



CHAPTER ONE

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INTRODUCTION

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1.1 PURPOSE

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The *Draft Environmental Impact Report, City of Grass Valley General Plan Update*, dated August 1999, was a program EIR prepared to disclose, analyze, and provide mitigation measures for all potentially significant environmental effects associated with the General Plan Update and its implementation. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is a requirement of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for all discretionary projects in California that have a potential to result in significant environmental impacts. As required under CEQA, the Draft EIR was published and circulated for review and comment by responsible and trustee agencies and interested members of the public. The public review period established ran from August 23, 1999 through October 7, 1999. Written and any oral comments on environmental issues received during the review period and prior to preparation of this Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) are addressed in the Final EIR.

CEQA requires that a Final EIR be prepared, certified, and considered by public decision-makers prior to taking action on a project. The Final EIR provides the Lead Agency (i.e., City of Grass Valley City Council) an opportunity to respond to comments received on the Draft EIR during the public review period and to incorporate any additions or revisions to the Draft EIR necessary to clarify or supplement information contained in the Draft document.

1.2 SCOPE AND FORMAT

This document includes this chapter, [Introduction](#), outlining the purpose, scope and format of the Final EIR. Chapter Two explains the public review process and lists all agencies and individuals who commented on the Draft EIR. Chapter Three consists of the actual letters of comment, reproduced in their entirety. Chapter Four consists of responses to each written comment received on the Draft EIR as well as oral comments made during Planning Commission Public Hearings that were specific to the Draft EIR. These responses are intended to supplement or revise information contained in the Draft EIR, as appropriate, based on the comments and additional research or updated

information. Each response follows the associated comment, which is summarized. Each letter has been numbered (e.g., Letter 1, Letter 2). Within each letter, individual comments are assigned an alpha-numeric identification. For example, the first comment on Letter 1 is Comment 1-A, and the second is Comment 1-B.

Chapter Five contains a description and analysis of proposed revisions to the *Draft 2 General Plan Update* since the Draft EIR and General Plan were published. Chapter Six consists of revisions to pages S-4 through S-11 of the Summary Table in the Draft EIR that reflect changes resulting from comments on the Draft EIR and changes in the *Draft 2 General Plan Update* resulting from the public review process and any noted errata. The table is reprinted in its entirety and replaces the Summary Table in the Draft EIR.

1.3 USE OF THE DRAFT EIR

Each chapter of the Draft EIR identifies an environmental topic (e.g. geology). The characterization of the significance of each impact was based upon the initial study and the EIRs author's experience in similar communities, but prior to taking into consideration the full effect of all relevant proposed General Plan policies. Thus, the phrase "potentially significant," in initially describing the environmental effects of the General Plan Update, is used broadly and reflects the level of potential effects prior to considering all relevant policies. The EIR then analyzes the effect of the proposed General Plan, with full consideration given to all relevant General Plan policies. All relevant policies are listed under "Discussion/Conclusion" as well as under "Mitigation Measures," so that the reader can follow the EIR author's analysis. Based upon the evaluation, the EIR either determines that additional mitigation measures are required (as reflected in the text and summary table), or that sufficient text and revisions were incorporated into the General Plan that the potential impacts are viewed as less than significant.

Added mitigation measures identified in the Draft EIR are subject to the Mitigation Monitoring Program required by § 21081.6. of the Public Resources Code. Specific policy additions or changes in the General Plan made a part of the document before release of the Draft EIR, which also had positive environmental effects, are in fact not CEQA mitigation measures and are not subject to statutory Mitigation Monitoring requirements. Implementation of these policies is assured through the "Implementing Actions/Strategies " included in the General Plan.



CHAPTER TWO

1 - Introduction

OVERVIEW OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

2 - Overview of Comments Received

2.1 PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PROCEDURES

3 - Letters of Comment

4 - Responses to Comments

CEQA requires public disclosure in an EIR of all project environmental effects and encourages public participation throughout the EIR process. As stated in § 15299 of the CEQA Guidelines, the purposes of public review of environmental documents are:

5 - Evaluation of Changes to General Plan Update, Draft 2

- a) sharing expertise
- b) disclosing agency analyses
- c) checking for accuracy
- d) detecting omissions
- e) discovering public concerns
- f) soliciting counter proposals

6 - Revised Summary Table of Potential Impacts, & Proposed Mitigation Measures

Section 15201 of the CEQA Guidelines states that "Public participation is an essential part of the CEQA process." A public review period of no less than 30 days nor longer than 60 days is required for a Draft EIR under § 15087(c) of the CEQA Guidelines. If a State agency is a lead or responsible agency for the project, the public review period shall be at least 45 days. In this case, a review period extending from August 23, 1999 to October 7, 1999 was established. Two letters of comment were received after the close of the review period and are also addressed in this Final EIR.

Three public hearings were held on the Draft EIR by the City Planning Commission: Monday August 23, 1999, Monday September 13, 1999 and Monday September 20, 1999. Questions and comments related to the General Plan Update were made and recorded. Only limited comment was received on the Draft EIR. Oral comments received that were specific to the EIR as well as written comments are addressed in Chapter Four.

2.2 AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS WHO COMMENTED ON THE DRAFT EIR

Letter 1: Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

Letter 2: Andrew R. Cassano, Nevada City Engineering, Inc.

Letter 3: Rodney A. Hill, Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

Letter 4: Overton Caperton, Carriage House Property Owners Association

Letter 5: Kenneth J. Absher, O.D.

Letter 6: Sharon M. Boivin

Letter 7: Thomas Miller, Interim County Administrator, Nevada County

Letter 8: Stephanie Snider, Administrative Analyst, Nevada County

Letter 9: John W. Rumsey, Nevada County Dept. Of Transportation and Sanitation

Letter 10: Mark Tomich, Planning Director, Nevada County

Letter 11: Laurie Oberholtzer, Rural Quality Coalition

Letter 12: Jean L. Baker, CALTRANS District 3, Marysville

Letter 13: Jason Marshall, California Department of Conservation

Letter 14: S R Jones, Executive Officer, Nevada LAFCo

Letter 15: Dan Landon, Executive Director, Nevada County Transportation Commission

Letter 16: James P. Chatigny, General Manager, Nevada Irrigation District

Letter 17: Jeff Wagner, Fire Chief, Ophir Fire Protection District

Letter 18: Tim Fike, Chief, Nevada County Consolidated Fire District

Oral Comment, September 20, 1999 Planning Commission Meeting: Paul Schwartz



CHAPTER THREE

LETTERS OF COMMENTS

1 - Introduction

2 - Overview of Comments Received

3 - Letters of Comment

Letters on file at Community Development Department , Grass Valley City Hall.

4 - Responses to Comments

Letters also contained within final printed version of Final EIR.

5 - Evaluation of Changes to General Plan Update, Draft

2

6 - Revised Summary Table of Potential Impacts, & Proposed Mitigation Measures



CHAPTER FOUR

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

1 - Introduction

2 - Overview of Comments Received

3 - Letters of Comment

4 - Responses to Comments

5 - Evaluation of Changes to General Plan Update, Draft

6 - Revised Summary Table of Potential Impacts, & Proposed Mitigation Measures

This section summarizes each of the written and oral comments received on the Draft EIR during the public review period. Following each comment is a response intended to either supplement, clarify, or amend information provided in the Draft EIR, or refer the commentor to the appropriate place in the Draft EIR where the requested information is found. Letters of comment and documents are presented verbatim in Chapter Three, and each letter and comment is numbered for reference.

Many of the letters received commented on the draft General Plan Update as well as the Draft EIR. Unless the General Plan Update comment raised an environmental issue not otherwise addressed, comments on the draft General Plan Update are found in Chapter Three, but are not responded to in Chapter Four. This is in keeping with the intent of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines [§ 15088(a)].

LETTER 1 Terry Roberts, Senior Planner, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

LETTER 2 Andrew R. Cassano, Land Use Planner, Nevada City Engineering, Inc.

LETTER 3 Rodney A. Hill, Air Pollution Control Officer, Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

LETTER 4 Overton Caperton, President, Carriage House Property Owners Association

LETTER 5 Kenneth J. Absher

LETTER 6 Sharon M. Boivin

LETTER 7 Thomas A. Miller, Interim County Administrator, Nevada County

LETTER 8 Stephanie Snyder, Administrative Analyst, County Administrator's Office, Nevada County

LETTER 9 John W. Rumsey, Senior Civil Engineer, Department of Transportation and Sanitation, Nevada County

LETTER 10 Mark Tomich, Planning Director, Nevada County

LETTER 11 Laurie Oberholtzer, Board Member, Rural Quality Coalition

LETTER 12 Jean L. Baker, Chief, Office of Environmental Management, Caltrans District 3, Marysville, CA

LETTER 13 Jason Marshall, Assistant Director, CA Department of Conservation, Office of Governmental and Environmental Relations

LETTER 14 S R Jones, Executive Officer, Nevada LAFCo

LETTER 15 Dan Landon, Executive Director, Nevada County Transportation Commission

LETTER 16 James P. Chatigny, General Manager, Nevada Irrigation District

LETTER 17 Jeff Wagner, Fire Chief, Ophir Hill Fire Protection District

LETTER 18 Tim Fike, Chief, Nevada County Consolidated Fire District

Oral Comment Paul Schwartz

LETTER 1 Terry Roberts, Senior Planner, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

Comment 1A: The State Clearinghouse has submitted the above named proposed draft environmental document to selected state agencies for review. On the enclosed Notice of Completion you will note that the Clearinghouse had checked the agencies that have reviewed the project. The review period is now closed and the comments from the responding agencies are enclosed. Please note that Section 21104 of the California Public Resources Code requires that: "a responsible agency or other public agency shall only make substantive comments regarding those activities involved in a project which are within an area of expertise of the agency or which are required to be carried out or approved by the agency." Commenting agencies are also required by this section to support their comments with specific documentation. This letter acknowledges that the City has complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Response: Comment noted. No response is required.

LETTER 2 Andrew R. Cassano, Land Use Planner, Nevada City Engineering, Inc.

Comment 2A: The writer suggests that the list of documents incorporated by reference include past EIRs done for the City's sewer collection and treatment system master plans and the Nevada County General Plan.

Response: Although the described EIRs contain useful background, both were written prior to the development of the current Grass Valley General Plan Update and do not directly address the project. Incorporation by reference is usually reserved for documents that address or describe the current project, but are lengthy or highly technical in nature.

Comment 2B: Overall buildout impacts in the City are profoundly affected by growth in the County. The County made a decision upon adoption of its General Plan to accept a number of significant and unavoidable impacts. The County's decision to accept these impacts probably makes it more difficult for the City to have control in fully mitigating the same impacts. Further the County's General Plan requires growth to be directed to existing urban regions at maximum densities.

Response: Comment noted. The City recognizes that past and future County actions will have an impact on environmental quality within the City of Grass Valley. Although the County accepted several significant and unavoidable impacts with adoption of its General Plan, it is the intention of Grass Valley decision-makers to minimize those impacts on Grass Valley through adoption of the current General Plan.

Comment 2C: The planning area map (Figure 2-2) does not reflect the latest version in the draft General Plan Update. The writer notes that the Meddler property is not fully contained within the Planning Area.

Response: The maps in the EIR were prepared prior to the start of public hearings before the City Planning Commission. During those hearings, some minor drafting errors in the map were discovered. Chapter Five of this Final EIR contains a corrected and updated map based on City Council direction.

Comment 2D: The residential unit counts (Table 2-1) don't agree with the annexation agreements. They should be 180 units for Loma Rica Ranch, 363 units for North Star and 100 units for Kenny Ranch.

Response: The figures referred to by the writer are actually in acres, not units. Table 2-1 is reprinted at the end of this Chapter with the following revised heading: "Land Use Acreage and Housing Unit Allocations Per Annexation Agreements." Housing units are displayed on page 2-4 at the bottom of the Table.

Comment 2E: On Page 2-4, the older term "Planned Employment Center" should be replaced with annexation agreement terminology "Business Park" and the term "Park and Recreation" should be replaced with "Recreation Zoning."

