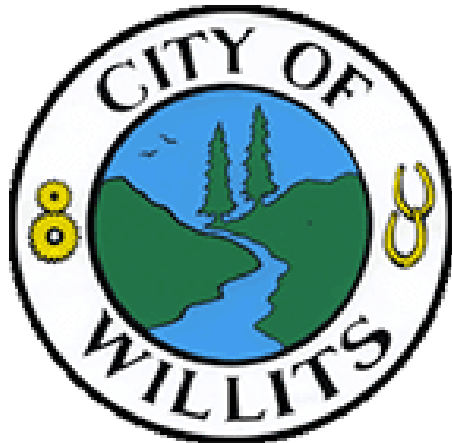


City of Willits

Land Use Element & Sphere of Influence Update



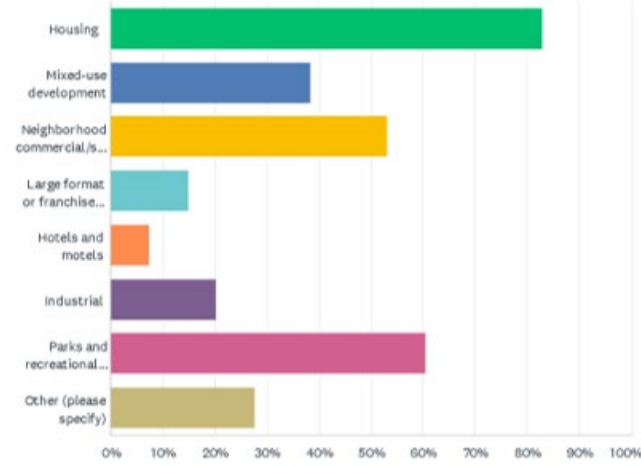
City Council Presentation & Discussion

May 10, 2023

PLANWEST
PARTNERS, INC. 

Community Outreach

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Housing	82.98%	78
Mixed-use development	38.30%	36
Neighborhood commercial/small retail (specialty shops, coffee shops, clothing stores, gift shops, etc.)	53.19%	50
Large format or franchise retail stores	14.89%	14
Hotels and motels	7.45%	7
Industrial	20.21%	19
Parks and recreational facilities	60.64%	57
Other (please specify)	27.66%	26
Total Respondents: 94		



Online & Print

Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits
 Donations Accepted Edition No. 482

Thursday, March 16, 2023

City asks residents to weigh in on land use update

Submitted by City of Willits

The City of Willits is currently working on an update to the General Plan Land Use Element. This element has not been comprehensively updated since 1982. State law has established the General Plan as the "constitution" for developing land within a city for a planning period of 20 years or more.

As part of this update, the City of Willits will also be looking closely at development potential outside of the City that could be added to its "Sphere of Influence." Together

Read the rest of Update Over on Page 13

City of Willits Land Use Element Update

About Resources & Documents Submit Comments



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.

We are very interested to learn about your expectations, priorities, and concerns about Willits. Please take this online community survey and ensure that your responses are available to decision makers in planning for Willits' future!

Sign up for Project Updates

Quick Links

- Get to Know Willits Land Use & Zoning
- Property Owner Zone Change
- Sign up for Project Updates
- City of Willits Homepage

News & Announce

Notice of Preparation for the Environmental Impact Report



GENERAL PLAN LAND USE ELEMENT UPDATE COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

WEDNESDAY MARCH 22ND

11:30 AM - 2:00 PM

1:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Two Sessions

WHAT BROUGHT THE FUTURE OF WILLITS LOOK LIKE

TAKE OUR SURVEY

SCAN ME

In House on this Tuesday, March 29, 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM and an evening Open House between 5:30 and 8:00 PM.

For more information on the Land Use Element Update, please visit www.willitslanduseupdates.com. There you can sign up for project updates by email, take an online community survey, submit a property owner zone change request, and learn more about Willits land use and zoning.

Policy Focus Areas for Council Consideration

- ▶ Facilitate Infill Development and Commercial Vitality.
- ▶ Opportunities Available through Land Use Changes within the City or through proposed Sphere of Influence expansion areas outside the City.
- ▶ Ensuring Adequate Public Utilities, Services, and Infrastructure.
- ▶ Protect and Conserve Natural Resources and Energy, Avoid Hazards

- ▶ For each focus area we hope to:
 - ▶ Describe Policy Focus Area.
 - ▶ Ask Discussion Questions.
 - ▶ Summarize potential policy topic areas
 - ▶ Seek Council input and general guidance

Facilitate Infill Development & Commercial Vitality

- ▶ Should development regulations be modified to allow property owners to make more efficient use of land at a scale in keeping with the existing neighborhood?

POLICY RANGE

Modify development standards to allow more infill development on parcels at a scale in keeping with the existing neighborhood

Retain current development standards acknowledging that further infill development by property owners, even at a scale in keeping with the neighborhood, may be limited by existing standards

Facilitate Infill Development & Commercial Vitality

- ▶ Should development regulations be modified to allow property owners to make more efficient use of land at a scale in keeping with the existing neighborhood?
- ▶ Potential Policy Options:
 - ▶ Reduce minimum standards, such as:
 - ▶ Smaller minimum parcel sizes.
 - ▶ Reduce “yard” or required front, side, or rear setback requirements.
 - ▶ Increase maximum ground coverage limits.
 - ▶ Allow taller buildings.
 - ▶ Reduce minimum on-site parking requirements.

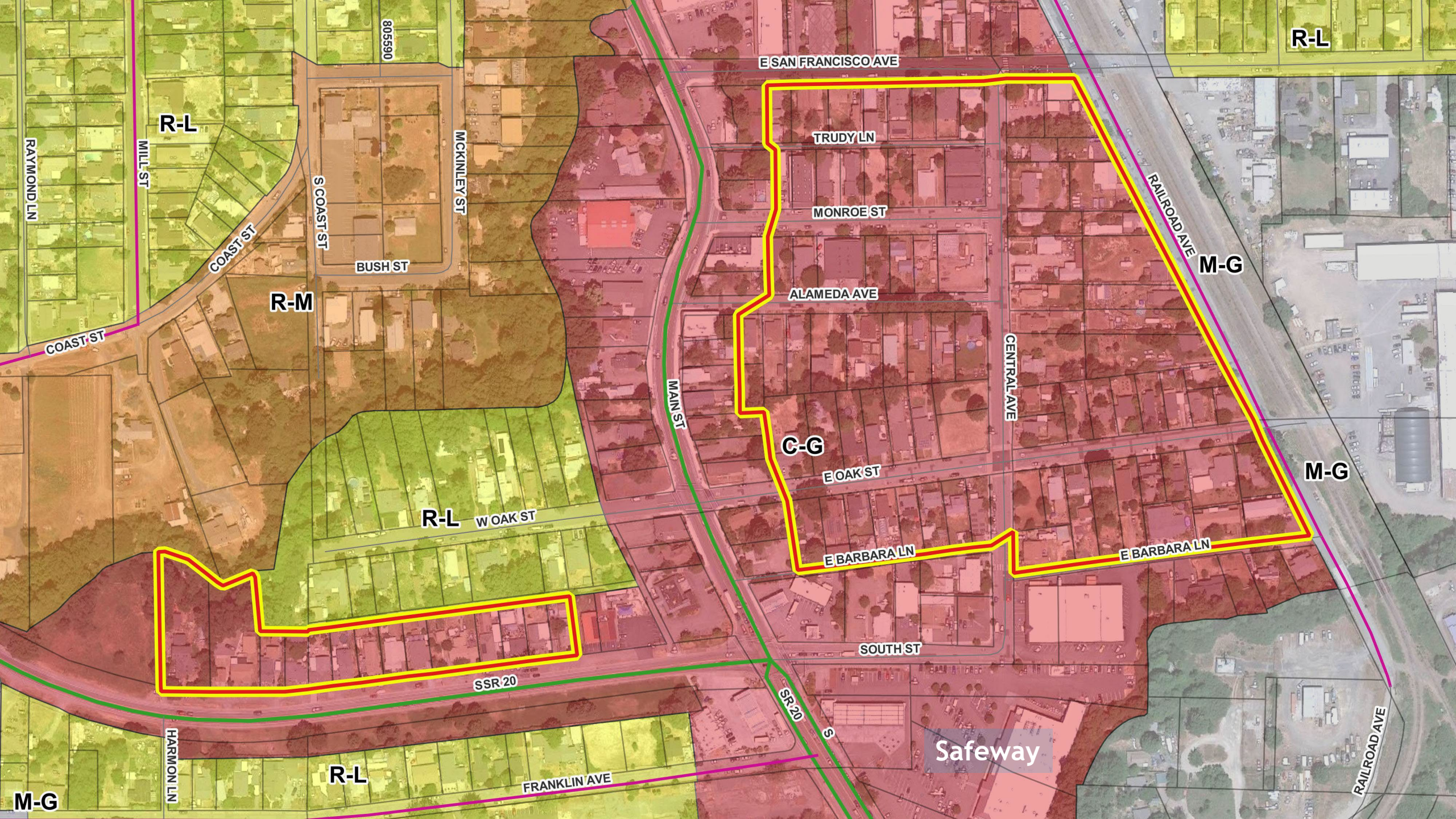
Facilitate Infill Development & Commercial Vitality

