

CHAPTER TWO: LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the present (2015) context for land use planning in the Sunset Industrial Area (SIA). The following is a summary description of how land in the SIA is used, and assesses the potential for additional development that is either implied or explicitly authorized by existing planning policies and regulations. The discussion of existing land uses and land use policies and regulations is based upon both a detailed land use inventory (using information furnished by the Placer County Geographic Information System and the Placer County **Assessor's database**) and a review of current planning documents, including the existing SIA Plan, the Placer County General Plan, the Placer County Zoning Code, the general plans of nearby incorporated cities, and the plans of other agencies active in the SIA.

This chapter is organized into the following sections:

- Major Findings (Section 2.1)
- Existing Character (Section 2.2)
- Existing Uses and Ownership (Section 2.3)
- Holding Capacity (Section 2.4)
- General Plan/Area Plan and Zoning (Section 2.5)
- Relevant Plans and Agencies (Section 2.6)
- Key Terms (Section 2.7)
- References (Section 2.8)

SECTION 2.1 MAJOR FINDINGS

- **The SIA’s buildings are currently a mix of** low-value metal and tilt-up buildings, utilitarian industrial complexes, and large-scale industrial and warehouse facilities. Thunder Valley Casino Resort architecture is unique in the SIA.
- **The SIA’s primary gateway is the** Sunset Boulevard entry from SR 65. Lesser gateways include Industrial Avenue and Athens Avenue, and where Fiddymont Road enters the SIA from the south.
- Over half (58.3 percent) of the land in the SIA is vacant. Agriculture is the second most common existing use (15.5 percent), and Open Space is the third most common existing use (9.1 percent).
- Thunder Valley Casino Resort, the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill, as well as various commercial and industrial businesses, form the employment base of the SIA.
- The SIA contains many areas with constraints that prevent or may limit future development. Over 70 percent (5,327.8 acres) of the SIA is constrained. The Placer Ranch project is the largest constraint since it is currently proposed for development in the city of Roseville. Conservation and mitigation areas, as well as the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill, are significant constraints.
- The existing SIA Plan planning area can accommodate 140,866 square feet of commercial development, 16,975,874 square feet of industrial development, and 15,996 total employees. This holding capacity is based on the amount of existing (March 2015) land available for development.
- Placer County is in the process of developing the Placer County Conservation Plan, a habitat conservation plan under the Federal Endangered Species Act. None of the **Plan’s** proposed conservation reserve areas are located within the SIA. Placer County developed two Ecosystem Restoration Plans that preserve and restore watersheds that intersect the SIA. The County also developed a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to help make residents less vulnerable to future hazard events.
- SACOG, in its Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy report **classifies the SIA as an “Established Community,” but acknowledges that the** area is expected to see significant continued growth through 2035.
- **The city of Lincoln’s Sphere of Influence extends into the SIA planning area in the** northwest and overlaps 958 acres. The land in the SIA and in the Lincoln planning area is designated as either Public Facilities (782.8 acres) or Special Use District. (177.2 acres). The majority of the land designated Public Facilities includes the **Western Regional Sanitary Landfill potential expansion area. Lincoln’s General Plan** states that light industrial, commercial, and open space uses are appropriate for the Special Use District as long as they are compatible with nearby constraints.

SECTION 2.2 EXISTING CHARACTER

Existing Conditions

Existing Architectural Character

As the Sunset Industrial Area (SIA) has developed over time, there have been three primary architectural themes that have evolved, in addition to one significant outlier. The first theme can be characterized by low-value industrial buildings that have been erected either as standalone businesses or within light industrial parks. What is apparent is that as the SIA has evolved, so have the background policy requirements placed on developers, such that much of the early, small-scale development consisting of prefabricated metal buildings and tilt-up concrete structures with little to no formal character has been followed in recent years by buildings that generate some visual interest with significantly more attention to building and site aesthetics.



