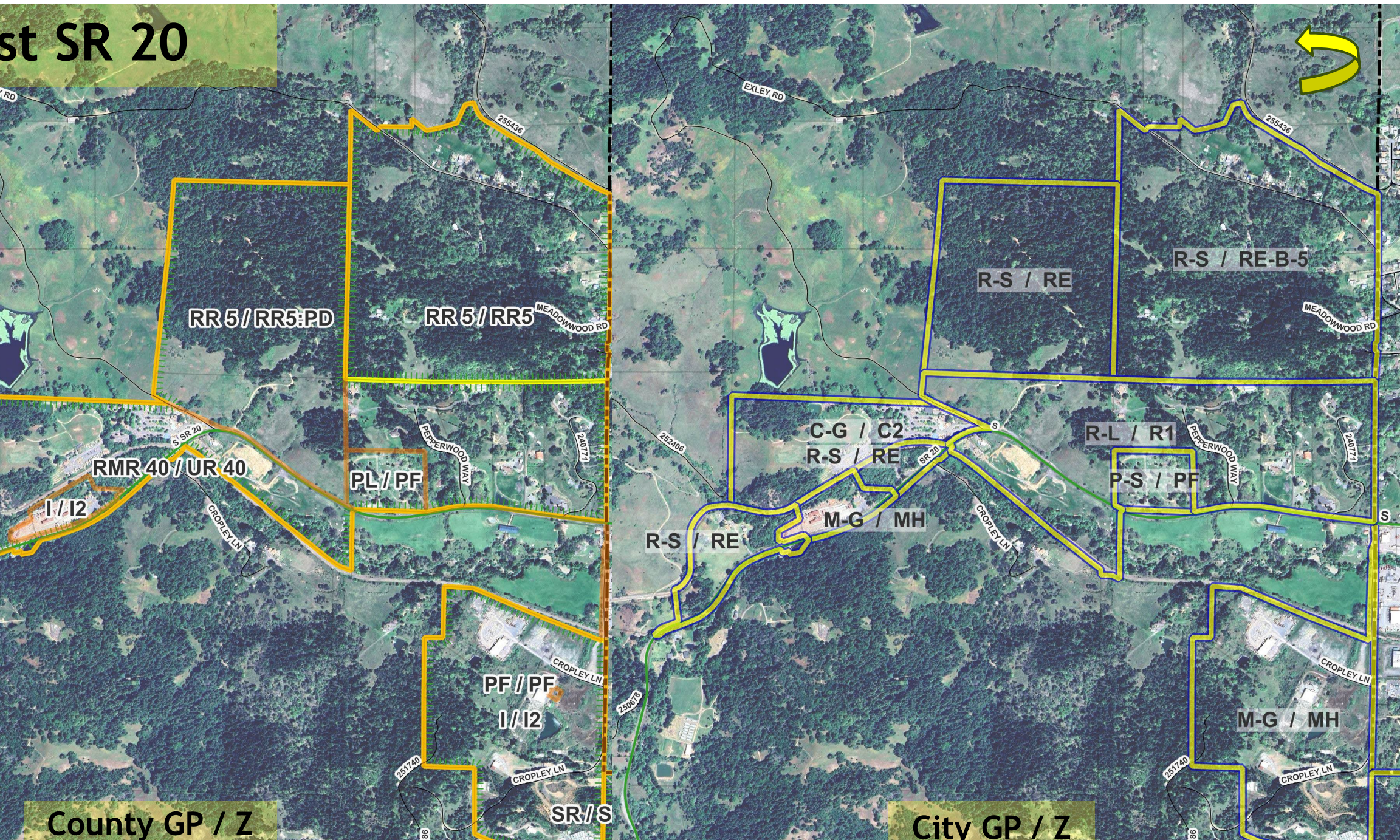


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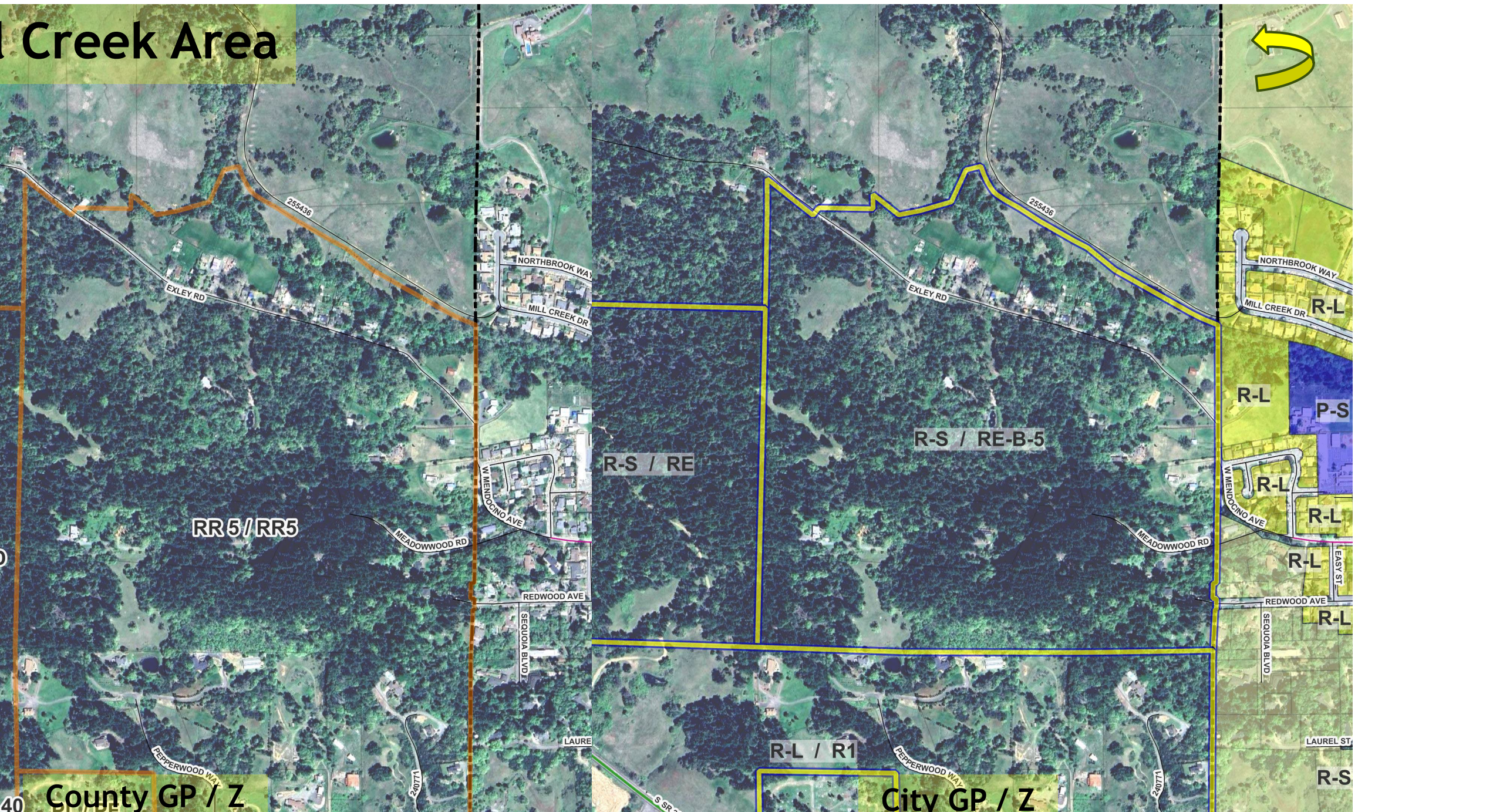
