



CITY OF GRASS VALLEY
Community Development Department
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August 28, 2020

To: See Attached Agency List

Re: **Notice of Preparation for a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report** for the Amendment to the Southern Sphere of Influence Planning and Annexation Project

The City of Grass Valley will prepare a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the **Southern Sphere of Influence Planning and Annexation Project** (proposed project, project) and is issuing this Notice of Preparation (NOP) per Section 15082 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The City is requesting input from the public and your agency on environmental issues associated with development of the proposed project as described in this NOP. As a responsible or trustee agency, your agency may need to use this EIR when considering issuance of a permit or other discretionary approval for the proposed project. Comments received during this public comment period will be used to focus the environmental analysis in the EIR.

Project Location

The project is located along State Route (SR) 49, immediately south of the existing City of Grass Valley limits and within the City of Grass Valley Planning Area in the central/western portion of Nevada County (**Figure 1, Regional Location Map**). The project spans both the east (industrial side) and west (Berriman Ranch) sides of SR 49, beginning in the vicinity of McKnight Road and extending south along SR 49 and La Barr Meadows Road 9 (**Figure 2, Annexation Area Map**). As shown in **Table 1**, the project includes 55 Nevada County Assessor's Parcel Numbers.

Table 1

APN	Size (Acres)	Existing Use	Existing City Land Use Designation	Proposed Land Use Designation	Existing Pre-Zoning	Proposed Prezoning
009-620-003 ⁺	5.26	Vacant	UED	M/I		M-2 *
009-620-010 ⁺	5.47	Vacant	UED	M/I		M-2
009-620-012	19.1	Vacant	UMD	UMD	R-2	R-2
022-031-009 ⁺	20.54	Vacant	UED	M/I		M-2 *
022-140-005	1.5	Grange Hall	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-140-008	5.4	Industrial	M/I	M/I	M-2 *	M-2 *
022-140-010	10.1	Industrial	M/I	M/I	M-2 *	M-2 *
022-140-011	1.5	Industrial	M/I	M/I	M-2 *	M-2 *
022-140-012	1	Rental Yard	M/I	M/I	M-2 *	M-2 *
022-140-021	2.8	Industrial	M/I	M/I	M-2 *	M-2 *
022-140-022	6.9	Industrial	M/I	M/I	M-2 *	M-2 *
022-140-025	3.03	Industrial	M/I	M/I	M-2 *	M-2 *

APN	Size (Acres)	Existing Use	Existing City Land Use Designation	Proposed Land Use Designation	Existing Pre-Zoning	Proposed Prezoning
022-140-035 [#]	36.63	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-1 *	M-2 *
022-140-036	2.8	Mini Storage	M/I	M/I	M-2	M-2
022-140-038	2.2	Veterinary Hospital	M/I	M/I	M-2	M-2
022-140-041	2.5	Dismantling Yard	M/I	M/I	M/I	M-2
022-140-043	2.6	Landscape Material	M/I	M/I	M-2	M-2
022-140-050	2.2	Dog Kennel	M/I	M/I	M-2	M-2
022-140-051	0.04	Wireless Tower	M/I	M/I	M-2	M-2
022-140-053 [#]	59.88	Vacant	UMD/OS/C	UL,M,HD/OS	C2/R2/OS	R-1,2,3/OS
022-140-057 [#]	15.47	Vacant	C/OS	UMD/M/I,OS	C-2/OS	M-1/OS/R-2
022-140-058	1.94	Plumbing Supply	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-003	0.2	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-004	0.3	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-008	0.02	Right-of-Way	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-009	0.1	Auto Repair	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-010	0.5	House	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-011	0.05	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-015	0.7	Auto Repair/Commercial	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-016	0.3	House	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-017	0.4	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-018	0.4	House	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-021	1.2	House	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-022	3	House	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-023	0.26	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-024 ⁺	1.99	C&D	C	M/I	C-2	M-1
022-150-026 [#]	0.43	House	C	UMD	C2	R-2
022-150-027 [#]	0.54	House	C	UMD	C2	R-2
022-150-028	0.3	Residential/Commercial	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-029 [#]	0.44	House	C	UMD	C-2	R-2
022-150-030	7.8	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-032	0.5	House	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-150-033	0.03	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-1
022-160-003 [#]	25.78	Vacant	OS/UED	OS	OS/RE	OS
022-160-004	11.3	Landscape Material	M/I	M/I	M-2	M-2
022-160-005 [#]	10	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-1	M-2 *

