

CHAPTER 1: Introduction



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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 VISION STATEMENT

The El Charro Specific Plan Area will be an attractive and vital regional retail destination that will benefit from its proximity to Interstate 580 (I-580) while integrating a design that fits into the area's surrounding natural context. Travelers along I-580 experience views of rolling hills, interspersed with development, on either side of them throughout the region. Framed by development and roadways, these major view corridors will be incorporated into the retail area envisioned for this part of Livermore. As the western entrance to the City, the Plan Area will also provide a recognizable and well-designed gateway into the City, and will become a destination for City residents and the surrounding region.

Commercial development throughout Livermore is intended to support Downtown as the central vibrant retail commercial node. As a result, the Specific Plan Area is designed to attract a different scale of uses other than those found in Livermore's unique and dynamic Downtown. The uses within El Charro will be primarily regional-serving retail, selling clothing and accessories, home furnishings, electronics, jewelry, and other similar items and services. This commercial development will draw its market from the region as well as outside of the regional trade area, focusing on providing and servicing volume rather than the niche markets provided by the retail found in Downtown Livermore. The look and feel of the Plan Area will also be unlike what can be found in the well-developed main street of Livermore and will not detract from the Downtown.

The design of the commercial area will take cues from Livermore's historical character, including the agriculture and viticulture traditions seen throughout the community's natural and built landscape. Pedestrian friendly design elements are incorporated into the site and building design, including the use of landscape design and amenities. Development within the Specific Plan Area will also be compatible with surrounding land uses, including the active quarries, the Livermore Municipal Airport, and Los Positas Golf Course.

Circulation improvements will create a balanced and efficient external and internal transportation system. Extending Jack London Boulevard west to El Charro Road, for example, will connect the Specific Plan Area to the rest of the City. As of 2006, the only access to all of the properties within the Plan Area is provided by I-580, and this future Jack London Boulevard connection will allow for local access to and from the proposed retail and open space areas, creating continuity within the City itself.

Lastly, development within the Plan Area will be consistent with the City's Scenic Corridor policies, and will be sensitive to identified viewsheds and corridors that contribute to Livermore's character and identity. Development standards will incorporate design criteria and organize land uses in the Specific Plan Area that are sensitive to environmental assets and resource areas, including arroyos,

wetland areas, and tree stands. Any standards not discussed in the Specific Plan are established in the Livermore Planning and Zoning Code (LPZC), unless specific modifications to these standards are adopted through the PD District.

1.2 SPECIFIC PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The El Charro Specific Plan was developed to address future development patterns in the Plan Area. Under California Government Code Sections 65450 through 65457, as well as the State General Plan Guidelines prepared by the Office of Planning and Research (OPR), a specific plan may be used to implement a general plan and its policies and programs. Specific plans must be consistent with the applicable elements of the jurisdiction's general plan.

California Government Code Section 65451(a) defines the following content requirements for specific plans, including text and diagrams, which specify all of the following:

1. The distribution, location, and extent of the land uses, including open space, within the area covered by the plan.
2. The proposed distribution, location, extent, and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.
3. Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.
4. A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out paragraphs (1), (2), and (3).

California Government Code Section 65454 also states that no specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with the general plan. The El Charro Specific Plan was prepared pursuant to State Law and complies with all requirements.

1.3 PLAN AREA LOCATION AND OWNERSHIP PATTERNS

The El Charro Plan Area is located in eastern Alameda County, on the western edge of the City of Livermore (see Figure 1-1 Regional Location). The area is bordered by I-580 to the north, El Charro Road to the west, open space, aggregate resource lands, and active mining quarries to the south, and a municipal golf course and airport to the east. As shown in Figure 1-2 Local Context, the Plan Area is bordered to the northwest by the City of Dublin, and to the west by unincorporated Alameda



Figure 1-1 Regional Location
 CITY OF LIVERMORE EL CHARRO SPECIFIC PLAN

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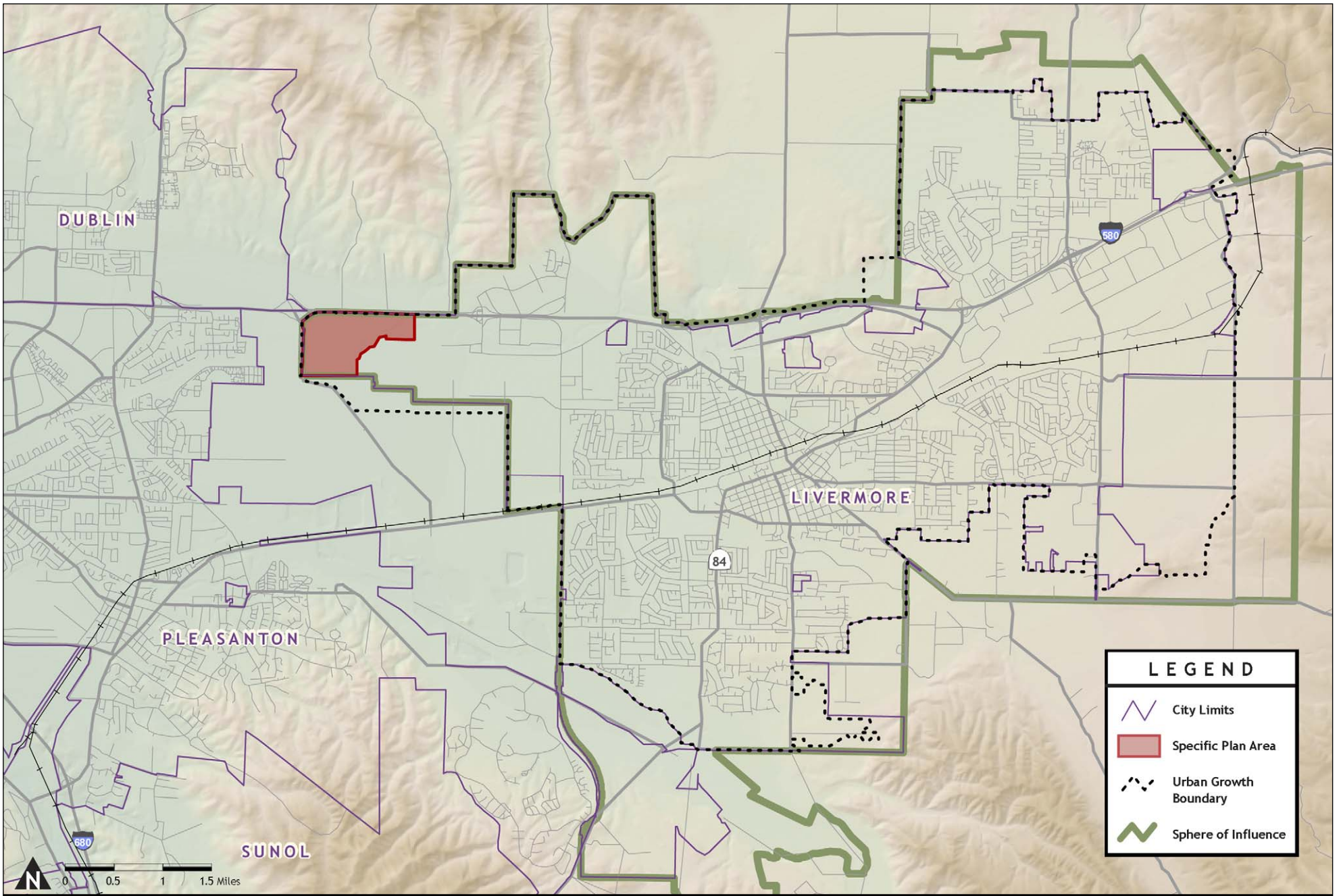