- ▶ Should the range of principally permitted uses in certain residential and commercial zones be expanded - or new zones be created - in order to provide flexibility to property owners and encourage new business development and a broader range of housing types?

POLICY RANGE

Modify the range of permitted uses
Citywide or on a neighborhood basis
with the objective of encouraging
additional desired uses and making long-
standing existing uses conforming

Retain the current range of
permitted uses and apply
specific zones to specific
parcels to achieve
zoning use conformity



R-L

E SAN FRANCISCO AVE

R-L

TRUDY LN

RAYMOND LN

MILL ST

MCKINLEY ST

S COAST ST

BUSH ST

MONROE ST

RAILROAD AVE

M-G

R-M

ALAMEDA AVE

COAST ST

MAIN ST

CENTRAL AVE

C-G

E OAK ST

M-G

R-L

W OAK ST

E BARBARA LN

E BARBARA LN



SSR 20

SR 20

SOUTH ST

Safeway

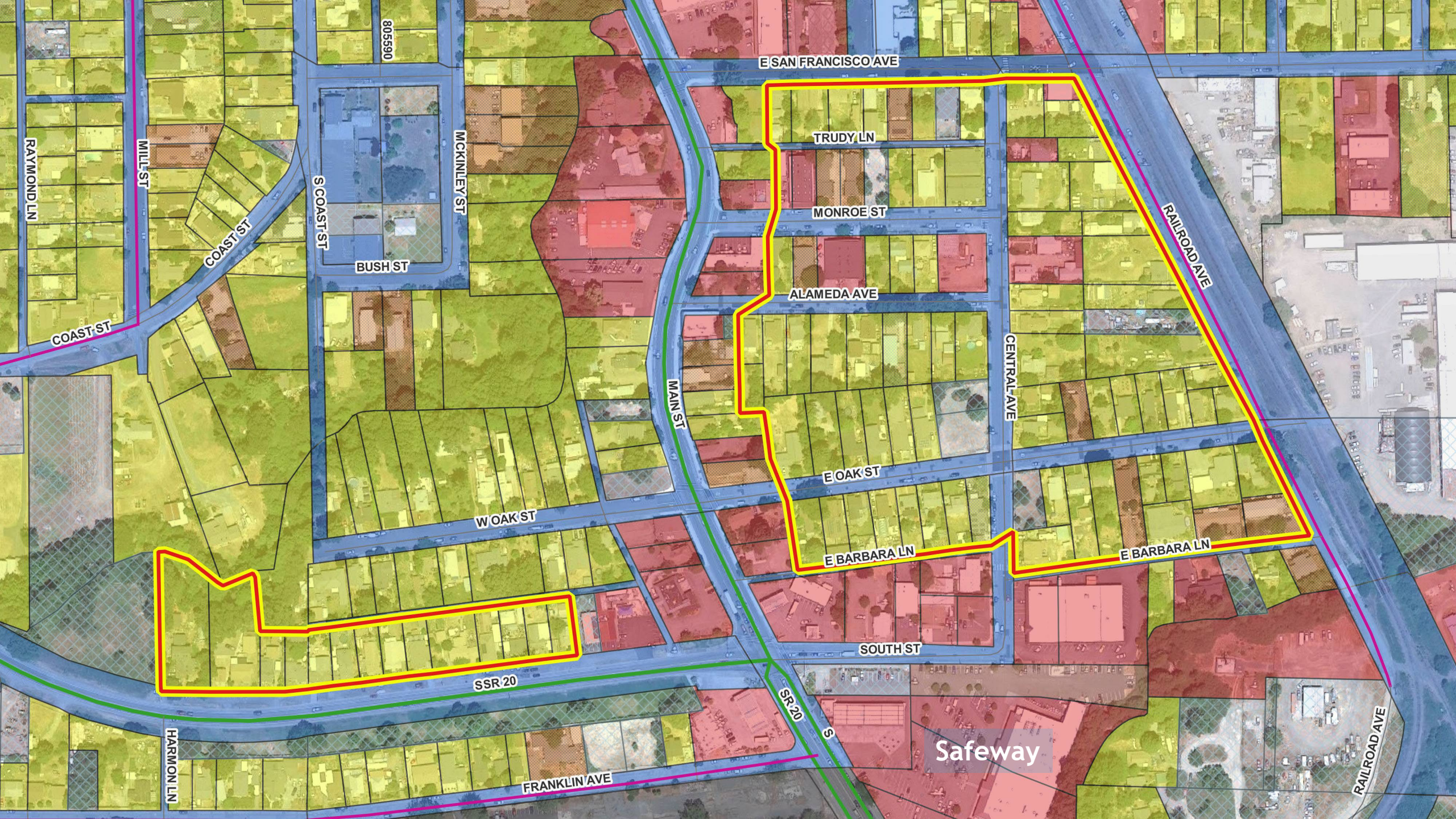
HARMON LN

R-L

FRANKLIN AVE

RAILROAD AVE

M-G



E SAN FRANCISCO AVE

TRUDY LN

MONROE ST

ALAMEDA AVE

CENTRAL AVE

E OAK ST

E BARBARA LN

E BARBARA LN

SOUTH ST

SSR 20

SR 20 S

Safeway

FRANKLIN AVE

RAYMOND LN

MILL ST

COAST ST

S COAST ST

BUSH ST

MCKINLEY ST

MAIN ST

W OAK ST

HARMON LN

805590

RAILROAD AVE

RAILROAD AVE

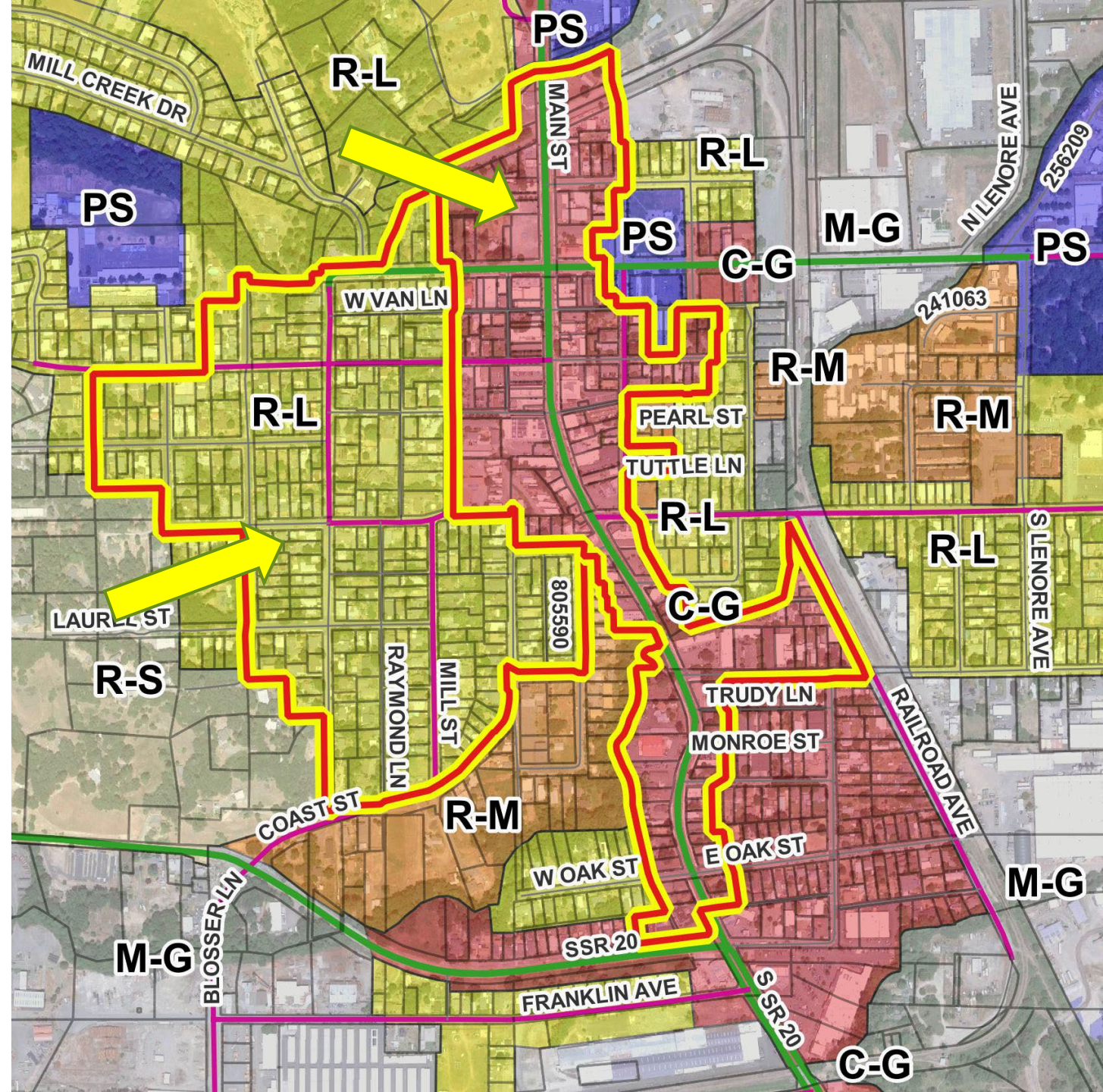
Downtown Area

► Opportunities

- Consider establishing new, more flexible zones or overlays
- Allow flexible re-use of existing or modified commercial buildings
- Allow incremental residential growth similar to existing
- Reduce non-conformity

► Issues

- Parking
- Potential concerns due to incremental change to neighborhood feel



Facilitate Infill Development & Commercial Vitality

- ▶ Should the range of principally permitted uses in certain residential and commercial zones be expanded - or new zones be created - in order to provide flexibility to property owners and encourage new business development and a broader range of housing types?