Response: The General Plan Update does replace the term "Planned Employment Center" with "Business Park." However, in the context of Table 2-1, the term "Planned Employment Center" should be retained. The annexation agreements specifically allocate acreage to the "Planned Employment Center" land use designation. It is assumed that, following adoption of the General Plan Update, the term "Business Park" will replace "Planned Employment Center" in future annexation agreements, as well as other City plans and

regulations.

The term "Parks and Recreation" as used in Table 2-1 could be construed as implying annexation agreements which commit the respective parties to dedications of public park acreage. This is neither the intent of the annexation agreements, nor of references to "Parks and Recreation" allocations within the EIR. Therefore, the term "Parks and Recreation" in Table 2-1 is changed to "Recreation," signifying an acreage commitment to recreation, but not necessarily public park land. Table 2-1 is reprinted at the end of this Chapter.

Comment 2F: It is the writer's understanding that Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, which listed significant impacts is no longer a part of CEQA, but is referenced numerous times in the Draft EIR.

Response: References to Appendix G are to the current CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, which is titled "Environmental Checklist Form." The Checklist contains thresholds of significance that are very useful in the preparation of EIRs. The Appendix G referenced by the writer was removed from the Guidelines in 1998.

Comment 2G: Figure 3.5-4 is difficult to read in black and white.

Response: Figure 3.5-4 is reprinted at the end of this Chapter.

Comment 2H: The third paragraph on page 3-56 implies that the General Plan may mandate phasing or the timing of annexations. The statement should be supplemented to make it clear that phasing is expected to be a function of market demand and cost of infrastructure. This discussion and all similar discussions should make it clear that the percent of buildout in each region of the City is a planning projection, not a City mandate. The EIR should state clearly that the actual buildout may vary over the 20 year period.

Response: The General Plan Update commits the City to a land use plan designed in part to reduce sprawl and leap-frog (non-contiguous) development. As reflected in the EIR, the concept of identifying differing anticipated development "buildout" levels during the 20-year plan period in three areas (core, fringe, and periphery) is the principle tool for directing future growth and planning public service and infrastructure expansion. Although the General Plan Update does not indicate which specific parcels are anticipated to develop or not develop over the 20-year period, it does state the anticipated buildout levels within the three areas. The implication is that the City does not anticipate full buildout of the core, fringe, or periphery during the 20-year plan period.

Comment 2I: In Table 3.9-1 "Labor Meadows Road" should be corrected to read "LaBarr Meadows Road."

Response: Comment noted. Table 3.9-1 should be corrected to read: "LaBarr Meadows Road" under the column headed "ARTERIALS."

Comment 2J: It would be advisable for the EIR to elaborate further on the traffic impacts created by the County. The notion has been raised that the City could avoid street and intersection operational problems by

simply altering the land use map. In reality a significant portion of the daily traffic on City streets originates in the County. The City and County continue to update a regional capital improvement program, which should soon be adopted by the three western County jurisdictions. Meanwhile, each jurisdiction maintains its own capital improvements program and mitigation fee. A more detailed discussion of these individual and cooperative efforts could be helpful in assuring the public that there is a plan in place to alleviate traffic congestion.

Response: The General Plan Update process included considerable coordination between the City of Grass Valley and the Nevada County Transportation Commission. In fact, the Commission intentionally delayed consideration of the Regional Transportation Plan/Program in early 1999, pending results of traffic modeling and an initial draft plan being prepared by the General Plan Update Circulation Element consultant.

It is true that a significant portion of daily traffic on City streets originates in the County. This phenomenon was taken into account by traffic modeling performed during the General Plan Update. Also, because the General Plan Update included a broad Planning Area roughly four times the land area of the current City limits, much of the unincorporated area affecting (and affected by) the City was fully a part of land use and transportation planning from the outset.

Comment 2K: The EIR should review the possibility of a conventional at-grade intersection at the Crestview Drive/Smith Road and Highway 49 intersection. A separated grade interchange is probably not affordable, and the physical environmental impacts of constructing it would be much greater.

Response: Neither the General Plan Update nor the EIR intend to preclude an at-grade intersection at the Crestview Drive/Smith Road and State Highway 49 intersection. Please refer also to Letter 15, response to comment 15C, later in this Chapter.

Comment 2L: It is disappointing that there is no mention on page 3-133 of Fred Knoop's contribution to the horse business at Loma Rica Ranch. Mr. Knoop took the limited horse facilities that MacBoyle started and, beginning in the 1950s, improved and operated Loma Rica Ranch as an internationally recognized thoroughbred farm.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment 2M: Since the Northerly Emphasis alternative, discussed on Page 4-6, is selected as the environmentally superior alternative, the discussion should recognize that this option is not currently feasible due to the existence of the North Star annexation agreement, unless the agreement is renegotiated.

Response: Comment noted. A sixth assumption is added to the list appearing on pages 4-7 and 4-8 as follows: "The North Star Annexation Agreement will be renegotiated to recognize the redistribution of land uses as proposed."

Comment 2N: The fifth paragraph on page 4-11 is not accurate. The densities set forth in the annexation

agreements would apply under either the old or updated General Plan. However, the current General Plan allows for much greater development intensity than is contemplated by the annexation agreements.

Response: The comment and the 5th paragraph on page 4-11 actually agree. The EIR is stating, correctly, that the current (1982) General Plan and the annexation agreements provide for different land use designations. In that sense, the current General Plan and the annexation agreements are incompatible. This incompatibility is reconciled under the General Plan Update, which embraces the land use allocations of the annexation agreements.

LETTER 3 Rodney A. Hill, Air Pollution Control Officer, Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

Comment 3A: The input variables and full [air quality] monitoring report should be included as an appendix to the final EIR or the final General Plan.

Response: Comment noted. Input variables and the full monitoring report are included as a 15 page attachment at the end of this Chapter.

Comment 3B: Mitigations or alternatives should be contained in the EIR addressing "unavoidable significant impacts" predicted to occur on three collector streets whose level of service (LOS) may drop to LOS F, causing localized air quality violations. Mitigations might include priority treatment in future transportation planning/programming and a strategy for avoiding congestion on the three collectors (Freeman Lane, Hughes Road, Ridge Road).

Response: Comment noted. Impact #3.4-1 on page 3-32 of the DEIR states: "An increase in regional emissions of non-attainment pollutants from mobile and stationary sources will result from implementation of the 2020 General Plan. This is a potentially significant impact." As suggested, an additional mitigation measure, Mitigation Measure #3.4.2, is hereby added to specifically address the air quality impacts associated with traffic congestion on street segments and at intersections which drop to LOS "F":

Mitigation Measure #3.4.2: Priority treatment in future transportation planning/programming, and a strategy for avoiding congestion shall be developed for arterial and collector roadway segments and intersections whose level of service drop to LOS "F". (Applies to Impact #3.4-1)

Effectiveness of Measure: Although the impact will remain cumulatively significant, adoption of this mitigation measure in conjunction with Mitigation Measure #3.4-1, will further reduce the level of impact.

This mitigation measure is being added to the revised Table of Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures, Chapter 6.0 of this document.

Comment 3C: Western Nevada County has not yet been declared an [ozone standard] non-attainment area by the Environmental Protection Agency. The DEIR should be corrected to reflect this (pages 3-28 and 3-31).

Response: It had been anticipated by the State Air Resources Board that Western Nevada County was to be declared a non-attainment area by the U.S. EPA in July, 1999. This declaration has not yet occurred. However, the process for the State ARB Board to recommend to EPA that a declaration of non-attainment be made has begun. If the California portion of the process continues as scheduled, it is a relative certainty that EPA will declare western Nevada County a non-attainment area in violation of the 8-hour ozone standard before the end of the Year 2000. The last paragraph on page 3-28 (DEIR) is changed to read " ... and will likely be designated as a federal non-attainment area for ozone before the end of the Year 2000." On page 3-31, the footnote to Table 3.4-2 is changed to read, "Western Nevada County will be designated as a federal non-attainment area by the end of the Year 2000", and "Source: Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, 1997 and 1999."

Comment 3D: A new PM2.5 monitoring station has been added at Litton Drive in Grass Valley.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment 3E: Grass Valley has taken a significant step by addressing and providing strategies for mitigating area and mobile source emissions, for reducing ozone precursors, and for reducing particulate matter air pollution. It is apparent that air quality was a prime consideration in development of the [General] Plan.

Response: Comment noted and appreciated. NSAQMD's constructive assistance in helping the City to address air quality in the General Plan Update was a model for intergovernmental cooperation.

LETTER 4 Overton Caperton, President, Carriage House Property Owners Association

Comment 4A: If Freeman Lane is extended, average daily traffic will exceed 10,000 at buildout and peak traffic would approach 15,000, making Freeman an arterial, not a collector street.

Response: By the Year 2020, the average daily traffic on Freeman Lane is projected to be 4,800 vehicles. At build out, Freeman Lane is predicted to carry 10,100 vehicles per day. This volume is 200 vehicles higher than the acceptable LOS "D" threshold of 9,900 ADT.

By definition, the average daily traffic (ADT) is the average of the number of vehicles that travel on a roadway over the course of a typical weekday. While traffic volumes do vary from day to day, it is highly unlikely, even in rural areas that experience high recreational peaking, that a peak day would be 50% higher than the average day. Therefore, the statement that the peak traffic would approach 15,000 vehicles per day is without basis.

Comment 4B: Extension of Freeman Lane across Wolf Creek, and subsequent traffic volumes combined with driveways on Freeman and absence of sidewalks on both sides will pose unjustified safety issues.

Response: Specific safety issues potentially resulting from a combination of 1) street design, 2) traffic

volumes, and 3) vehicular speed as they pertain to a specific street merit further evaluation at a project level, if, in fact, a project is submitted for consideration at a future date. Such site-specific issues are beyond the scope of the General Plan EIR, which is a program EIR as defined by CEQA.

Comment 4C: Much of Carriage House is in a valley that experiences temperature inversions. Added vehicular traffic and congestion will create unhealthy [air quality] conditions, particularly for the very young and elderly.

Response: Specific air quality issues potentially resulting from increased traffic and congestion as they pertain to a specific street merit further evaluation on a project level if, in fact, a project is submitted for consideration at a future date. Site-specific air quality issues are beyond the scope of the General Plan EIR, which is a program EIR as defined by CEQA.

Comment 4D: The noise level of a truck passing within 50' will create noise levels of 85dB. The noise level at homes with 20' setbacks would be exposed to levels of 91+ dB. Noise levels would be even higher given the steep slope of Freeman Lane. Noise levels of this magnitude cannot be mitigated, even with sound walls which are inappropriate in residential areas.

Response: The Noise Element of the General Plan and noise impact analyses in the DEIR utilize commonly accepted methodologies for projecting known noise levels based upon future conditions. The two noise "descriptors" used in the DEIR are Ldn and CNEL, as described on page 3-98 of the DEIR. Resulting noise contours (Existing Noise Contours, Figure 3.10-2 and Projected Year 2020 Noise Contours, Figure 3.10-3) employ these concepts. Specific noise issues potentially resulting from increased traffic levels and, potentially, traffic speed, as they pertain to a specific street merit further evaluation and mitigation on a project level if, in fact, a project is submitted for consideration at a future date.

Comment 4E: The scenic vista at the confluence of Wolf Creek and Allison Ranch Canal at the end of Freeman Lane would be destroyed by a highway bridge or box culvert. A park and trailhead would be more beneficial.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment 4F: The 1982 General Plan does not identify Freeman Lane as a collector, only as an alternative access road. Poor planning occurred in the past.

Response: The 1982 General Plan presented the Freeman Lane extension as one of the alternatives to improved circulation. It was selected during the current General Plan Update process and designated a collector as one element of the preferred circulation system, supportive of the preferred land use alternative.

Comment 4G: The most suitable link to North Star is a Taylorville Road extension, in lieu of a Freeman Lane extension.

