

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**



## 1.1 PURPOSE

The *Placer Vineyards Specific Plan* is a guide for the future urban growth and development in southwest Placer County. This Specific Plan will define a comprehensive set of policies to govern urban development in the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan Area (Plan Area).

Placer Vineyards is envisioned as a new urban-suburban community with a mix of residential, employment, school, and recreational uses. This Specific Plan sets policies for both on-site as well as off-site permanent preservation of significant natural resources and open space. The Specific Plan provides mechanisms for the implementation of public services and utilities and encourages the creation of cultural and educational community spaces. Placer Vineyards is guided by the following objectives:

- ◆ Protect and enhance the highest quality natural features and resources of the site and provide transitional buffers sensitive to the character of adjacent land uses;
- ◆ Promote compact mixed-use development that strives to provide a balance of uses, diverse housing and transportation choices, and contributes to a jobs to housing balance within the region;
- ◆ Establish a pedestrian-friendly community and access to a regional system of trails that link neighborhoods; and
- ◆ Develop a series of districts with their own unique site identity with urban centers, neighborhoods, and community serving facilities (schools, parks, and public amenities).

The Specific Plan and subsequent entitlement process is consistent with the goals and policies identified by the *Placer County General Plan* and allows for a sequence of community input and government review to ensure that development occurs in a logical, consistent, and timely manner.

## 1.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Placer Vineyards includes approximately 5,230 acres of land located in the southwest corner of Placer County, approximately 15 miles north of the City of Sacramento (see Figure 1-1). The Plan Area is bounded to the north by Base Line Road, to the south by the Sacramento County line, to the west by the Sutter County line and Pleasant Grove Road, and to the east by the Dry Creek Parkway and Walerga Road (see Figure 1-2). The major roads serving the Plan Area—Base Line Road, Watt Avenue, and Walerga Road—are projected to be future thoroughfares. A number of smaller country roads and unpaved 2-lane roads traverse north-south through the Plan Area. A major electrical power line

easement traverses east-west. 2 smaller electrical power easements traverse north-south.

The land is primarily level and has gently rolling terrain that slopes primarily southwest and partially toward Dry Creek. A number of small creeks and wetlands are also dispersed throughout the site. The land consists mostly of undeveloped grazing and agricultural land, with approximately 150 residences located in the Special Planning Area (SPA), concentrated in the northwest corner of the Plan Area (refer to Figure 1.2 for the location of the SPA). A number of home occupation and ancillary uses are located throughout the rural residential areas. A self-storage facility is located on Pleasant Grove Road at the southwest corner of the Plan Area. There are also a few commercial uses northwest of the Plan Area, including a convenience store and service commercial uses (trucking operation and boat and RV storage). An abandoned portion of the Union Pacific Railroad traverses the western portion of the Plan Area.