APN	Size (Acres)	Existing Use	Existing City Land Use Designation	Proposed Land Use Designation	Existing Pre-Zoning	Proposed Prezoning
022-160-006	25.5	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-2	M-2
022-160-033	8.3	Vacant	M/I	M/I	M-2	M-2
022-200-036 [#]	14.6	Vacant	OS	M/I	OS	M-2 *
022-200-037 [#]	7.3	Vacant	OS	M/I	OS	M-2 *
022-200-066 [#]	7.53	Vacant	OS	M/I	OS	M-2 *
022-230-010 [#]	2.3	Vacant	UMD	M/I	R-2	M-2 *
022-230-052 [#]	42.9	Vacant	OS/UMD	M/I	OS/R-2	M-2 *
022-230-053 [#]	5.74	Vacant	OS	M/I	OS	M-2 *
029-350-012 [#]	11.4	Vacant	BP	C	CBP	C-2

Source: SCO Planning and Engineering, August 2020

Notes: + = New properties not included in 2014/2016; # = proposed zone change; * = Southeast Industrial Combining Zone

Most of the project area is vacant or developed at less than the anticipated density and intensity in the Grass Valley General Plan. There are several existing businesses and homes within the plan area. The types of businesses and uses on each parcel are noted above.

Project Overview

In 2014, the City completed an extensive general plan and prezoning planning process for the Southern Sphere of Influence Planning and Annexation Project that included approximately 420 acres of land south of the City limits for the sphere of influence (SOI). The City certified an EIR for this project (2014 SOI EIR). In 2016, the City amended the project to include a combining or overlay zone on several industrial properties and prepared an addendum to the EIR. Existing general plan land use designations and zoning in the plan area are depicted in **Figure 3, Existing General Plan Map** and **Figure 4, Existing Zoning Map**, respectively.

With the proposed project, the City is seeking to amend the Southern Sphere of Influence Planning and Annexation Project to include: 1) an amendment to the General Plan land use designations on 237 of the 400 acres; 2) a prezone of 237 of the 400 acres to various zone districts consistent with the proposed General Plan amendments; 3) an amendment to add 31 acres to the City's SOI; and 4) the annexation of approximately 400 acres (**Figure 5, Proposed General Plan Map, Figure 6, Prezoning Map**). The proposed General Plan land use designations and zoning changes would decrease the total development potential by up to 18 residential dwelling units and increase the total development potential of nonresidential uses by approximately 361,000 square feet. (Note: The City annexed approximately 32 acres of the 416-acre planning area analyzed in the 2014 SOI EIR in 2015. In addition, the current proposal does not include approximately 20 acres of land analyzed in the 2014 SOI EIR that is now owned by Nevada County, a portion of which contains the County's Corporation Yard.)

The project also includes General Plan land use redesignation and rezoning of approximately 17 acres of land area within the current City limits.

Because the action is linked to the past project, the City is preparing a Subsequent EIR in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The Subsequent EIR will incorporate the results of additional technical studies completed since approval of the 2016 Addendum. In addition, the Subsequent EIR will address two site-specific areas within the project: a 10- to 15-acre area of residential land on the west side of Highway 49 and the expansion area for Hansen Brothers Enterprises (HBE) operations east of La Barr Meadows Road and south of the existing operations. No specific development is proposed as part of this project.

General Plan Amendment

The Grass Valley General Plan designates the project area as Urban Estate Density (UED), Urban Low Density (ULD), Urban Medium Density (UMD), Commercial (C), Business Park (BP), Manufacturing/Industrial (M/I), and Open Space (OS). The proposed project would change the General Plan designations to include a range of residential, commercial, and manufacturing land uses as shown in **Table 1**. See **Figure 3, Existing General Plan Map** and **Figure 5, Proposed General Plan Map** for the location of the existing and proposed land use designations within the project area.