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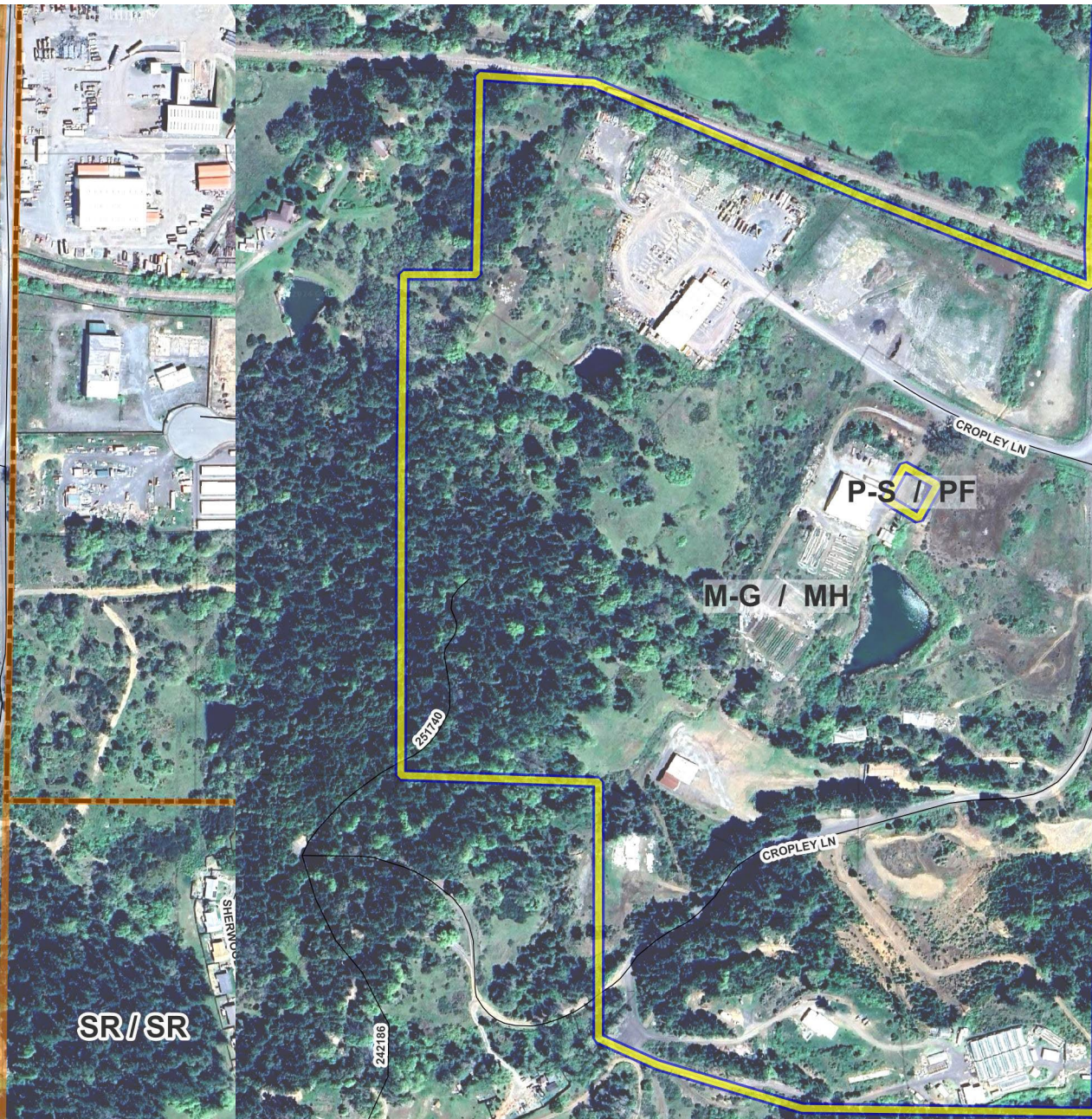
# Mill Creek Area



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