Low-value metal and tilt-up buildings



Higher value modern light industrial complex

The second theme is a collection of quasi buildings and large scale industrial facilities focusing on operational structures such as the batch plant at the Lesvos Industrial Properties, Rio Bravo bio-mass facility, and the Material Recovery Facility (MRF). These facilities are typically accompanied by large areas of lay down space and vehicle yards. Each of these facilities utilizes some form of screening, fencing, or landscape to buffer them visually and to provide security for the vast sites. Buildings on these sites typically support buildings for the operation and vary widely in terms of quality, character, and scale.



Bio-mass operational structures



Material Recovery Facility (MRF)

The third theme consists of larger signature buildings varying widely in both use and architectural style. The Ace Hardware distribution center and the former Formica plant are examples of these types of multi-acre floor plate buildings. Within these two buildings the evolution of the SIA is evident. The Formica building is utilitarian and unadorned, and there is minimal site work to provide screening of the buildings operations. Directly across Industrial

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Avenue, the Ace Hardware warehouse of more than 20 acres and the associated truck yards are almost completely hidden from view due to thoughtful earth berming and landscape buffering.



Former Formica Plant



Ace Hardware Distribution Center

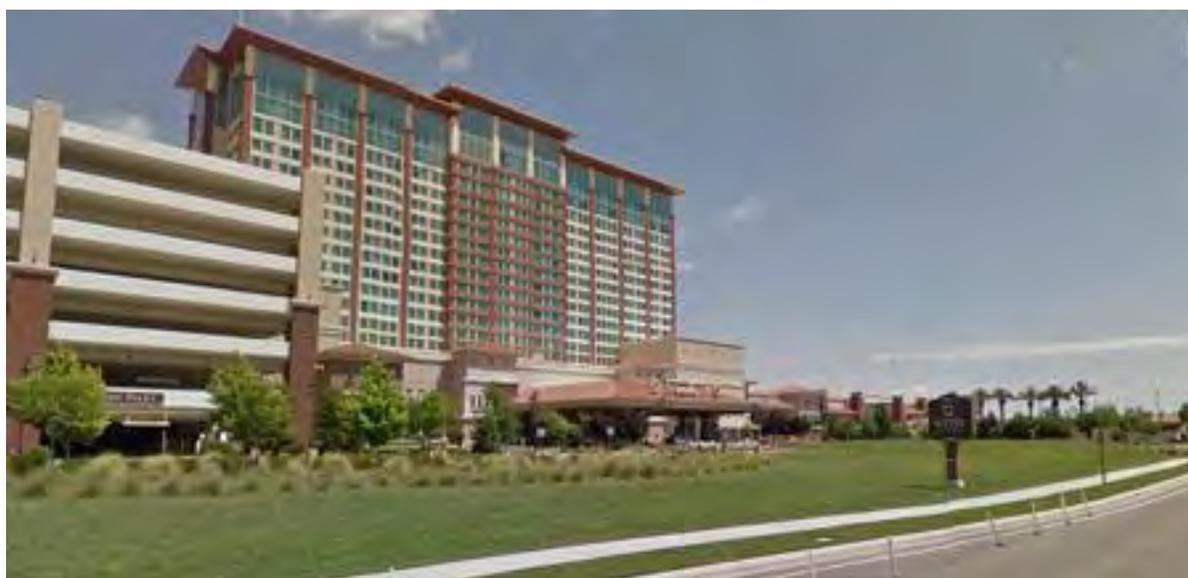


Landscape buffers

The outlier within the SIA is the Thunder Valley Casino Resort on Athens Avenue. This multi-building complex contains a 17-story hotel with 297 rooms, 14 restaurants, a spa, numerous stores, and a seven-level parking structure with more than 4,000 spaces, all supporting a 144,000 square foot casino and outdoor amphitheater. The architecture for this complex uses materials and colors in a Mediterranean theme and incorporates landscaping throughout which compliments, but does not obscure, this entertainment megaplex.



