



LATON COMMUNITY PLAN



Fresno County
Department of Public Works and Planning
2220 Tulare Street, 6th Floor
Fresno, CA 93721

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Prepared for:
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1.0 INTRODUCTION



California State Law (Government Code 65300 et. seq.) requires that every jurisdiction prepare a comprehensive, long-term general plan consisting of land use maps and accompanying text to specify how development may occur. The general plan must include seven State mandated elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. California law also provides for a number of optional elements, which may be included within a general plan at the discretion of the local agency. Fresno County's General Plan includes optional Economic Development and Public Facilities and Services elements. Additionally, local jurisdictions may prepare more focused community plans for specific geographic areas. Fresno County has prepared over 30 community plans.

This Community Plan (Plan) focuses specifically on the unincorporated community of Laton. The Plan provides community goals, policies and development regulations designed to accommodate planning activities and growth for the period 2010 to 2029 and beyond. The Laton Community Plan was first adopted in 1969. This plan continues the fundamental directives of the original plan.

PLAN BOUNDARIES

The community of Laton is located generally in the south-central portion of Fresno County between State Routes 41 and 43. The rural community is bounded by Murphy Slough Canal to the north and northeast, the Kings River to the south and southeast and the Old Kingston Grade and Dennis Avenue to the west. Laton is approximately 24 miles south of the City of Fresno, roughly six miles north of the City of Hanford and eight miles directly east of the unincorporated community of Riverdale (Figure 1-1). The Laton Community Planning Area is approximately 589 gross acres in size, and generally corresponds to the existing sphere of influence boundaries of the Laton CSD. Figure 1-2 shows the Laton CSD boundary.

LATON COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

The Laton Community Services District (CSD) was formed in 1981. Voters within the CSD's service boundaries elect the CSD's Board. The CSD provides public services to the community within its powers as authorized in Government Code sections 61000-61009. Services consist of street lighting, fire protection, stormwater, wastewater collection and treatment, and domestic water.

The CSD's facilities and infrastructure include an office, a fire station, wastewater collection system, wastewater treatment plant, water distribution system, and groundwater wells. The CSD has approximately 460 connections for water and wastewater service, with 410 connections serving single-family residential properties. Overall capacity for water and sewer is approximately 550 connections.

The CSD owns and operates Laton's wastewater collection and treatment system, which consists of sewer mains, pumps, and a treatment plant. The treatment plant is currently operating at about two-thirds of its design capacity (approximately 135,000 gpd). The current

permitted treatment capacity is 200,000 gallons per day (gpd). The CSD also owns and operates the community's domestic water distribution system. All water is taken from CSD owned groundwater wells.

GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

Future growth in Laton is limited by a network of canals, levees and the Kings River that nearly encompass the community on all sides except the west. Murphy Slough Canal to the north and Grant Canal to the south are two significant geographic limitations to growth. The Kings River, which serves as the boundary between Fresno and Kings counties, is also a limiting factor both physically and politically.

HISTORY OF PLANNING IN THE AREA

The Laton Community Plan was originally adopted by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors in 1969. The Circulation Element was adopted separately in 1973. In 1976, the plan was substantially revised as part of updating the Fresno County General Plan. Minor revisions were also adopted in 1978, 1979 and 1981.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The process of updating the Laton Community Plan included public outreach to solicit input from residents in Laton and interested individuals and agencies. A public meeting was held in the community on June 9, 2008. Written comments, in English and Spanish, were submitted at the meeting on comment cards and/or mailed to Fresno County following the meeting.

Additionally, a public scoping meeting was held on August 11, 2008, in the Laton Elementary School Cafeteria. The scoping meeting provided Laton residents and other interested individuals and agencies with an opportunity to provide input on potential environmental issues that could result from implementation of the Plan Update. Public input at the scoping meeting was used to determine some of the issues evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report for the Plan.

Below is a summary of relevant public comments received at the June 9, 2008 public meeting and from written comments and other correspondence that were submitted to Fresno County. These comments were utilized to prepare the land use map, goals and policies of the Plan. In general, the following overall needs were expressed:

- More housing in the community, preferably low to medium density housing and self help housing and other low income housing programs.
- Development of diverse retail/commercial uses in the community to provide additional shopping opportunities and professional office uses.
- Safer pedestrian walkways and street crossings, especially for schoolchildren and sidewalks and bike trails.
- More parks and playgrounds.
- Increased police services and a County Sheriff sub-station to address gangs and criminal activity.

- Road maintenance and installation of better road signs, streetlights, and sidewalks
- Sufficient parking within the Central Business District.
- Efficient utilization of existing land (i.e., infill development).

SIGNIFICANT PLANNING AND RESOURCE ISSUES/ OPPORTUNITIES

Conversion of Agricultural Land – Agriculture provides the primary economic base for the Laton community. A significant percentage of agricultural land surrounding Laton is Prime Farmland as listed on the California Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) State Important Farmlands Map(s). In addition, all of the land in the western growth area within the Planning Area is restricted under Williamson Act Contracts. Parcels under contract are subject to stringent development restrictions for a minimum of ten years from the inception of the contract or its most recent renewal. The presence of agricultural land adjacent to Laton limits growth and development opportunities.

New development in the community will bring about the conversion of agricultural land. In areas designated for future growth, County land use policy supports compact urban boundaries, minimal intrusion of urban development into productive agricultural areas, and the provision of urban services. Goals and policies in the County General Plan promote the long-term conservation of productive and potentially productive agricultural lands and accommodation of agricultural-support services and agriculturally-related activities that support the viability of agriculture and further the County’s economic development goals (Fresno County Goal LU-A). Policy LU-A.1 directs urban growth away from valuable agricultural lands to unincorporated communities and other areas planned for such development where public facilities and infrastructure are available.

Some agricultural lands have been included in the Plan to allow for future growth. These areas are covered by “Reserve Overlays” to reserve these lands for future more intensive development by permitting limited agricultural uses on an interim basis. New growth areas are peripheral to the existing Laton community, and per County policies, proposed urban development is subject to the provision of public facilities and phasing. As conditions of approval, the County will require: (1) community sewer and water service; and (2) completion of all roadways providing access to the development-as if they were part of the development-to the nearest fully developed street; and (3) safe collection and disposition of flood and storm waters in accordance with the plans and directives of the County of Fresno, Department of Public Works. (Fresno County Policies LU-G.21 and 22)

In considering proposals for new development on productive agricultural land, Fresno County General Plan policies Policy LU-G.21, 22 and 23 shall apply. These policies ensure that expansion into growth areas in Laton can be provided with necessary public services and such expansion is consistent with other General Plan policies. Additionally, mitigation measures that address the impacts of converting agricultural land to urban uses adopted through the CEQA environmental review process will be applied. Finally, the County will balance the preservation of agricultural land with the need for housing and other urban uses considered necessary to support a sustainable community.

Laton CSD Constraints – Planned growth within Laton will be restricted by the ability of the CSD to provide necessary services. Domestic water and sewer services will need to be expanded as growth occurs. New wells will need to be developed and the wastewater

treatment plant, currently operating at two-thirds capacity, will need to be expanded. The District is encouraged to prepare water and sewer master plans to prepare for anticipated growth that includes appropriate implementation policies and funding strategies. The expansion of Laton is subject to County policies requiring that necessary public services to be provided and that the proposed expansion is consistent with Fresno County General Plan policies. (Fresno County Policy LU-G.2)

Limited Inventory of Developable Land – Currently, Laton has limited inventory of land for larger scale developments. To alleviate this situation, the updated Plan provides for additional growth areas to the west designated for the future development of residential subdivisions, neighborhood parks and pedestrian pathways.

Limited Commercial Uses – At present, the Laton community does not offer a wide range of retail/ commercial opportunities. Consequently, it is necessary for residents to travel to nearby communities to purchase products unavailable in Laton. Additionally, many professional services are unavailable. To address this situation, the Plan designates specific areas adjacent to major roadways for the development of service commercial and Central Business District commercial uses. The development of diverse service commercial and office professional uses is essential for the continuing vitality of the community.