- ▶ Potential Policy Options:
 - ▶ Define more flexible zones in commercial districts, or zones on the fringe of commercial districts, to allow for a broader range of commercial and residential uses;
 - ▶ Reduce or refine existing commercial zones to ensure that the range of uses such as the is achieving its intended purpose (e.g., Administrative Office (CO) Zone);
 - ▶ Add a mixed-use zone that allows commercial and residential uses;

Facilitate Infill Development & Commercial Vitality

- ▶ Should the range of principally permitted uses in certain residential and commercial zones be expanded - or new zones be created - in order to provide flexibility to property owners and encourage new business development and a broader range of housing types?
- ▶ Potential Policy Options:
 - ▶ Define tailored zones or combining zones for specific areas to achieve desired outcomes (commercial vitality on Main Street or South Main Street, or to address non-conforming commercial or residential uses); or,
 - ▶ Provide greater flexibility for café, corner store, or other neighborhood shop front uses or cottage commercial uses in residential area with limited nuisance impacts.

OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH LAND USE CHANGES WITHIN THE CITY OR THROUGH SPHERE OF INFLUENCE EXPANSION AREAS OUTSIDE THE CITY

- ▶ What types of City or property owner-initiated changes within the City boundary should be considered in order to facilitate future residential, commercial, or other kinds of development?

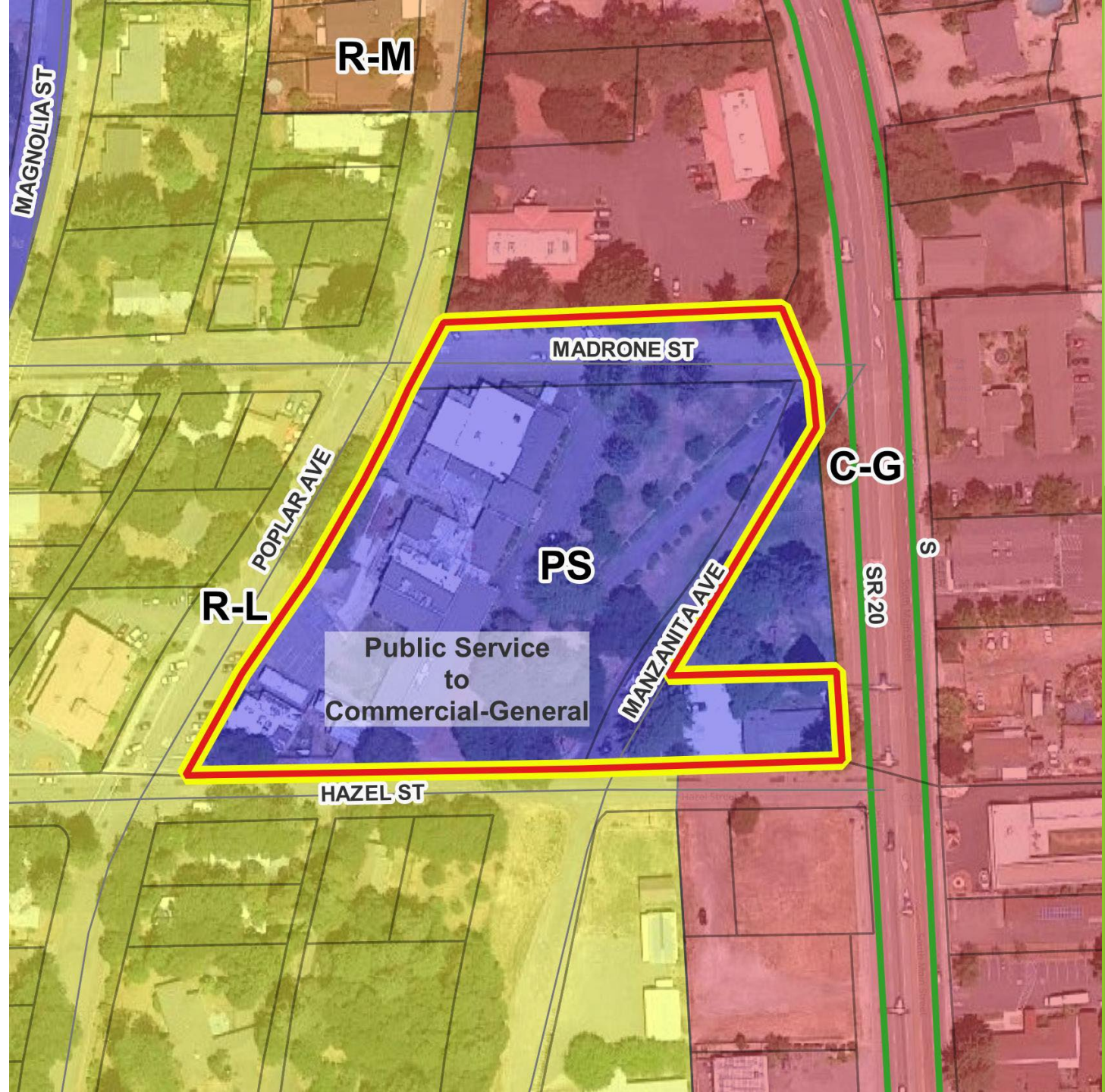
Former Hospital

► Opportunities

- Vacant site and motivated landowner
- Various commercial, mixed-use, or residential options
- Centrally located