Prezoning

As part of the proposed project the City would prezone the properties consistent with the revised general plan. Prezoning is a required component of the annexation process. The California Government Code Section 65859 allows the City to adopt an ordinance zoning land outside of the City. The provisions of the prezone and zoning districts would not become effective until the property is annexed. Until the property is annexed the properties are subject to the existing County zoning. **Table 1** lists the existing parcel zoning for land within the project area, and the anticipated zoning as part of the proposed project. (See also **Figure 6, Proposed PreZoning**.) The proposed zoning would be consistent with both the amended General Plan land use designations and the existing business and manufacturing uses found within the project area.

SOI Amendment

The City proposes to add approximately 31 acres of land to its existing SOI. The land is between the existing SOI and the Empire Mine State Park boundaries.

Annexation

The intent of the prezoning is to provide for annexation of 400 acres of the project area. This will involve seeking approval of the annexation from the Local Agency Formation Commission. The EIR will be designed to meet the Local Agency Formation Commission requirements for annexation.

Comment Period

The NOP comment period begins on **September 1, 2020 to October 1, 2020**. When submitting comments, please be specific in describing your environmental concerns. In particular, if there are changes to the project or measures you believe the City should take that would reduce the environmental impact of the project or address issues of concern, please include them in your response to this NOP. Please also include contact information so that the City can follow up with questions regarding comments if necessary. Comments must be sent to:

Thomas Last, Community Development Director
City of Grass Valley
125 E. Main Street
Grass Valley, CA 95945
toml@cityofgrassvalley.com

Scoping Meeting

A virtual scoping meeting will be conducted on **September 23, 2020. The meeting will be at 3:00 p.m.** The scoping meeting will provide public agencies and the public with the opportunity to learn more about the proposed project and to discuss environmental issues. The scoping meeting will include a presentation of the proposed project and a summary of the environmental issues to be analyzed in the EIR. Comments provided during the scoping meeting will assist the City in scoping the potential environmental effects of the project to be addressed by the EIR.

Meeting Access Information:

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device:

Please click this URL to join.

<https://zoom.us/j/91034981807?pwd=MmwwVUZ6RDhtQIRFL0ZBdzhTWGx2Zz09>

Passcode: Ssm92320!

Or join by phone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 669 900 9128 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592

Webinar ID: 910 3498 1807

Passcode: 403221714

International numbers available: <https://zoom.us/j/91034981807?pwd=MmwwVUZ6RDhtQIRFL0ZBdzhTWGx2Zz09>

Anticipated Significant Environmental Impacts

The analysis in the Subsequent EIR will build on the 2014 SOI EIR and rely on the conclusions and determinations that remain applicable to the proposed project. The 2014 SOI EIR determined that the Southern Sphere of Influence Planning and Annexation Project would result in less-than-significant impacts (no mitigation required) in the following resources and issue areas: aesthetic resources; geology, soils, and mineral resources; land use, agriculture and forestry resources; population and housing; and public services and recreation. Given the similarities between the original project and the proposed project, and the relatively similar circumstances that exist today, it is unlikely that new features of the proposed project would result in new significant impacts or a substantial increase in severity of previously identified significant impacts in these areas. Therefore, the discussion of these topics is anticipated to include a summary of the conclusions of the 2014 SOI EIR with a brief, supplemental discussion substantiating the applicability of the 2014 SOI EIR analysis to the amended project.

Other resource areas (including hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, and public utilities and energy) may be also be adequately addressed through the analysis and mitigation measures identified in the 2014 SOI EIR but will be re-evaluated in the Subsequent EIR. The 2014 SOI EIR analysis will be updated to address the change in land use designations, zoning, and the addition of approximately 31 acres to the City's SOI and any relevant updates to the existing setting.

Finally, the City has identified the following primary issues that will be fully analyzed in the Subsequent EIR.

Transportation

The project could result in increased vehicle travel and associated vehicle miles traveled. An analysis of vehicle miles traveled will be conducted. Based on an analysis of the trip making characteristics of the proposed project, the Nevada County Travel Demand Model, and area demographics, the total number of vehicle trips and directional trip distribution of the project-generated traffic will be estimated. The analysis will also address potential vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian safety impacts associated with changes in traffic conditions.