Central Business District Parking - The Central Business District (CBD) in Laton suffers from limited parking. As a result, residents and visitors to the area find it difficult to park and shop in the CBD. The Plan supports exploring ways to provide additional parking within the Central Business District (Land Use Policy 6-1).

Housing - Housing is limited in Laton and there has traditionally been a shortage of affordable housing, particularly rental housing. Lack of housing was identified as a major growth inhibitor in the original community plan. The 2000 US Census reported that Laton had 373 housing units, of which 236 were owner-occupied and 127 were renter-occupied.

The housing stock in Laton consists of detached single-family units, multiple family units and mobile homes. Housing in Laton ranges in age (built date) from the 1930s (or earlier) to the present day. The majority of housing was constructed during the 1980s and 1990s.

Table H-II (Housing Quality Survey) in the Fresno County Housing Element (2003) indicated that 31% of all housing in Laton (426 units per the survey) were in need of substantial rehabilitation and/or demolition (75 required minor repair, 50 moderate repair, 16 substantial repair and 118 needed demolition). The housing quality survey revealed that Laton was one of four unincorporated communities with the greatest housing deterioration.

An important goal of the Fresno County Housing Element (2003) is to increase the supply of housing, with a priority on the development of affordable housing, to meet the needs of the residents of Fresno County's unincorporated communities (Fresno County Housing Goal A – Housing Production). A shortage of housing stock in unincorporated communities was cited in the Housing Element. The Housing Element reported that Laton had a for-sale vacancy rate of less than 1 percent.

New housing opportunities are available on land located in the southeast and northwest designated "Reserve" and in the new western growth area, where land is designated primarily for residential uses. Opportunities for multiple family housing exist in the new growth areas. Consideration should also be given to developing new housing on in-fill lots.

Lack of New Industrial Uses – New industrial uses would provide job opportunities and economic stimulus to the community. Areas designated for industrial development located in the center of town along the railroad right-of-way have not developed. If development of industrial uses does not occur in the future, other uses such as service commercial or a linear park or greenbelt amenity should be considered.

Circulation Constraints – The circulation system in Laton is constricted due to canals, dead end streets, the Kings River and the railroad right-of-way. Murphy Slough Canal and Grant Canal are significant geographic limitations to north-south circulation. The railroad tracks, the linear areas of undeveloped land adjacent to the tracks and Fowler Avenue bisect the community and greatly limit east-west circulation. New development will be required to construct roadways to provide for maximum transportation connectivity.

Flood Hazards – Updated Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) developed by FEMA became effective in February 2009. These maps indicate that a large percentage of land in Laton is in Flood Zone A. Zone A is applied to areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event. Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain management standards apply. Development in flood zone areas will be required to comply with the provisions of California Government Code Section 65962(a); Fresno County General Plan polices HS-C.7, Policy HS-C.8 and HS-C.9 and the County's Floodplain Management Ordinance.

Poor Pedestrian Environment – Laton's restricted circulation system also limits pedestrian circulation and travel. To address this situation, the Plan provides an opportunity for development of proposed pedestrian pathways principally in the western growth area, with connections along existing roadways to allow walking, jogging and bicycling across Fowler Avenue to eastern Laton and destinations such as the Central Business District, Laton High School, the Laton-Kingston Regional Park and the Rodeo Grounds.

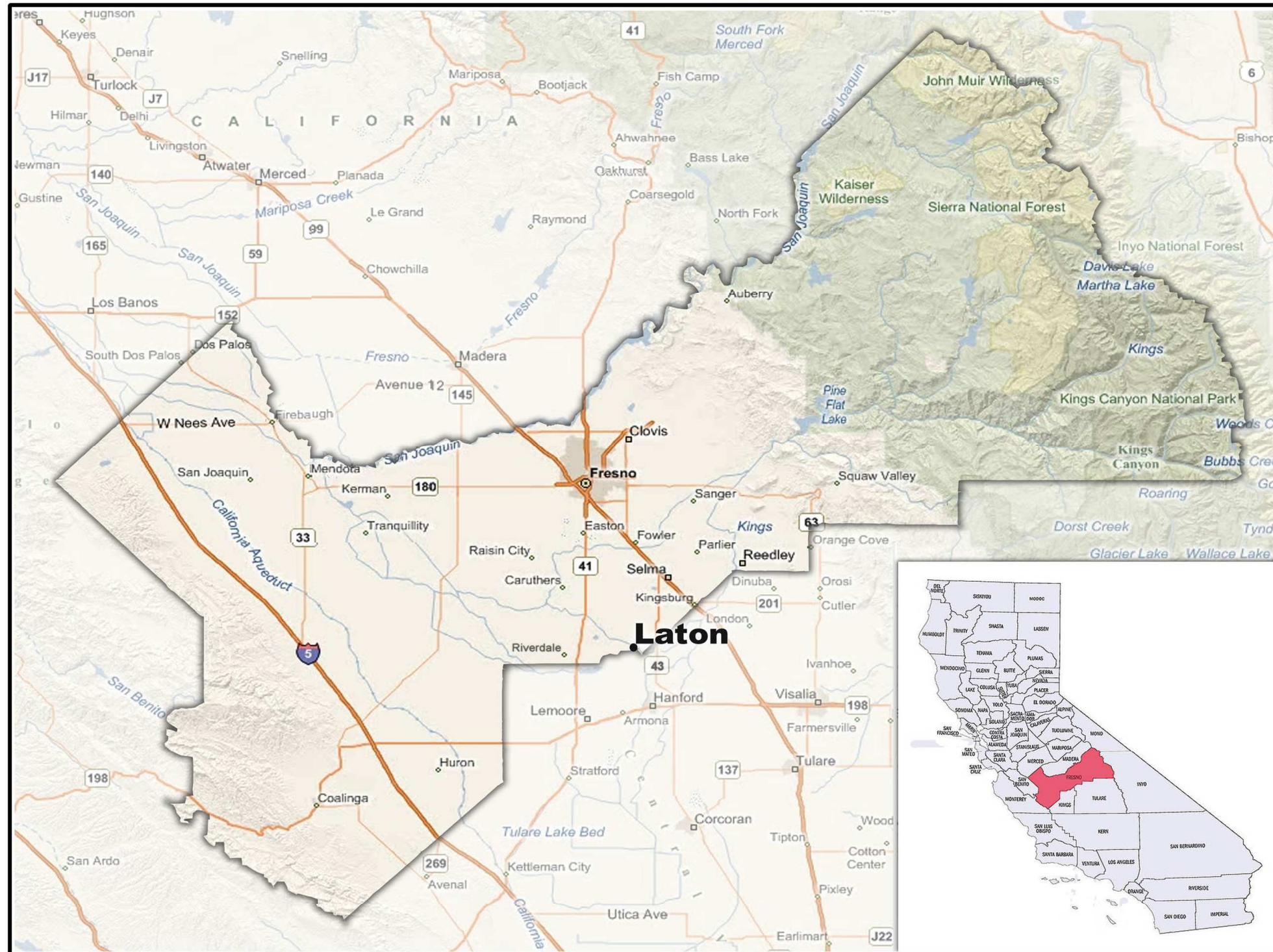
Need for Neighborhood Parks – Laton lacks neighborhood level parks and trails. To address this need, the Plan includes the requirement for the development of a neighborhood park and a pedestrian and bicycle trail in the western growth area. The pedestrian, bicycle trail and the neighborhood park will be developed as development occurs.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE GENERAL PLAN

The Laton Community Plan is part of the Fresno County General Plan. Community plans are not required to address all of the issues mandated by Government Code Section 65302 when the overall general plan satisfies these requirements. For example, a community plan need not discuss fire safety if the jurisdiction-wide plan adequately addresses the subject and the community plan is consistent with those policies and standards.

Community plans focus on a particular region or community within the overall general plan area. Community plans are required to be internally consistent with the general plan of which they are a part. All principles, goals, objectives, policies, and plan proposals set forth in a community plan must be consistent with the overall general plan. To facilitate such consistency, the general plan provides a policy framework for the detailed treatment of specific issues in the various community plans.