Response: The elimination of Freeman Lane and its replacement with the Crestview-Smith to Taylorville

Road connection would relocate additional traffic to the west side of the McKnight Way interchange at Taylorville Road. While it is likely that this change would not alter the overall conclusions of the DEIR analysis, if these changes are combined with additional traffic generated by the inevitable changes to Berriman Ranch land uses, the overall impact at the SR 49/McKnight Way interchange may be significant and require further evaluation.

Information submitted with Letter 4 contrasts physical features and travel characteristics for the two alternative routes. The grade on the new Taylorville Extension would have to be confirmed but could be less than that existing today on Freeman Lane. The speed limit on the Taylorville Extension would need to be established but could be greater than the 25 mph limit on Freeman Lane. The comparison of travel distances and travel times indicates that trips to some locations would be longer, and others would be shorter. As noted earlier, the key traffic issue is the impact to the McKnight Way interchange if additional traffic was to pass through the McKnight/Taylorville roundabout.

LETTER 5 Kenneth J. Absher

Comment 5A: The EIR assumes the use of Freeman Lane, has provided no alternative, and has not evaluated the proposed alternatives of record.

Response: An alternatives analysis was performed. Alternatives considered within the General Plan Update and evaluated in the DEIR are described on page 5-3 of the DEIR. As a Program EIR, the range of alternatives and level of specificity therein are appropriate. The alternatives analyzed both a north and south land use alternative with a variety of circulation alternatives. The circulation system alternatives that were analyzed included: 1) the Freeman Lane connection, 2) a connection to Crestview, 3) an extension of McKnight Way, and 4) a no connection alternative. The preferred land use alternatives were subsequently analyzed with the preferred circulation system which included the Freeman Lane connection as well as the Smith-Crestview connection.

Comment 5B: The EIR understates the noise level on Freeman Lane, based on the projected traffic volume.

Response: Please refer to response to comments 4A and 4D related to traffic volumes and noise, and to the methodological description in the DEIR (pages 3-98 through 3-122, DEIR).

LETTER 6 Sharon M. Boivin

Comment 6A: Traffic analysis fails to look at West Main Street, which appears to approach low service levels during peak hours now, and will be exacerbated by development of Kenny Ranch.

Response: The initial DEIR scoping identified the intersection of Main Street with Auburn Street for analysis during the p.m. peak hour. Currently, this intersection operates at LOS "B" with an average delay per vehicle of 12.9 seconds. No other intersections along West Main Street were identified to be analyzed under existing conditions. However, under future conditions, the intersection of Main Street with Alta Street was added (Table 3.9-7). The Year 2020 forecast for West Main Street is presented in Table 3.9-5C. Please

refer also to the response to comment 9D.

The Regional traffic model reports that in the year 2020 the volume of traffic on West Main Street will be 9,450 ADT west of Auburn Street. This is less than the volume reported in the comment based on 1994 traffic counts. It may be that the traffic model understates the volume of traffic in this area and that West Main Street west of Auburn Street should be added to DEIR Table 3.9-6 as a location which is likely to exceed LOS "D" in the year 2020. As widening to four lanes in this area is impractical, the impact to this location should be added to the list of significant and unmitigable impacts. Please note the addition of this impact to the revised Table of Potential Impacts, Chapter 6.0 of this document.

Comment 6B: The EIR's conclusion that [enumerated] significant, adverse effects [of increased traffic congestion and acceptance of a LOS lower than "D"] will occur "even with the most feasible attempts at mitigation" are specious.

Response: The fundamental reason that the DEIR states that significant, adverse effects will occur even with the most feasible attempts at mitigation is that a substantial amount of the traffic which impacts Grass Valley initiates or is generated outside of the City limits in western Nevada County. Grass Valley accommodates outside traffic, but has little practical control over key variables related to external traffic generation, namely land uses and land use densities/intensities.

The City of Grass Valley's threshold for Level of Service is "D", beyond which, mitigations are required with the exceptions noted. Table 3.9-4 of the DEIR describes the difference between LOS "D" and conditions at other Levels of Service. In other words, the draft General Plan acknowledges the locations where LOS "D" may be exceeded in the future. The DEIR acknowledges the General Plan Update policies under which the City will strive to maintain LOS "D", but allow the City Council sufficient flexibility to accept LOS "E" in situations in which the Council determines that the costs (including environmental, neighborhood, "quality of life") of maintaining LOS "D" might outweigh the benefits. The DEIR (Circulation Implementation Actions and Strategies 7-CI) states as follows:

"Continue to update a Capital Improvement Program which strives to maintain LOS "D" at all locations during weekday P.M. peak hours. Define "normally accepted maximum" improvements that are consistent with the character and terrain of Grass Valley. If forecast traffic volumes cannot maintain LOS "D", the City Council may consider additional "extraordinary" improvements. The City Council may determine on a case by case basis, that "extraordinary" improvements are not feasible or desirable and may relax the LOS "D" standard for a particular intersection or roadway segment".

Implementation Action/Strategy 7-CI continues by spelling out the criteria which the City Council shall use in considering exceptions to the LOS "D" standard:

- The number of hours per day that a road segment or intersection would operate at conditions worse than LOS "D"
- The ability of the improvement to reduce peak hour delay and improve traffic operations
- The impact on accessibility to surrounding properties

- The right-of-way needs and physical impact on surrounding properties
- The visual aesthetics of the required improvements and the impact on community identity and character
- Environmental impacts including air quality and noise impacts
- Construction and right-of-way acquisition costs
- Impacts on pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety
- The impacts of the required construction phasing and traffic maintenance

7-CI ends with the following statement: "In no case should the City plan for worse than LOS "E" at any intersection or roadway segment during the afternoon peak hour.

Acceptance of a lower level of service does, admittedly, have certain adverse transportation impacts which would be averted if measures to adhere to LOS "D" were implemented. However, flexibility to impose a lower standard in selected circumstances is regarded an important safeguard, designed to protect environmental and community values against the doctrinaire imposition of single purpose standards. In some cases, the "cure is worse than the disease". The City Council must have the right to exercise judgement in such cases, even if it means a greater degree of traffic congestion.

The DEIR does not encourage the City to embrace the lower standard easily. Rather, as evidenced in the above excerpts from Implementation Action/Strategy 7-CI, it approaches any reduction in standard with caution and provides guidelines for decision-making.

Comment 6C: The EIR says that traffic congestion will lead to degraded air quality, impediments to emergency response vehicles, and movements of goods and services. This is not what the public wants, based on public workshops, and is inconsistent with the underlying draft General Plan goal that the City's circulation system promote the safe, efficient, and reliable movement of people and goods".

Response: The Circulation Element of the draft General Plan, including the Circulation Plan contained therein, does strive to meet the goals and objectives enumerated within the Element, as well as incorporating infrastructure improvements designed to achieve stated level of service (LOS) standards. The DEIR candidly evaluates the draft General Plan's environmental impacts, identifies impact mitigation measures, and notes impacts which may remain significant and unavoidable even with implementation of the stated mitigation measures. Circulation impacts adjudged to be significant and unavoidable are clearly identified in Chapter 3 of the DEIR.

Comment 6D: It is inappropriate to include the interchange at Dorsey Drive and Highway 20/49 since no environmental document has been prepared to address the impacts of such an interchange and CALTRANS is just beginning to prepare the EIR.

Response: The Dorsey Drive interchange is included in the General Plan Circulation Element. The interchange is identified as a project in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Comment 6E: Commentor believes that the DEIR inadequately addresses the impacts of Plan buildout and road improvements, which could result in incompatible land uses in proximity to one another and in significant adverse impacts on sensitive environmental resources.

Response: Comment noted. It is not possible to respond to the issue of incompatible land uses in proximity to one another without benefit of specific examples. No known incompatibilities are apparent in the draft General Plan.

Comment 6F: Effective mitigation would require the City to adopt site development standards to be used during "project site review process" to provide a consistent approach for addressing sensitive environmental features and natural constraints, clustering and provision of open space, potential for land use conflicts, and potential for public health hazards including excessive noise.

Response: Numerous policies and implementation actions/strategies found in the DEIR (Appendix C) address these issues. Examples:

Protection of sensitive features/natural constraints: 1-COSI; 4-COSI; 7-COSI; 16-COSP

Clustering and open space provision: 6-COSI

Land use compatibility: 7-LUI; 2-LUI; 8-LUI

Public health and noise: 1 through 17-SI; 1 through 10 NI

In addition, please refer to the response to comment 10C, below.

Comment 6G: EIR inadequately addresses noise impacts associated with traffic increases and proposed road improvements. Commentor identifies particular concerns: Freeman Lane, south of McKnight and Dorsey Drive between East Main and Sutton.

Response: Please refer to response to Comment 4D, above, and to methodological description in DEIR (pages 3-98 through 3-122, DEIR).

LETTER 7 Thomas A. Miller, Interim County Administrator, Nevada County

Comment 7A: Letter 7 is a transmittal letter accompanying County comments (see Letter 8).

Response: No response necessary.

LETTER 8 Stephanie Snyder, Administrative Analyst, County Administrator's Office, Nevada County

Comment 8A: The EIR needs to address the potential consequences of future annexations on County services in both incorporated and unincorporated regions.

Response: The City of Grass Valley is currently revising and updating its Sphere of Influence Plan/Master Services Element. This effort will address issues of County service levels. The current revision/update implements the following Implementation Actions and Strategies in the General Plan and EIR:

8-LUI Coordinate with LAFCo, Nevada County, and other agencies and special districts regarding provisions of this General Plan, application of General Plan provisions in unincorporated portions of the Planning Area, and the timing and directions of future annexations.

9-LUI Establish standard processes and procedures for planning, annexation, and service provision in the unincorporated Planning Area.

11-LUI Review service provision/extension plans, policies, and procedures to assure compatibility with the General Plan.

It is further noted that the General Plan Update process involved coordination between Grass Valley and County/Regional agencies, notably in the areas of Planning/Community Development and Transportation.

Comment 8B: The EIR should include analysis of service issues, mitigation measures (including impact fees and tax sharing agreements) and a phasing plan for annexation.

Response: The aforementioned Sphere of Influence Plan/Master Services Element will provide meaningful analysis of the issues identified. The General Plan does address the timing of future development (Figure 3-3, 20 Year Development Level Map and descriptive text on page 3-16). The DEIR's evaluation of Plan impacts is based substantially upon 20-year development projections contained in Figure 3-3 and accompanying text.

LETTER 9 John W. Rumsey, Senior Civil Engineer, Department of Transportation and Sanitation, Nevada County

Comment 9A: The EIR lists four road segments as having existing LOS "E". However, all are three lane roads, not two lane, and consequently are not deficient.

Response: The number of travel lanes and associated capacities of these roads used for this analysis are as presented were presented in the Nevada County General Plan Update. Thus, the projected Levels of Service are consistent with available methodologies and standards.

Comment 9B: Mitigation measure 3.9.5 calling for signalization at Whispering Pines and Brunswick Road is inadvisable, due to the steep grade combined with winter icing problems.

Response: Comment noted. The feasibility of signaling this location or of installing alternative traffic controls should be assessed as traffic volumes approach warrants for signalization in the future. Further engineering evaluation will be needed to determine an applicable location for the easterly extension of Whispering Pines Road.

Comment 9C: Mitigation measure 3.9.3 lists several policies as mitigations, including reference to a Transportation Services Management (TSM) Ordinance. State legislation severely restricts local government ability to pass TSM ordinances.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment 9D: The EIR contains no analysis of West Main Street in the downtown area.

Response: Please refer to the response to comment 6A. West Main Street in the Downtown Core area was analyzed under future conditions and daily traffic projections are listed in Table 3.9-10B. These locations include Main Street west of Auburn, south of Squirrel Creek Road and east of Bennett Street. Under existing conditions, Main Street east of Bennett Street currently carries 12,172 ADT. At the time that the setting document was being prepared a current traffic count west of Auburn Street was not available from the County nor the City. The consultant was unable to have this location counted as the several attempts coincided with the Main Street widening project and SR 49 ramp closures. Please refer also to the response to comment 6A, above.