Air Quality

The 2014 SOI EIR found that reasonably foreseeable future development would have the potential to create significant air quality emissions both in the construction and operational phases. The air quality analysis in the Subsequent EIR will analyze reasonably foreseeable construction and operational impacts related to proposed project changes. The impact analysis will address whether the proposed project would result in any new or substantially worse significant air quality effects as compared with the approved project.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The 2014 SOI EIR found that reasonably foreseeable future would have the potential to create significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The GHG analysis will include a brief discussion of the current state of the science (e.g., Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment Report), along with applicable regulatory framework and relevant local, state, and federal guidance. The GHG and climate change analysis in the Subsequent EIR will focus on the reasonably foreseeable construction and operational changes since the analysis provided in the 2014 SOI EIR.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

The Subsequent EIR will evaluate the potential effects of the SOI expansion on cultural resources (i.e., archaeological and historic architectural resources) and tribal cultural resources. This will include issues identified during the tribal consultation conducted under the requirements of Assembly Bill 52.

Biological Resources

The 2014 SOI EIR found that reasonably foreseeable future development under the 2014 SOI project would have the potential to cause a significant impact on special-status plants, coast horned lizard, nesting migratory birds and raptors, riparian habitat and federally protected waters. Since the adoption of the 2014 SOI EIR, the regulatory status of some wildlife species has changed (e.g., foothill yellow-legged frog is now a state listed species). The biological resources section will be updated to include the current special-status species that could be affected by the project and other recent regulatory changes, such as State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State and the Navigable Waters Protection Rule.

Wildfire

Although wildfire is addressed in the 2014 SOI EIR (see Impact 3.11.2, Wildland Fire Hazards), the Subsequent EIR will include a section evaluating the potential effects related to wildfire using the updated questions in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Any new significant impacts will be discussed, and mitigation will be proposed, if required.