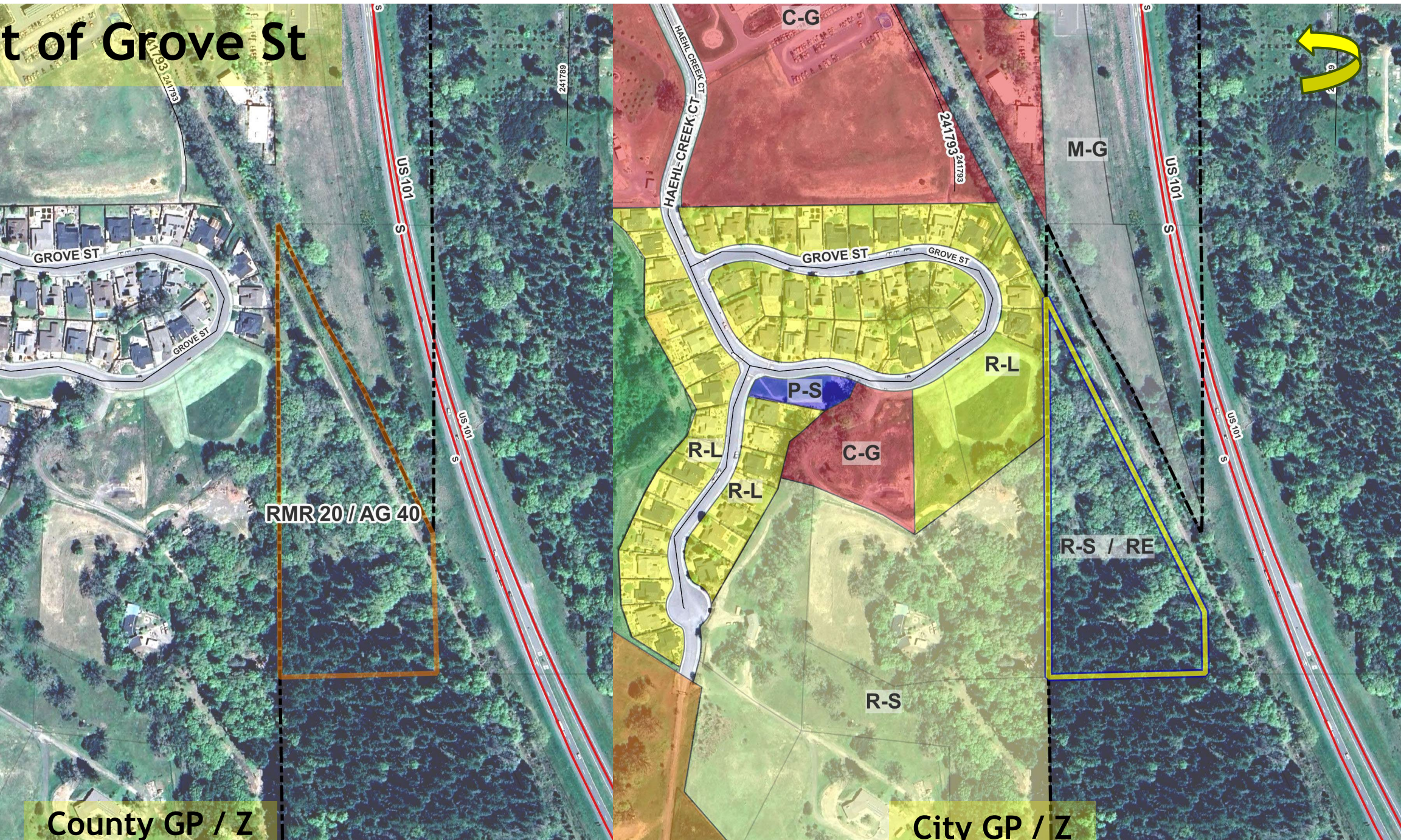
Cropley Lane



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# of Grove St