► Issues

- No significant issues



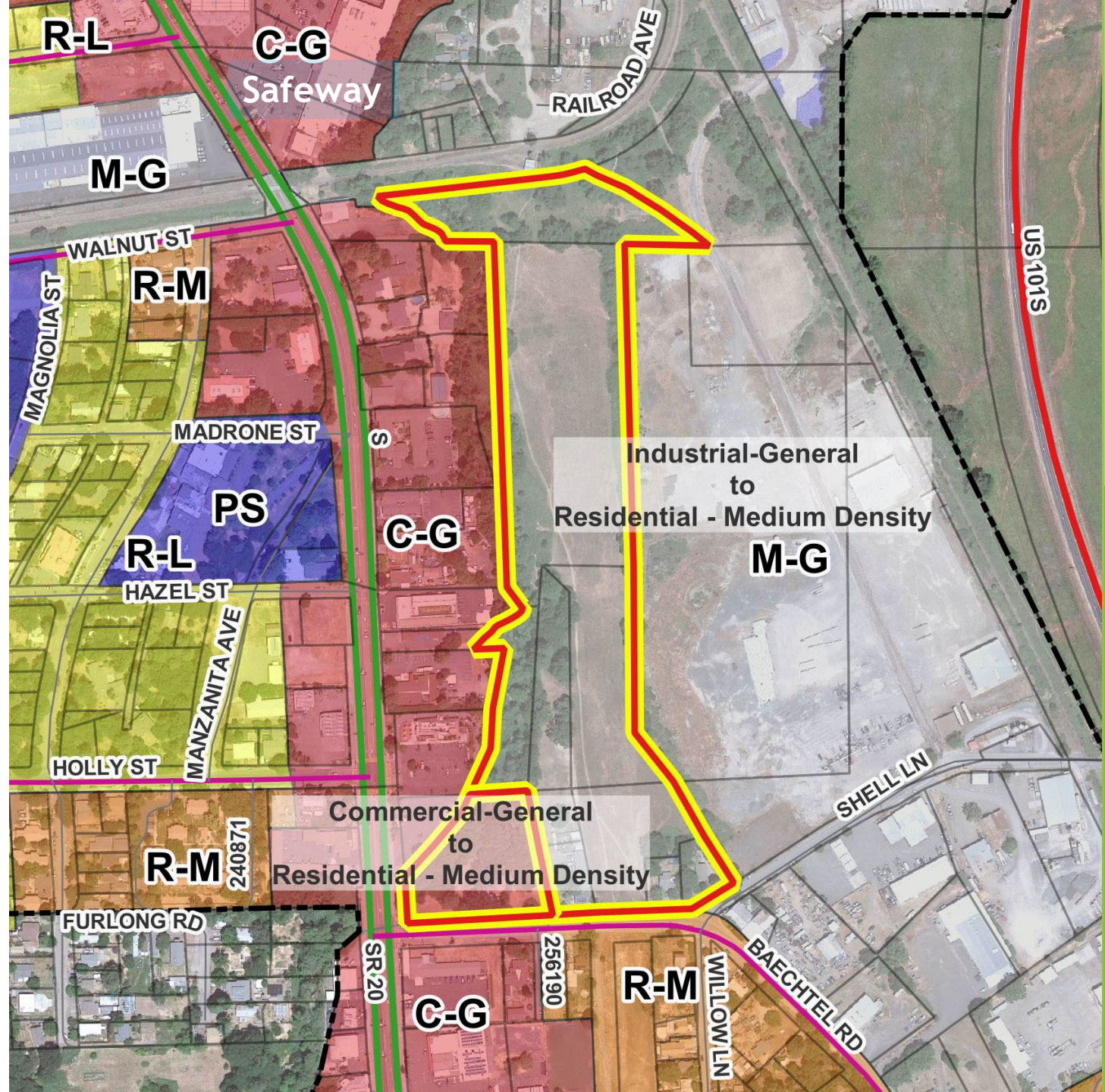
Baechtel Road Residential or Mixed-use

► Opportunities

- Various housing and commercial types
- Railroad Avenue extension
- Centrally located

► Issues

- Adjacent riparian
- Road extension across railroad right of way
- Property owner interest



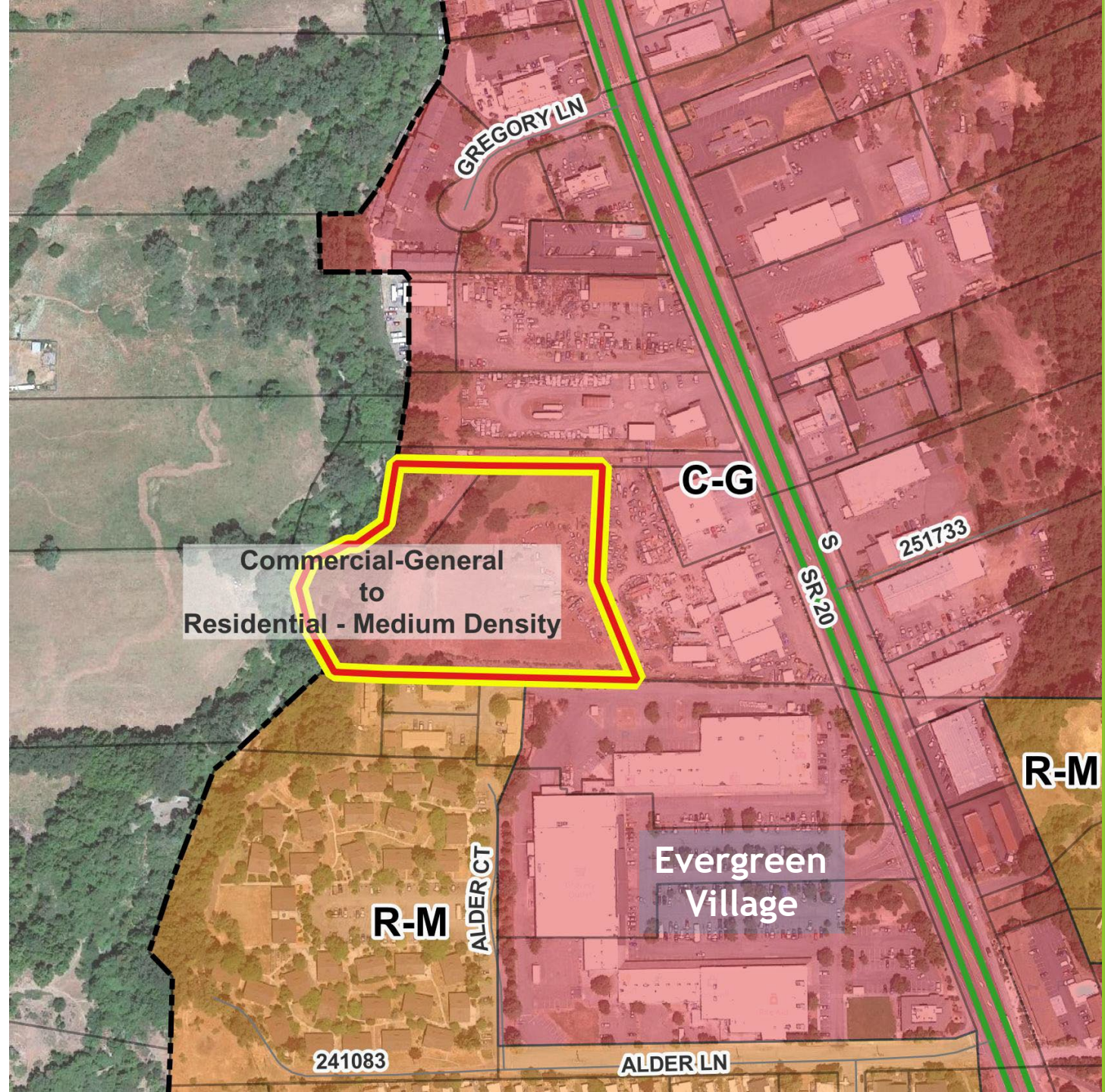
South Main Street Vacant Commercial

► Opportunities

- Additional housing near commercial areas and services
- Adjacent to an SOI evaluation area and potential shared secondary access
- Likely adequate utility services