Sincerely,



Thomas Last
Community Development Director

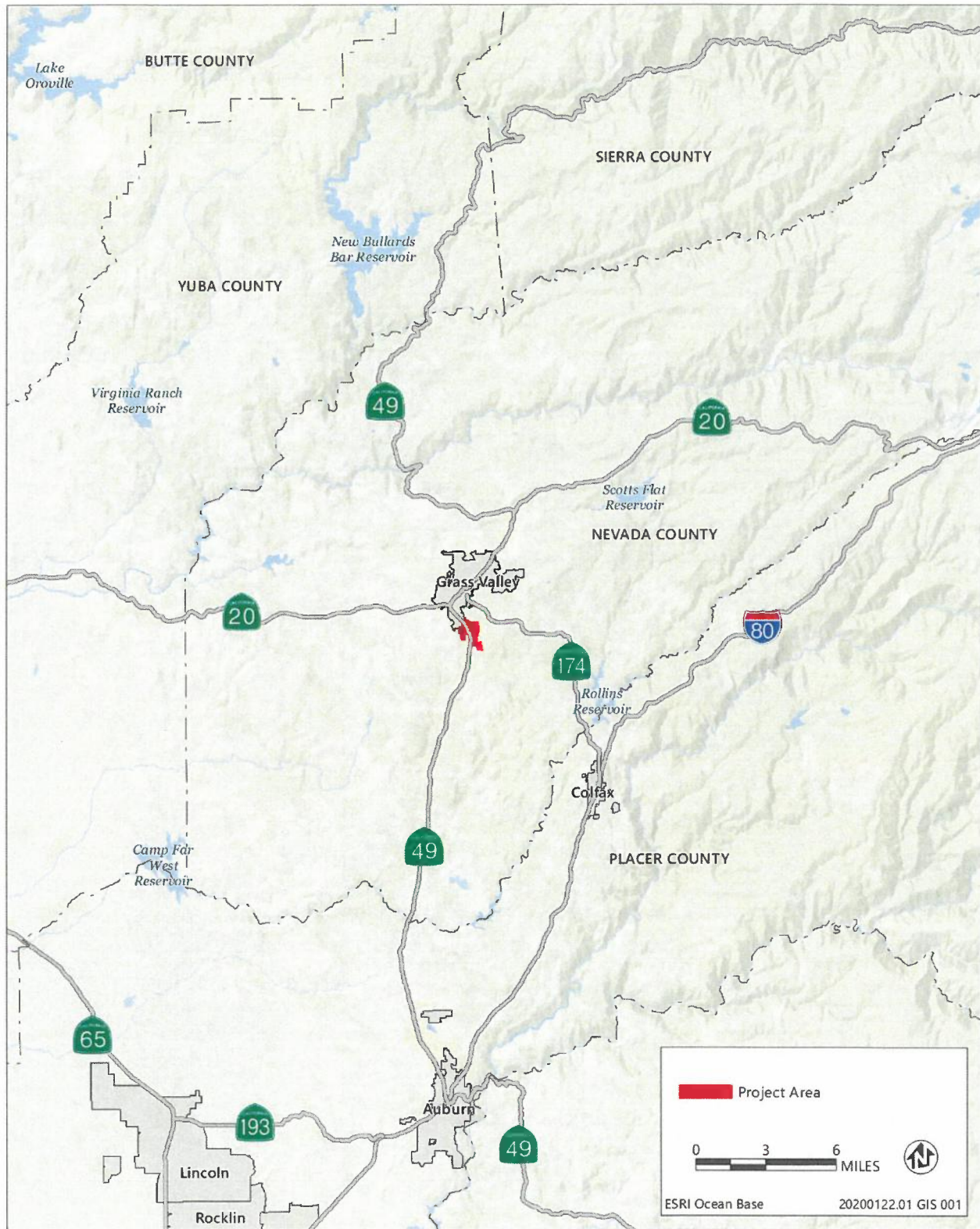


Figure 1, Regional Location Map