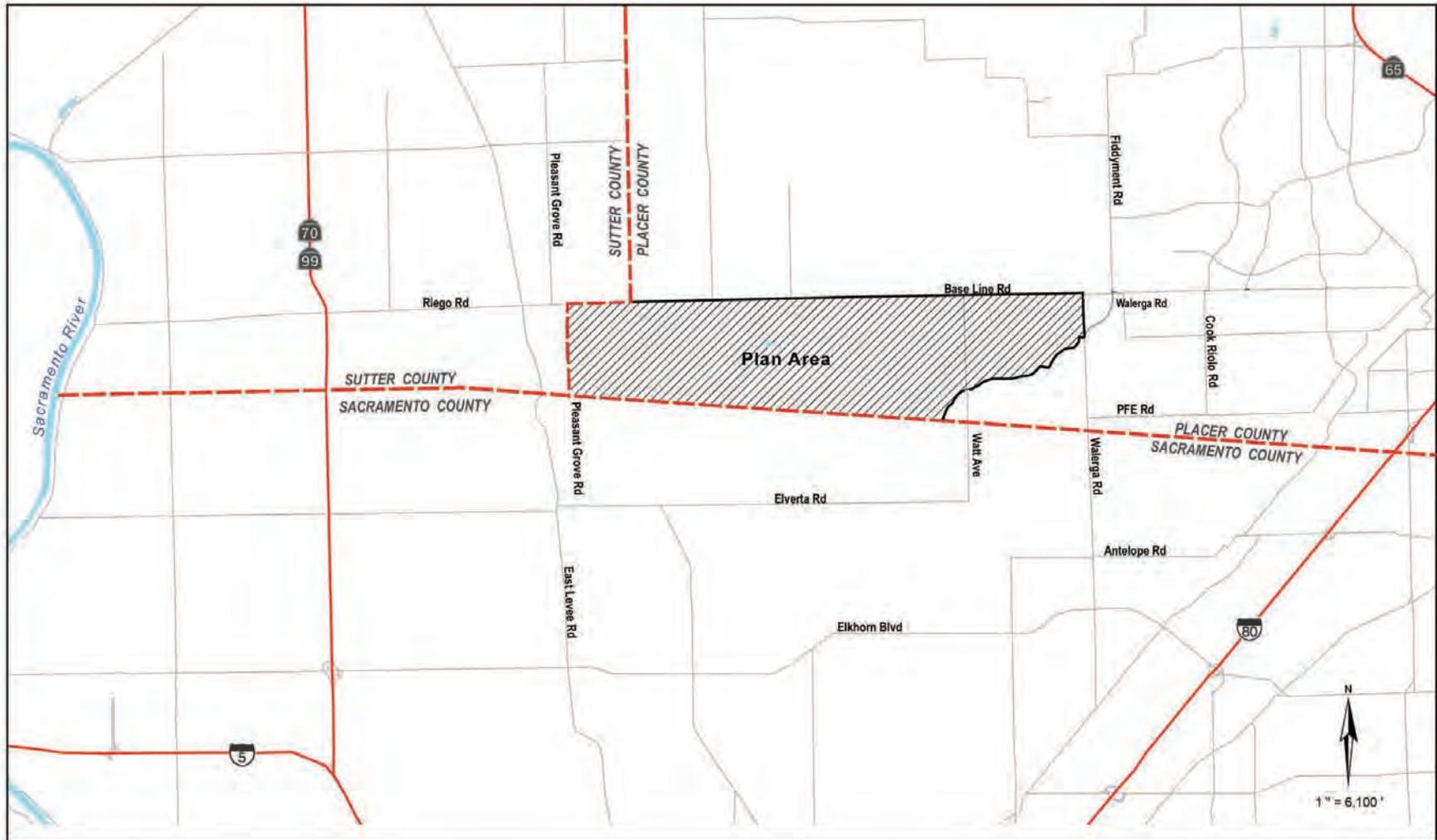
The primary land use in the area has historically been agriculture, with rice lands, vineyards, orchards, grazing land, and areas devoted to field crops. In some areas the land has lain fallow for several years. The Plan Area also contains a number of small tree groves and isolated oak stands, primarily along the southern border adjacent to the Dry Creek parkway and existing Dyer Lane.

Neighboring land uses in the area consist of agricultural grazing land, farming, and large-lot rural residential uses. Urban development is also found nearby in adjacent Sacramento County within the communities of Antelope, Rio Linda, and Elverta. Roseville continues to see growth east of Walerga Road and north of Base Line Road. Refer to Figure 1-3 for a map of planning areas and projects surrounding the Plan Area.