Figure 1-2 Local Context
CITY OF LIVERMORE EL CHARRO SPECIFIC PLAN

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County land (this land is under consideration for annexation into the City of Pleasanton). The entirety of the Plan Area is under the jurisdiction of the City of Livermore.

The site is approximately 250 acres of mostly non-urbanized land that is rectangular except where it follows Arroyo Las Positas on the southern and eastern edges. Property owners include the Johnson-Himsl Partnership, Roger Johnson, Crosswinds Church, Children's Hospital, Contra Costa Theater (Sywest), Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (Zone 7 Water Agency [Zone 7]) and the City of Livermore (illustrated in Figure 1-3 Property Ownership). Additionally, Prime Outlets Livermore Valley, LLC (Prime Outlets) is working with the City of Livermore to create a development proposal on property owned by Johnson-Himsl in the northwest corner of the Specific Plan Area.

1.4 EXISTING PHYSICAL SETTING

Most of the Specific Plan Area is flat and was historically in dryland agricultural production. The Arroyo Las Positas natural drainage channel runs east to west through the Plan Area. Most of the arroyo is unimproved and lined with tall trees, 50 to 70 feet high, and bushes, both of which contribute scenic value to the area. The far western edge of the arroyo, where it meets El Charro Road, has been channelized, including concrete linings, terraced plantings, and ramps. Figure 1-4, Existing Setting, illustrates some of the natural and regulatory features of the area.

Views from the site to the surrounding areas include rolling hills and grazing lands to the north, and higher tree-covered hills to the distant south. Both the I-580 corridor, adjacent to the site's northern edge, and El Charro Road, along the western edge, are at or slightly above grade and do not impede views from the Plan Area. Views to the site from both of these roadways are, for the most part, unimpaired. Travelers on I-580 briefly lose sight of the Plan Area only when going west to east and pass underneath the El Charro/Fallon Road interchange. Conversely, travelers crossing I-580 on the elevated El Charro/Fallon Road interchange enjoy expanded views of the Plan Area.

1.4.1 Existing Land Use Patterns

Site visits to the Plan Area in 2006 show that approximately 120 acres are under dryland farming, as seen by the tilled fields. Approximately 42 acres of the Johnson-Himsl lands, as well as the remaining undeveloped land, are fallow. An occasional trailer or piece of farm machinery can be found dotting the landscape of this area. The Sywest property is presently under lease to a golf driving range. A small rural residential community of fewer than a dozen housing units occupies the southwest corner of the Children's Hospital property, while the remaining property area is grazing land. This parcel is only accessible by a private driveway leading from the terminus of Freisman Road. The Children's Hospital site is still under a Williamson Act contract; however, they have recently filed for non-

renewal status. Zone 7, the regional agency charged with securing adequate potable water storage and storm drainage conveyance, owns approximately 15 acres of land along the arroyo in the Plan Area, providing stormwater control and management for the region. The remainder of the Plan Area is owned by the City, and as of 2006, this land was used as a buffer area to the airport as well as to store floodwater.

Land uses in the Plan Area are restricted due to the City-adopted Airport Protection Area (APA). The APA applies to the areas adjacent to the airport and ensures that surrounding land uses are not in conflict with airport operations. This amendment prohibits new residential land use designations within the APA, which covers an area 5,000 feet north, east, and south, and 7,100 feet west of the airport runways. In addition, a 40-foot height restriction under the City's zoning code extends 5,000 feet from the edge of the runways and applies to a majority of the Plan Area, except where amended by this Specific Plan.

Interstate 580 forms the northern boundary of the Specific Plan Area. Unincorporated County land is located on the north side of the interstate. A section of this land is being developed under a Specific Plan by the City of Dublin, and was in its early planning stages in 2006.

Arroyo Las Positas forms a portion of the Specific Plan boundary and runs through the City property, starting in the northeast corner and exiting in the southwest corner. This arroyo provides riparian habitat and is a vital component of the area's stormwater management system. Prior to its confluence with Arroyo Mocho, Arroyo Las Positas drains approximately 80 square miles in the northeast portion of the Alameda Creek watershed.¹

The Las Positas Municipal Golf Course forms the eastern edge of the Plan Area. The Livermore Municipal Airport is located south of the golf course, and affects the Plan Area through certain regulations and restrictions. Both facilities have entrances from Airway Boulevard, which connects to I-580. The airport also has access from Jack London Boulevard.

Beyond the southern edge of the site, which aligns with the City and sphere of influence (SOI) boundaries, is agricultural land owned by Rhodes & Jamieson (R&J). In 2006, this area was being used for horse grazing and includes animal shelter structures. In addition, the easternmost of the four parcels was in dryland agricultural production for alfalfa and hay, but has significant aggregate resources beneath the surface.