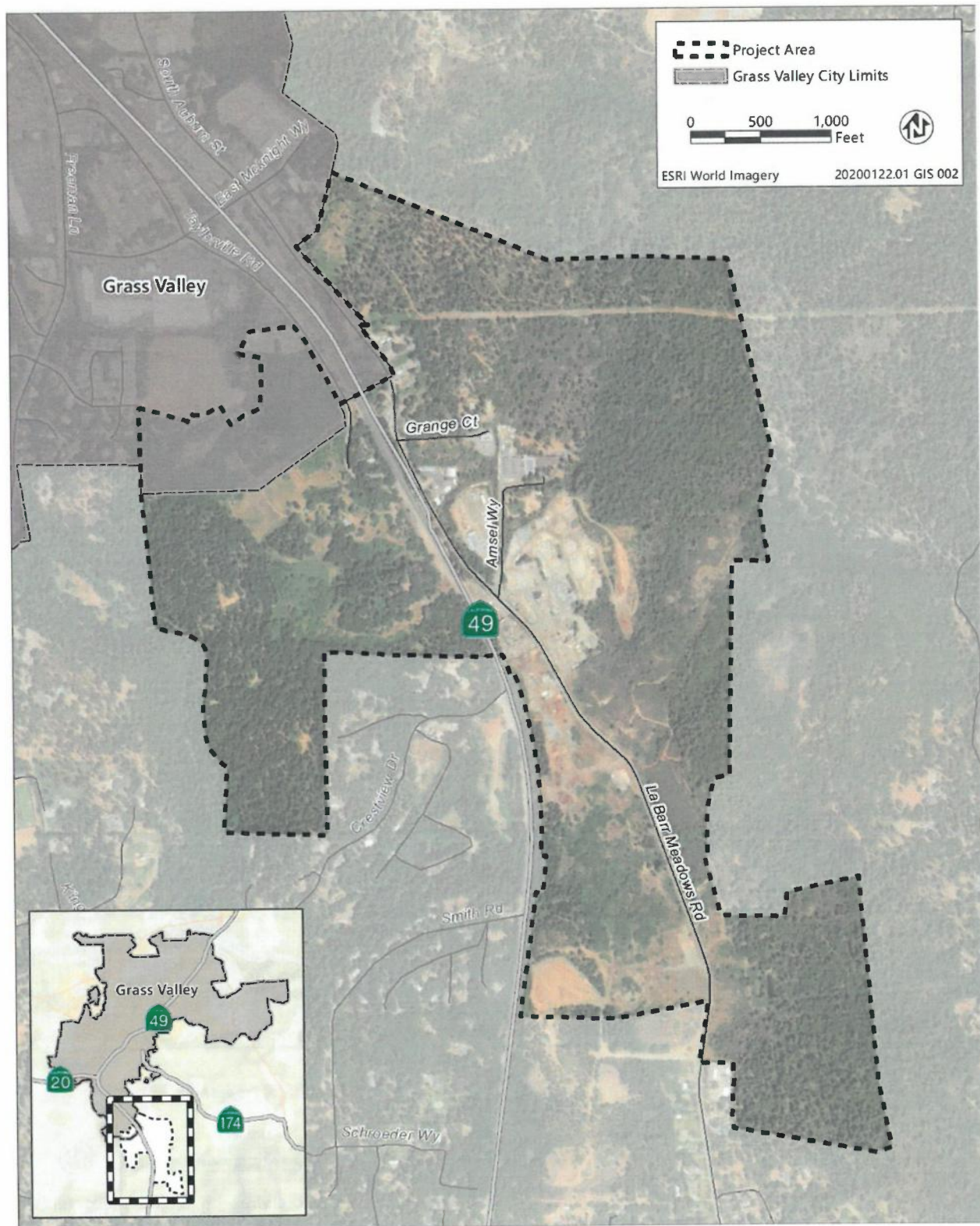


Figure 2, Annexation Area Map

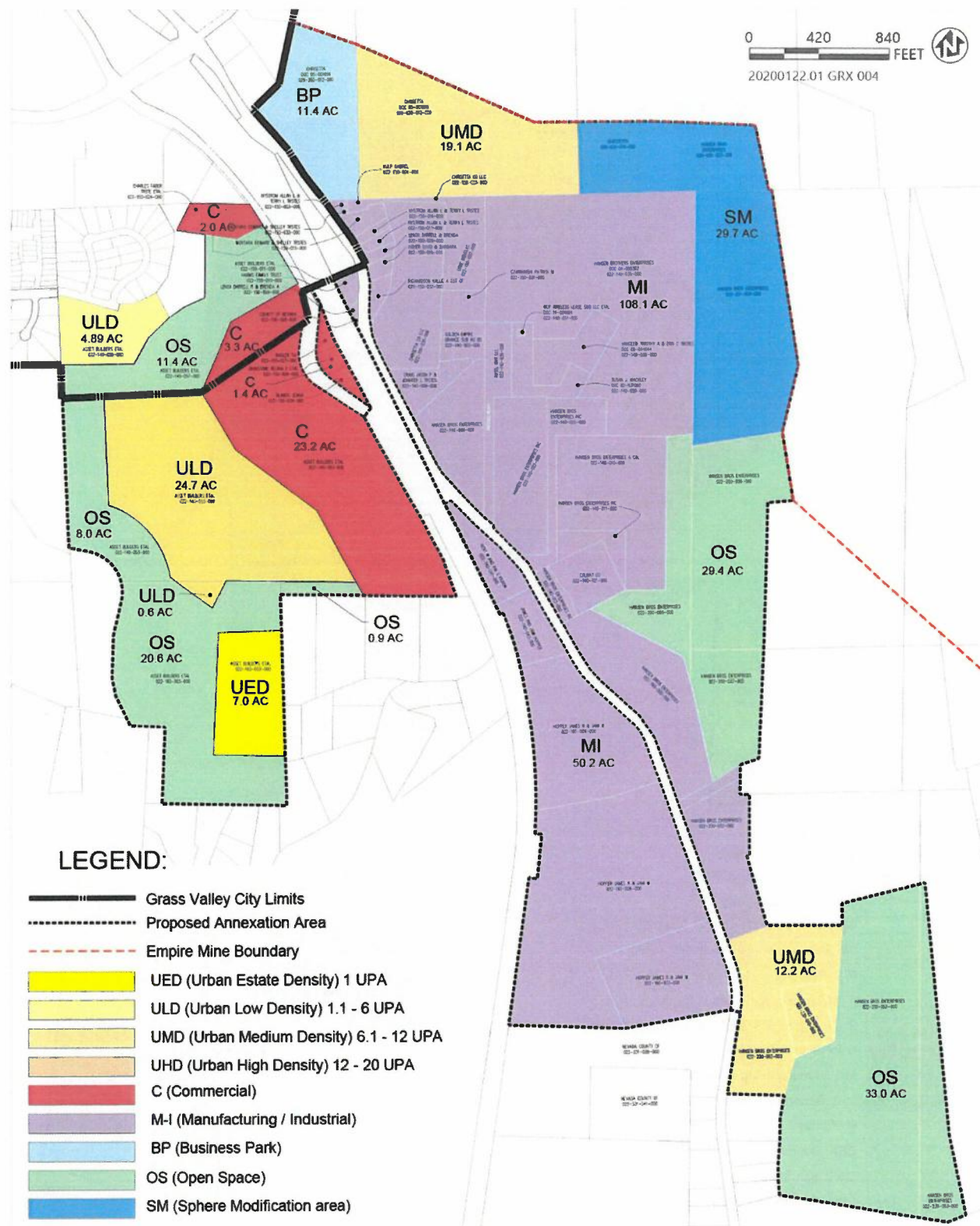