Fresno County General Plan Policy LU-H.11 requires community plans to be periodically updated to ensure consistency with the General Plan. The goals and policies adopted in the Laton Community Plan are consistent with those in the General Plan in accordance with this policy.



**COMMUNITY PLAN
LATON**
**LOCATION OF LATON
FRESNO COUNTY**

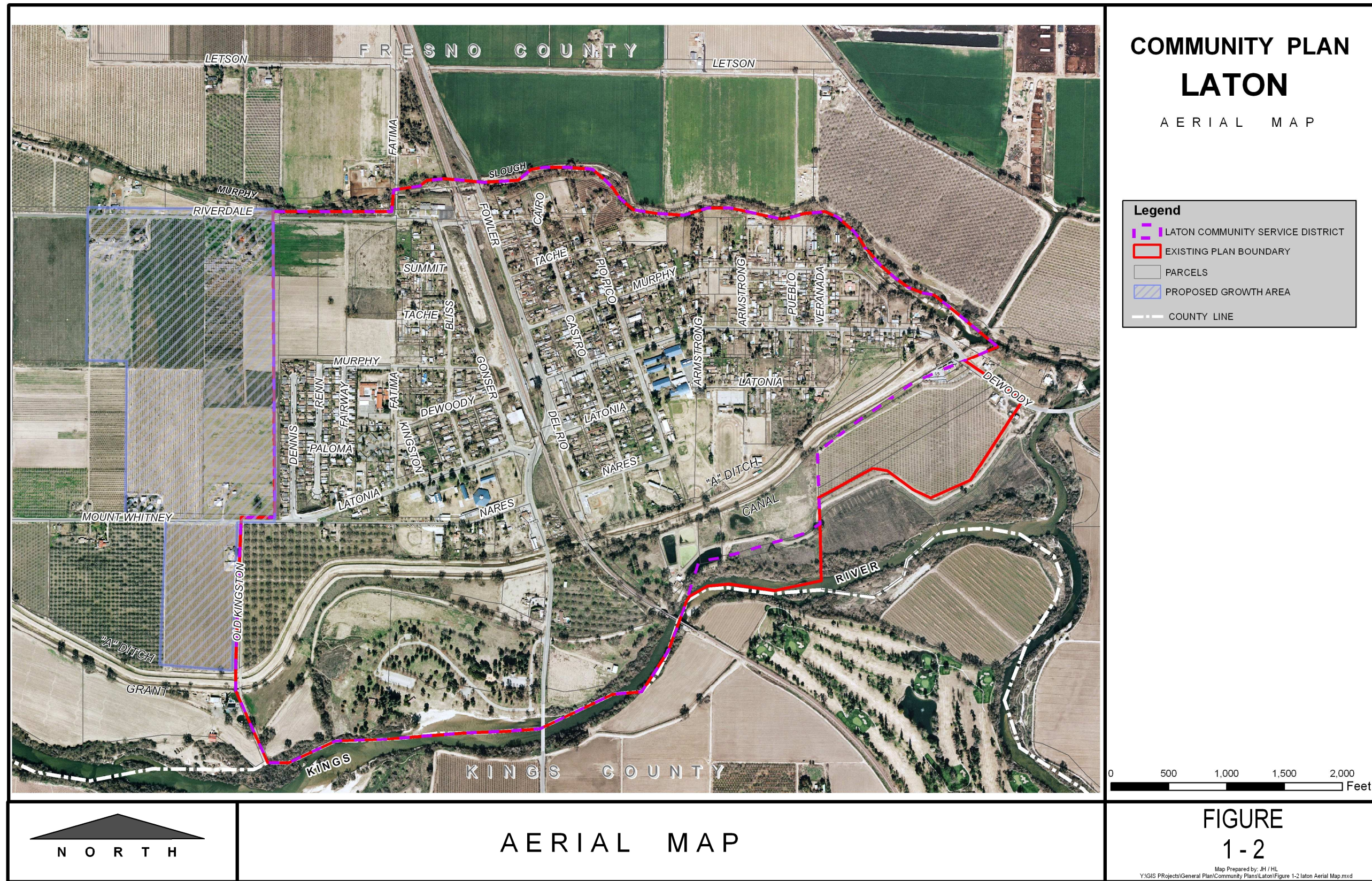


**LOCATION OF LATON
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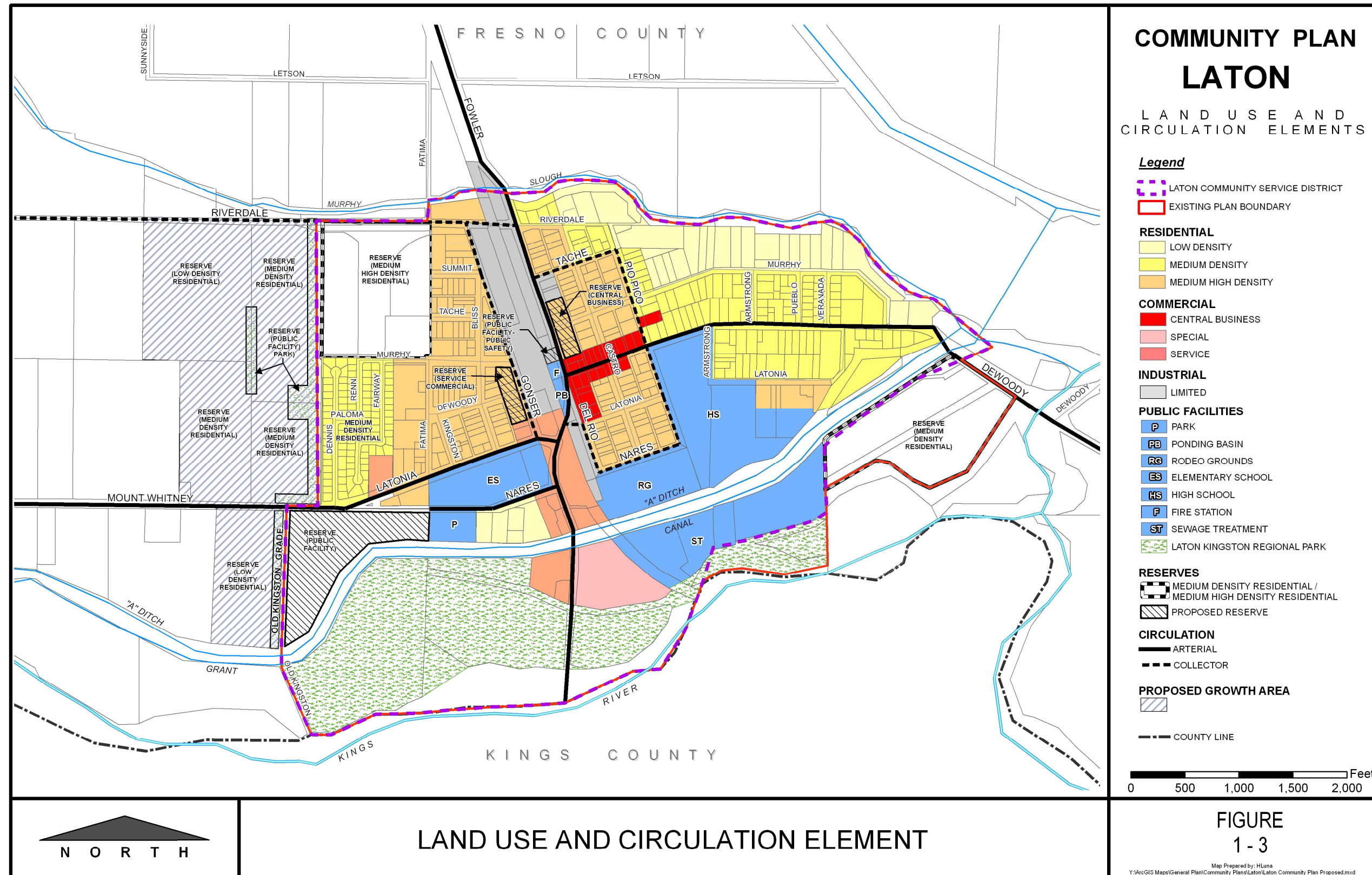
**FIGURE
1-1**

Map Prepared by: JH / HL
Y:\GIS\Projects\General Plan\Community Plans\Laton\Figure 1-2 Laton Aerial Map.mxd

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2.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAN AREA



LAND AREA

The Laton Community Plan Planning Area is approximately 589 acres in size. The land area consists of existing territory within the Laton CSD boundary, land within the CSD sphere of influence (SOI) and parcels of undeveloped land located in new growth areas are currently outside the CSD's service boundaries and SOI.