Thunder Valley Casino Resort complex



Streetscape accentuates resort without screening buildings

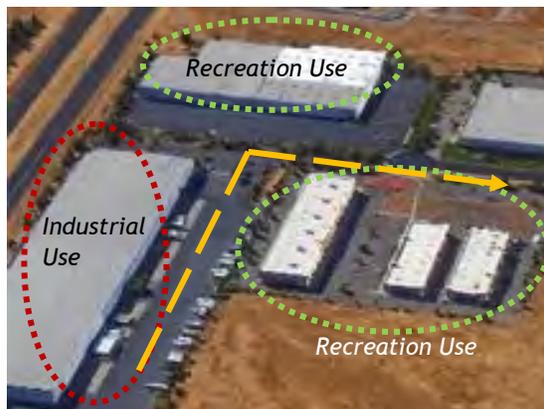
As the new vision for the SIA begins to take shape, standards and guidelines for each of these themes will need to be carefully constructed as considerations for small, single-user parcels, large-scale and multi-tenant developments, and operational structures will all be valuable to the overall viability of the SIA.

Incongruous Land and Building Uses

One of the characteristics of the SIA developing over an extended period of time and through many up and down real estate cycles is that there are significant incongruous land and building uses. Examples of incongruous land uses include the relationship of the bio-mass facility and the Lesvos unsightly industrial properties with the Thunder Valley Casino Resort. In addition to the visual incongruity between these properties, the operations of the industrial sight present potential dust, odor, and noise issues with a high value tourism center.



In addition, many of the buildings throughout the SIA are currently being used for purposes other than industrial, including churches and recreational uses. These uses create conflicts with other industrial uses, particularly in relation to overloaded parking lots which were not sized for congregations and tournaments, pedestrian circulation from parking on adjacent streets, or a significant number of children within the industrial complex. It is clear that these uses are filling underutilized buildings, but they represent both a safety hazard and a deterrent for industrial users to co-locate with businesses catering to large gatherings of families and children.



Example of how uses are conflicting

Existing Gateway Character

At the current time, access into the SIA planning area is limited to one primary entry, two secondary entries and a few additional rarely used entries. To call any of these existing points of entry a gateway is far too complimentary as none create any kind of place-making distinction.

Sunset Boulevard entry from SR 65

The Sunset Boulevard entry sequence from Highway 65 to Industrial Avenue has two elevated overpasses at the highway and at Industrial Avenue, and two curving access roads that connect Sunset Boulevard to Industrial Avenue.