Figure 3, Existing General Plan Map

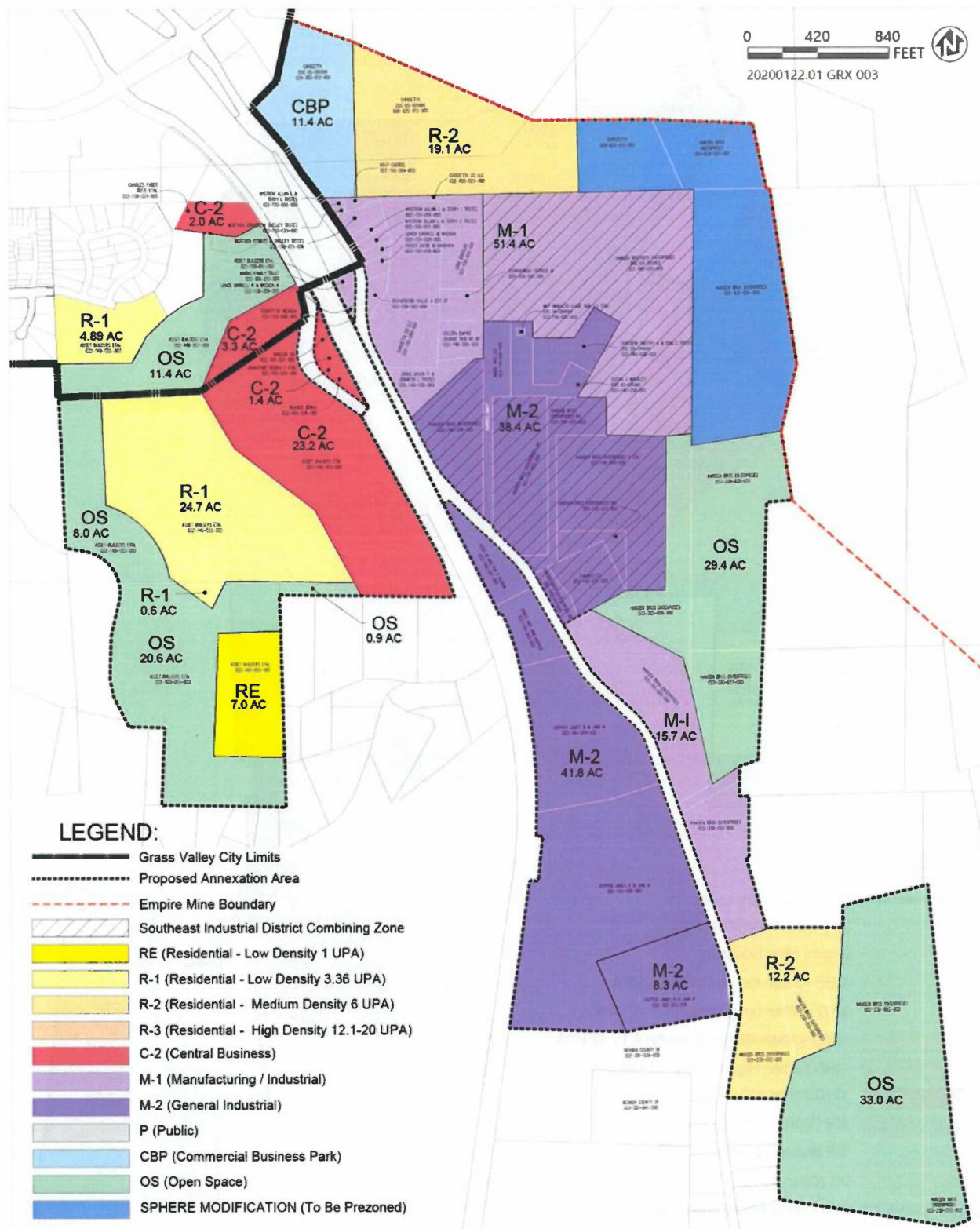


Figure 4, Existing Zoning Map