► Issues

- Adjacent riparian
- New SR 20 encroachment planning
- Property owner interest



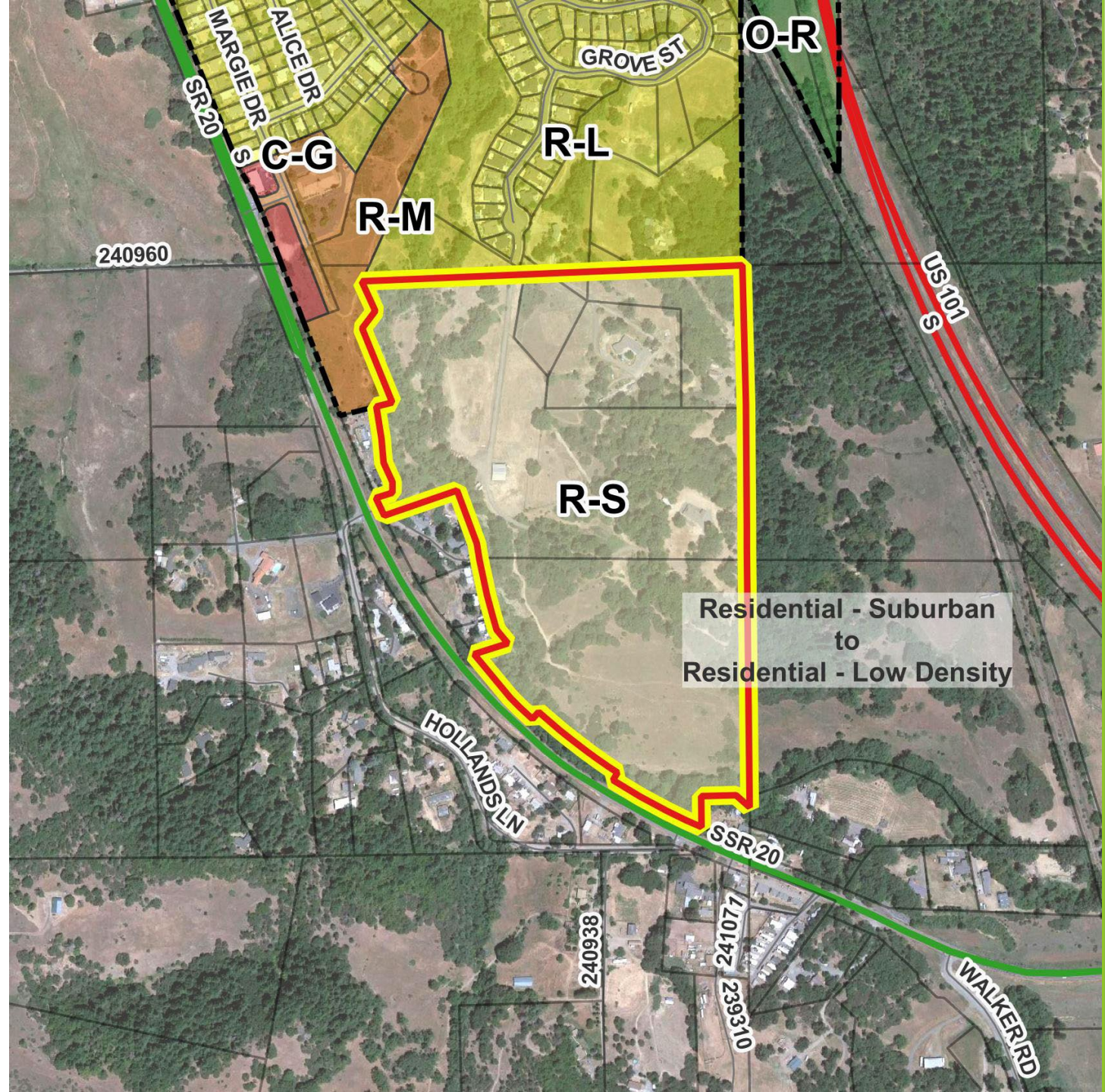
South Haehl Creek Area

► Opportunities

- Extension of Haehl Creek subdivision suburban residential development
- Adjacent to an SOI evaluation area and potential shared secondary access

► Issues

- Slopes and seismic hazards
- Street, utility, infrastructure extension
- Property owner interest



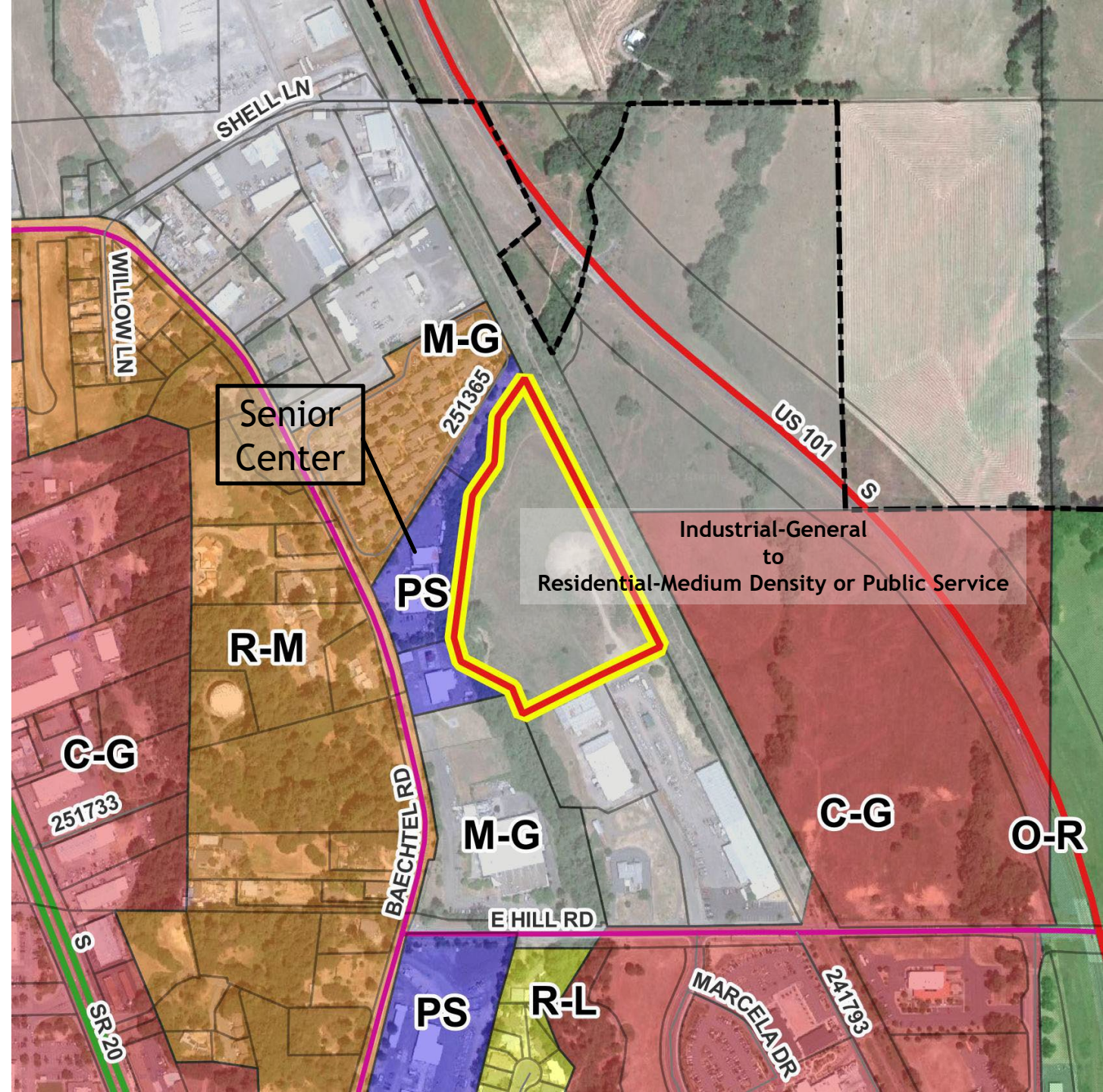
East Hill Vacant Industrial

► Opportunities

- Potential park or recreation site or residential area
- Vacant industrial with no apparent residual constraints from use