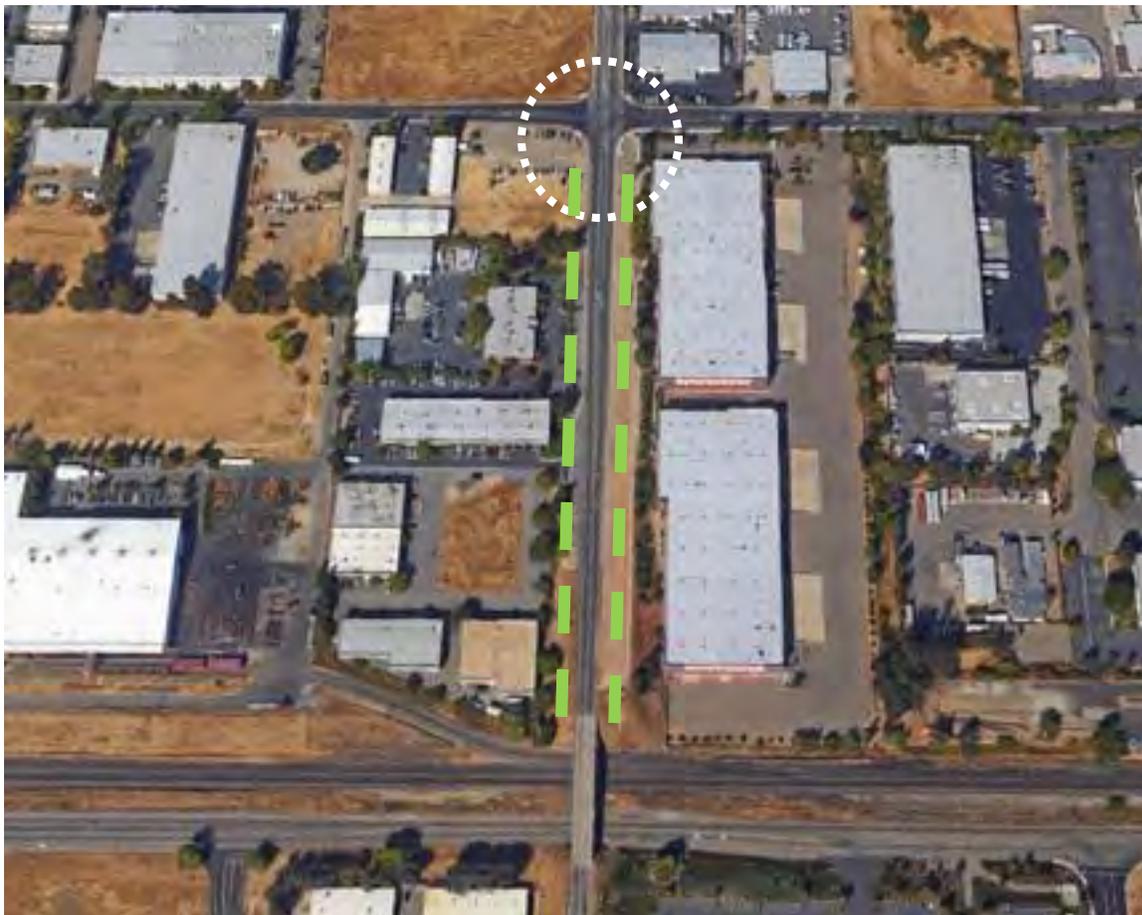
From the overpass of the highway, the entry begins with a number of vacant sites on both sides of Sunset Boulevard, and one new business park development on the north that is internally focused and turns its back to the entry sequence. The current land use designation for the

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parcels immediately adjacent to Sunset Boulevard in this area is commercial and careful consideration will need to be given to how future development, landscape, lighting, and wayfinding will define the streetscape and announce the beginning of this linear entry gateway.

The next part of the sequence consists of two curved access roads linking Sunset Boulevard to Industrial Avenue, Placer Corporate Drive and South Loop Road. This geographical point is the real gateway node and all of the four corners are presently undeveloped parcels. In addition, some of the more high quality tilt-up industrial buildings flank the southern edge of the gateway.

The final sequence of the entry is the length of road between Industrial Avenue and Cincinnati Avenue. Because of the elevated rail crossing bridge, this area is cut off visually from the rest of the entry sequence and is already developed along its length. How this streetscape re-connects the entry experience with the initial entry sequence will be an important consideration. In addition, there is an opportunity to bracket the entire entry sequence with a minor gateway note at the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Cincinnati Avenue.



Secondary Entry Gateways

There are currently two secondary entry gateways, one at Industrial Avenue and Athens Avenue, and another at the point at which Fiddymont Road enters the SIA from the south. Each of these gateways has issues that make them less-than-ideal entrances to the area. The Industrial Avenue/Athens Avenue intersection has the potential to be an important gateway for the Casino and entertainment district. However the at-grade rail crossing makes this area both potentially unsafe and unsightly. Without a major infrastructure improvement that would elevate the intersection and provide a grade-separated crossing, this gateway will continue to be highly compromised.



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The Fiddymont Road gateway is currently an abrupt transition between a fully developed residential community and undeveloped land. If the Placer Ranch development proposal is realized, this entry will become an important gateway to identify Placer Ranch as a distinct but connected neighborhood. If Placer Ranch is not realized, character and importance of this gateway will need to be reconsidered.