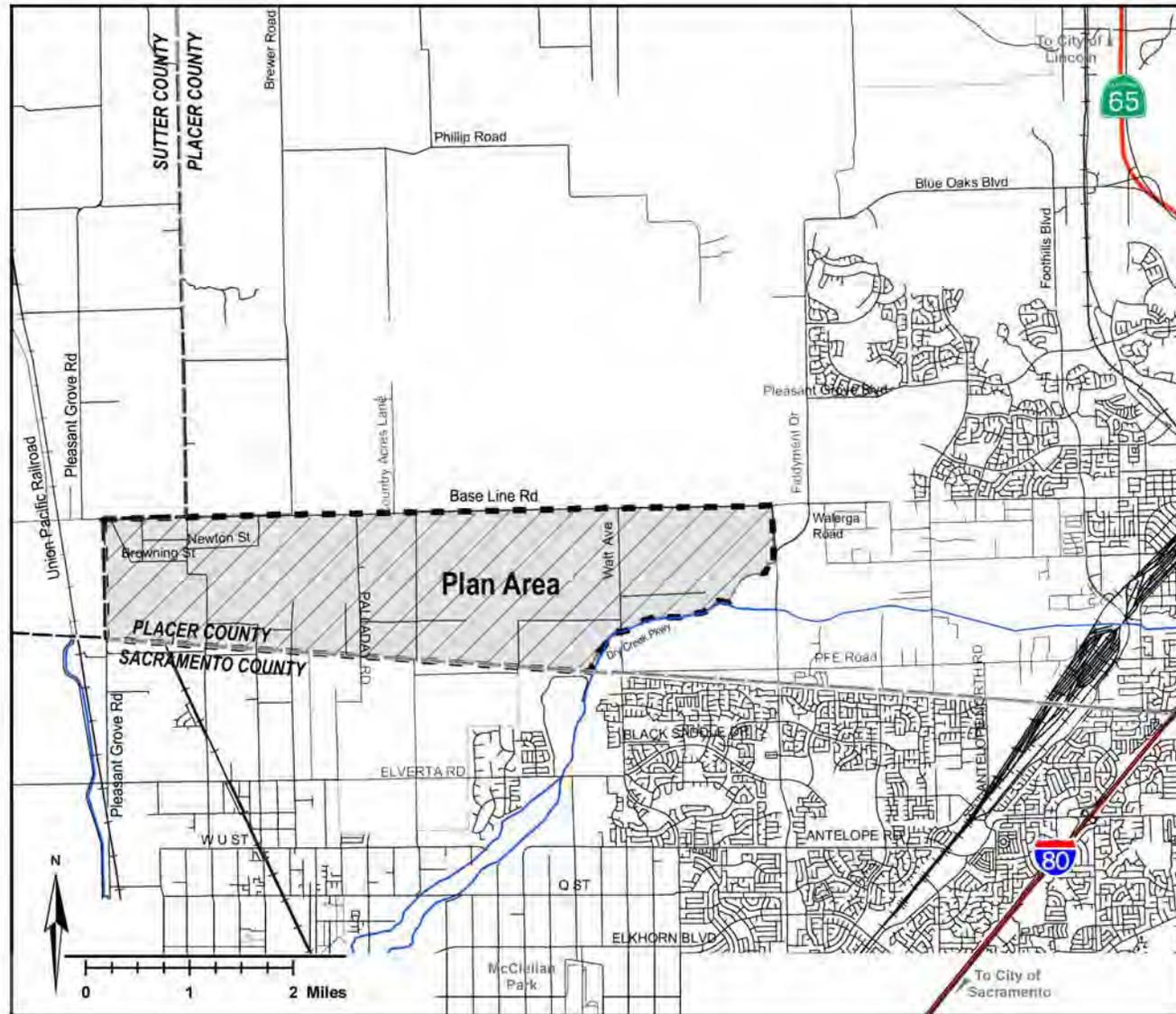
INTRODUCTION

Figure 1.1 Placer Vineyards Regional Context



Source: Quad Knopf, 2005

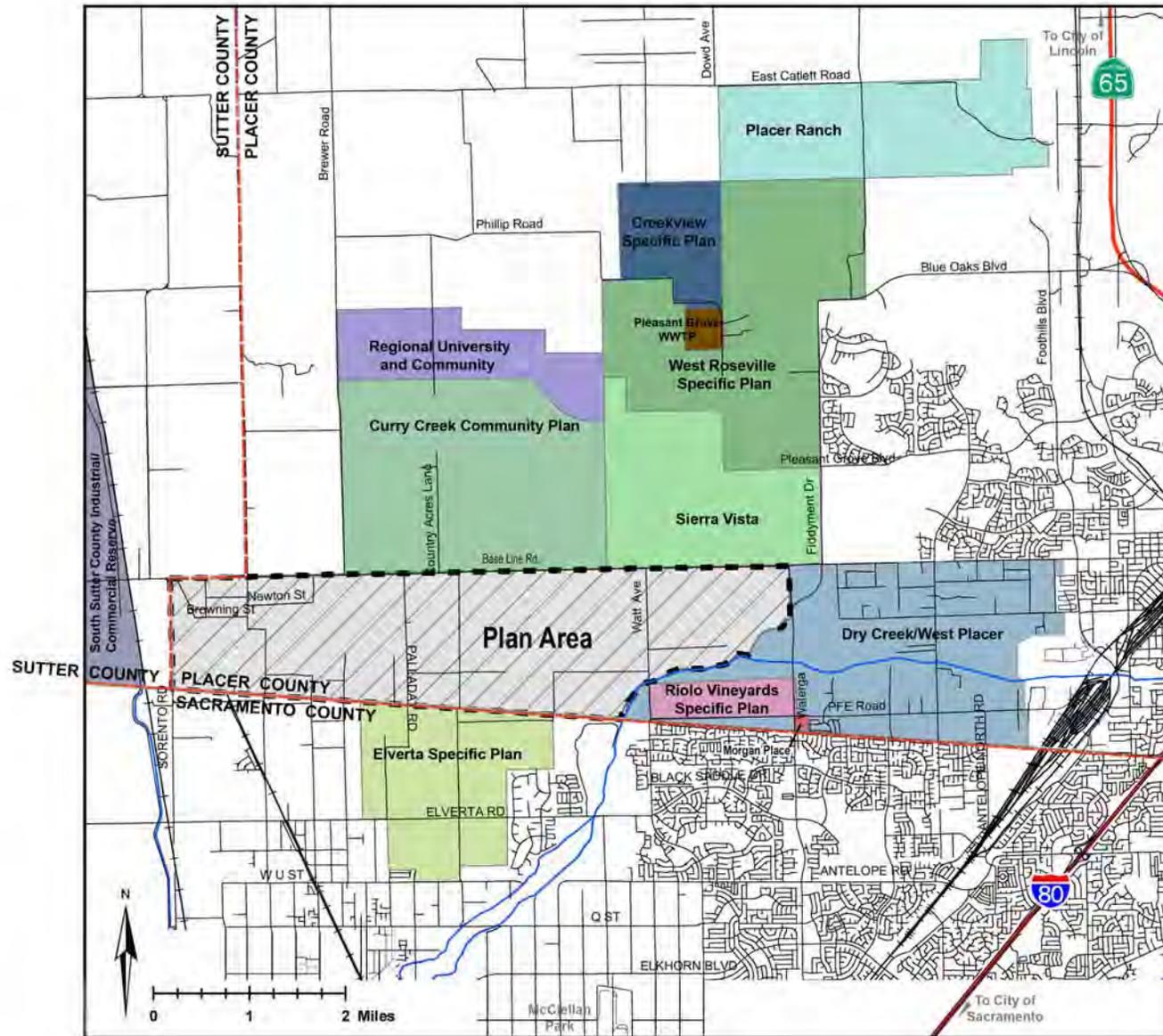
Figure 1.2 Placer Vineyards Site Location



Source: Placer County Planning Dept., 2001/Sacramento Planning Department, 2002/Quad Knopf, 2005