Further south of the Plan Area is a large, active gravel quarry pit. Land uses are controlled through R&J's contractual agreement with Vulcan Materials Company, who mines this area to process gravel from these quarries. Two of the quarries are slated as future lakes in the Chain of Lakes Specific Plan

¹ Zone 7 Water Agency, *Stream Management Master Plan Draft EIR*, March 2006.

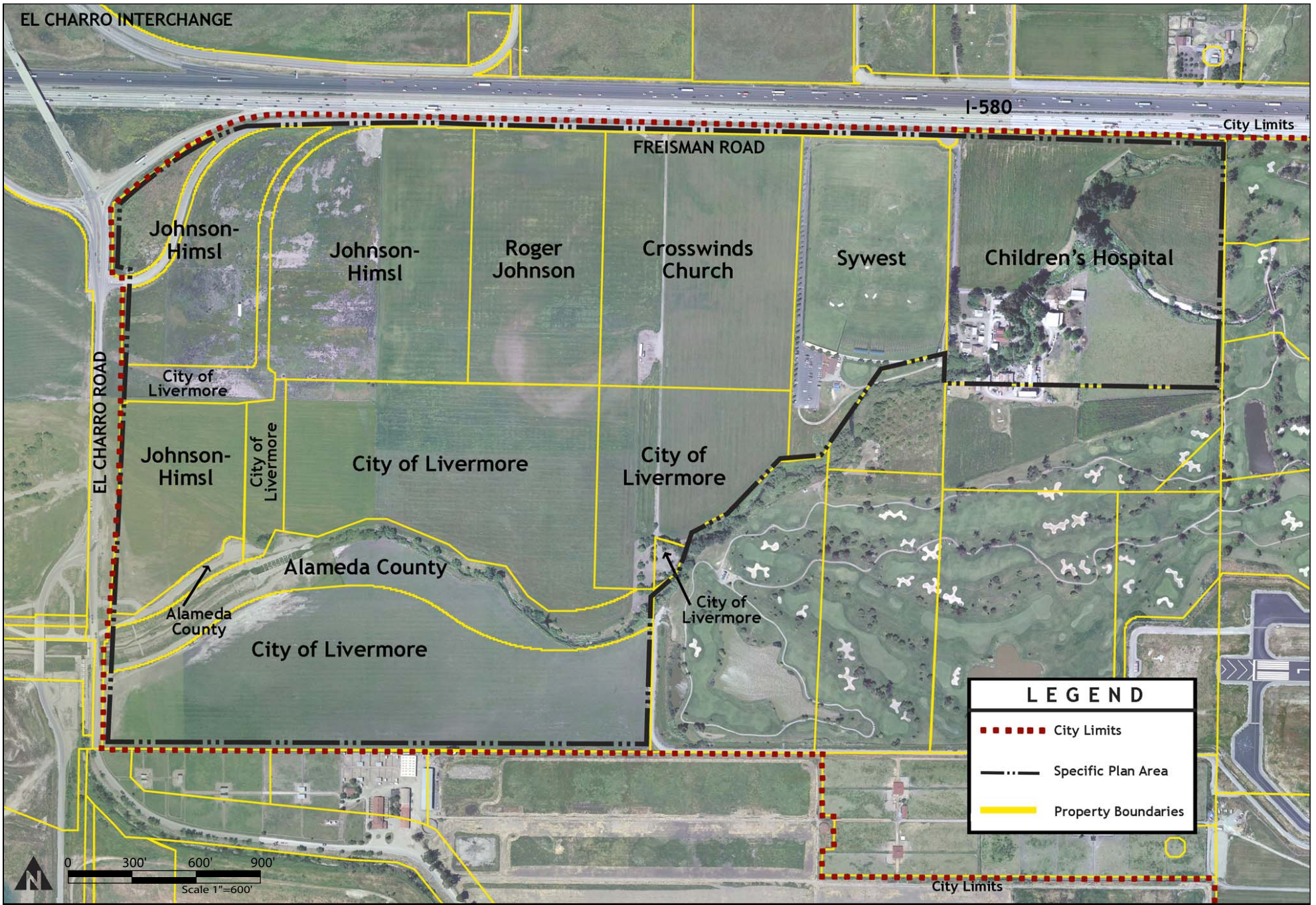


Figure 1-3 Property Ownership
 CITY OF LIVERMORE EL CHARRO SPECIFIC PLAN

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being developed by the County in conjunction with Zone 7, surrounding cities, and quarry owners in the area.

The quarry facilities use Quarry Road, located south of the Specific Plan Area, and El Charro Road along the site's western edge, to transport materials to I-580. The southern portion of El Charro Road is privately owned by the quarry operators, and it is their primary access in and out of this area. Quarry operations and transportation activities are permitted 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Despite the fact that the R&J and Vulcan Materials properties are beyond the Specific Plan boundary, the development of this Plan was coordinated with all interested landowners, as decisions regarding road alignments and improvements could likely affect their land, existing operations, and circulation patterns and facilities.

Most of the County land immediately west of the Plan Area is undeveloped. However, the land is under consideration for annexation into Pleasanton as part of a proposed amendment to the Staples Ranch Specific Plan Area. Proposed land uses within this area include a community park, ice skating rink, commercial uses, including an auto mall, and a senior residential facility. Existing residential development along the current City limit boundary of Pleasanton is visible from the site.

1.4.2 Circulation Overview

As of 2006, existing vehicular access to the El Charro Specific Plan Area was limited to one location, the interchange at El Charro Road and I-580. The El Charro Specific Plan Area is located directly southeast of the El Charro/Fallon Road interchange. El Charro Road runs in a north-south direction, forming the western boundary of the Specific Plan Area. Freisman Road intersects with El Charro Road just south of the interchange, running through the northwest corner of the Plan Area, and then parallel to I-580 until it reaches the western property line of the Children's Hospital site at the eastern edge of the Plan Area. A private road extends south from the terminus of Freisman Road, providing access to the rural residential properties at the easterly edge of the Plan Area.