TOPOGRAPHY

Topography in the Planning Area is essentially flat, with very minor elevation changes. Minimum elevation is 250 feet, covering the majority of Laton, and the maximum elevation is 259 feet toward the eastern side of the community. Most land surrounding the community has been utilized for agriculture for a number of years and is level.

SOILS AND GEOLOGY

Soil Classifications - The California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) State Important Farmlands Maps identify critical agricultural lands and track the conversion of these lands to other uses. Soil types are classified depending on their suitability for agricultural use. Grangeville fine sandy loam soil covers most of the Planning Area, including the western growth area. Grangeville fine sandy loam is Prime Farmland. Other soils are nearly all classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance. (Refer to Figure 2-1 and Table 2-1)

**Table 2-1
Laton Planning Area Soil Types**

Map Symbol	Map Unit (Soil) Name	Farmland Classification
Dm	Dello loamy sand	Farmland of Statewide Importance
Dn	Dello sandy loam	Farmland of Statewide Importance
Gf	Grangeville fine sandy loam	Prime Farmland if Irrigated and Drained
Gn	Grangeville fine sandy loam, hard substratum	Farmland of Statewide Importance
TzaA	Tujunga sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Not Prime Farmland
TzbA	Tujunga loamy sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of Statewide Importance

Source: Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning

Geology (Seismicity) – Most of Fresno County is situated within an area of relatively low seismic activity. However, the faults and fault systems that run along the eastern and western boundaries of the County, as well as other regional faults, have the potential to produce high-magnitude earthquakes throughout the county. A high-magnitude earthquake on one of these faults could cause moderate intensity ground shaking in Laton.

The valley portion of Fresno County where Laton is situated is located on alluvial deposits, which tend to experience greater ground shaking intensities than areas located on hard rock. Therefore, structures in the valley areas could potentially suffer greater damage from ground shaking than those located in the foothills and mountain areas. Policies of the County General Plan require all proposed structures, additions to structures, utilities, and public facilities be sited, designed, and constructed in accordance with applicable sections of the International Codes developed by the International Code Council, which address potential seismic activity.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources as defined by the Fresno County General Plan include wetlands and riparian areas, fish and wildlife habitat, native vegetation, and air quality. Natural resources in Laton may be found adjacent to and within the Kings River as well as on surrounding agricultural land and open space. Goals and policies in the County General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element encourage and/or require protection of natural resources on a countywide basis. Therefore, where conditions in the Laton community apply, these goals and policies shall be implemented.

WATER RESOURCES

There are a number of factors affecting the County's existing water resources. Throughout much of the county, groundwater is in a state of overdraft. In some county areas, contamination from natural or manmade sources has reduced groundwater quality such that its use requires treatment. Supplies of surface water have been reduced due to changing regulations, and from pressure to allow long-term transfers of water out of the county. Finally, there is the increase in water demand due to the County's anticipated growth.

The goals and policies in the County General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element seek to protect and enhance surface water and groundwater resources in the county. The goals and policies address broad water planning issues, groundwater recharge, the relationship of land use decisions to water issues, and water quality problems. New development will be required to be in compliance with these goals and policies.

To initiate better water conservation practices, proposed development projects will be required to comply with the policies in this community plan that address the need to conserve water (Public Services Policies 13-1-13-5). New development projects will also be required to implement Fresno County General Plan policies that promote water conservation (Fresno County Public Facilities and Services Element, Policies PF C25-C30).

The CSD provides domestic water in Laton. The CSD utilizes groundwater from local wells for all potable water supplies in the community. Laton is located in the Kings sub-basin of the San Joaquin Valley groundwater basin in the Tulare Lake hydrologic region. The sub-basin encompasses approximately 1,530 square miles and contains approximately 90 million acre-feet of water. Groundwater levels in this region have exhibited a general downward trend since droughts in 1976-77 and 1987-92. The groundwater in Laton is relatively free of contaminants and is used by residential, commercial, and industrial customers.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Laton area (historically known as the Laton/ Kingston area) has been a center of rural and urban activity for many years dating back to the mid-19th Century. Located on the south bank of the Kings River about a half-mile west of Laton, Kingston was once an important river town. Originally known as Whitmore's Ferry, the town's name changed to Kingston when the site became the first bridged point on the Kings River in the area (1869). A few years later, Kingston became a Butterfield Stage station. The town declined rapidly in the 1870s and ultimately vanished.

Kings County's portion of the Laton-Kingston Regional Park, the historical site of Kingston, was designated a state historical landmark in 1937. L.A. Whitmore, who operated the first ferry to cross the Kings River in this area, founded the park in 1856. There are no other recognized historic landmarks in the area.

The community of Laton was established near Kingston along side the Santa Fe railroad line that passed through the area. The town was originally located in Kings County until the boundary between Kings and Fresno counties moved to follow the Kings River. In 1899, the community was officially named "Laton" after Charles A. Laton, a landowner from San Francisco.

By 1907, the Fresno County Atlas depicted early Laton growing alongside the Santa Fe railroad line, with subdivision of land for development on the eastern side of the tracks. Accordingly, historic structures are likely still standing in this area. Laton residents are encouraged to contact the Fresno City and County Historical Society to initiate research about historic Laton, and to document any historic buildings or sites existing in the community.

MINERAL RESOURCES

Fresno County has been a leading producer of minerals because of the abundance and wide variety of mineral resources that are present in the county. This being noted, none of the minerals typically produced in the County are found in Laton.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Laton's economy is primarily dependent on agriculture, making this a natural resource of utmost importance. A high percentage of agricultural lands surrounding Laton are Prime Farmland. Agricultural lands limit development opportunities since County policies disallow or discourage urban development on productive or potentially productive agricultural land. Table 2-2 below presents State Classified Farmland within the Planning Area.

The Fresno County General Plan contains a number of goals and policies to support the long-term preservation and protection of agricultural resources. Policies provide direction for the County to consider establishing several agricultural conservation programs, including setting up criteria to determine which lands should receive priority funding for land conservation easements, establishing an agricultural mitigation fee program to help offset development on agricultural lands, and participation in the Agricultural Land Stewardship Program Fund.

**Table 2-2
State Important Farmland
within the Planning Area**

Farmland Classification	Acres
Agricultural Land of Local Importance	37.54
Agricultural Land of State Wide Importance	43.90
Prime Agricultural Land	86.75
Total Acreage	168.19
Source: Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning	

Refer to Table 3-1 for all land use designations in Laton by parcels and acreage.

Development in Laton is subject to the County’s Right-to-Farm Ordinance, pursuant to General Plan Policy LU-A.15. This helps protect farming operations from interruptions due to land use conflicts with adjacent properties. The intent of the ordinance is to allow farmers to conduct normal farming operations (harvest crops, till soil, or spray crops) without interference from nearby urban land owners.

The County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office also utilizes various regulations and procedures to minimize agricultural impacts on adjacent non-agricultural properties, including the issuance of pesticide application permits, providing agricultural land use recommendations on development projects, and a range of educational programs and services. Future development within the Planning Area that brings about the conversion of Prime Farmland to non-agricultural uses will be required to mitigate the loss of such agricultural lands. Parcels located immediately adjacent to the Planning Area in the western growth area are restricted under Williamson Act Contracts.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Laton contains four distinct habitat types; Urban, Cropland, Orchard, and Riparian (along the Kings River and Murphy Slough). Species potentially supported by these habitats are presented in Table 2-3.