Figure 5, Proposed General Plan Map

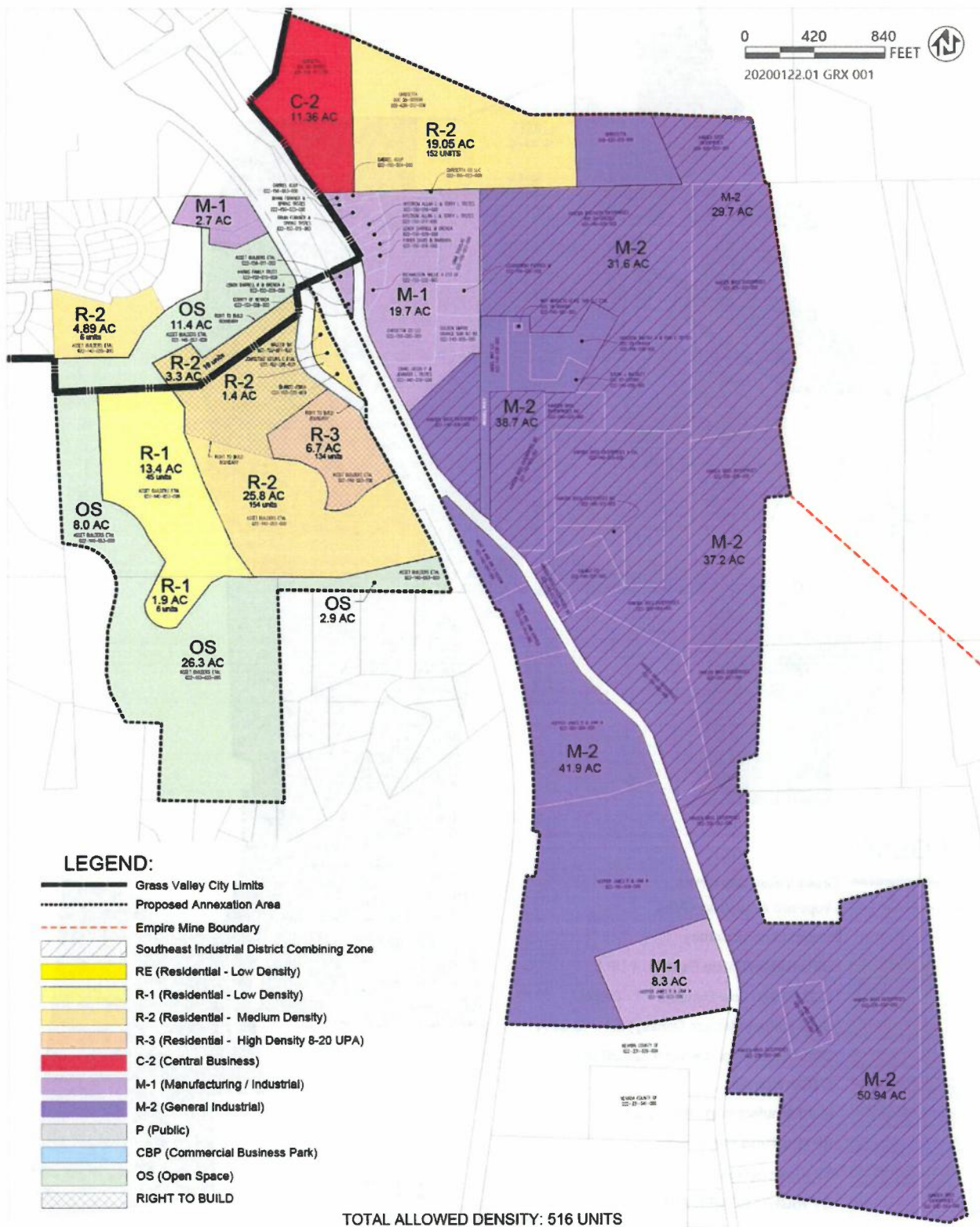


Figure 6, Proposed Prezoning Map