Several circulation improvements, further discussed in Chapter 4, will be required to support development within the Plan Area:

- Extension of Jack London Boulevard
- Expansion of El Charro Road
- Realignment of Freisman Road
- North/south street connections and internal streets

1.5 APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The City of Livermore has several policy documents and plans in place that apply to development in the El Charro Specific Plan Area. Early in the planning process, a full policy analysis for the Plan Area was completed and should be referred to for a comprehensive overview of all applicable policies. The following section contains a summary of the most relevant policies and plans, which influenced the Specific Plan preparation.

1.5.1 City of Livermore General Plan

Existing Land Use Designations

Business and Commercial Park (BCP)

The General Plan designates the majority of the Specific Plan area as Business and Commercial Park (BCP), which permits a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.3 to 0.5, depending on the particular use. BCP designations are given to areas with a minimum of 20 acres, located in the general vicinity of the freeway, and typically along major streets. Encouraged uses include destination-oriented community and regional retail, highway commercial and service uses, and office and light industrial uses as appropriate. The designation is particularly aimed at the development of employment generating uses.

Limited Agriculture (LDAG)

The City-owned parcels in the southern half of the Plan Area and the R&J properties adjacent to the site are designated as Limited Agriculture (LDAG). This designation applies to parcels that are a minimum of 20 acres and have the potential to be used as transition areas between lower density residential development and the larger Agriculture/Viticulture parcels in the City. Both designations are intended to preserve and promote Livermore's rural heritage, agriculture and viticulture uses, and unique habitats. In the case of the Specific Plan Area, the LDAG designation also includes flood control and airport buffer functions.² Figure 1-5 General Plan Land Use Designations, depicts the current Livermore General Plan designations for the El Charro Specific Plan and its surrounding area.

Land Use Element: Applicable General Plan Policies

The following policies provide direction regarding development within the Plan Area, and help to establish the desired character and quality of development envisioned for the Plan Area and within Livermore in general.

² City of Livermore General Plan, 2003, page 3-27.

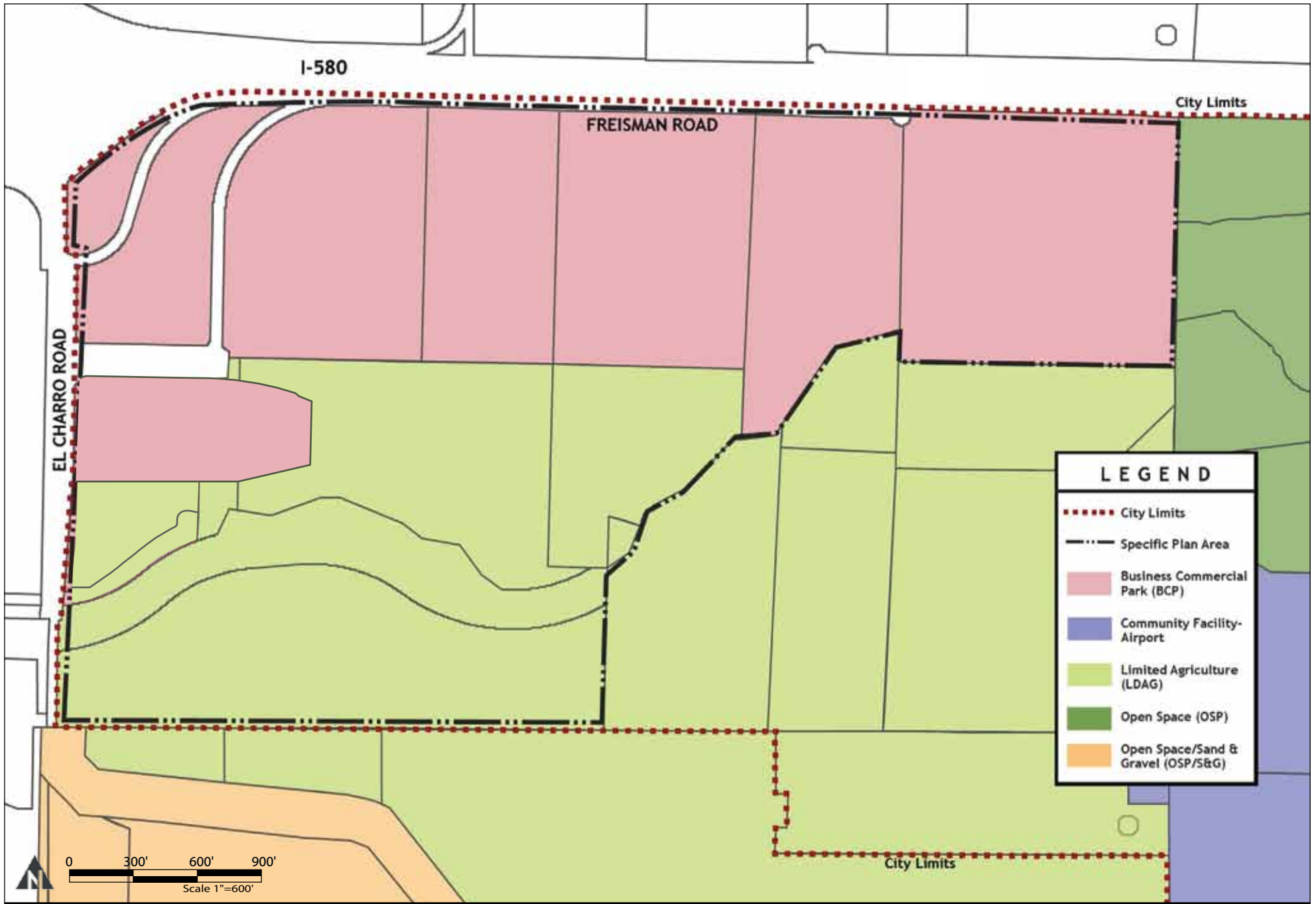


Figure 1-5 Existing General Plan Land Use Designations
 CITY OF LIVERMORE EL CHARRO SPECIFIC PLAN

Revised July 2012

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Commercial Development

The focus of Livermore’s commercial development is primarily intended to complement and support the Downtown as a vibrant area, as well as to serve existing neighborhoods, with additional growth occurring contiguous to existing urban fabric (Objective LU-1.4). An exception to this is regional and community-serving retail centers, such as outlet malls and other large national retailers that are adjacent to or accessible to a highway or freeway (Policy LU-1.4-P6).³

Environmental Considerations

Goal LU-4 of the General Plan states that the City will ensure that new development mitigates significant environmental, design, and infrastructure impacts. In part, the City will prevent development in areas where the environmental context (critical physical or biological characteristics) renders an allowable land use inappropriate. Policy LU-4.1-P1 requires impacts to wetland and biological resources be calculated on a gross acreage basis, and include an assessment of steep slopes, streets, floodways, and park dedications that could result in losses of wildlife and plant habitat. Policy LU-4.1-P2 encourages development clusters that minimize ecological footprints on sites proximate to sensitive areas, such as creek corridors.