Comment 9E: The process used to forecast land use, traffic impacts and mitigations leaves a potential for either inadequate treatment of latecomers outside the Core Area or less than full mitigation.

Response: Comment noted. Please refer to the response to comment 15F.

Comment 9F: The Plan and EIR lay out a mechanism for updating traffic mitigations, but the process has not proven the ability to react to change. Necessary fees to support the 1994 Grass Valley/Nevada City Sub-Area Study are still not in place.

Response: Comment noted. Please refer to the response to comment 15F.

Comment 9G: Timing policies in the plan do not preclude development in the outlying areas. A large outlying project may trigger mitigations that earlier projects escape, thus relieving the developer from shouldering the whole burden.

Response: Comment noted.

LETTER 10 Mark Tomich, Planning Director, Nevada County

Comment 10A: Expand discussion of growth inducing impacts (3.16, DEIR) to address direct and indirect

impacts resulting from proposed General Plan options. Proposed annexation areas appear to have include a large amount of commercial zoned land located outside of existing, core commercial areas.

Response: As a matter of policy, the General Plan acknowledges and incorporates land use allocations previously approved for the three large annexation areas: North Star, Loma Rica Ranch, and Kenny Ranch. These allocations include commercial designations, which are described and discussed in the General Plan and DEIR. The General Plan provides for the continuation of a strong downtown core commercial area, but acknowledges the existence of other commercial land uses outside of the City core, both within the City limits and in unincorporated portions of the Planning Area.

Comment 10B: Specific, detailed analysis of the following issues identified as requiring resolution should be provided in the General Plan and EIR: conversion of open space land to urban uses, impacts to biological resources, drainage and increase in downstream flows due to new development, and impacts to air quality.

Response: The DEIR, a Program EIR, addresses these issues at an appropriate level of analysis. Please refer to DEIR sections 3.3 (Biological Resources); 3.4 (Air Quality); 3.6 (Land Use and Planning); and 3.14 (Conservation and Open Space).

Comment 10C: DEIR and General Plan should include specific policies and mitigation measures to preserve open space and environmental resources. Plan alternatives should consider increased clustering and open space.

Response: Both the General Plan and EIR address open space, environmental resources, and clustering in substantial detail and specificity. The General Plan includes numerous policies and implementation actions/strategies (i.e., mitigation measures) to preserve open space and environmental resources, and to promote clustering. Regarding open space and associated environmental resources, the DEIR addresses the issue, in part, on page 3-149 as follows:

This impact could be directly and cumulatively significant. In the absence of adequate planning for this impact, there would soon be a significant loss of open space in Grass Valley. The General Plan contains several goals, objectives, policies, and implementation strategies that specifically address the impact of new development on open space including establishing a City-sponsored open space district to operate and manage existing and future open space resources (4-RP), establishing and assigning responsibility for land/development rights acquisition for open space purposes (5-COSI), and enlisting the interests and efforts of appropriate state and federal agencies and private foundations regarding open space protection (19-COSP). Furthermore, the General Plan recommends that a development review process be maintained which documents compliance with the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation strategies of the General Plan (6-COSI). Lastly, an agreement with the County of Nevada should be reached for a strategy to protect open space in the Planning Area (18-COSP) which would include establishing an urban limit line beyond which urban land uses, densities, facilities and services will not extend (20-COSP). These goals, policies, objectives, and implementation actions and strategies would reduce the effect, however it will remain a **cumulative, significant unavoidable and irreversible impact.**

Specific goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures/strategies follow, thereafter, on page 3-149.

Please refer to the response to comment 6F, above, in reference to clustering and natural features.

Comment 10D: Plan and EIR do not include sources for traffic data provided. Please complete studies to provide data sufficient for a comprehensive traffic analysis for areas currently identified as data "not available".

Response: Existing daily traffic volumes on study area roadways within the Grass Valley Sphere of Influence were obtained CALTRANS and Nevada County's ongoing traffic count program. Of the total of 30 existing intersections which were identified for study by City of Grass Valley staff, and new intersection turning movement counts were made in October through November 1998 at 24 locations. Available data from the 1994 Subregional Transportation Study was re-used at 6 locations. All of these aforementioned references are included in the existing setting document for the Grass Valley General Plan Update. For Year 2020 conditions, it was appropriate to analyze additional locations beyond those that had been selected for the existing conditions analysis. Therefore, while traffic projections exist for the future were made, existing data was not available, thus the N/A identification.

Comment 10E: Traffic mitigation measures have not been analyzed under cumulative conditions to determine effectiveness of these measures. Significant and unavoidable impacts should include alternatives and obtainable mitigation measures which avoid elevating impacts to significant levels.

Response: Table 3.9-8 on page 3-86 of the DEIR identifies the impacted intersections with implementation of the General Plan, the applicable mitigation measures and the resulting Levels of Service for year 2020 conditions. Intersection level analysis was not conducted for General Plan buildout conditions.

Comment 10F: The draft General Plan does not include a Housing Element. The Housing Element should be updated.

Response: A Housing Element update was not part of the General Plan Update. The Housing Element will be updated in a timely fashion in keeping with State HCD schedule and requirements.

LETTER 11 Laurie Oberholtzer, Board Member, Rural Quality Coalition

Comment 11A: The EIR does not address a full range of alternatives, particularly a scale-down alternative which reduces traffic impacts below the significant level with no roads falling below LOS "D", mitigates unmitigated wildland fire hazard, strain on local water distribution and public services/facilities, and increased pressure to develop open space.

Response: State guidelines for consideration of project alternatives are found in Chapter 4.0 of the DEIR (page 4-1+). As stated in Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines, "An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of

the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives".

It is essential to recognize that fundamental planning assumptions stemming from the basic objectives of the General Plan Update include acceptance of specific 20-year population and housing unit projections, and acceptance of the role of Grass Valley as a the commercial/business hub of western Nevada County throughout the planning period. These fundamental planning assumptions were given credence in the selection of project alternatives, both during the General Plan Update and DEIR preparation.

Regarding traffic impacts, the City of Grass Valley's threshold for level of service is "D", beyond which mitigations are required with the exceptions noted. Table 3.9-4 of the DEIR describes the difference between LOS "D" and conditions at other levels of service. The DEIR acknowledges the locations at which LOS "D" may be exceeded in the future.

Four General Plan alternatives were evaluated: 1) no project alternative, 2) northerly emphasis, 3) southerly emphasis, and 4) draft General Plan. The draft General Plan is a hybrid of the northerly and southerly emphasis alternatives.

The DEIR concludes that the northerly emphasis alternative is the environmentally superior alternative (page 4-33).

Comment 11B: The Plan will result in roadway levels of service below "D" in many locations. Quality of life impacts of the proposed traffic levels must be explored, and neighborhood street thresholds established. Lower traffic levels of service may affect the economy of downtown and quality of life of downtown neighborhoods.

Response: Insofar as level of service reductions are concerned, please refer to the response to c comment 6B. Note particularly, that giving the City Council discretion to lower the level of service standard in selected circumstances actually allows quality of life factors to be taken into consideration.

Comment 11C: Quality of life impacts of traffic levels on local streets must be explored and a local traffic threshold is needed.

Response: A General Plan-level analysis focuses on freeways, arterials and collector street but not local streets which are not included in the regional traffic model. The thresholds for each of these classifications is presented in Table 3.9-2. Currently, there is not a uniform standard for traffic volume threshold relating to quality of life. However, as a rule of thumb, traffic engineers often intend for local residential streets to carry no more than about 2,000 to 2,500 ADT. When traffic volumes reach or exceed that level, many residents find that normal non-automobile activities which would occur are impacted (i.e., children playing in streets) and that noise and air pollution levels are unacceptable. General Plan implementation measure 17-CI directs the City to identify an applicable threshold and consider that threshold during review of entitlements.

Comment 11D: How to update traffic mitigations and fees needs to be discussed.

Response: General Plan implementation action/strategy 15-CI notes that the Capital Improvement Program and the fee program will need to be updated.

Comment 11E: Must we give up on West Main Street? How will downtown be affected as the LOS drops to "F"?

Response: Please refer to the responses to comments 6A and 9D.

Comment 11F: EIR needs to seriously address traffic rather than just allow the City to throw up its hands. Scaling down land uses, traffic diversions, prohibiting through traffic in some neighborhoods must be explored. Eliminate sprawl inducing commercial land uses in outlying areas.

Response: Traffic concerns and conflicts occupied much of the agenda of the Steering Committee, which worked for 15 months to produce the draft General Plan. The concerns voiced in this comment, and many others, were discussed at length. It is important to note that traffic and circulation problems in Grass Valley and vicinity pose some difficult problems, due to a combination of factors including: terrain, a less than ideal existing road network lacking an efficient street "hierarchy", presence and influence of the freeway, cross town movements and through-traffic in downtown and residential neighborhoods, and presence of substantial non-resident traffic. The General Plan update did not create these problems, but must deal with them in the context of overall City goals, objectives, and policies (both transportation and other elements). Many citizens and officials who participated in the General Plan Update's meetings, workshops, and hearings since mid-1998 will attest to the fact that the planning process (including the DEIR) has addressed the issues identified here and developed an understanding of the conflicts and compromises inherent in resolving the issues.

Comment 11G: EIR must explore the option of requiring open space on the land use map along ridgelines, special viewsheds, to form scenic easements along roads, along ditches, at future park sites. Clustering must be required to avoid resources.

Response: Regarding clustering, the Plan promotes clustering for the very purposes stated in the comment: 6-COSI in the General Plan and DEIR. Please refer also to responses to comments 6E and 10C.

In addition to an Open Space designation on the Land Use map, the General Plan also employs the concept of Open Space Opportunity as an overlay to the General Plan Land Use map. The Open Space land use designation is reserved for land whose use is determined to be permanently restricted to non-developed purposes, by virtue of ownership or adopted regulation (parks, formally delineated wetlands). The Open Space Opportunity overlay identifies an overall pattern of targeted open space not all of which yet to be secured by purchase, easement, or specific regulation.

The Open Space Opportunity designation is found in the current General Plan, and is depicted on the Land Use map. There is no evidence that the open space opportunity land use designation on the 1982 General

Plan Land Use map (current General Plan) facilitated public acquisition or protection of areas so designated. In the absence of pro-active public policy (the City within the City limits, Nevada County in unincorporated portions of the Planning Area), private property so designated was placed in a land use "limbo", ostensibly rendered incapable of productive use by private owners. The OSO designation in the 1982 Plan map is not, coincidentally, matched by and reflected geographically in an equivalent Zoning District in the Zoning Ordinance. This calls into question the compatibility between the 1982 General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

The 2020 General Plan Update utilizes the OSO concept as an overlay, rather than a land use designation. This approach:

- Allows identification, description, and delineation, of various types of open space areas.
- Allows appropriate differences in approach to the various types of open space areas identified, described, and delineated, rather than establishing a single, regulatory General Plan approach to areas best treated differently based on their characteristics.
- Allows a greater degree of future flexibility in identifying and delineating potential open space areas based upon their natural characteristics. Although it would be ideal to have all the scientific information needed to perform precise natural area delineations during the General Plan, such is not the case. As a policy document, the General Plan recognizes the need for and desirability of more definitive study prior to including additional open space areas in the General Plan OSO overlay or as open space designations on the Land Use map.
- Enables private owners to utilize their properties, rather than having to endure de facto "takings" potentially inherent in unsubstantiated open space designation on the Land Use map.

Comment 11H: The EIR does not discuss the critical impact of sprawl and change in the historic urban form of the Grass Valley environs. The Plan provides for more commercial and industrial/ business park land than the City or western Nevada County will need in the next twenty years. Phased annexation must be considered. Low density interim development districts on fringe and peripheral areas must be considered.