Other Minor Entries

There are several other minor project entries that, because of their minimal use, do not rise to the level of providing a gateway to the project site. These include the points at which East Catlett Road, Sunset Boulevard West, and Fiddymont Road to the north enter the project site, as well as the southern end of the site where Industrial Avenue enters the site.

Foothills Boulevard and Duluth Avenue Alignment

There are currently two proposals for the connection of Foothills Boulevard to the project site. One proposal would link up with Duluth Avenue, creating a problematic gateway configuration as this area is already developed with a number of low investment and lay down yard properties. Additionally, the width of the Foothills Boulevard, extension would require extending the right-of-way significantly into these properties and has the potential to encroach into existing building footprints as well. The other alignment proposed would swing Foothills Boulevard west of Duluth Avenue businesses and link into the Placer Ranch proposed road network. This alignment could allow for a significant gateway to the project from the south.



Duluth Avenue alignment



Alternate alignment

Incompatible Land Uses

A problematic land use trend in the Plan area is the increased number of non-industrial uses. A number of indoor recreation uses and churches have been developed, which are inconsistent with the over-all goals of the SIA as the major employment base of the County. These uses generate few jobs and can create conflicts with neighboring industrial uses, including truck/auto traffic and increased pedestrian activity.

SECTION 2.3 EXISTING USES AND OWNERSHIP

Existing Conditions

Table 2-1 and Figure 2-1 show the existing uses in the SIA, as categorized by the Placer County Assessor's Office. Over half (58.3 percent) of the land in the SIA is vacant. This figure includes vacant agricultural land, as well as vacant commercial and industrial land. Agriculture is the second most common existing use (15.5 percent), and Open Space is the third most common existing use (9.1 percent).

Industrial/Warehouse uses cover 7.5 percent of the SIA land area. The SIA has approximately 3.7 million square feet of industrial uses, which accounts for about 23 percent of the South Placer region's industrial development. Currently, warehouse and distribution uses make up 96 percent of the industrial inventory in the SIA. The SIA's current industrial/warehouse vacancy rate is at 12.8 percent. For comparison, the South Placer area's vacancy rate is 13.0 percent.

Commercial uses (retail and office) account for only 0.6 percent of the SIA land area. The retail sector in the SIA is modestly represented, accounting for only 16,000 leasable square feet in 2014. Similar to the retail sector, the office sector in the SIA has been historically insignificant, accounting for approximately 170,000 of leasable square footage in 2014. This is 1.4 percent of leasable office space in the South Placer region. The South Placer region, by contrast, hosts 86.0 percent of Placer County's leasable office space.

Residential uses are lacking in the SIA, with the exception of a handful of ranch houses in the northwest corner of the study area. Although the SIA offers a limited capacity for residential development, it is in close proximity to established residential neighborhoods in adjacent cities such as the cities of Lincoln, Roseville, and Rocklin.

TABLE 2-1 EXISTING LAND USES Sunset Industrial Area 2015			
Existing Land Use	Assessor's Use Codes ¹	Acreage	Percent of Total
Agriculture	01 ² , 40, 44, 48, 51	1263.6	15.5%
Commercial	17, 25	50.0	0.1%
Industrial/Warehouse	31, 32, 35, 38, 39	613.6	7.5%
Open Space	89, 98	745.0	9.1%
Parking Lots	27	47.3	0.6%
Public/Private Utility	81	386.4	4.7%
Unknown (e.g., Roads)	No Use Code	288.1	3.5%
Vacant	00, 07 ¹ , 20, 30, 50, 84	4777.9	59.2%
Total		8,172	100.0%

¹The Placer County Assessor's Office classifies all parcels in the County by use for tax assessment purposes. This information is kept up-to-date and provides a useful resource that documents existing uses.

²These use codes were recategorized to better reflect the current existing use.