► Issues

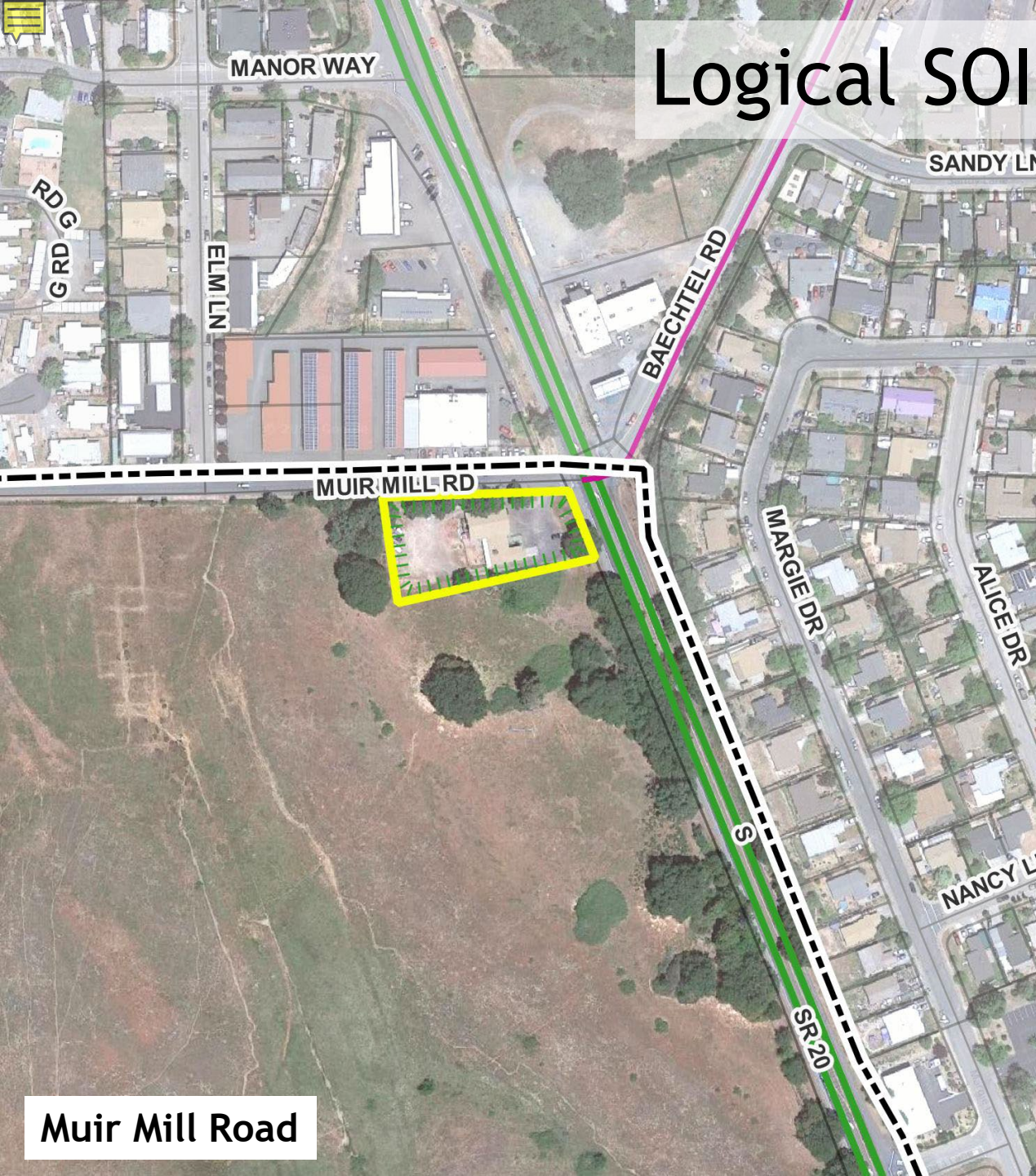
- Limited access
- Adjacent riparian
- Property owner interest



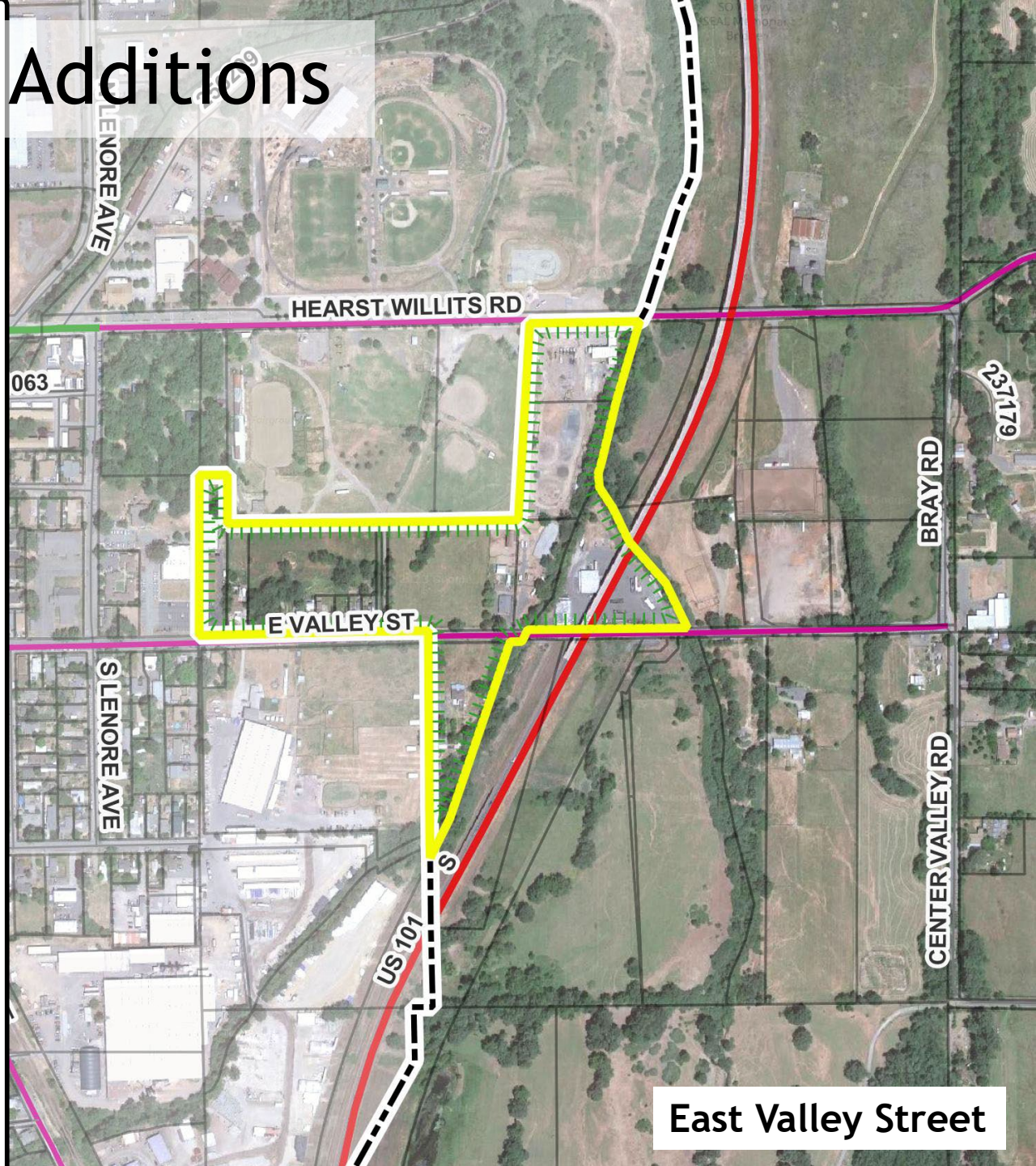
OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH LAND USE CHANGES WITHIN THE CITY OR THROUGH SPHERE OF INFLUENCE EXPANSION AREAS OUTSIDE THE CITY

- ▶ What potential City Sphere of Influence areas should be considered in order to facilitate future residential, commercial, or other kinds of development?