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1.3 Proposed Development Surrounding Placer Vineyards



Source: Placer County Planning Dept., 2001/Sacramento Planning Department, 2002/Quad Knopf, 2005

### 1.3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In the early 1990s, the Placer Vineyards Property Owners' Group—21 land owners or owner representatives controlling approximately 4,250 acres or 81 percent of the 5,230-acre Plan Area—initiated the preparation of the first draft Specific Plan. After a planning effort coordinated over 5 years, the first draft Specific Plan was submitted to Placer County in December 1996. Subsequently, the first draft Specific Plan was revised and a public review draft of the Specific Plan was published in May 2003. This *Placer Vineyards Specific Plan* supersedes and replaces all previous versions of the Specific Plan.

The remaining 19 percent of the Plan Area (or approximately 979 acres) consists almost entirely of land in the far western part of the Plan Area, known as the Special Planning Area (SPA). These are mostly rural residential-agricultural parcels ranging in size from 1 to 40 acres. While included in the Plan Area, these rural residential lots will be governed under their existing land use and zoning classifications and are not limited or directed by the policies contained in this Specific Plan.

### 1.4 PURPOSE AND INTENT OF SPECIFIC PLAN

The *Placer County General Plan* directs the preparation of a Specific Plan to allow development of the *Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan* area with the intent that the entire 5,230-acre Plan Area would be comprehensively planned. The Specific Plan sets forth regulations and programs which will carry out the goals and policies of the General Plan and ensure development is of the highest quality possible.

The *Placer Vineyards Specific Plan* addresses a comprehensive range of issues associated with the development of the Plan Area. This document is designed as a framework of policies, guidelines, and standards which shall guide the build-out of the Plan Area, expected to occur over a period of 20 to 30 years.

### 1.5 LEGAL AUTHORITY

Placer County is authorized to adopt this Specific Plan following the provisions of California Planning and Land Use Law (Title 7, Chapter 3, Article 8 [Sections 65450–65457] of the California Government Code and of Section 17.58.200 of the *Placer County Zoning Ordinance*. These provisions require that a specific plan be consistent with the adopted general plan of the jurisdiction in which the plan is located. All projects that follow within the Plan Area shall be consistent with this Specific Plan and the *Placer County General Plan*.

### 1.6 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

#### 1.6.1 GENERAL PLAN AND COMMUNITY PLAN

The August 1994 *Placer County General Plan* identifies the Plan Area as appropriate for urbanization following adoption and implementation of a comprehensive Specific Plan. The Plan Area is currently designated “Urban” on the “Generalized Land Use Diagram” within the *Placer County General Plan* and as the “West Placer Specific Plan Area” in the *Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan*. A list of development standards, referred to in the General Plan as “Exhibit 1,” is applicable to the Plan Area.

General Plan Exhibit 1 envisions the 5,230-acre Plan Area as a mixed-use community, including a maximum of 14,132 dwelling units. It also establishes 80 acres of commercial development, 160 acres of office and professional development, and 300 acres of professional/light industrial development as approximate acreages for a mix of acceptable non-residential land uses and the following plan features:

- A. An urban form design concept that provides for 2 mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented villages buffered with lower densities and a larger town center.
- B. The town center will operate as the institutional and social focal point of the community and provide a central location for public and institutional uses.
- C. The village core areas are mixed-use commercial areas with neighborhood commercial uses and high-density residential uses.
- D. Commercial areas within the town center and villages shall enhance outdoor public gathering areas.
- E. Community open space should be contained in village greens and community parks that are connected with a greenbelt system.
- F. The town center and village core areas shall be planned and designed to be pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-oriented.
- G. Commercial buildings with the ground floors oriented to pedestrians; street-level windows, numerous entries, arcades, porches, and balconies; retail shops and display areas; street orientation with parking to the rear; and varied building facades and covered walkways.
- H. A mix of residential types with densities radiating outward from the village core areas.