Source: Placer County Assessor's Office and Mintier Harnish, 2015

The parcels within the SIA have many different owners (see Table 2-2 and Figure 2-2). On the east side, much of the area has been subdivided into smaller parcels with a wider variety of ownership interests. The ownership interest on the east side are more diverse than on the west side where land is largely held by Angelo K Tsakopoulos Et Al and Placer Ranch interests. Despite the diversity in ownership on the east side, over 97 percent of the land in the SIA is owned by ten ownership groups (shown in Table 2-2). Placer Ranch interests own the most property within the SIA (26.9 percent or 2,213.3 acres).

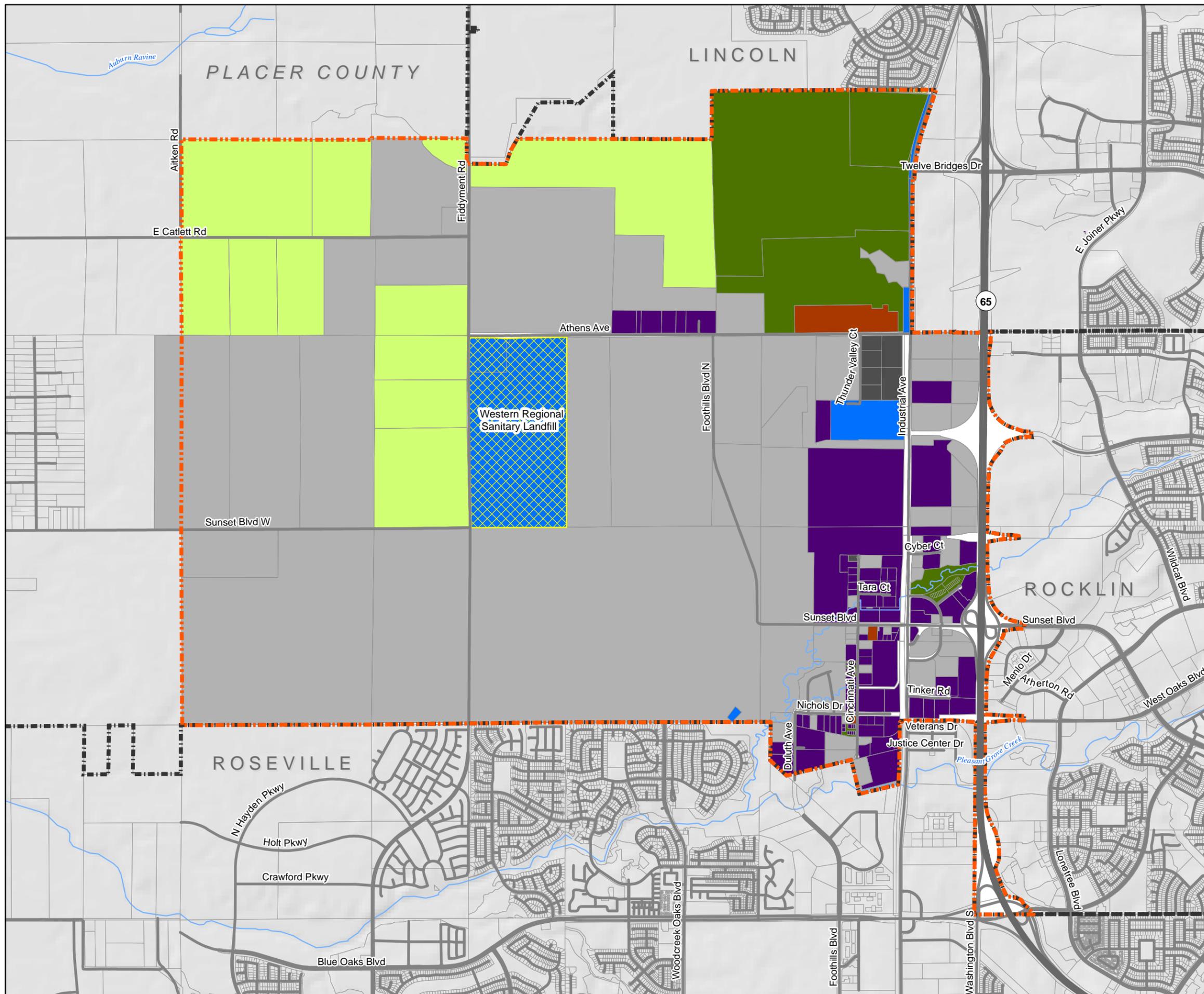
TABLE 2-2 PROPERTY OWNERSHIP Sunset Industrial Area 2015		
Ownership Group	Acreage	Percent of Total
Placer Ranch	2,195.6	26.9
Western Placer Waste Management Authority (Western Regional Sanitary Landfill and expansion lands)	772.0	9.4
Lewis Antonio Mountain Ranch, LLC	750.6	9.2
Angelo K Tsakopoulos Et Al	723.9	8.9
Running W Land, LLC	720.0	8.9
Placer Athens Limited Partnership	326.9	4.0
Warm Springs Investments LTD	313.2	3.8
CP 3500 Cincinnati, LLC	211.3	2.6
United Auburn Indian Community	178.8	2.2
Western Placer Waste Management Authority	142.3	1.7
All other property owners	264.7	3.2
Total	8,172	