Livermore Municipal Airport

The General Plan contains an objective to protect the airport from incompatible development encroachment that could compromise its economic viability. The City will therefore promote development in the airport’s vicinity that maintains noise standards and flight clearance requirements, such as light industrial and transportation uses, and limited agriculture and open space (Policy LU-4.4-P1).

The Public Safety Element also contains policies related to the airport, including a minimum 800-foot wide buffer mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) along the full length of any runway and 1,000 feet at the ends. In 1991, the City established an Airport Protection Area (APA) that extended this minimum buffer to 5,000 feet along all sides of a runway, except to the west where the distance was increased to 7,100 feet to accommodate the most frequent take-off direction. These buffers were incorporated into the County Land Use Plan (CLUP) authored by the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), and apply to the entire Specific Plan Area.

Approximately 96 acres of land owned by the City of Livermore was purchased with FAA grant money for the airport buffer area. Use of this land is restricted by both the County Airport Land Use Plan and FAA grant assurances.

³ City of Livermore General Plan, 2003, page 3-26 through 3-33.

Visual Quality

The City's General Plan establishes a goal to protect and enhance public views within and from established scenic routes, including views of arroyos (Goal CC-4). Development shall not be allowed to obscure, detract from, or negatively affect the quality of the views from designated scenic routes (Policy CC-4.1-P1). All exterior lighting must be designed to minimize nighttime light pollution, and signage should be minimized to the extent possible (Policy CC-1.3-P1).⁴

Community Character Element

Urban Design

The Community Character Element outlines policies and actions directed at preserving and enhancing the aesthetic and functional qualities in Livermore through design. High standards of urban design are encouraged throughout the City, particularly in all new development and redevelopment (Objective CC-2.1), which is subject to a design and compatibility review. This review takes into account community design, site design, building design, and landscape design (Policies P1 and P2). Architectural design and site layout should be distinctive, and take into consideration the surrounding context, while striving to provide visual buffers and facilitate pedestrian activity.

Gateway Features

The General Plan identifies several major gateways into the City of Livermore, including one at the interchange of I-580 at El Charro Road. Policy CC-2.4-P3 states that development along the south side of Freisman Road and the eastern edge of El Charro Road on the southeast side of the El Charro/Fallon Road interchange shall provide a buffer of vineyards.

I-580 Scenic Corridor

Interstate 580 is Livermore's major scenic corridor, providing the clearest views of the surrounding hills to travelers. According to the California Department of Transportation, the Livermore portion of I-580 is eligible for the State's scenic highway designation, but is not officially designated at this time.⁵ The General Plan indicates the City's intent to secure this designation, and in the meantime, outlines policies aimed at protecting the afforded views that contribute to the route's scenic value, such as grading control, landscaping, and building height limitations. Anything within 3,500 feet of the freeway's centerline and visible from the road is considered part of the Scenic Corridor.

From I-580, traveling west to east, views to the north include rolling hills and agricultural grasslands; views south capture the Las Positas Golf Course, the airport, fallow agricultural fields, and in the distance, rolling hills. Similar views can also be found when traveling in the opposite direction. Among others, the General Plan also identifies Fallon Road on the north side of I-580, State Route

⁴ City of Livermore General Plan, 2003, page 4-6.

⁵ http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm, accessed February 9, 2006.

84 (SR-84) just east of the airport, and the existing portion of Jack London Boulevard as scenic routes.⁶

Subarea 6A

The General Plan divides the I-580 Scenic Corridor area into six subareas, and applies site-specific development standards based on the unique visual resources found in each area. The Specific Plan Area falls in Subarea 6A, which is the area south of I-580 from El Charro Road to SR-84 on the east. A 2.2-degree view angle⁷ was originally established for this subarea to regulate building heights in order to preserve views of the southern ridgelines from I-580; lands closer to I-580 generally have more restrictive building height limitations.⁸

The Specific Plan was concurrently processed with a General Plan Amendment to allow for limited vertical projections above the 2.2-degree view angle. There are two site-specific circumstances under which buildings or architectural elements may, or are encouraged, to project vertically into the delineated Scenic Corridor:

- Institutional land uses, which are allowed a 15-foot vertical projection into the view plane, only if located on the Children’s Hospital site. The design of an institutional/assembly building, if proposed, could require more volume and taller ceiling heights than commercial land uses; and
- Special architectural elements, which could project into the view plane in order to establish a clearly discernable gateway into the City of Livermore. This condition applies specifically to the Johnson-Himsl parcel adjacent to Interstate 580.

These projections consider the functional needs of the proposed land uses, and the potential visual implications of these actions. The overall intent is to provide development and landscaping that creates a cohesive district within the City and serves as a City gateway element, while protecting the views of the southern ridgelines. Further information on the Scenic Corridor is provided in Chapters 2 and 3 of this Plan.

Relevant Policies

Goal CC-4 seeks to protect and enhance public views to and from established scenic routes, including views of arroyos. Therefore, development should not detract from, block, or degrade view quality, and the City should not permit any development that wholly obstructs views to any scenic area from an identified scenic route (Policies CC-4.1-P1 and P3). Scenic routes should be connected

⁶ City of Livermore General Plan, 2003, page 4-27.

⁷ View angle refers to the plane by which building height limitations are determined. View angles are established for each subarea based on land use policies, ridge elevations and other visual resources, freeway elevation, and existing development patterns. A list of criteria is found on page 4-65 of the General Plan. City of Livermore General Plan, 2003, page 4-65.