The California Natural Diversity Database, a California Department of Fish and Game program that inventories the status and locations of rare plants and animals in California, indicates that there are two special status species within the vicinity of Laton.

The San Joaquin kit fox, or *Vulpes macrotis mutica*, is designated as endangered by the Federal Endangered Species Act, and as threatened by the California Endangered Species Act. Brittle scale, or *Atriplex depressa*, is designated by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as a plant that is rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.

**Table 2-3
Habitat Types and Species Support**

Habitat	Description	Species Supported
Urban	Ornamental shrub and tree stands in lawns, street strips and other landscaped areas.	Mostly resident and migratory birds. Native plants, mammals, reptiles and amphibians are poorly represented in this habitat.
Cropland	Cultivated vegetable, fruit, and grain crops ranging in height from a few inches to ten feet. cotton, corn, hay and other field crops. vineyards	Non-native weedy plants, resident and migratory birds, hawks, and small mammals (mice, rats, squirrels, etc.).
Orchard	Fruit and nut trees	Non-native weedy plants. Little habitat for terrestrial vertebrates due to absence of herbaceous understory.
Riparian	Aquatic and terrestrial habitat within and adjacent to Kings River and Murphy Slough. Kings River and its tributaries receive protection under Section 404.	Mixed trout and warm water fish. Oak trees. Other plant and animal species associated with the Kings River and Murphy Slough.
Source: Fresno County General Plan		

EXISTING LAND USES

Within the boundaries of the Community Plan, the predominant land use is single-family residential. Other land uses include commercial, industrial, public facilities and parks. Land adjacent to the Planning Area chiefly consists of agricultural and open space uses. Pastures, orchards, vineyards, dairy farms and row crops surround the community.

County policies regarding development phasing are stated in the Fresno County General Plan. These are intended to maintain compact urban boundaries, minimize intrusion of urban development into productive agricultural areas, and to create the optimum situation for provision of services while accommodating future population demand projects.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2000 Census reported that there were 1,236 people, 331 households, and 285 families residing in Laton. The population density was 641.4 people per square mile. There were 340 housing units at an average density of 176.4 per square mile. With regard to ethnicity, the 2000 Census reported that 68.9% of the population was Hispanic, 28.1% was White (*non-Hispanic*). The average household size was 3.72 and the average family size was 3.96.

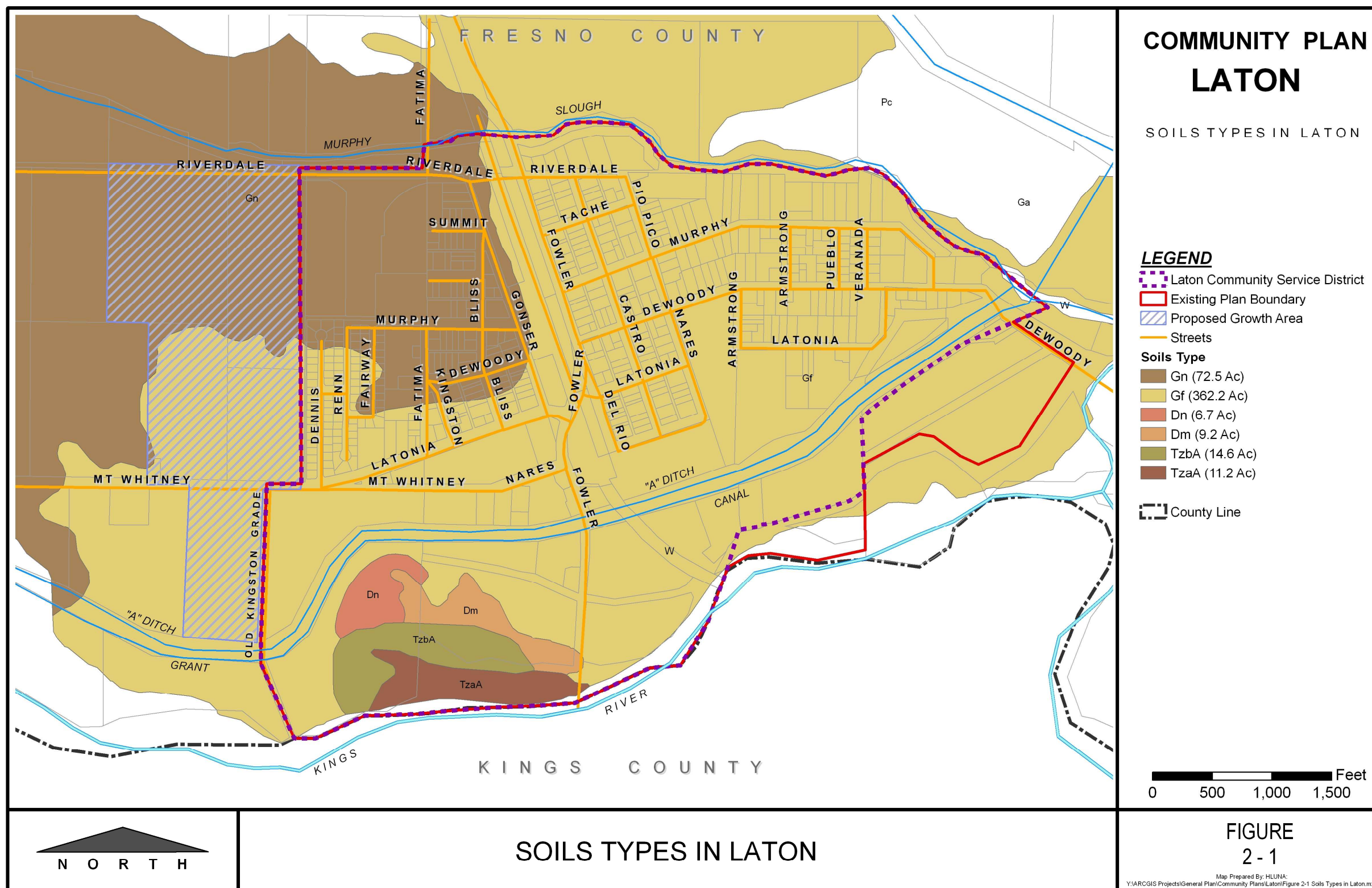
The population of Laton at the time of the 1990 Census was 1,415. Thus, the population of the community decreased about 13% by the time of the 2000 Census. Factors that may account for a drop in population include migration, deaths and miscounting of Laton residents.

The population of agricultural communities can change dramatically due to the presence of seasonal workers. The last major growth within the community consisted of 96 homes constructed in 1986. Current population in Laton is estimated to be 1,401. While significant population growth in Laton may not occur during the planning horizon (20 years), an annual growth rate of approximately one percent (1%) is expected.

**Table 2-4
Population of Laton (1890-2008)**

Census/ Year	Population
1890	1,150
1960	1,052
1970	1,071
1980	1,100
1990	1,415
2000	1,236
2008	1,401 (est.)
Source: California Department of Finance	

Figure 2-1
Soil Types in Laton



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3.0 LAND USE ELEMENT



The Laton Community Plan augments the goals, policies and implementation programs found in various Elements of the Fresno County General Plan. The Land Use Element's goals and policies are, therefore, subject to countywide goals and policies of the General Plan, which should be referred to in order to accurately determine urban development policy.

The Agriculture and Land Use Element, the Transportation and Circulation Element, and the Housing Element of the Fresno County General Plan are particularly relevant to future development proposals in the Laton community.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The land use designations presented on the Laton Community Plan map (Figure 1-3) and as described below correspond with the land use designations and development intensity standards adopted in the Fresno County General Plan Agriculture and Land Use Element. Land use designations determine the types of land uses that will be allowed to develop in Laton. Primary land use designations (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial) are defined in terms of allowable uses and intensity standards. Densities are identified in gross acres, which include all land, streets and rights-of-ways. The land use designations are implemented largely through County zoning. Table LU-2 in the Fresno County General Plan Agriculture and Land Use Element shows which zoning districts are compatible, conditionally compatible, or incompatible with the various Fresno County General Plan land use designations. (Also, refer to Table 6-2 in this Plan).