Source: Placer County, 2015

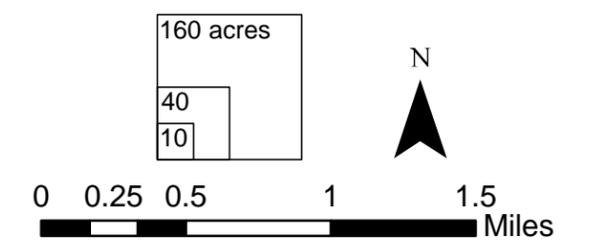
Thunder Valley Casino Resort is a notable existing commercial use in the SIA. The United Auburn Indian Community, a Native American tribe of Miwok and Southern Maidu Indians of the Sacramento Valley, owns the complex. The resort and casino is the only entertainment venue located in the SIA, though other recreational uses exist (e.g. an indoor baseball center and a trampoline park). Other notable commercial and industrial uses located in the SIA include: distribution centers and warehouses, RV storage and service centers, small industrial operations, and office uses. In addition, there are three churches on industrial land in the SIA in leased space in industrial zones.

The Western Placer Waste Management Authority (WPWMA) is the second-largest land owner in the SIA (9.4 percent or 772.0 acres). The WPWMA operates the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill located in the center of the SIA.

Sunset Area Plan | Figure 2-1
Existing Land Uses



- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Road Right-of-Way
- Vacant
- Parking Lots
- Commercial
- Industrial/Warehouse
- Public/Private Utility
- Planning Area
- City Limits
- Western Regional Sanitary Landfill



Date: 01-26-2015
Source: Placer County, 2015

SECTION 2.4 HOLDING CAPACITY

Existing Conditions

Constraints

The true holding capacity for development in the SIA is dependent, in part, on the amount of unconstrained land. There are several reasons land in the SIA could be considered constrained and unavailable for development. Table 2-3 lists the types of constraints and the acreage constrained. It also includes the acreage within the SIA that is available for development. There are 929.7 acres of existing PCCP reserve land in the northern half of the SIA that is unavailable for development and will remain in its natural state. In addition there are 782.2 acres of potential mitigation bank area that will likely remain natural. Both areas contain vernal pools, and temporary ponds that provide habitat for plants and animals. Development is constrained on the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill site, as well as its expansion areas (772.1 acres). Land with existing buildings (546.7 acres) is not available for new development. There are also smaller areas unavailable for development, including potential future Placer Parkway right-of-way (78.4 acres), land within the 100-year floodplain (32.7 acres), and creek lands (20.0 acres).