Logical SOI Additions



Muir Mill Road



East Valley Street

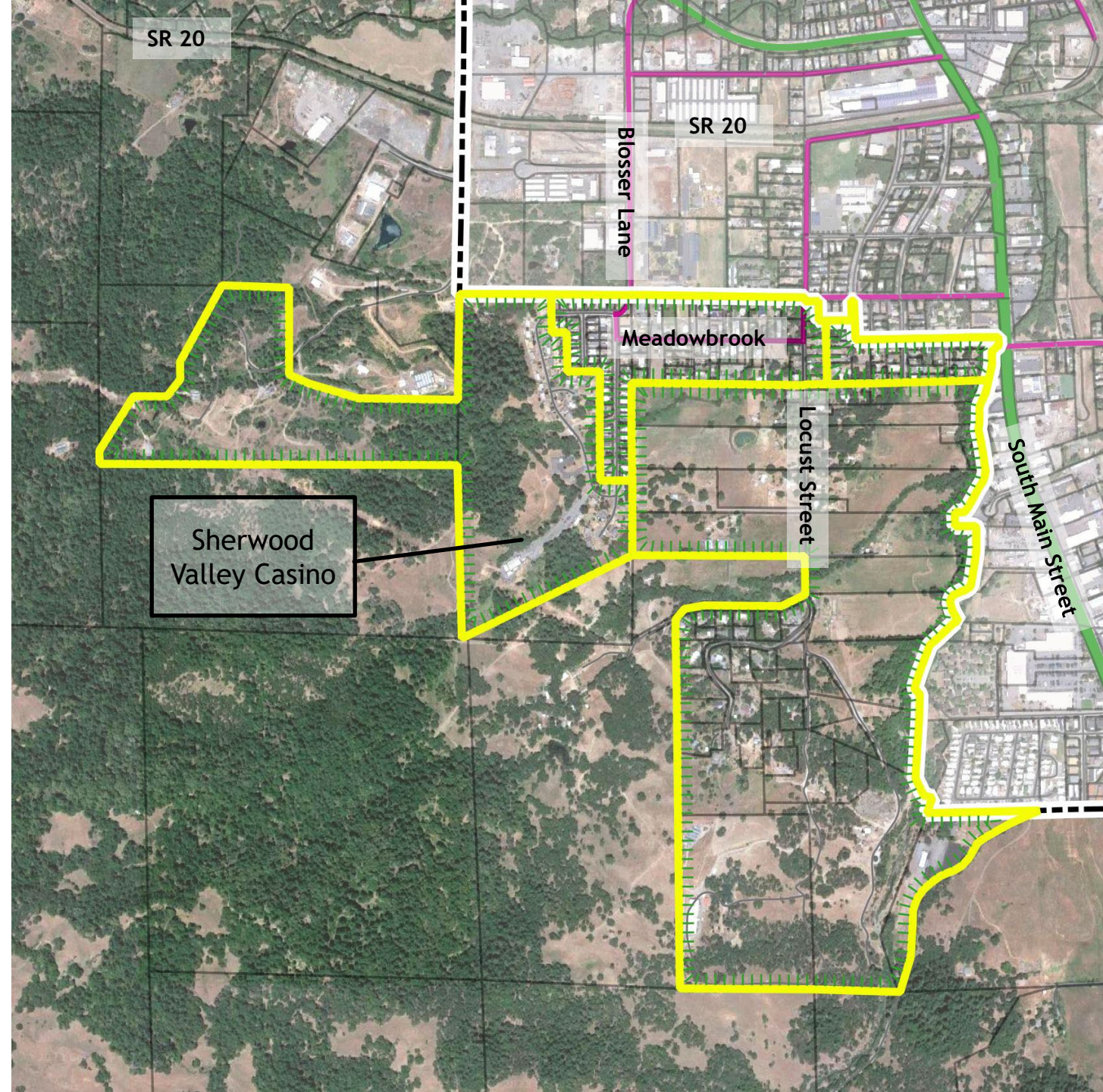
Locust Street Area

► Opportunities

- Bring all areas served by City wastewater into SOI
- Add developable areas with larger vacant parcels to SOI

► Issues

- Limited infill development potential within existing developed areas
- Wetland and riparian areas
- Potentially significant utility upgrades and access improvements



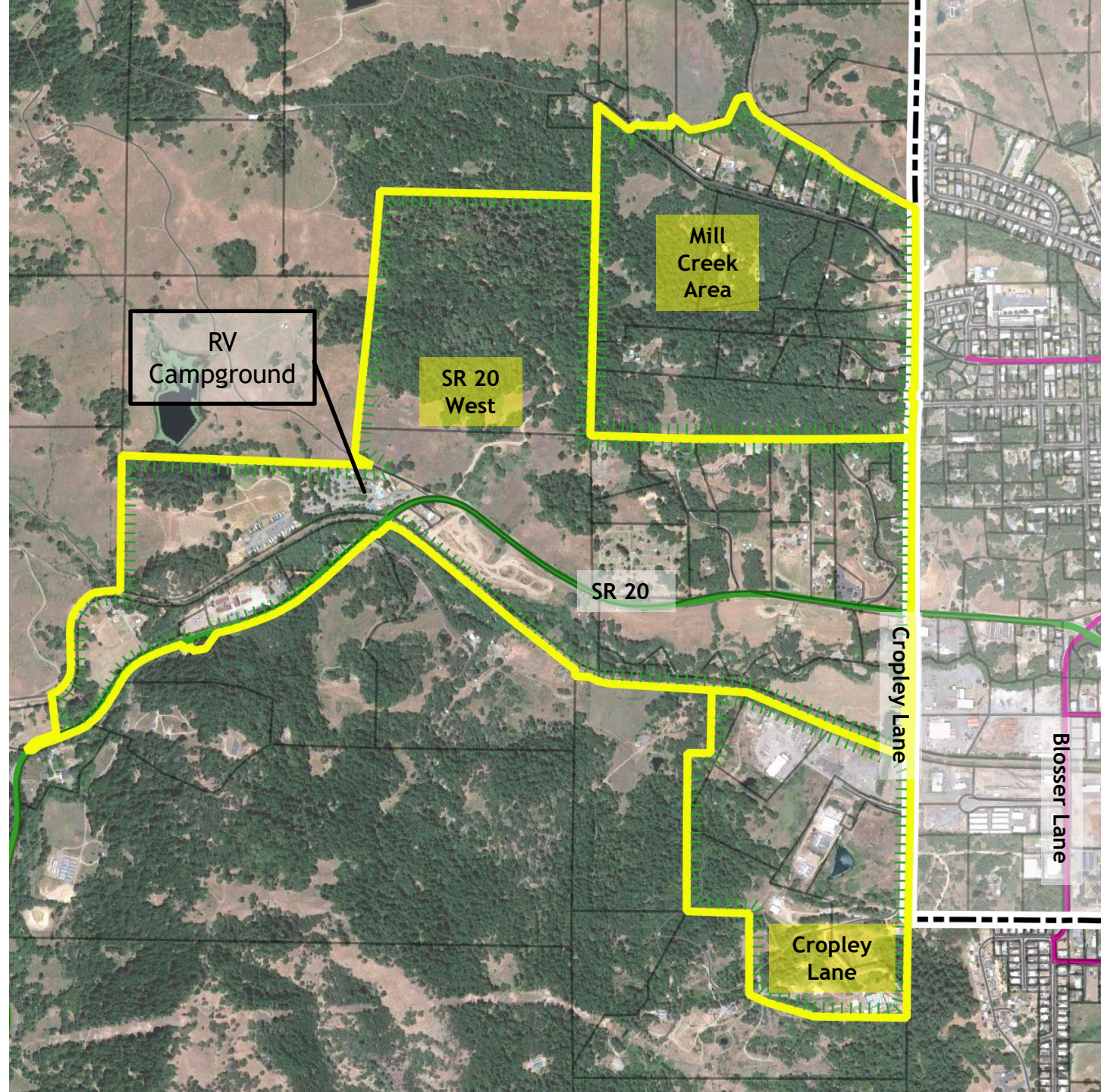
West SR 20, Mill Creek Area & Cropley Lane Industrial