Agriculture

Agriculture: This designation provides for the production of crops and livestock, and for location of necessary agriculture commercial centers, agricultural processing facilities, and certain nonagricultural activities.

Residential

Low Density Residential: This designation provides for residential development that combines the space and privacy of a suburban setting with the amenities and services of urban areas. The predominant residential type is the single family dwelling unit. Typical densities range from 0.9 – 2.8 DU/gross acre.

Medium Density Residential: This designation provides for single family dwellings, multi-family dwellings, and accessory structures. Typical densities range from 2.8 – 5.8 DU/gross acre.

Medium High Density Residential: This designation provides for single family dwellings, multifamily dwellings, accessory structures, churches, schools, and libraries. Typical densities range from 5.8 – 14.5 DU/gross acre.

Commercial

Central Business Commercial: This designation provides for development of commercial centers where the full range of retail services and professional and governmental offices are concentrated in a location that is central to most community residents. Typical uses include specialty shops, retail, entertainment uses, apparel stores, restaurants, hotels/motels, and financial, medical, and professional offices.

Service Commercial: This designation provides for general commercial uses which, due to space requirements or the distinctive nature of the operation, are not usually located in commercial centers. Typical uses include repair, rental, sales, storage, and overnight lodging.

Special Commercial: This designation provides for commercial activities which do not fall within any other commercial land designation and whose frequency of occurrence does not warrant the establishment of additional specific use designations. Typical uses include drive-in theaters, airport-related and recreation-related commercial uses, and other such uses.

Industrial

Limited Industrial: This designation provides for restricted non-intensive manufacturing and storage activities that do not have detrimental impacts on surrounding properties.

Public

Public Facilities: This designation provides for location of services and facilities that are necessary to the welfare of the community. Typical uses include waste disposal, ponding basins, parks, schools, civic centers, hospitals, libraries, penal institutions, and cemeteries.

Overlay Land Use Designations

Reserve Overlay: Overlay designations are intended to reserve certain lands for future more intensive development by permitting only limited agricultural uses on an interim basis. Typical uses include raising livestock; tree, vine, and field crops; single family dwellings; and accessory buildings. Where such lands are peripheral to an unincorporated community, development shall be subject to the provision of public facilities and phasing.

NEW GROWTH AREAS

New housing opportunities in Laton are planned on land previously designated (in the 1981 Plan) "Reserve" in the southeast and northwest and on land in the western growth area. Most land in the western growth area is designated primarily for residential uses with complementary neighborhood park and pedestrian/ bike trail facilities.

The neighborhood park will be 40,000 square feet in size and will include a landscaped picnic area and a tot-lot. The pedestrian/bike trail will be located along the eastern edge of the western growth area extending from Grant Canal to Riverdale Road. The trail will be landscaped with turf and shade trees. The Plan envisions that these recreational facilities will be developed incrementally as projects are proposed and processed. The final design of the park and the trail will be determined at the time land use entitlements for developments are processed. One or more developers may be required to contribute land and/or funding for the development of the park and the trail and installation of the equipment. The pedestrian/bikeway facility is designed to provide connectivity with the rest of the community by running the trail east-west along the Mt

Whitney/Latonia right-of-way (south) and Murphy right-of-way (north) to connect the western growth area with the heart of the community, Laton Elementary School, and the CBD.

LAND USE DIAGRAM

The Land Use Diagram (Figure 1-3) graphically depicts how the various land use types are distributed throughout the community. The Land Use Diagram also displays the CSD’s boundaries and Sphere of Influence as defined by the Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). Table 3-1 shows the distribution of land uses in Laton by parcels and acreage.

**Table 3-1
Land Use Designations in Laton
(Parcels and Acreage)**

Land Use	Parcels	Acres
Residential		
Low Density	32	35.7
Medium Density	122	75
Medium High Density	202	81.72
Commercial		
Central Business	23	6.75
Special	2	9.05
Service	15	16.16
Industrial		
Limited	12	24.43
Public Facilities		
Park	1	3.07
Ponding Basin	2	0.77
Rodeo Grounds	1	9.56
Elementary/Middle Schools	2	11.24
High School	4	27.77
Fire Station	1	0.48
Sewage Treatment	5	20.42
Laton Kingston Regional Park	8	82.60
Reserves		
Low Density Residential	2	44.63
Medium Density Residential	5	77.77
Medium High Density Residential	4	29.30
Reserve Service Commercial	9	1.56
Reserve Central Business	6	1.65
Reserve Public Facility - Public Safety	2	0.41
School District	1	17.05
Reserve Public Facility Park and Pedestrian Pathway	---	12
Totals	461	589.09
Source: Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- A. County goals, policies and implementation programs adopted throughout the General Plan are applicable wherever pertinent to the Laton Community. County guiding principals for development in Laton are:
- 1) Residential and commercial development that increases economic vitality and addresses future population demands.
 - 2) Concentrate urban development within the existing community boundary.
 - 3) Preclude urban development that cannot be provided with appropriate urban services.
 - 4) Phase development in accordance with the adopted community plan.
 - 5) Accommodate urban population increases through infill of existing urban areas prior to development of planned expansion areas.
 - 6) Plan for the provision of a variety of housing types and densities.
- B. The following policies are the basis for recommendations in the Laton community:
- 1) New development in residential reserve areas will not be allowed until 80% of developable land within the Planning Area is built-out or committed to development consistent with planned land uses.
 - 2) Orderly growth and development of residential neighborhoods should ensure a variety of densities and housing types.
 - 3) Laton's primary growth direction should be to the west of the current urban area.
 - 4) Public facilities and open space should continue to be used for the benefit of the entire community.
 - 5) All discretionary entitlements or permits for development will be conditioned to protect the proposed projects to the urban level of flood protection in urban and urbanizing areas pursuant to California Government Code 65962(a)(2).

LAND USE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

Residential Land Use

Goal 1: Accommodate a sufficient supply of housing for all sectors of the market, with low and moderate-income housing distributed throughout the community.

Policies:

- 1.1 Encourage development proposals that promote a variety of housing types in the community.
- 1.2 Support housing developments that will meet the needs of existing residents and projected population of the community.
- 1.3 Encourage development of housing for seniors and other special needs populations (i.e., developmentally disabled, farm worker households, and physically handicapped).
- 1.4 Encourage a diverse distribution of housing types that provide for alternative housing options to accommodate lifestyle changes.

- 1.5 New residential development shall occur in an orderly manner and contribute to and maintain the necessary infrastructure and services needed for a sustainable community, while avoiding the premature conversion of prime farmland.
- 1.6 Support designating specific areas for multi-family residential development opportunities.
- 1.7 Support development of duplexes on corner lots consistent with zoning and designed for compatibility with surrounding development.
- 1.8 Development of new residential land uses in areas determined to be within a 100-year flood zone will be required to comply with the provisions of California Government Code Section 65962(a), Fresno County General Plan polices and the County's Floodplain Management Ordinance.

Goal 2: Plan and regulate residential development in close proximity to existing and/ or planned urban facilities and services.

Policies:

- 2.1 New development shall only be permitted when it is located immediately adjacent (*shares a common boundary totaling not less than 5% or more of the project's entire boundary*) to lands that are currently developed.
- 2.2 New infill development proposals shall be reviewed for compatibility with existing public facilities. Projects that are determined to have potential impacts to public facilities shall participate proportionally as a condition of development to the creation of a funding mechanism (development fee) to fund the construction, maintenance and operation of public facilities.
- 2.3 New infill development projects shall be designed and landscaped to be compatible with the scale and design of the existing adjacent/surrounding residential neighborhood.
- 2.4 Preserve and enhance the Commercial Business and Commercial Service areas. Promote retail commercial, offices, professional services, public and community facilities and residential uses.
- 2.5 Territory designated residential "Reserve" (i.e., *Medium Density Residential Reserve*) may have the Reserve designation removed at the time necessary and appropriate development is proposed when the following criterion are met:
 - a. All of the requirements of Fresno County General Plan policies for unincorporated communities.
 - b. The Laton Community District's adopted water and sewer master plans indicate that the CSD is able and willing to provide these urban services to new development areas.
 - c. The territory included in a residential Reserve Overlay area is not subject to a Williamson Act contract.