⁸ City of Livermore General Plan, 2003, page 4-61.

as a complete and easy to navigate system that provides aesthetic value to travelers, including cyclists and hikers. Provisions established in the City's landscape plan should guide the incorporation of trees and shrubs along scenic routes (Policy CC-4.3-P1 and Action CC-4.3-A1).

Any new development within a scenic corridor will be reviewed for its architecture, site planning, and landscape compatibility with view preservation as well as consistency with other visual policies and objectives. The General Plan states that design solutions that fit with the natural skyline and existing cityscape are preferred.

Circulation Element

The City seeks to develop a circulation system that will support, and be consistent, with the goals and policies of the Land Use Element. Therefore, all new development projects are to be reviewed for impacts to adjacent circulation systems, and must mitigate any impacts to the extent feasible (Policy CIR-1.1-P2). The General Plan establishes an upper limit of acceptable level of service at signalized intersections to be mid-level D, except in the Downtown Area, where there is no standard, and near freeway interchanges, where it is LOS E (Policies CIR-4.1-P1–P3).

Several improvements are being planned for the I-580 corridor and Livermore through the City's General Plan, which accommodates expansion of the interstate through its adopted policies. Such improvements include HOV lanes, ramp metering, auxiliary lanes, and right-of-way preservation for a future transit corridor in the I-580 median. Policy CIR-2.1-P3 states that the City shall pursue and protect adequate right-of-way to accommodate future roadway improvements. Policy CIR-7.1-P1 supports State and regional efforts to improve I-580 within the Tri-Valley with high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, auxiliary lanes, ramp metering, and possible transit expansion alternatives. Some of these improvements are planned for the corridor adjacent to the Plan Area.

The City's General Plan also anticipates an extension of BART to Greenville Road and upgrades to ACE commuter rail service. Rail expansion alternatives are being studied in the Regional Rail Plan sponsored by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), California High-Speed Rail Authority, BART, and Caltrain.

The Jack London Boulevard extension is part of the Circulation Element's roadway system and should be completed per Action CIR-2.1-A2, which directs the City to construct any missing links to complete its roadway system, when warranted.⁹ Any new roadways or expansions should be carried out with the least possible environmental impacts to air quality, noise, community appearance and visual quality, drainage, or vegetation and wildlife. Emergency vehicle access must also be secured to all development or redevelopment projects (Policies CIR-5.2-P1 and P3).

⁹ City of Livermore General Plan, 2003, page 5-20.

The City also outlines a number of policies and actions related to the creation and extension of the bicycle and trail network. These policies not only encourage and incorporate access for bicycles and pedestrians throughout the City but set policies to provide the necessary facilities and services that will further encourage these modes of transportation. Action CIR-3.3-A2 states that City shall develop bicycle routes and multi-use trails in accordance with the City's adopted master plan for a bikeway and trails network.

In terms of parking, the General Plan requires that adequate parking be provided; however, excessive off-street parking is discouraged. According to Action CIR-9.2-A1, the City should consider adopting parking maximums, according to use, to limit impervious surfaces and undesirable open-land uses.¹⁰

Infrastructure and Public Services Element

Water System Policies

As part of development within the Specific Plan Area, both potable and recycled water will need to be extended and provided in a manner that will support the needs of the new commercial developments. Goal INF-1 and its associated objectives, policies, and actions ensure that sufficient water supplies and facilities will be provided to the El Charro Specific Plan Area once development is initiated.

Wastewater Policies

Goals set forth through the Specific Plan ensure that the collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater will be provided for all existing and new developments within the City. INF-2.1-P10 states that all new development projects shall be responsible for construction of a sanitary sewer collection and conveyance system as part of the Citywide infrastructure plan.

Stormwater Policies

Policy INF-3.2-P1 requires all new development to be responsible for constructing a stormwater collection system, as well as contributing stormwater collection fees to both the City and Zone 7 to construct additional necessary facilities. The construction of any new systems should occur concurrently with new roadways if possible to maximize efficiencies (INF-3.2-P4).¹¹ The General Plan also contains directives to reduce impervious surfaces that contribute to increased stormwater runoff through the use of vegetative swales (bio-filters), as well as requirements for detention/infiltration basins to discharge stormwater at the same rate as pre-project flows (Actions INF-3.2-A1 and -A2). New development is required to pursue proactive measures to address these directives (Policy INF-3.3-P5).

¹⁰ City of Livermore General Plan, 2003, page 5-31.

¹¹ City of Livermore General Plan, 2003, page 7-23.

Arroyos Policies

Arroyos and creeks should be kept in a natural state to the extent possible, and only maintained and modified to the extent necessary to protect public safety and health, provide flood control and recreational use, and preserve habitat. Proposed modifications should be limited to essential public infrastructure and any improvements must be done in accordance with proper engineering standards, resource agency approvals, and best practices for environmental restoration (Policies INF-3.3-P1 and -P2).

Electricity, Gas and Telecommunications

All new developments must extend and underground electricity, gas, and telecommunication services needed to support their land uses while maintaining and improving existing levels and service standards for the City's residents. Objective INF-4.2 is particularly applicable to the Plan Area because it indicates that utility service shall be provided in a way that balances the public's need and Livermore's natural environment.

1.5.2 Agricultural Resources

Within the Specific Plan boundary, the Department of Conservation's 2004 Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) identifies one property—the Children's Hospital site—as Prime Farmland, with the remainder being grazing, other, or developed lands. The Alameda County Important Farmland Map (2006), however, designates the Children's Hospital site as "Non-Prime Agricultural Land." The Alameda County Williamson Act Lands 2006 map shows the Children's Hospital site as Non-Prime Agricultural Land in Non-Renewal.

Agricultural resource impacts are addressed as part of the Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

1.5.3 Zoning Ordinance

The goals and policies outlined in the General Plan are implemented in the City's Planning and Zoning Code (LPZC), which provides detailed guidelines and standards for new development and redevelopment projects.

Consistent with the BCP land use designation, the El Charro Specific Plan Area is zoned as Planned Development (PD). This zoning category requires site plan approval. PD zoning districts ensure compatibility with adjacent uses as well as with the intent of the General Plan by guiding appropriate land uses for the project. Figure 1-6 Existing Zoning Districts, illustrates the existing zoning classifications for the Plan Area and adjacent properties.