Response: The northerly emphasis alternative, the environmentally superior alternative, was specifically constructed to maximize infill development and deter "sprawl". Even that alternative, however, acknowledged that land outside of the current City limits would be necessary to accommodate projected 20-year demand for residential land. The draft General Plan, based fundamentally on the northerly emphasis but with some modifications, provides for non-residential development on the Bear River Mill on Highway 49 south of the City (SDA designation, intended in part to accommodate some commercial development). This is the major difference between the northerly emphasis (environmentally superior alternative) and draft General Plan. It represents a policy decision to provide for more commercial land availability *than would be required based upon a strict ratio of commercial land needs to projected population increase in the Planning Area*. The reasons for this policy decision are:

1. Restricting commercial land availability to the limited amount projected to be needed based on a population ratio formula allows no margin for error. As with any land use designation, it is both prudent and common practice to allow for more than the market-projected minimum land area (if

sufficient land is available within the Planning Area) for each land use.

2. In Grass Valley and vicinity, irregular terrain and site development constraints combine to render some sites either undevelopable or marginally developable. Often, more land area is required to locate an otherwise entitled land use than presumed by sound development practices or implied by City regulations and standards.
3. The Highway 49 corridor in the southern portion of the Planning Area is well suited to 1) providing commercial services for the large and growing population south and west of Grass Valley in unincorporated Nevada County and 2) accommodating types of development whose land area requirements would make them unsuitable in the downtown area or other, established commercial districts.

Concerning the commentor's request for low density interim development districts in the fringe and peripheral portions of the Planning Area, the draft General Plan provides for just such uses (Urban Estate Density residential) on a *permanent* basis appropriately located in the fringe and periphery.

Comment 11I: The EIR is too general. Some level of neighborhood-specific analysis is needed.

Response: The General Plan's goals, policies, objectives, and implementation actions/strategies provide both for identification of neighborhoods and for continued, detailed neighborhood-level planning. The DEIR provides an appropriate level of neighborhood-level analysis in a Program EIR. More detailed analysis is best accomplished at a later time, when more specific development plans and actions are proposed.

LETTER 12 Jean L. Baker, Chief, Office of Environmental Management, CALTRANS District 3, Marysville, CA

Comment 12A: EIR underestimates the extent of congestion under the Update Plan. LOS and assumed capacity for the freeway is most significant. To avoid LOS "F" the freeway would have to be six-laned (though not in 20 year Plan period). Buildout, as well as 20 year time frame should be estimated

Response: The level of service thresholds identified in the EIR originated in the Nevada County General Plan. Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) staff have provided information defending the use of these thresholds. Please refer to Letter 15 and attachments, found in Chapter 3.0, for an explanation of methodologies employed in transportation planning in Nevada County.

Comment 12B: To avoid LOS "F" through Grass Valley, the freeway would have to be widened to 6 lanes.

Response: Please refer to NCTC information referenced above (Letter 15, Chapter 3.0). The thresholds

noted above indicate that the LOS "D" standard will not be exceeded at General Plan build out (Table 3.9-10A).

Comment 12C: Alternatives to widening the freeway include parallel roads, additional width on

East Main from Idaho Maryland to Bennett providing access for Railroad, providing four lanes on East Main all the way to Brunswick Road.

Response: Comment noted. Please refer to NCTC information (Letter 15, chapter Three). The use of auxiliary lanes to increase intersection capacity is appropriate. The need to widen Main Street has been identified in the DEIR.

Comment 12D: Widening of Idaho Maryland Road to 4 lanes will probably require replacement of the undercrossing structure under the freeway.

Response: Comment noted. The extent of improvements needed to create a four lane section in this area will need to be evaluated further in subsequent studies required for modifications to the state highway and city street system.

Comment 12E: The mitigation measure proposed for the Idaho Maryland intersection with East Main Street (signalization) may not be allowed due to insufficient storage area to accommodate left turn volumes.

Response: The Westbound left turn lane is projected to carry 512 vehicles under 2020 conditions. Typically, dual left turn lanes are installed when the left turning volumes reaches 300 vehicles. However, providing a single westbound left turn onto the freeway would also provide LOS "D" conditions (delay = 32.5 seconds per vehicle). The Nevada County Operations Study identified widening the on ramp to two lanes in conjunction with ramp metering to provide sufficient storage for waiting motorists.

Comment 12F: The LOS for some intersections is not accurate.

Response: The Bennett/East Main intersection may not function as an isolated intersection under current conditions, and the existing Level of Service at this location may be poor. The draft General Plan suggests that Washington Street will be relocated to align with Bennett Street in the future.

The Brunswick Basin Traffic Operations Plan (BBTOP, 6-30-99) utilizes the Synpro software to calculate the Level of Service for the four closely spaced intersection along the Brunswick corridor in the vicinity of Highway 49/20. The results of that study state that the Brunswick/Nevada City Highway and the Brunswick/Maltman intersections currently operate at LOS "D"; the Brunswick/SR 20 intersection operates at LOS "C"; and the Brunswick/Sutton Way intersection currently operates at LOS "E".

Comparison of the Year 2020 GPU projections with the BBTOP's Year 2010 projections without the Dorsey Drive interchange revealed that the draft General Plan projections are consistently lower than those in the operations study. As the BBTOP indicated that Year 2010 projections could be accommodated with all

intersections operating at LOS "D" or better with signal coordination and intersection modifications, it is reasonable that the projected Year 2020 volumes could also be accommodated with these improvements.

Comment 12G: Some roads should be re-designated as arterials due to the high volumes they will carry.

Response: Re-designating collector roads as arterials would increase the volume of traffic accepted at LOS "D". McCourtney Road and Freeman Lane north of McKnight would operate at LOS "D" or better in Year 2020 with this re-designation.

Comment 12H: Highway 20 west of Grass Valley is an undivided expressway, not a freeway, and its capacity should be shown as such. Highway 20 will need to be widened to 4 lanes all the way to Penn Valley to accommodate projected volumes.

Response: Highway 20 west of Grass Valley is four lanes just west of the City limits with this facility narrowing to two lanes to the west. As shown in the following Table, the two lane section will operate at LOS "F" under Year 2020 conditions if no improvements are made and would require widening to four lanes to achieve LOS "D" or better. This conclusion is consistent with the Nevada County General Plan, and a four lane Highway 20 is included as a long term project in the current RTP. This information should be added to Table 3.9-5A of the DEIR.

Year 2020 Addition to Table 3.9-5A

LEVELS OF SERVICE ON HIGHWAY 20 WEST OF HIGHWAY 49

FACILITY	NO. LANES	YEAR 2020	LOS	V/C
Hwy 20				
West of SR 49	4 Lanes	27,500	D	0.89
West of Mill Street Ramps	2 Lanes	25,170	F	1.63

As shown in the Table below, at General Plan Build out the forecast traffic volume on Highway 20 would exceed the capacity of a four lane arterial street. A controlled access facility would be needed to deliver LOS "D" or better under these conditions.

Buildout Addition to Table 3.9-5A

LEVELS OF SERVICE ON HIGHWAY 20 WEST OF HIGHWAY 49

FACILITY	NO. LANES	Build Out	LOS	V/C
Hwy 20				
West of SR 49	4 lane arterial	31,400	F	1.01
West of Mill Street Ramps	4 lane arterial	34,800	F	1.12

Comment 12I: The DEIR understates the number of unmitigable street segments under cumulative conditions. Many more would operate at LOS "E" or LOS "F".

Response: The comment confuses future traffic conditions for the Year 2020 with "cumulative" conditions occurring at full buildout of the General Plan. Page 3-96 refers to residual impacts under Year 2020 conditions. Table 3.9-11 indicates that many more segments would be impacted at General Plan buildout. Intersections were analyzed under Year 2020 conditions (see Table 3.9-7 of the DEIR). The corresponding mitigation measures listed on page 3-97 are those improvements needed for intersections that fall below standard for the Year 2020 after the CIP improvements (see Table 3.9-8).

LETTER 13 Jason Marshall, Assistant Director, CA Department of Conservation, Office of Governmental and Environmental Relations

Comment 13A: Will new development foreclose access to identified mineral deposits? How will buildout affect the region's future ability to meet projected demand for mineral resources?

Response: The planning process and DEIR development included coordination with the State Department of Conservation's Division of Mines and Geology. The General Plan Update does not entail any changes to the existing Mineral Management Element, adopted by the City of Grass Valley on August 24, 1993 and by the State Mines and Geology Board on September 13, 1993. Technical answers to the questions posed would, properly, be addressed in an update or amendment to the Mineral Management Element. However, nothing inherent in the draft General Plan alters access to or protection of mineral resources in contrast to the existing Grass Valley General Plan.

Comment 13B: Historic mining operations have resulted in areas of unstable geology. The DEIR should specifically identify abandoned mines and mitigation measures to prevent hazardous situations in the future. The Division's Abandoned Mine Lands Program may be able to assist in documenting potential abandoned mine hazards.

Response: The draft General Plan addresses the abandoned mine problem systematically and in considerable detail (Safety Element). Coordination with the Division's Abandoned Mine Lands Program personnel during the planning process was helpful to the City in devising an appropriate program for

addressing the problem. The Division's assistance in specifically identifying hazards will be most welcomed by the City. In fact, the City learned in its coordination efforts with the Division that State technical assistance is imperative in this effort, and that any project to so identify hazards without the technical expertise and assistance of the Division would likely result in an incomplete and, in all likelihood, erroneous inventory.

LETTER 14 S R Jones, Executive Officer, Nevada LAFCo

Comment 14A: The DEIR notes that development may strain urban water supply, treatment, and conveyance systems managed by the City or NID. The DEIR notes that because of several General Plan policies, the impacts may be mitigated to a less than significant level. However, if water supplies were insufficient to accommodate a particular development, the only responsible option would be to deny the development.

Response: Comment noted as true. Were water supplies to be determined to be insufficient to serve a particular development and no alternative source was obtainable, the development would have to be denied. Water services, including supply, treatment, and distribution, are discussed on pages 3-42 through 3-44 of the DEIR. Implementation of the draft General Plan, including goals, objectives, policies, and implementation actions/strategies are deemed to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant for water supply and water treatment. For water distribution, however, potentially significant impacts will continue to exist until the single critical water distribution issue is resolved: which portions of the Planning Area will be served by the City and which will be served by NID. Once that issue is resolved, the impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

LETTER 15 Dan Landon, Executive Director, Nevada County Transportation Commission

Comment 15A: Figure 3.9-1 in the DEIR shows Brunswick Road from Loma Rica Drive to Nevada City Highway as 4 lanes. However, that stretch is currently either 3 or 4 lanes, providing a higher capacity than analyzed and perhaps not necessitating 4-laning south and east of Sutton Way by the Year 2020.

Response: Comment noted. Please refer to response to comment 9C regarding the LOS thresholds and three lane roads.

Comment 15B: Some differences between the Circulation Plan and NCTC analysis exist. Specific differences: Circulation Plan forecasts need for four lanes on Idaho Maryland Road east of the freeway, the NCTC analysis does not; NCTC analysis forecasts need for four lanes on East Bennett and on McCourtney, the Circulation Plan does not. Differences may be attributed to different land use assumptions for Loma Rica and North Star. These differences can be worked out between the City and NCTC.

Response: Comment noted. Please refer to circulation implementation action/strategy 14-CI directing the City to coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions and with NCTC to provide acceptable and compatible levels of service standards.

Comment 15C: Functional classification in DEIR Figure 3.9-1 for arterials and collectors does not completely correspond with the Regional Transportation Plan. NCTC and City will work together to straighten out differences, an effort which coincides with the Federal Highway Administration's request (through CALTRANS) that NCTC update its functional classification system.

Response: Comment noted. Please refer to circulation implementation action/strategy 14-CI directing the City to coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions and with NCTC to provide acceptable and compatible levels of service standards.

Comment 15D: Table 3.9-3 shows two segments on Brunswick Road which are apparently the same stretch of road: south of Idaho Maryland Road and northwest of Loma Rica Ranch.

Response: The two segments are 1) between Whispering Pines and Idaho Maryland Road and 2) between Loma Rica Road and Whispering Pines, respectively.

Comment 15E: On page 3-71 of the DEIR it is stated that an interchange at Highway 49/Crestview-Smith may be needed. However, land use in the vicinity will determine whether a grade-separated interchange or at-grade intersection will be needed.