- d. Approval by the Fresno County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) of an SOI amendment (if necessary) and annexation of this territory into the Laton Community Services District.

Goal 3: Fully integrate new development into the existing community through connectivity to adjacent development.

Policies:

- 3.1 Encourage higher-density (*projects with densities of 10 dwelling units per gross acre or greater*) on vacant and underutilized land within the existing community plan boundary and the new growth areas.
- 3.2 Require new developments to provide the maximum feasible number of connections to adjacent land that is either developed or designated for future development. These connections may be in the form of streets and/or pedestrian/bicycle paths.
- 3.3 New residential development shall integrate pedestrian connectivity that is representative of small town communities, and include sidewalks, curbs, planting strips, and trees to enhance the streetscape.
- 3.4 Protect existing single family residential neighborhoods from new, nonconforming, out-of-scale development.
- 3.5 Avoid over concentration of multi-family dwelling units (*projects with densities of 10 dwelling units per gross acre or greater*).

Goal 4: Ensure that new developments and neighborhoods are well designed and include a variety of public amenities.

Policies:

- 4.1 New single-family developments shall incorporate traditional neighborhood design features, including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Streets shall be laid out on a grid or modified grid pattern to the extent feasible.
 - b. Local streets shall have detached sidewalks with parkway strips between the curb and sidewalk designed in conformance with County subdivision standards. Installation of such sidewalk patterns must be sensitive to existing development patterns and maintenance of parkways areas will be required to be determined at the time of development and may include the formation of a Community Facilities District.
 - c. Garages shall be offset behind the plane of residence's front elevations.
 - d. One 15-gallon tree shall be provided for each unit within a development. The trees may be planted in the front yard of individual lots, or clustered on any common or open space area.

- e. New developments shall be designed and constructed to integrate with existing developments to the extent feasible.
- 4.2 New development shall incorporate open space areas that will provide community and neighborhood identity and to serve as open space or recreational buffers between incompatible land uses, densities and noise generators.
- 4.3 All new developments within the 106-acre new growth area shall contribute to development of a Pedestrian and Bike Trail ("Trail") and a Neighborhood Park ("Park") as shown on Figures 3-1 and 3-2. The Trail and the Park shall be designed and constructed according to the standards stated below subject to approval of the director of the Public Works and Planning Department ("Director") or his designee.
- a. The Trail shall be developed according to the following standards:
 - 1) Shall be located along the existing western community plan boundary, extending from Grant Canal to Riverdale Road.
 - 2) The trail shall be 40 feet wide with a 10-foot wide walking path in the center. A ten-foot wide turf area to the east of the walking path and a ten to twenty feet turf area west of the walking path shall be provided.
 - 3) The walking path shall be constructed with concrete or other material acceptable to the Director or his designee.
 - 4) Automatic irrigation system including rain sensor shall be provided for the landscaped areas.
 - 5) Shade trees shall be a minimum of 15 gallons in size and of a type to form a large canopy. All landscaping material shall be tolerant to the valley climate.
 - b. The Park shall be developed according to the following standards:
 - 1) Shall be generally located 630 feet west of the existing western community plan boundary and 830 feet south of the Riverdale Avenue.
 - 2) Shall be at least 40,000 sq ft in size (400ft x 100ft).
 - 3) Shade and accent trees shall be a minimum of 15 gallons in size. Shade trees shall be of a type to form a large canopy. All landscaping material shall be tolerant to the valley climate.
 - 4) Automatic irrigation system including rain sensor shall be provided for landscaping areas.
 - 5) Tot lot and play equipment for children shall be provided.
 - 6) A minimum of five benches adjacent to the play area shall be provided.
 - 7) A minimum of eight picnic tables and benches large enough to accommodate eight people shall be provided.

- 8) A four-foot fence with a gate shall be provided around the perimeter of the Park.
- 9) A minimum of two drinking fountains shall be provided.
- 10) A minimum of four trash receptacles shall be provided.

4.4 All new urban development within the 106-acre new growth area shall participate proportionally as a condition of development to the creation of a funding mechanism (development fees, assessment district, County Service Area and/or zone of benefit within the Laton Community Services District) to fund construction, maintenance and operation of the Neighborhood Park and Pedestrian and Bike Trail. The funding mechanism shall be established prior to recordation of the first final map for new urban development within the 106-acre new growth area. The first-in developer, with County's concurrence, may develop the Park or the Trail in its entirety with subsequent developers reimbursing the first-in developer on a pro rata basis. Both the Park and the Bike Trail shall be developed when 60% of the residential units within the new growth area are constructed.

The funding mechanism for the development and on-going maintenance and operation of the recreational facilities mentioned above may consist of one or a combination of the following:

- a. Dedication of land and providing utilities
 - 1) Dedicate land for the Trail and the Park.
 - 2) Extend utilities from the nearest point of connection to the recreational facilities.
- b. Payment of development fees
 - 1) Development fees shall be collected prior to issuance of any building permit for new urban development within the new growth area to fund the construction of the Bike Trail and the Park.
 - 2) If necessary, the first-in development will be assessed fees sufficient to initiate construction of the Bike Trail and the Park with future developers reimbursing the first-in developer on a pro rata basis.
- c. Provide cost estimates for the design, construction, and long-term maintenance
 - 1) The first-in developer shall provide a cost estimate for the design, construction and the long-term maintenance of the Bike Trail and the Park. These cost estimates will be used as a basis for establishing the development fee and assessing properties within the assessment district for the long-term maintenance of the recreational facilities.

- 4.5 Promote contiguous and compact development to preserve agricultural and open space land.
- 4.6 Planned Residential Developments shall incorporate the following characteristics:
- a. Usable open space, exclusive of right-of-way and required setbacks, is encouraged to be comprised of a minimum of 10% of gross project acreage for recreation and open space purposes. Improved parkland pursuant to Policy OS-H.2 of the Fresno County General Plan may be used to assist in meeting this standard.
 - b. Except as allowed by State law or Fresno County General Plan provisions, density shall not exceed the underlying zoning provisions.
- 4.7 Multi-family developments shall be designed and landscaped to be compatible with the scale of the existing/surrounding residential neighborhood. Multi-family developments will meet the following criteria:
- a. Exterior Elevations – All structures shall utilize design features such as offsets, balconies, projections, landscaping or similar elements to preclude large expanses of uninterrupted building surfaces.
 - b. Building, Parkway, Walkway Separation – Provide privacy, light, air, and pedestrian access to dwellings within the development by ensuring adequate distances between buildings, parking lots and driveways, and walkways.
 - c. Open Space, Landscaping, and Screening – Open space, exclusive of required setbacks, right-of-way, and easements, shall be provided within each development for the use of residents. The amount of open space shall be consistent with Policies OS-H.2 and OS-H.3 of the Fresno County General Plan (5 to 8 acres of County owned improved parkland per 1,000 population).
 - d. Energy Efficiency – Encourage the following measures:
 - 1) Appropriate landscaping materials to provide shade in the summer and protection from the elements in winter.
 - 2) Eaves, canopies, awnings, along south and west elevations.
 - 3) Secured bicycle storage areas with lock-up capabilities.

Goal 5: Ensure that noise-sensitive development is not located adjacent to noise producing land uses.

Policies:

- 5.1 New residential development proposals shall be reviewed for their proximity to roadways, commercial and industrial uses, and other noise sources. Projects that are determined to have potential noise related impacts shall incorporate the following mitigation measures as determined by the County:

- a. Compliance with the performance standards in Fresno County's Noise Element and Title 15
- b. The use of setbacks, site design, and soundproofing to ensure that the exterior noise levels do not exceed 60 dB Ldn at a point 50 feet from the closest building façade and interior noise exposure is 45 dB Ldn or below.
- c. For multi-family development, encourage greater setbacks along arterials and collectors as an alternative to walls and fences.
- d. Develop design measures to buffer residential development from non-residential land uses. These measures may include setbacks, roadways, community waterways, landscaping, and landforms such as berming, fences and walls.