As Table 2-3 shows, 3,161.8 acres of the SIA is constrained, while 5,010.2 acres are available for development. The land available for development can be classified as vacant or underutilized. Vacant parcels do not have an existing active use, while underutilized parcels have existing uses that do not match their land use designation or have buildings that take up a small portion of the overall parcel. In the case of the SIA, the most common example is industrial-designated land currently used for agriculture. In the SIA, 424.8 acres are underutilized and 1,970.4 are vacant.

TABLE 2-3 CONSTRAINTS Sunset Industrial Area 2015	
Classification	Acreage
Placer County Conservation Plan, Existing Reserve	929.7
Potential Mitigation Bank	782.2
Western Regional Sanitary Landfill and Expansion Site	772.1
Existing Buildings	546.7
Potential Placer Parkway Right-of-Way	78.4
100-Year Floodplain	32.7
Creek	20.0
Subtotal	3,161.8
Vacant and Underutilized Land Available for Development	5,010.2
Total	8,172.0

Source: Placer County, Mintier Harnish, 2015

Holding Capacity

Holding capacity refers to the amount of new employment building square footage and jobs that can be accommodated on land available for development. Determining the holding capacity for the 1994 SIA Plan is necessary to set a baseline to compare alternative land use scenarios and the eventual preferred alternative. To calculate the theoretical amount of building square footage and jobs, certain assumptions need to be made about the nature of expected development. Table 2-4 shows the assumptions used to calculate the holding capacity for the 1994 SIA Plan. These assumptions reflect current industry standards, tailored to the specific conditions of the SIA and surrounding area.

TABLE 2-4 HOLDING CAPACITY ASSUMPTIONS Sunset Industrial Area 2015			
Land Use Designation	FAR	Net Acreage Factor	Square Feet per Employee
General Commercial (GC)	0.35	0.8	250
Industrial (I)	0.40	0.8	1,100

Source: Placer County, Mintier Harnish, 2015

There are three General Plan land use designations with land available for development in the SIA: Agriculture (80 acres min.), General Commercial (GC), and Industrial (I). The holding capacity does not take into account agricultural employment; Table 2-5 only shows the holding capacity for General Commercial and Industrial designations. The vast majority of non-

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agricultural land available for development is Industrial (1,217.9 acres). Using the assumptions in Table 2-4, that land has a capacity for nearly 17 million square feet of new industrial buildings and 15,433 jobs. There are only 11.5 available acres designated General Commercial, and that land has capacity for 140,866 square feet of new buildings and 563 jobs.

TABLE 2-5 EMPLOYMENT HOLDING CAPACITY Sunset Industrial Area 2015			
Land Use Designation	Vacant and Underutilized Acres	Net Building Square Feet	Employees
General Commercial (GC)	11.5	140,866	563
Industrial (I)	1,217.9	16,975,874	15,433
Total	1,229.4	17,116,740	15,966

Source: Placer County, Mintier Harnish, 2015

SECTION 2.5 GENERAL PLAN/AREA PLAN AND ZONING

Existing Conditions

Placer County General Plan

The Placer County Board of Supervisors adopted the Placer County General Plan in 1997, as well as its update in May 2013. The General Plan Policy Document is divided into two main parts. Part I describes the Countywide Land Use Diagram and allowable uses and standards for each of the designations appearing on the diagram. Part I also describes standards for land use buffer zones and depicts the Countywide Circulation Plan Diagram, standards for the roadway classification system on the diagram, and standards for transit corridors.

Part II contains the goals, policies, standards, implementation programs, and quantified objectives. Part II is divided into ten elements (e.g. Land Use, Housing). Each element includes several goal statements relating to different sub-topics or different aspects of the topics addressed in the section. For each goal statement there are several policies which amplify the goal statement and a set of related implementation programs describing briefly the proposed action, the agencies or departments with primary responsibility for carrying out the program, the time frame for accomplishing the program, and the funding source.

The elements of the General Plan include:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation and Circulation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Recreational and Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Health and Safety
- Noise
- Administration and Implementation