Response: The first bullet point on page 3-71 of the DEIR should be changed to read as follows: "Construction of a new interchange on Highway 20/49 at Dorsey Drive and, as warranted by future demand, either an at-grade intersection or grade-separated interchange in the area of Crestview Drive-Smith Road in southern Grass Valley.

Comment 15F: Reconstruction and improvements at the McKnight Way Interchange should not be contingent upon construction of the Crestview-Smith Road interchange, as stated in bullet point 4, page 3-71 of the DEIR.

Response: Comment noted. Bullet point 4 on page 3-71 of the DEIR should be changed to read, "Reconstruction of the McKnight Way interchange on Highway 49 to create modern roundabout intersections".

Comment 15G: Alternatives to the automobile are not likely to significantly reduce the demand for automobile facilities within the 20-year planning period.

Response: Although the draft General Plan assumes the automobile to be the primary transportation conveyance throughout the planning period, it provides for facilities and programs to encourage and accommodate numerous alternative modes. An extensive trail and sidewalk network is planned to offer both transportation and recreational opportunity for bicycles, pedestrians, and equestrians. Emphasis on public transportation (which may well take many forms and employ a variety of types of conveyances) is clearly stated in the General Plan. A tight, non-sprawling future land use pattern is intended to facilitate reliance on alternative modes for some of the trip types currently automobile-dependent. Demographics indicate increased need for public transportation, for Grass Valley has a large and growing senior population likely

to welcome an alternative to driving. Although it is not anticipated that alternative modes will render the automobile obsolete, or alter the need for automobile facilities during the 20-year planning period, it is the City's intent, manifested in the draft General Plan, to make it possible for people to have choices in internal transportation not fully available today.

Comment 15H: The NCTC has long been working to implement a regional capital improvement program and fee schedule. Grass Valley should champion such a program upon completion of the General Plan process.

Response: Comment noted. To this end, attention is called to the following General Plan Implementation Actions and Strategies, found in Appendix C of the DEIR:

- 14-CI Coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions to provide acceptable and compatible levels of service on roadways connecting the City. Work with the Nevada County Transportation Commission to implement applicable level of service standards.....
- 15-CI Ensure adequate funding to meet established level of service policies. Continue to implement and update traffic impact fees on new development and to obtain gas tax and other revenues to fund the Capital Improvement Program..... Work with regional planning agencies to explore funding opportunities for all components of its transportation system that are required to meet its level of service standard.
- 16-CI Maintain a current record of CALTRANS and NCTC activity for major facilities so future right of way needs can be addressed when reviewing development proposals.

Comment 15I: Table 3.9-5B on page 3-78 of the DEIR shows Dorsey Drive (west of Sutton Way) as a 2 lane facility in 2020, resulting in an LOS "D" based on traffic projections. The Regional Transportation Plan provides for this segment to be 4-laned in conjunction with the Dorsey Drive interchange.

Response: The Circulation Element (draft General Plan, following page 4-6) provides for 4-laning Dorsey Drive west of Highway 20/49 and the interchange to the Nevada City Highway and continuing on Sierra College Drive to the College entrance. However, the Circulation Plan depicts as 2 lanes through Year 2020 the portion of Dorsey Drive east of Highway 20/49 to Sutton Way, and beyond.

LETTER 16 James P. Chatigny, General Manager, Nevada Irrigation District

Comment 16A: City has not responded to NID letter of September 4 regarding potential non-compliance with Master Service Agreement between the City and NID.

Response: The General Plan and EIR are not intended to alter or affect in any way the contents of the Master Service Agreement between the City and NID.

Comment 16B: Regarding Hydrology Impacts in the DEIR 3.2.2, in certain weather conditions excess runoff enters the DS Canal which discharges into Wolf Creek. This phenomenon has been occurring for

decades.

Response: Comment noted. This phenomenon would seem to re-inforce the need full implementation of the City's Capital Improvement Program and Drainage System Master Plan, as mitigation measures (see discussion on pages 3-10 and 3-11 of the DEIR).

Comment 16C: Regarding 3.2-4 On-Site Disposal. On lots contiguous to a water course, NID uses a standard setback of 200' (uphill) from [septic systems] to the water course.

Response: The DEIR (page 3-12) addresses on-site wastewater disposal systems, noting that such systems are regulated by the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health. It is assumed that NCDEH enforces the NID standard for setbacks, or other standard as promulgated by NCDEH.

Comment 16D: Regarding 3.5-1, the effects of growth and development under the General Plan may strain water supplies. The discussion erroneously depicts the ability of the City to expand water service to any area in the City and areas to be annexed.

Response: Please refer to the response to comment 16A. The discussion of new growth and development as placing a potential strain on local water supplies does not imply the unilateral extension of service by the City, to the exclusion of NID's territorial prerogatives or in violation of the Master Service Agreement between the City and NID.

Comment 16E: On page 3-43, the DEIR has a misprint concerning the amount of water available to the District. The correct amount is 250,000 acre feet, not 330,000 acre feet.

Response: Comment noted. The sentence should be changed to read:

"Of the 250,000 acre feet of water the District has available, approximately 170,000 acre feet provides for total demand (urban and non-urban)".

Comment 16F: Regarding 3.5-3, there is a serious violoation of the existing Master Service Agreement concerning water service to the North Star area. NID was not conferred with regarding service of treated water, and no Board approval has been requested from NID. Figure 3.5-1 clearly identifies the designated service areas agreed to by the governing boards of the City and NID.

Response: Please refer to response to comment 16A. If the DEIR misstates the current water supply arrangement for North Star, the error is acknowledged. However, based upon 1998 discussions with NID and City personnel, the following service description appears in the DEIR (page 3-44): " The annexation agreement between North Star owners and the City providees for owners to pay for necessary extensions from the City's system into the North Star property. NID is planning to provide treated water service to a portion of the property currently within the NID service area, but outside the NID District Boundary". The City is currently updating its Master Services Element and Sphere of Influence, an effort likely to contribute to solutions to future water service uncertainties. Apparently the DEIR is correct, however, is stating (page

3-44): The critical water distribution issue is: which portions of the Planning Area will be served by the City and which will be served by NID. Once resolved, impacts related to the future water distribution patterns will be eliminated. Until that time, this impact [growth straining local water distribution systems] remains potentially significant.

LETTER 17 Jeff Wagner, Fire Chief, Ophir Hill Fire Protection District

Comment 17A: It is imperative that the City address the effect of annexations on special districts' tax revenue base.

Response: Comment noted. The General Plan Update and DEIR do address interjurisdictional coordination and cooperation, though perhaps not at the level of specificity desired by the commentor. Pertinent General Plan provisions include:

1. Land Use Goal 9: Coordinate peripheral development with the County General Plan and appropriate entities currently providing services in the Planning Area.
2. Land Use Goal 8: Create a sound fiscal environment
3. Land Use Objective 22: A healthy City government and special districts.
4. Land Use Policy 37: Assure that new development pays its fair share of the cost of municipal services.
5. Land Use Policy 39: Assure that acceptable inter-agency agreements regarding future service and facility provision are in place prior to approval of any major new development.
6. Land Use Policy 40: Refer all development proposals to potentially affected governmental entities for review and comment.
7. Land Use Implementation Action/Strategy 8: Coordinate with LAFCo, Nevada County, and other agencies and special districts regarding provisions of this General Plan, application of General Plan provisions in unincorporated portions of the Planning Area, and the timing and directions of future growth.

In addition to the above measures/mitigations in the General Plan and DEIR, the City is currently revising its Sphere of Influence/Master Services Element, which addresses future development, City expansion, and service delivery in more detail than is found in the General Plan Update.

LETTER 18 Tim Fike, Chief, Nevada County Consolidated Fire District

Comment 18A: The General Plan does not address the effects on the NCCFD of City annexations, in terms of remaining levels of service, facilities, and financial and community impacts. The District would like to explore cooperative methods for addressing mutual needs and concerns.

Response: Please refer to the response to comment 17A.

Corrections and Reprinted Materials Identified in Chapter 4.0

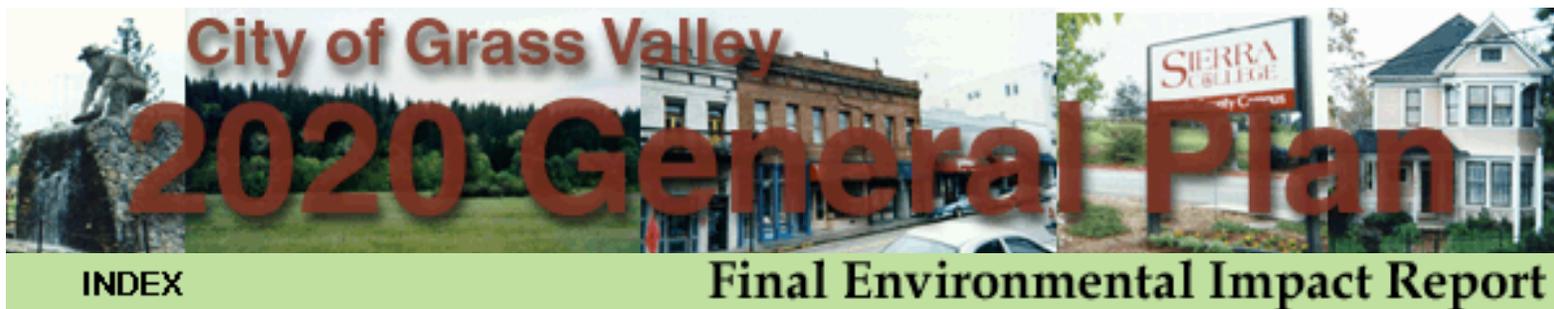
Corrected Version -- See Responses to Comments 2D and 2E

TABLE 2-1

LAND USE AND HOUSING UNIT ALLOCATIONS

PER ANNEXATION AGREEMENTS

Acreage	Loma Rica Ranch	North Star	Kenny Ranch
Residential Acreage	121	312	150
Commercial Acreage		20	22
Planned Employment Center Acreage	115	123	88
Mfg./Processing/Distribution Acreage		117	
Recreation Acreage	50		
Schools Acreage		13	
Open Space Opportunity Acreage	165	175	96
Total Acreage	451	760	356
Housing Unit Allocation (# of units)	180	363	100



CHAPTER FIVE

1 - Introduction

2 - Overview of Comments Received

3 - Letters of Comment

4 - Responses to Comments

5 - Evaluation of Changes to General Plan Update, Draft 2

6 - Revised Summary Table of Potential Impacts, & Proposed Mitigation Measures

EVALUATION OF CHANGES TO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE,

DRAFT 2

5.1 CHRONOLOGY OF GENERAL PLAN EVENTS

A draft General Plan (Draft 2, General Plan Update) was approved by the General Plan Steering Committee on July 20, 1999. The approved draft General Plan Update became the "project" subject to environmental evaluation by the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The DEIR was published and forwarded to the State Clearinghouse for circulation, review, and comment on August 23, 1999. The mandatory 45-day review and comment period ended on October 8, 1999.

During the 45-day review period, the Grass Valley Planning Commission held three public hearings on the General Plan Update and Draft Environmental Impact Report. Planning Commission hearings were held on August 23, September 13, and September 20, 1999. In the period spanned by the Planning Commission hearings (August 23 through September 20, 1999), the Planning Commission received and considered written and oral testimony, which offered opinions on and requests for changes in the General Plan and DEIR.

Based upon written and oral testimony, the Planning Commission made selected recommendations for changes to Draft 2, General Plan Update, and approved the General Plan Update with those recommended changes on September 20, 1999. The version of the General Plan Update approved by the Steering Committee, along with recommendations for change from the Planning Commission, were then forwarded to the Grass Valley City Council.

The City Council held a public hearing on the General Plan Update and Draft Environmental Impact Report on October 19, 1999. The Council accepted both oral and written testimony on the Plan and DEIR. The Council closed the public hearing on the General Plan Update and DEIR following all testimony on the night of October 19, 1999.