Scenic Routes

The LPZC safeguards the City's scenic routes and view resources by outlining specific requirements for new development in regards to design elements, zoning restrictions related to height, density, coverage, lot area, and other factors that minimize the impact on the surrounding environment.

Building Heights

Section 3-05-270 of the LPZC limits building heights within 5,000 feet of any airport runway to 40 feet. As stated earlier, building heights are also subject to Scenic Corridor regulations, exceptions to which are allowed under this Specific Plan and are further described in Chapter 2.

1.5.4 Design Standards and Guidelines, City of Livermore

As directed by action items contained in the General Plan, the City adopted a comprehensive set of design standards and guidelines in June 2004, *Design Standards and Guidelines*. This document works in conjunction with the General Plan to further denote specific parameters, design principles, and performance standards for new development and redevelopment projects, and related public improvements. Specific design standards and guidelines are developed and incorporated into the Specific Plan document that focuses on the type and character of development envisioned for this area. These standards and guidelines build on and supplement the existing Citywide design standards and guidelines.

Goals are outlined throughout the document and include broad-based Citywide as well as specific area goals for types of development, and particular element goals.

1.5.5 Regional Rail Plan

A partnership of Bay Area transportation agencies are developing a Regional Rail Plan for the Bay Area that is intended to integrate passenger rail systems, improve connections, expand the rail network, and coordinate future rail projects. A Draft Plan is anticipated in early 2007. Livermore is located along a major transportation corridor and just east of the last stop on the Dublin/Pleasanton line of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART), the regional transit system. Rail expansion opportunities could affect the I-580 corridor and provide transportation alternatives for retail development within the El Charro Specific Plan Area.

1.5.6 Countywide Transportation Plan

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA) is responsible for congestion management in Alameda County, and strategically plans, funds and implements projects and programs for highway and transit expansion, local road improvements, transit maintenance and improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Several projects that could potentially impact the El

Charro Specific Plan Area, such as I-580 widening to accommodate HOV or HOT lanes, auxiliary lanes, or right of way preservation for rail expansion in the I-580 corridor, would all be programmed and funded through the ACCMA.

1.5.7 Stream Management Master Plan

The Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, otherwise known as the Zone 7 Water Agency (Zone 7), is responsible for providing drinking water and flood control to Livermore, Dublin, Pleasanton, Sunol, and the unincorporated areas of the county within the Tri-Valley. They strategically plan, fund, and implement projects and programs to provide flood control and the best drinking water at the lowest cost to their distributors. In early 2006, Zone 7 adopted their Stream Management Master Plan (SMMP) and Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR). The SMMP addresses multiple objectives including Flood Protection and Drainage, Erosion and Sedimentation, Water Supply, Water Quality, Habitat and Environment and Trails, Recreation, and Public Education. Zone 7 is working closely with stakeholders to implement their plan. The City of Livermore has worked closely with Zone 7, and will continue to work closely to develop funding and implementation programs for the elements of the SMMP that lie within the vicinity of, and benefit from, the El Charro Specific Plan.

1.5.8 Zone 7 Well Master Plan

Zone 7 also is working to improve the use of the groundwater basin with the development of a Well Master Plan (2003). In order to provide appropriate well capacity to meet its current reliability goals, Zone 7 proposes to increase its well production capacity through the installation of 8 to 15 new production wells within the Main Basin of the Livermore Valley. Proposed facilities would be located within up to 11 potential wellfields identified within the Well Master Plan. The eleven identified wellfields are located in the Cities of Pleasanton, Livermore, or within unincorporated lands of Alameda County. The main objective of this project is to increase reliability and redundancy of the water system such that treated water is available to Zone 7 customers during peak demand periods or in the event of an emergency.

1.5.9 Chain of Lakes Master Plan

In 2006, Zone 7 began developing a Chain of Lakes Master Plan. The project, when complete, will consist of a series of abandoned gravel quarry pits converted into nine lakes (Lakes A through I), linked in series, and used for seasonal water storage and conveyance, and floodwater detention and conveyance. The Chain of Lakes Master Plan will be a comprehensive master plan for the operation and maintenance of the entire Chain of Lakes and incorporating it into Zone 7's water supply, flood control, and/or untreated water programs.