► Opportunities

- City water line along SR 20
- Flat land along SR 20 with larger parcels
- Industrial area adjacent to City and services
- Extend low density residential into Mill Creek area

► Issues

- Sewer and water service extensions
- Access issues
- Steep slope
- Prime farmlands



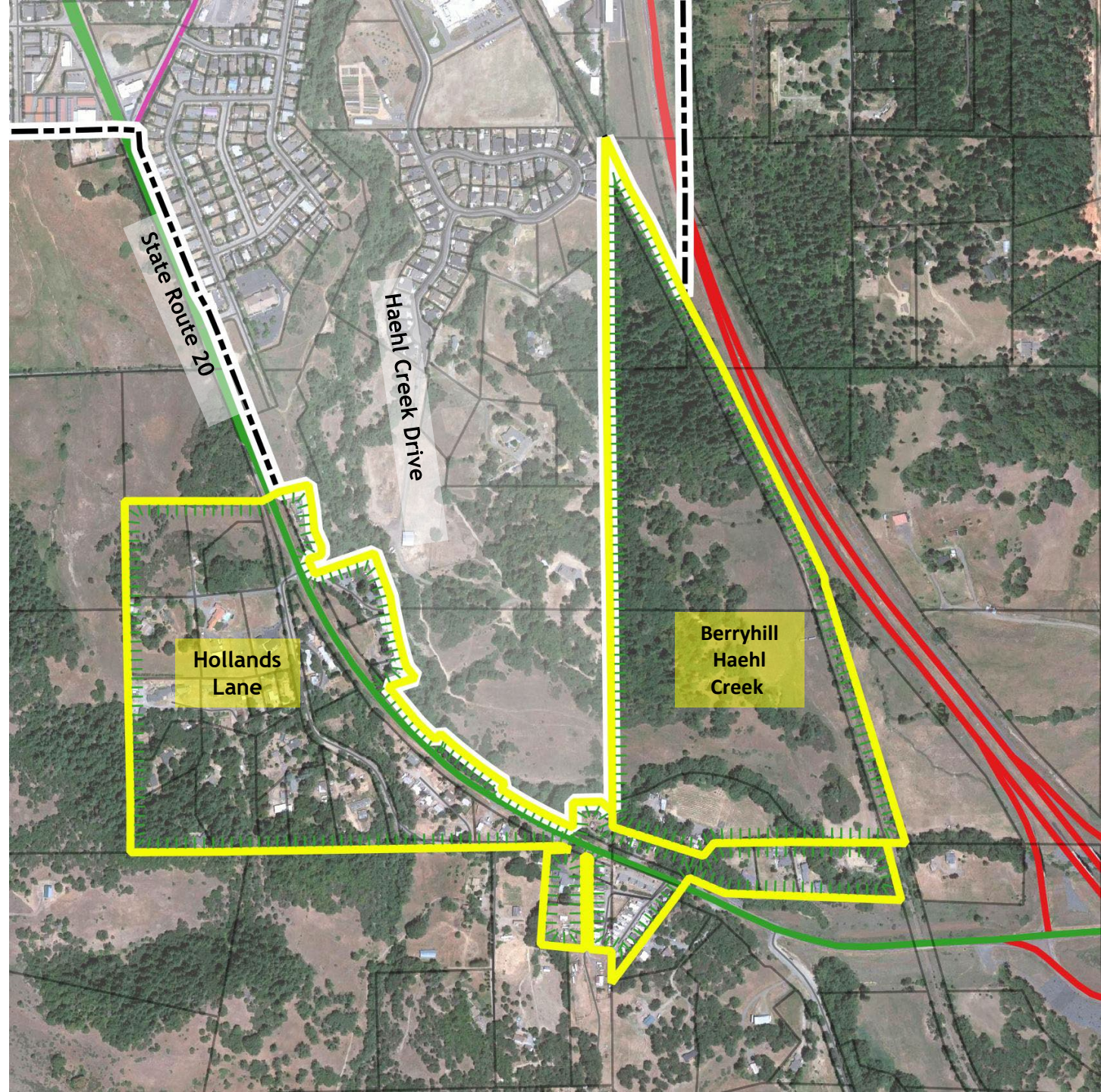
Berryhill/Haehl Creek & Hollands Lane

► Opportunities

- Bring areas served by City water into SOI
- Add developable areas with larger vacant parcels to SOI

► Issues

- Limited infill development potential within existing developed areas
- Limited access
- Utility and infrastructure extension
- Steeper slopes
- Seismic Hazards
- Some prime farmland



Public Utilities, Services, and Infrastructure

- ▶ What criteria should be applied to identify potential Sphere of Influence and annexation areas?

POLICY RANGE:

Include more detailed programs that establish City criteria for infrastructure expansion and service delivery

Defer all annexation area entitlements until annexation is initiated by property owner and an analysis of infrastructure and services is conducted demonstrating how services are to be provided

Public Utilities, Services, and Infrastructure

- ▶ What criteria should be applied to identify potential Sphere of Influence and annexation areas?
- ▶ Potential Policy Options:
 - ▶ Sphere Areas should:
 - ▶ Contain land planned by the County for development, be considered reasonably developable, or be served by City utilities;
 - ▶ Have a minimum of natural resources or hazard constraints;
 - ▶ Be adjacent to the City, promote orderly development, and result in a more logical City boundary; and,
 - ▶ Be adjacent to City infrastructure and facilities with adequate capacity or that can be feasibility expanded to provide an adequate level of service.

Public Utilities, Services, and Infrastructure

- ▶ What criteria should be applied to identify potential Sphere of Influence and annexation areas?
- ▶ Potential Policy Options:
 - ▶ Annexations should:
 - ▶ Be initiated based on the supply of land for residential, commercial, industrial, and public facility uses within the City;
 - ▶ Contribute to the City's fiscal stability;
 - ▶ Result in the efficient use of City services and utilities;
 - ▶ Connect to or extend the City's mobility network; and,
 - ▶ Protect agricultural land and open space areas.

Natural Resources

- ▶ What programs are needed to ensure that annexations and new development proposals are streamlined and that important natural resources are protected, and energy is conserved?

POLICY RANGE:

Include more detailed programs to demonstrate that natural resources protected through ministerial and discretionary project review

Defer all annexation area entitlements until annexation is initiated by property owners

Natural Resources

- ▶ What programs are needed to ensure that annexations and new development proposals are streamlined and that important natural resources are protected, and energy is conserved?
- ▶ Potential Policy Options:
 - ▶ In order to protect natural creeks and streams, prohibit development within a buffer area on either side of the stream.
 - ▶ Establish a combining zone for stream and riparian areas to be applied to parcels adjacent to streams that specifies protective criteria.
 - ▶ Identify wetlands through project review.

Natural Resources

- ▶ What programs are needed to ensure that annexations and new development proposals are streamlined and that important natural resources are protected, and energy is conserved?
- ▶ Potential Policy Options:
 - ▶ Require onsite protection or through relocation and replacement of wetlands coupled with appropriate mitigations, as appropriate, to ensure no net loss of wetlands.
 - ▶ Integrate important tree protections from the urban forest management plan into Land Use Element and Zoning Regulations.
 - ▶ Establish an oak tree and oak woodland retention and protection program for new development that emphasizes the avoidance or minimization of oak tree and oak woodlands removal.

Next Steps