On November 9, 1999, the City Council met to discuss the General Plan, DEIR, recommendations for change to the Draft 2 General Plan Update recommended by the Planning Commission, and comment and requests for changes in the Plan by members of the public. This meeting was not a public hearing, although the Council invited members of the audience to discuss and clarify specific requests upon which the Council was taking action.

The City's General Plan consultant presented to the Council individual comments and requests for which Council action was requested or required. The Council discussed each comment/request, followed by a formal vote on each.

The resulting General Plan Update, hereafter called the Proposed Plan November 1999, is the version on which the Council is prepared to vote at its November 23, 1999 meeting. The Proposed Plan November 1999 contains some land use designations that are different from those in the Draft 2 General Plan.

The remainder of Chapter Five describes the changes made to the Draft 2 General Plan Update to produce the Proposed Plan November 1999, and discusses an effects these changes may have on the findings and conclusions contained in the DEIR.

5.2 LOCATIONS OF LAND USE DESIGNATION CHANGES, DRAFT 2 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE TO PROPOSED PLAN NOVEMBER 1999

Figure 5-1 shows the parcels or portions of parcels whose land use designations were changed between the Draft 2 General Plan Update (8/99) and the Proposed Plan November 1999 under consideration by the City Council. Shaded parcels (or portions of parcels) were changed.

5.3 SUMMARY OF LAND USE DESIGNATION CHANGES, DRAFT 2 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE TO PROPOSED PLAN NOVEMBER

Table 5-1 on the following page provides an acreage comparison of the Draft 2 General Plan Update and the Proposed Plan November 1999, for each land use designation used in the General Plan and depicted on the Land Use Plan Map. Since all land use changes were made from one land designation to another, the positive (gained acreage by virtue of the changes) and negative figures in the "Changes" column cancel one another out, resulting in a net change of zero acres.

The changes described here were all changes to the Land Use Plan map. The General Plan Update Land Use Plan map is "parcel based." That is, land use designations are depicted and recorded in a geographic information system for whole parcels, except for a very few "split parcel" designations.

Overall, land use designation changes were made affecting 158 parcels, out of a total of 6,372 parcels in the Grass Valley Planning Area. Thus, approximately 2.5% of all parcels in the Planning Area experienced land use designation changes.

The Planning Area contains 9,894 acres (15.46 square miles). The area of the 158 parcels experiencing land use designation changes (whole parcels and split parcels combined) constitute a total of 367.57 acres, approximately 3.7% of the total Planning Area.

Table 5-1 shows the distribution of land use designations by acreage and percentage of total, for the Draft Plan (8/99) and the Proposed Plan November 1999 following the changes made subsequent to the Draft EIR. Table 5-1 also shows changes in acres and percentage change for each land use designation. As shown in Table 5-1, the predominant land use designations are Urban Estate Density - Residential (2,221 acres in the Proposed Plan November 1999, or 22.4% of the total Planning Area), Special Development Area (1,528 acres, 15.4%) and Urban Low Density - Residential (1,396 acres, 14.1%).

The designations experiencing the largest acreage changes were Urban Estate Density (a net "loss" of 127 acres), Public (net gain of 100 acres), and Special Development Area (net gain of 71 acres).

Most significant percentage changes were Public (an increase of 30.0% to 433 acres), Institutional Non-governmental (a decline of 15.4% to 104 acres), and Office-Professional (net loss of 10.5% to 145 acres).

5.4 DETAILS OF CHANGES BY LAND USE DESIGNATION, DRAFT 2 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE TO PROPOSED PLAN NOVEMBER 1999

Table 5-2 provides a detailed statistical summary of changes affecting the various land use designations. The terms "transferred from" and "transferred to" are used, indicating the status of each designation prior to and after changes were made. Information for each land use designation in Table 5-2 includes: 1) net change in acres, 2) acreage transferred "from", 3) acreage transferred "to", 4) number of parcels involved in transfers from and 5) number of parcels involved in transferred to. Land use designations are shown in descending order, from designations experiencing the largest net gains to those experiencing the largest net losses.

5.5 DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES BY LAND USE DESIGNATION, DRAFT 2 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE TO PROPOSED PLAN NOVEMBER 1999

Section 5.5 contains descriptions of the significant changes in land use designation between the Draft 2 General Plan Update Land Use Plan Map and the Proposed Plan

November 1999. Table 5-3, Land Use Change Summary Matrix, provides a summary of acreage changes from each land use designation (left column) to each other designation (second row from top of table). The figures represent acreages transferred from one to another.

An examination of Table 5-3 shows that the largest single land use designation change was from Commercial to Special Development Area (SDA) of 65.90 acres. Acreage was also transferred from Urban Estate Density to Public (52.89 acres), Urban Low Density (42.77), and Business Park (28.09 acres).

The remainder of this section describes parcels and groupings of parcels where a change is involved. For each change, a discussion of its effect on findings and conclusions contained in the DEIR is made.

1. Commercial Designation Changed to Special Development Area (SDA) -- 65.90 acres

All or portions of seven parcels totaling 65.90 acres at the Bear River Mill site were designated Commercial in the Draft 2 General Plan. The designation was changed to Special Development Area to facilitate mixed use on this large property between Highway 49 and LaBarr Meadows Road. Although the planned distribution of land uses within the SDA has not been determined, mixed use will reduce environmental impacts as compared to a 65 acre commercial development, particularly in terms of traffic, air quality, and percentage impervious surface on the site at buildout. The change can, in fact, be viewed as additional mitigation and does not change any of the findings or conclusions contained in the DEIR

2. **Urban Estate Density (Residential) to Public -- 52.89 acres**

A change in designation for parcels in the northwest portion of the Planning Area owned by the Bureau of Land Management and Nevada Joint Union High School District, respectively. This change is a correction of the previous map and reflects the property's status as "public." The change will have no impact on planned land use and will have no impact on findings and conclusions contained in the DEIR.

1. **Institutional Non-governmental to Public -- 46.79 acres**

Redesignation of cemeteries on West Main Street and immediately east of the Golden Center Freeway. This change corrects the map to properly designate the subject cemeteries as public ownership and will have no effect on planned land use, or on the findings and conclusions contained in the DEIR.

1. Urban Estate Density to Urban Low Density -- 42.77 acres

Redesignation of 28 parcels in the Ridge Road, Slate Creek Road, and Upper Slate Creek Road area to reflect compatibility with surrounding residential areas and existing parcel sizes. Eighteen of the parcels are currently too small to meet the UED one-acre minimum parcel size, and would have been rendered "non-conforming lots." Because the affected area is essentially developed, this change will have no effect on future land use, or on the findings and conclusions contained in the DEIR.

1. Urban Estate Density to Business Park -- 28.09 acres

Designation of three parcels located east of LaBarr Meadows Road south of McKnight Way currently utilized for industrial purposes (sand and gravel processing, batch plant) to better reflect the future reuse potential of parcels unsuitable for residential use. The change expands an adjacent area already designated Business Park and will not have a significant effect on future land use and on DEIR findings and conclusions.

1. Urban Low Density (Residential) to Institutional, Non-governmental -- 19.48 acres

Designation of an 8.70 acre parcel on Rough and Ready Highway as ING, a designation designed for churches, civic clubs, and non-profit organization activities, in order to accommodate a future planned use. Also, four church properties totaling 10.78 acres, more appropriately designated ING rather than ULD, were redesignated. Changes to existing properties containing churches will no impact on DEIR findings and conclusions. The change to property on Ridge Road could have a minor impact on traffic, but will not change EIR conclusions. Land use compatibility may be enhanced due to the properties location adjacent to a veterinary clinic. Other DEIR conclusions will not be altered by the change.

1. Office-Professional to Commercial -- 14.29 acres

Involves five parcels on Taylorville Road, north of McKnight, and adjacent to the North Freeman Lane. Included is a parcel of 10.63 acres occupied by PG&E. The remaining four parcels are presently developed as commercial. The site is located in large commercial complex which includes the Pine Creek shopping center and K-Mart center. The change in land use designation will have no effect on DEIR

conclusions.

1. Urban Low Density to Business Park -- 13.65 acres

Redesignation to Business Park of 7.25 acres fronting on Rough and Ready Highway currently zoned Commercial by the County. Although the project proponent wished to have a Commercial designation in the City, a Business Park designation has been proposed to assure that the change would not conflict with the findings and conclusions contained in the DEIR. Also, redesignation of four parcels on the south side of the "S" curve on East Bennett, currently occupied by a door manufacturing plant is proposed. Due to the limited scale of the change and the existing use, this modification will not have significant effect on DEIR findings and conclusions.

1. Urban High Density to Commercial -- 12.68 acres

Redesignates a 7.21 acre parcel near the intersection of East Main Street and Sierra College Drive, currently zoned commercial by the City, to a Commercial designation on the General Plan Land Use Map. The parcel is included in a project presently in the early stages of development as an Indian Health Clinic. The change also redesignates 5.47 acres of a larger parcel (Amaral property) in the Glenbrook Basin, in keeping with a Nevada County development agreement with the owner and conforming to other land uses along Plaza Drive. Due to the limited scale of development proposed for the two sites and the preexisting nature of the commitments, the two changes will not have a significant effect on DEIR findings and conclusions.

10. Business Park to Manufacturing-Industrial -- 7.93 acres

Redesignation of eight parcels historically and currently devoted to heavy industrial uses in the Idaho-Maryland Road industrial area. This change was made to reflect long-established existing uses and will have no impact on land use or on DEIR findings and conclusions.

1. Urban High Density to Open Space -- 5.95 acres

Part of the aforementioned Amaral property (item 9, above). In keeping with an agreement between the owner and Nevada County, this change will designate as "Open Space" a sensitive environmental area (former Lake Olympia) and an

adjacent area. This change will have no impact on DEIR findings and conclusions.

1. Urban High Density to Institutional, Non-governmental -- 5.56 acres

One parcel along Brunswick Road currently under development as a senior care living facility was inadvertently designated Urban High Density on the previous map. An "Institutional, Non-governmental" designation is more appropriate for the land use currently under development at the site. This change will have no impact on DEIR findings and conclusions.

1. Business Park to Urban Low Density -- 5.08 acres

Three single family parcels adjacent to Nevada County Country Club and Litton Business Park, were incorrectly designated Business Park on the previous map in the belief that they were part of the Litton property and planned business park. Redesignation corrects previous drafting error. This change has no impact on DEIR findings and conclusions.

1. Business Park to Commercial -- 5.02 acres

Portions of several parcels along the Nevada City Highway are redesignated to reflect actual land use patterns and provide commercial frontage in an area planned for future mixed commercial/business park development. Previous designations, based upon whole parcels, resulted in inefficient pattern of land use due to unconventional parcel shapes and sizes. Although the amount of commercial acreage increases, due to the nature of the existing uses and parcel configuration, this change will have no impact on DEIR findings and conclusions.

1. Urban Medium Density to Business Park -- 4.59 acres

This change reflects portions of several parcels designated Business Park by Nevada County, and currently used for industrial purposes on the north side of the "S" curve on East Bennett Street. Because only existing developed area will be affected by the change and its small size, the modification will not affect DEIR findings and conclusions.

1. Business Park to Special Development Area -- 4.55 acres

This redesignation corrects a previous drafting error. Three parcels on Idaho-Maryland Road were shown on the Draft General Plan Land use map as Business Park in the Draft 2 General Plan (8/99) and have been changed to acknowledge that they are part of the Loma Rica Ranch, a Special Development Area (SDA). This change has no impact on DEIR findings and conclusions

1. Additional Changes

Several additional "cleanup" changes, involving very small parcels of land were made between Draft 2 General Plan Update and the Proposed Plan November 1999. The revisions are reflected on Figure 5-2. Taken together, these additional changes total 27.98 acres. A case-by-case review of the additional changes leads to the conclusion that, individually and collectively none will have an impact on DEIR findings and conclusions.