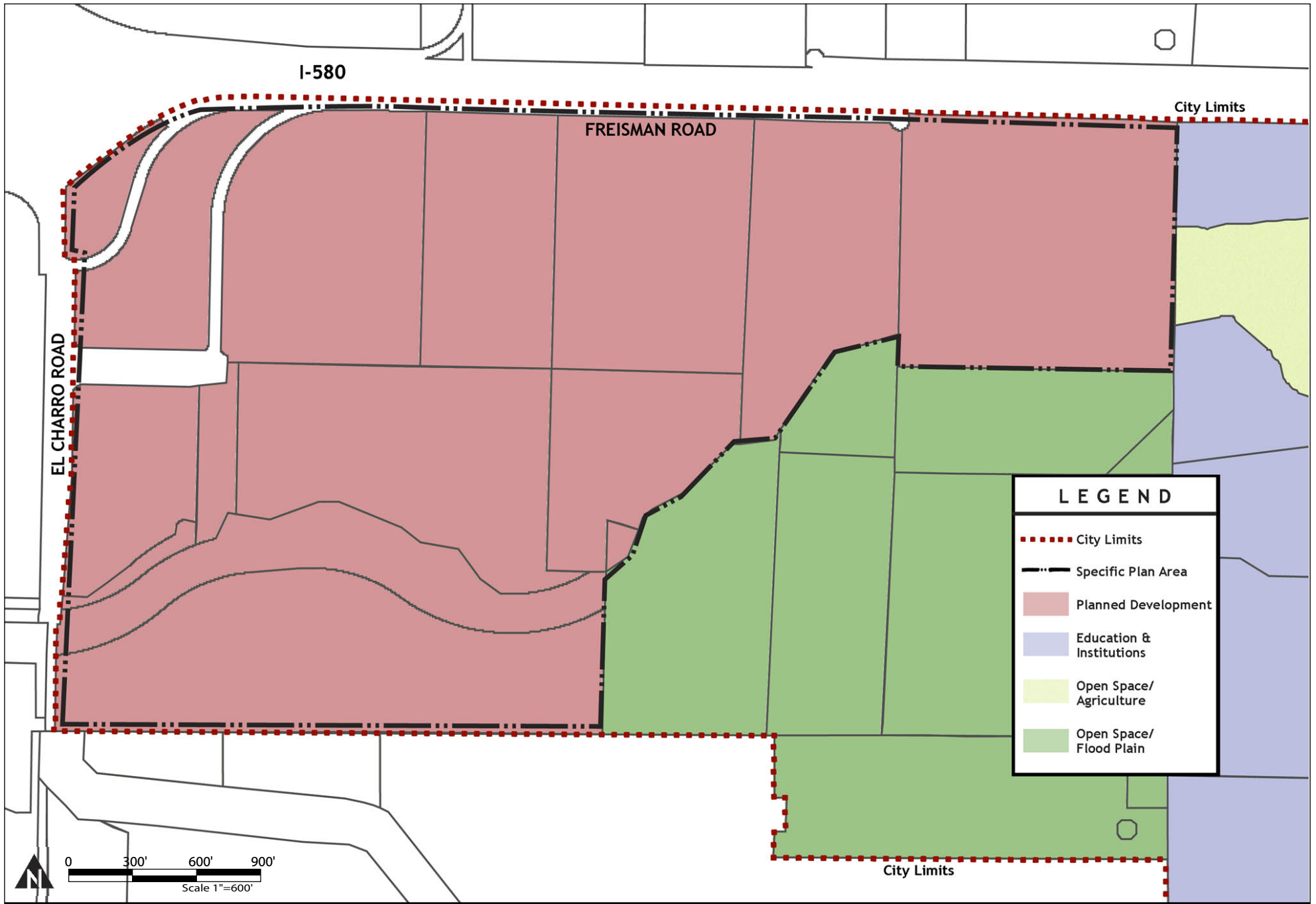


Figure 1-6 Existing Zoning Districts
 CITY OF LIVERMORE EL CHARRO SPECIFIC PLAN

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1.6 RELATIONSHIP TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

An EIR, pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has been prepared to provide an analysis of the potential impacts of this Specific Plan and to recommend appropriate mitigation measures as policies and features of the plan. The Specific Plan and the EIR were prepared in close coordination with one another; mitigation measures have been incorporated in the Specific Plan where possible.

The El Charro Specific Plan EIR assesses the implications of an assumed program of commercial development and open space preservation. Future environmental analyses of individual projects within the Specific Plan would be based upon and rely on this EIR. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15168, subdivision (c), the City may determine, after conducting a written analysis, that a proposed site-specific activity is within the scope of the project and impacts covered by the EIR.

Upon making such a determination, the City would conclude that no modification to the EIR is necessary, absent grounds for preparing a subsequent or supplemental EIR. Where the City cannot find the proposed activity to be within the scope of the project and impacts covered by this EIR, following the requirements of CEQA Guidelines 15162-15164, the City will to determine what appropriate subsequent or supplemental environmental documentation may be necessary.

Among the factors the City will consider in determining whether proposed activities are, indeed, “within the scope” of the project analyzed in this EIR are whether the site-specific project will cause:

- substantial changes to the project that will require major revisions to the EIR because of new significant impacts;
- substantial changes to the project that will cause an increase in severity of previously identified significant impacts; and/or
- one or more significant effects that were not discussed in this EIR.

Because the establishment of zoning districts is proposed as part of the overall Specific Plan project, the El Charro Specific Plan EIR can also be considered an EIR for a “zoning action” for purposes of Public Resources Code section 21083.3 and CEQA Guidelines section 15183. These provisions generally limit the scope of necessary environmental review for site-specific approvals following the preparation of an EIR for a “zoning action.” For such site-specific approvals, CEQA generally applies only to impacts that are “peculiar to the parcel or to the project,” except where “substantial new information” shows that previously identified impacts will be more significant than previously assumed. Notably, impacts are considered *not* to be “peculiar to the parcel or to the project” if they

can be substantially mitigated pursuant to previously adopted “uniformly applied development policies or standards.”

The EIR endeavors to anticipate as many impacts of future development in the Specific Plan as is feasible at this stage. When future development proposals that are consistent with the Specific Plan and consistent with the impacts described in this EIR are brought forward, it is possible that no additional CEQA documentation will be necessary. Future development proposals that are not consistent with the Specific Plan or that would result in impacts not anticipated in this EIR require additional CEQA documentation.

The Draft El Charro Specific Plan included two options for providing roadway connection between El Charro Road and Isabel Avenue/SR84—Jack London Boulevard Extension and Airway Boulevard Extension. The EIR fully analyzed each roadway extension option. The Livermore Council City selected the Jack London Boulevard Extension option, consistent with the Livermore General Plan, with the adoption of the Specific Plan.

1.7 PLANNING PROCESS

Livermore has undertaken the Specific Plan process to create a plan that will guide future development in the El Charro Area in a manner that is consistent with the community’s vision and reflects high-quality standards and design. The City assembled a team of consultants to design and evaluate the Plan Area and create a Specific Plan that will address the site’s challenges, meet the City’s needs, as well as serve the greater region. In conjunction with the Specific Plan, an EIR was prepared.

Due to the location and the environmental issues associated with the El Charro Specific Plan Area, a number of government jurisdictions as well as private property owners were involved throughout the planning process. The City held several coordination and information gathering meetings in order to address and understand the opportunities and constraints of developing this area.

1.8 ROLE OF OTHER RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES (FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL)

Throughout the Specific Plan process, a variety of agencies at the Federal, State and Local levels were involved due to the complex nature of the El Charro Specific Plan Area and the variety of issues associated with this site. The following agencies have had some level of involvement and input in the Specific Plan Process:

- Alameda County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC)
- Alameda County

- Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA)
- Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District/Zone 7 Water Agency (Zone 7)
- Alameda County Public Works Agency
- Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA)
- California Department of Conservation (DOC)
- California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- City of Dublin
- City of Livermore
- City of Pleasanton
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- San Francisco Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)
- San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (SFBRWQCB)
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

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