## INTRODUCTION

- I. Existing and proposed stream and riparian areas, utility easements, and other such features should be incorporated into the open space corridors for the community.
- J. Roadway corridors shall be designed as landscape corridors, including separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

### 1.6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)

In conjunction with the Specific Plan, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to study the environmental impacts the project may create. Elements analyzed in the EIR include project characteristics; the regulatory setting; population, employment and housing; visual quality and aesthetics; water quality; biological resources; geology and soils; archaeology; transportation/circulation; air quality; noise; public services and infrastructure; hazards; and plan alternatives. The purpose, policy, and detailed requirements of this Specific Plan will implement the mitigation measures contained in the EIR.

### 1.6.3 ZONING

Existing zoning designations in the Plan Area include the following:

- ◆ **F-B-X-DR** (Farming, Combining Development Reserve [80-acre minimum parcel size]);
- ◆ **IN-UP-DR** (Industrial, Combining Limited Use, Combining Development Reserve);
- ◆ **RA-B-X-DR** (Residential Agricultural, Combining Development Reserve [10-acre minimum parcel size]);
- ◆ **F-DR** (Farming, Combining Development Reserve);
- ◆ **CI-DC-DR** (Neighborhood Commercial, Combining Design Scenic Corridor, Combining Development Reserve);
- ◆ **O** (Open Space);
- ◆ **O PD=2** (Open Space, Combining Planned Residential Development = 2 dwelling units per acre); and
- ◆ **O PD=1** (Open Space, Combining Planned Residential Development = 1 dwelling unit per acre).

The Plan Area shall be rezoned with a new “Specific Plan” (SPL) zoning district. The SPL zone will be combined with the Specific Plan to function as the zoning text and map for the Plan Area (with the exception of the SPA). Rezoning in the Plan Area and in the SPA is described in more detail in Chapter IX, “Implementation.”

### Relationship to County Zoning

The Specific Plan text and exhibits and the “Land Use and Development Standards” presented in Appendix A will establish the zoning, land use, and development pattern for the Plan Area. The standards in this Specific Plan will amend and supersede the standards and land use designations found in the *Placer County Zoning Ordinance*, Chapter 17 of the *Placer County Code*. Standards or regulations that are not specified in this Specific Plan shall default to the *Placer County Zoning Ordinance* for the applicable provisions.

As an example, definitions for various land uses identified in the *Placer County Zoning Ordinance* shall be used as the basis for interpreting the land uses allowed in the Specific Plan. However, this Specific Plan may modify certain definitions or define additional land uses not found in the Zoning Ordinance. Modifications or amendments made to the Specific Plan and/or Land Use and Development Standards shall follow Placer County procedures for amendments as defined in Chapter IX, “Implementation.”

### 1.6.4 FINANCING PLAN

Concurrent with or shortly after the approval of the Specific Plan, the County Board of Supervisors may accept the *Placer Vineyards Public Facilities Financing Plan*. The Financing Plan shall identify the funding mechanisms required for the capital costs of all public facilities infrastructure necessary to accomplish Specific Plan build-out.

### 1.6.5 DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Pursuant to Section 17.58.210 of the *Placer County Zoning Ordinance*, upon the approval of the Specific Plan, the County will enter into Development Agreements with individual property owners within the Placer Vineyards property owners’ group. Development Agreements will set forth the property owner’s obligations related to the construction and financing of infrastructure, County facilities and public services, including financial contributions for public infrastructure and facilities maintenance, provision of urban services for the Plan Area, and other obligations that may be imposed by the County as a condition for development. It will also provide property owners with certain vested development rights, subject to the conditions for development in the Development Agreement.

### 1.6.6 DESIGN/SITE REVIEW

The purpose of the County's Design/Site Review process is to ensure that the design of buildings constructed in the Specific Plan area is of high quality and to prevent new construction from adversely affecting the residential and business desirability of the immediate and nearby neighboring areas. All development within the Plan Area will be subject to Design/Site Review.