5.6 DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTIAL CHANGES, DRAFT 2 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE TO PROPOSED PLAN NOVEMBER 1999

The Grass Valley General Plan contains four residential land use designations:

- Urban High Density (UHD) 8 to 20 units per acre
- Urban Medium Density (UMD) 4 to 8 units per acre
- Urban Low Density (ULD) 1 to 4 units per acre
- Urban Estate Density (UED) 1 or fewer units per acre, depending on services

From the Draft 2 General Plan Update (8/99) to the Proposed General Plan November 1999, the four land use designations experienced the following net changes in acreage: UHD -25 acres; UMD +10 acres; ULD -17 acres; UED -127 acres. Together, the changes in designation resulted in a net loss of 159 acres.

To calculate the implications for future housing unit and population projections, the net changes in vacant residentially designated acreage was identified. This step was taken to ensure that already developed residentially designated parcels would not be included in calculating net change (the assumption being that developed properties would remain in the same uses and at the same residential densities as they currently maintain.

The identification of vacant residential loss or gain resulted in the following: UHD lost a net 21 vacant acres; UMD -6; ULD +4; and UED -21.

The General Plan Update process utilized an assumption that vacant, residentially-designated land would build out at average densities lower than the maximum permitted by the General Plan. The assumed build out units per acre for each designation is as follows: UHD 12; UMD 6; ULD 3; and UED 0.67.

Applying the assumed residential densities to the number of net vacant acres each designation changed, the following is the change in projected housing units in the Grass Valley Planning Area at buildout of the General Plan. Please note, remaining unaltered is the Year 2020 projection of 10,203 housing units (7,383 current plus 2,820 added between 1999 and 2020).

- UHD -21 acres times 12 units per acre = 252 fewer units at buildout
- UMD -6 acres times 6 units per acre = 36 fewer units at buildout
- ULD +4 acres times 3 units per acre = 12 more units at buildout
- UED -21 acres times 0.67 units per acre = 14 fewer units at buildout
- Total net reduction of 44 residential acres = 290 fewer units at buildout

To re-calculate buildout population projections, based upon the foregoing change in housing unit projections, the following average household sizes applied throughout the General Plan Update were utilized: UHD 1.95; UMD 2.15; ULD 2.40; UED 2.40. Applying these household size figures to changes in housing unit projections resulted in the following buildout population changes:

- UHD -252 units times 1.95 persons per household = 491 fewer people
- UMD -36 units times 2.15 persons per household = 77 fewer people
- ULD +12 units times 2.40 persons per household = 28 more people
- UED -14 units times 2.40 persons per household = 33 fewer people
- Total net reduction in projected buildout population = 573

This information alters page 3-59 of the Draft EIR, Table 3.7-1, Components of Change, Housing and Population, 1999-2020-Buildout as follows:

- Net Change 2020 to Buildout

Housing Units 517

Population in Housing Units..... 1,531

Total Population..... 2,331

- **Buildout Status**

Housing Units10,720

Population in Housing Units....23,226

Total Population..... 25,726

Table 5-4 contains a comprehensive listing of parcels whose designations were changed subsequent to the Draft 2 General Plan Update (8/99) and Draft EIR. Figure 5-2 shows the Proposed General Plan November 1999 Land Use Plan Map.



1 - Introduction

2 - Overview of Comments

Received

TABLE S-1

3 - Letters of Comment

REVISED SUMMARY TABLE

4 - Responses to Comments

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

5 - Evaluation of Changes to

General Plan Update, Draft

2

6 - Revised Summary Table

of Potential Impacts, &

Proposed Mitigation

Measures

Impact Number	Impact	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Measure	Level of Significance After Mitigation
3.1-1	Development in areas of unstable geology.		None required.	Less than significant
3.1-2	Erosion and unstable soil conditions.		None required.	Less than significant
3.1-3	Subsidence associated with former mining activities.		None required.	Less than significant
3.1-4	Development on expansive soils.		None required.	Less than significant
3.1-5	Impacts to unique geologic or physical features.		None required.	Less than significant
3.2-1	Discharge into surface water.		None required.	Less than significant

3.2-2	Building in 100-year flood zone.	3.2-1	Update CIP and Drainage Master Plan to reflect 2020 needs.	Less than significant
3.2-3	Changes in quantity and quality of ground water.		None required.	Less than significant
3.2-4	Disposal of wastewater, groundwater and surface water contamination.		None required.	Less than significant
3.3-1	Reduce/destroy habitat of sensitive species.	3.3-1	No net loss of habitat.	Less than significant
3.3-2	Impacts to wetlands	3.3-1	No net loss of habitat.	Less than significant
		3.3-2	Review Grading Ordinance to protect wetlands.	Less than significant
3.3-3	Impact movement or dispersal of wildlife.		None required.	Less than significant
3.4-1	Increase in emissions of non-attainment air pollutants.	3.4-1	Incorporate mitigation specified in the Indirect Source Review Guidelines of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District.	Significant cumulative impact
		3.4-2	Priority treatment in future transportation planning/programming, and a strategy for avoiding congestion shall be developed for arterial and collector roadway segments and intersections whose level of service drops to LOS "F."	

3.4-2	Emissions of pollutants, exposure of sensitive land uses to odors.		None required.	Less than significant
3.5-1	Strain local water supplies.		None required.	Less than significant
3.5-2	Strain local water treatment facilities.		None required.	Less than significant
3.5-3	Strain local water distribution system, create demand for expanded services/facilities.	3.2-1	Update CIP and Drainage Master Plan to reflect 2020 needs.	Potentially significant
3.5-4	Strain locate sewer and septic systems, create demand for expanded services/facilities.	3.5-2	Amend SSMP to reflect 2020 Plan, reexamine fiscal base of SSMP, include development fee, coordinate timing/phasing of planned wastewater facility extensions/improvements with planned extension of other services/annexations as appropriate.	Less than significant
3.5-5	Strain stormwater drainage systems and create demand for expanded services and facilities.	3.2-1	Update CIP and Drainage Master Plan to reflect 2020 needs.	Less than significant
3.5-6	Strain fire protection services and create demand for expanded services and facilities	3.5-3	Update CIP in the future to meet public service and facility demands through 2020.	Less than significant
3.5-7	Strain police services and create demand for expanded services and facilities	3.5-3	Update CIP in the future to meet public service and facility demands through 2020.	Less than significant
3.5-8	Create demand for new recreational facilities.		None required.	Less than significant

3.5-9	Strain schools and create demand for expanded services	3.5-1	Collect development impact fees authorized by State law, levy additional fees in accordance with SB 50; Mello-Roos bonds, private bank loans, treasury anticipation notes, LeRoy Green new construction fund, bus transportation fee, and/or year-round school.	Less than significant
3.5-10	Strain solid water disposal system, create demand for expanded services and facilities.		None required.	Less than significant
3.5-11	Strain communication systems and create demand for expanded services and facilities.		None required.	Less than significant
3.5-12	City growth and development may place additional strains on County services		None required	Less than significant
3.6-1	Increase amount of residential development in comparison to existing setting.		None required.	Less than significant
3.6-2	Increase amount of commercial development in comparison to existing setting.		None required.	Less than significant
3.6-3	Increase amount of industrial development in comparison to existing setting.		None required.	Less than significant
3.6-4	Changes in phasing of future development.		None required.	Less than significant

3.6-5	Physical improvements to infrastructure and roadways conflicting with adjacent land uses.		None feasible.	Potentially Significant
3.6-6	Cumulative impact on land use.		None required.	Less than significant
3.7-1	Increase population and housing in community.		None required.	Less than significant
3.8-1	Impact scenic vistas or scenic highways.		None required.	Less than significant
3.8-2	Damage scenic resources.		None required.	Less than significant
3.8-3	Have a demonstrable negative visual effect on community.		None required.	Less than significant
3.8-4	Create new source of light and glare.	3.8-1	Require shielding or downward direction of lighting.	Significant cumulative
3.9-1	Traffic volumes exceeding LOS D on area streets.	3.9-1	Provide dual left turn lanes eastbound and westbound and separate the southbound left turn lane at the Main/Idaho Maryland/SR 49 southbound ramps.	Less than significant Significant and unavoidable for four collector roadways
		3.9-2	Add northbound right turn lane at South Auburn/Empire Street.	
		3.9-3	Add northbound right turn lane at Mill St./Neal St.	
		3.9-4	Add traffic signal at Freeman/McKnight.	

		3.9-5	Add traffic signal at Brunswick Rd./Whispering Pines.	
		3.9-6	Add traffic signal at Brunswick Rd./Dorsey (extension).	
3.9-2	Traffic operations at intersections exceeding LOS D		None required.	Less than significant
3.9-3	Increased demand for public transportation and make it difficult to meet roadway LOS/meet air quality goals in absence of improved public transportation.		None required.	Less than significant
3.9-4	Increased demand for bicycle facilities.		None required.	Less than significant
3.9-5	Increased demand for pedestrian facilities.		None required.	Less than significant
3.9-6	Increased demand for movement of goods.		None required.	Less than significant
3.9-7	Place strain on parking facilities		None required.	Less than significant
3.9-8	Place strain on emergency services due to overall road network.		None feasible.	Significant and unavoidable
3.9-9	Traffic volumes continue to increase after 2020		None feasible.	Significant and unavoidable cumulative impact
3.9-10	Increased traffic at build out of 2020 Plan		None feasible.	Significant and unavoidable cumulative impact

3-9-11	Build out of Plan will strain public transportation services		None required.	Less than significant cumulative impact
3.9-12	Build out of Plan will strain bicycle facilities		None required.	Less than significant cumulative impact
3.9-13	Build out of Plan will strain pedestrian facilities		None required.	Less than significant cumulative impact
3.9-14	Build out of Plan will strain goods movement facilities		None feasible.	Significant and unavoidable cumulative impact
3.9-15	Build out of Plan will strain parking facilities		None required.	Less than significant cumulative impact
3.9-16	Build out of Plan will strain emergency service logistics.		None required.	Less than significant cumulative impact
3.10-1	Increase noise levels in association with increased traffic.		None required.	Less than significant
3.10-2	Increases in fixed source noise levels		None required.	Less than significant
3.10-3	Increased noise associated with air port.		None required.	Less than significant
3.10-4	Increased noise associated with build out of Plan.		None required.	Less than significant cumulative impact
3.11-1	Expose property/people to hazardous materials		None required.	Less than significant
3.11-2	Interfere with emergency response/evacuation plans.		None required.	Less than significant

3.11-3	Development in the vicinity of the Airport could result in safety hazards.		None required.	Less than significant
3.11-4	Increased wildland fire hazard.		None feasible.	Potentially significant
3.11-5	Increased flood hazard.	3.2-1	CIP shall be updated along with drainage System master Plan in the future in order to extend service/infrastructure needs through 2020.	Less than significant
3.11-6	Exposure to naturally occurring asbestos in soil.		None feasible.	Potentially significant
3.12-1	Impacts on cultural resources from new development	3.12-1 3.12-2	<p>Add Policy 10-HP to the Final General Plan: Where historic and prehistoric cultural resources have been identified, the City shall require that development be designed to protect such resources from damage, destruction, or defacement whenever possible.</p> <p>Add Policy 11-HP to Final General Plan: If previously undiscovered cultural resources or human remains are encountered during construction or excavation, the procedures identified in Section 15064.5 to the CEQA Guidelines shall be followed.</p>	Less than significant

3.13-1	New growth will place increased pressure on park and recreation facilities.		None required.	Less than significant
3.14-1	Growth and development will increase pressure to develop open space.		None feasible.	Significant and unavoidable cumulative impact.

NOTE: Three errata were removed from the Table that appeared in the DEIR. Under Impact #3.6-5, the impact was erroneously identified as "Less than significant," but should have been identified as "Potentially significant," per the DEIR text. Under Impacts #3.9-9 and #3.9-10, a "Mitigation Measure" was removed because it is already a part of the project (General Plan Update) and does not need to be repeated here as mitigation. The language remains in the DEIR (pages 3-89 and 3-95), which correctly describes the General Plan's content and directive. Under Impact #3.9-11, the Table should have indicated that no mitigation was required ("None required") rather than "Same as above," per the DEIR text.