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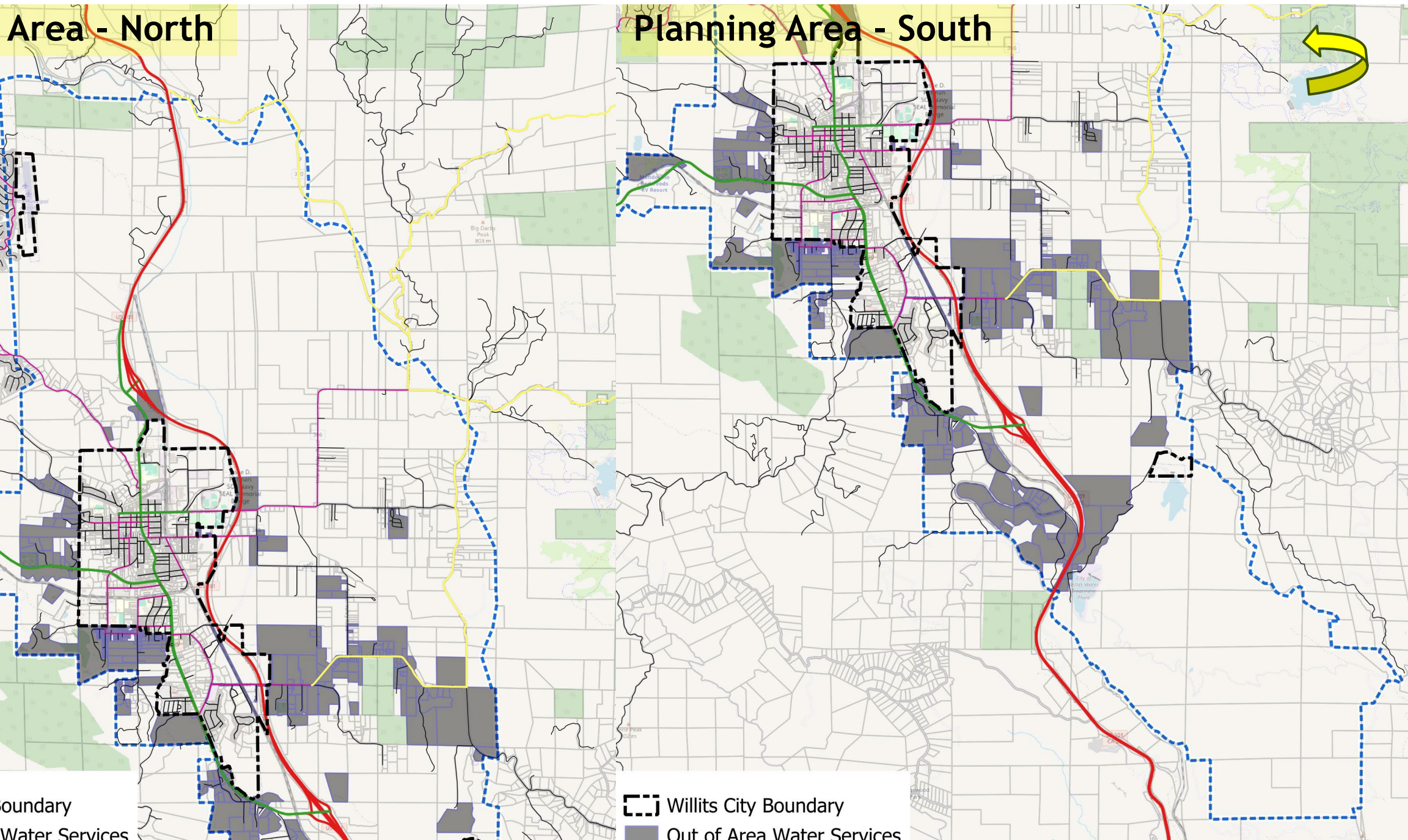
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# Area - North

# Planning Area - South



Boundary  
Water Services

-  Willits City Boundary
-  Out of Area Water Services