## 1.7 SPECIFIC PLAN ORGANIZATION

### 1.7.1 CHAPTER STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

Generally, each of the Placer Vineyards chapters begins with a chapter overview or land use concept discussion, followed by project background information and references to other related documents pertinent to the chapter. The Specific Plan includes goals, policies, standards, and design guidelines. The following definitions describe the nature of the statements of goals, policies, standards, and design guidelines and the format in which these are used in this Specific Plan.

**Goals:** Goals are objectives or purpose statements written in a way that is general in nature and immeasurable. Goals are called out in bold type in sans serif font and are identified by chapter number, followed by the goal number, as follows: **Goal 3.X**.

**Policies:** Policies are specific statements in text or a diagram guiding and implying a commitment to action. Policy statements are requirements and use "shall," "must" or "will." Policies are indicated in bold, italicized type followed by a subject heading and identified by the chapter number and policy number, as follows:

*Policy 3.X <Subject Heading>*.

**Standards:** Standards are specific, sometimes quantified regulations used to guide development of the Specific Plan. Development standards will serve to supplement the *Placer County Zoning Ordinance*. Development standards for Placer Vineyards are provided in a separate document accompanying the Specific Plan. Statement of standards in the Specific Plan use "shall," "must," or "will."

**Guidelines:** Guidelines are qualitative and provide a design intent through descriptions and illustrations. Guidelines allow for flexibility and interpretation so long as the intent of the guidelines is upheld. Guideline statements use words like "should," "may," "encouraged," and "discouraged." Guidelines are not numbered. They are identified in a sans serif font and indented a quarter inch from the body of the text, as follows:

**Design Guidelines for <Subject Heading>**.

### 1.7.2 SPECIFIC PLAN CHAPTERS

The Specific Plan consists of 9 primary chapters described below and a supporting appendix section:

#### Chapter I: Introduction

Presents the purpose, intent, and project context of the Specific Plan;

#### Chapter II: Vision

Presents the project vision, guiding design, and planning principles for Placer Vineyards and their specific application to the Placer Vineyards context;

#### Chapter III: Land Use

Sets the framework for the development of Placer Vineyards, providing information on land use regulations, allowable land use types, development standards, and the intensity and density of development;

#### Chapter IV: Environmental Resources

Addresses the environmental conditions and sensitive resources on the site, including wetlands, special status species, oak and riparian woodlands, water quality and conservation, energy conservation, air quality, and noise;

#### Chapter V: Transportation and Circulation

Describes the roadways, trails, and transit system and provides standards and guidelines for their design within the Placer Vineyards site;

#### Chapter VI: Community Design

Sets the design standards and guidelines for the elements that make up and will give identity to the Placer Vineyards community, including its street and landscape corridors; gateways, signage, and street lighting; activity centers; and neighborhoods;

#### Chapter VII: Parks and Open Space

Describes the parks, open space, and recreation system designed for the Placer Vineyards community;

#### Chapter VIII: Public Utilities and Services

Describes the backbone infrastructure systems (water, wastewater, recycled water, drainage, solid waste disposal, electricity and natural gas, telephone, and gas services) and community service facilities (schools, county services, public safety, and other community facilities) necessary to serve the Plan Area; and

#### Chapter IX: Implementation

Outlines the administration and implementation steps required to achieve the goals and regulations set forth in the Specific Plan.

## INTRODUCTION

### Appendices:

The Appendices contain references that support and supplement information in the Specific Plan. They include:

- ♦ Appendix A, “Land Use and Development Standards”  
(Provided under a separate cover);
- ♦ Appendix B, “Recommended Plant List;”
- ♦ Appendix C, “Traffic Intersection Analysis;” and
- ♦ Appendix D, “Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program”  
(Provided under a separate cover).