Commercial Land Use

Goal 6: Encourage vibrant and viable commercial areas concentrated in the CBD and service commercial areas adjacent to the railroad right-of-way.

Policies:

- 6.1 Preserve and enhance the CBD area as the community's primary service center.
- 6.2 Promote community oriented businesses in the Commercial Service (Reserve) area on the west side of Gonasor Avenue and CBD (Reserve) area on the west side of Del Rio Avenue.
- 6.3 Promote new businesses and services in the community (banks, supermarkets, service stations, etc.) that will reduce the need for residents to leave Laton to shop in other urban areas.
- 6.4 Encourage Laton business owners are encouraged to collaborate to consider the benefits of a mixed use overlay district to be applied to commercial areas in the community as appropriate.
- 6.5 Support development of a commercial shopping center at the intersection of Mt Whitney and Latonia avenues.
- 6.6 The area at the southwest corner of Fowler Avenue and the Grant Canal designated "Special Commercial" shall develop in a way that relates to the Laton-Kingston Regional Park (*i.e., recreational or related uses*).
- 6.7 Commercial developments shall be required to incorporate the following design standards:
 - a. Pedestrian oriented rather than automobile orientation. Buildings should be located at the back of the sidewalk with parking located behind the structure.

- b. Within the Central Business District two-story, mixed-use development is encouraged. The ground floor should be used for commercial and office space, and the second floor for office and/or residential uses.
 - c. To address parking demand issues in the CBD, and prevent further parking problems in the community, adequate parking shall be required of all new developments. Parking areas shall be intensely landscaped and provided with pedestrian pathways to buildings. Trees shall be selected and located so as to provide parking areas with 50% shade within 15 years.
 - d. Signs shall be integrated into the design of the building by utilizing the same basic or comparable materials.
 - e. Where feasible and permitted, new developments should provide street furniture and landscaping within the sidewalk area.
 - f. Outdoor spaces such as courtyards are encouraged. These spaces should provide seating and shade from overhangs and/or landscaping.
 - g. Roof-mounted and detached mechanical equipment shall be acoustically baffled to prevent noise from the equipment from exceeding the standards of the County Noise Ordinance and Title 15. This equipment shall be screened from view, to the extent feasible.
 - h. Screening of open storage shall be required. Displaying products for sale in front of retail developments exposed to the street shall be restricted or prohibited.
- 6.8 Explore ways to provide additional parking within the Central Business District.
- 6.9 Commercial development will generally be discouraged when located within 500 feet of the entrance to a public school. If commercial uses are proposed within 500 feet from the entrance to a public school the criterion in Policy 14.3 in the Public Facilities Element shall be followed.

Industrial Land Use

Goal 7: Promote the development of industrial areas concentrated adjacent to the railroad right-of-way.

Policies:

- 7.1 Support new industrial uses that will create job opportunities for residents and which minimize environmental and visual impacts on the community.
- 7.2 Industrial development shall be directed towards vacant lands currently designated for industrial uses before new uses are developed on productive agricultural land.
- 7.3 New industrial uses shall only be approved or developed when necessary urban services can be provided.
- 7.4 Industrial uses shall not create significant impacts from off-site circulation, noise, dust, odor, and potential handling of hazardous materials.

- 7.5 All industrial development shall provide for pedestrian access both to the site and within the site to the extent feasible.
- 7.6 The two areas designated Limited Industrial at the southeast corner of Tache and Fowler Avenues, and on the west side of Del Rio Avenue between Latonia Avenue and the rodeo grounds are located adjacent to residential uses and shall be developed in a manner that will not adversely impact adjoining residents of the surrounding neighborhood. Implementation in these areas shall be limited to nonintensive commercial and light manufacturing, warehousing, and storage operations.

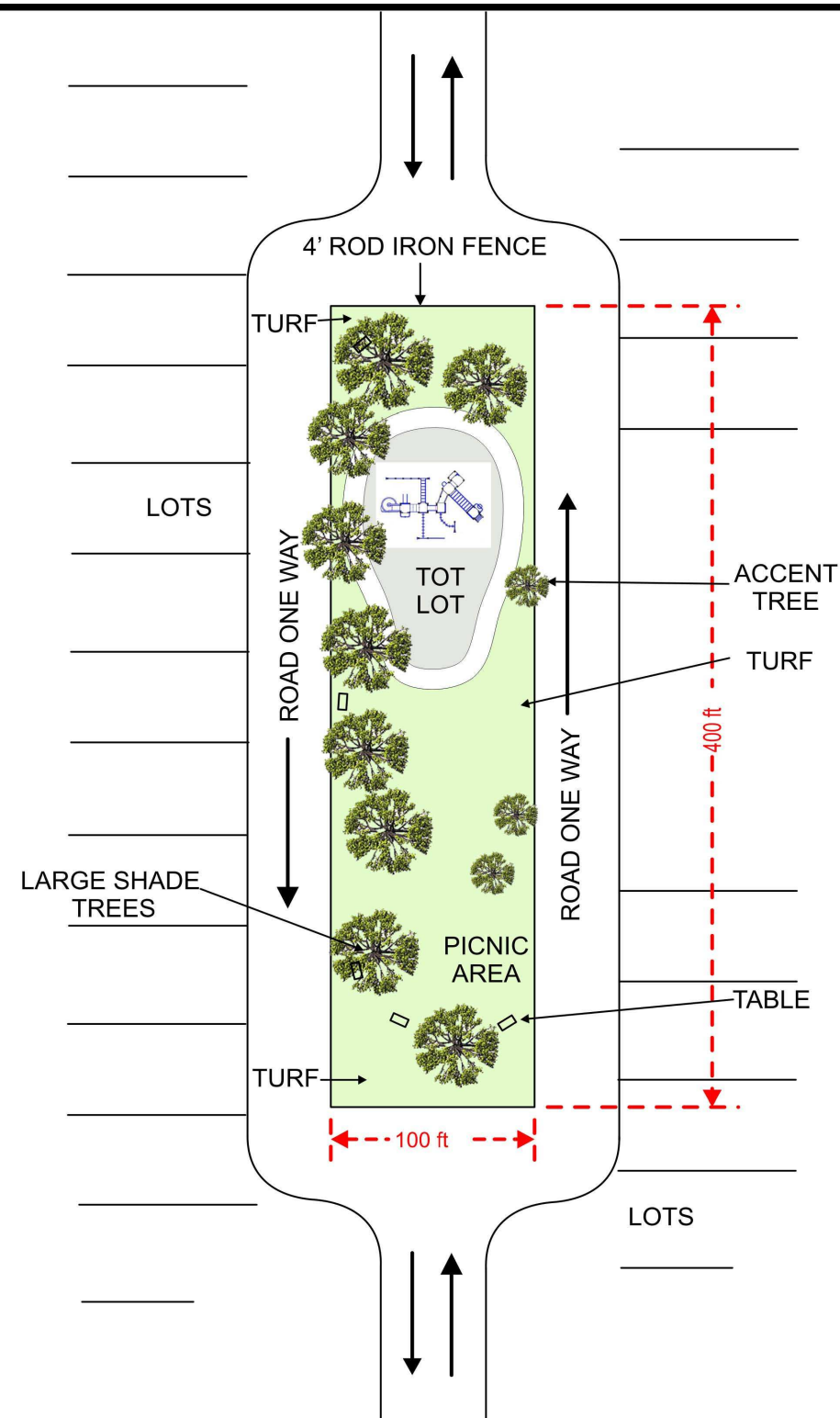
Agricultural Land Use

Goal 8: Mitigate loss of agricultural due to urbanization.

Policies:

- 8.1 Determine and implement mitigation measures to minimize the loss of prime agricultural land as shown in Figures 3-3 and 3-4.

COMMUNITY PLAN LATON



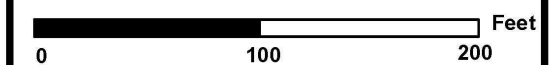
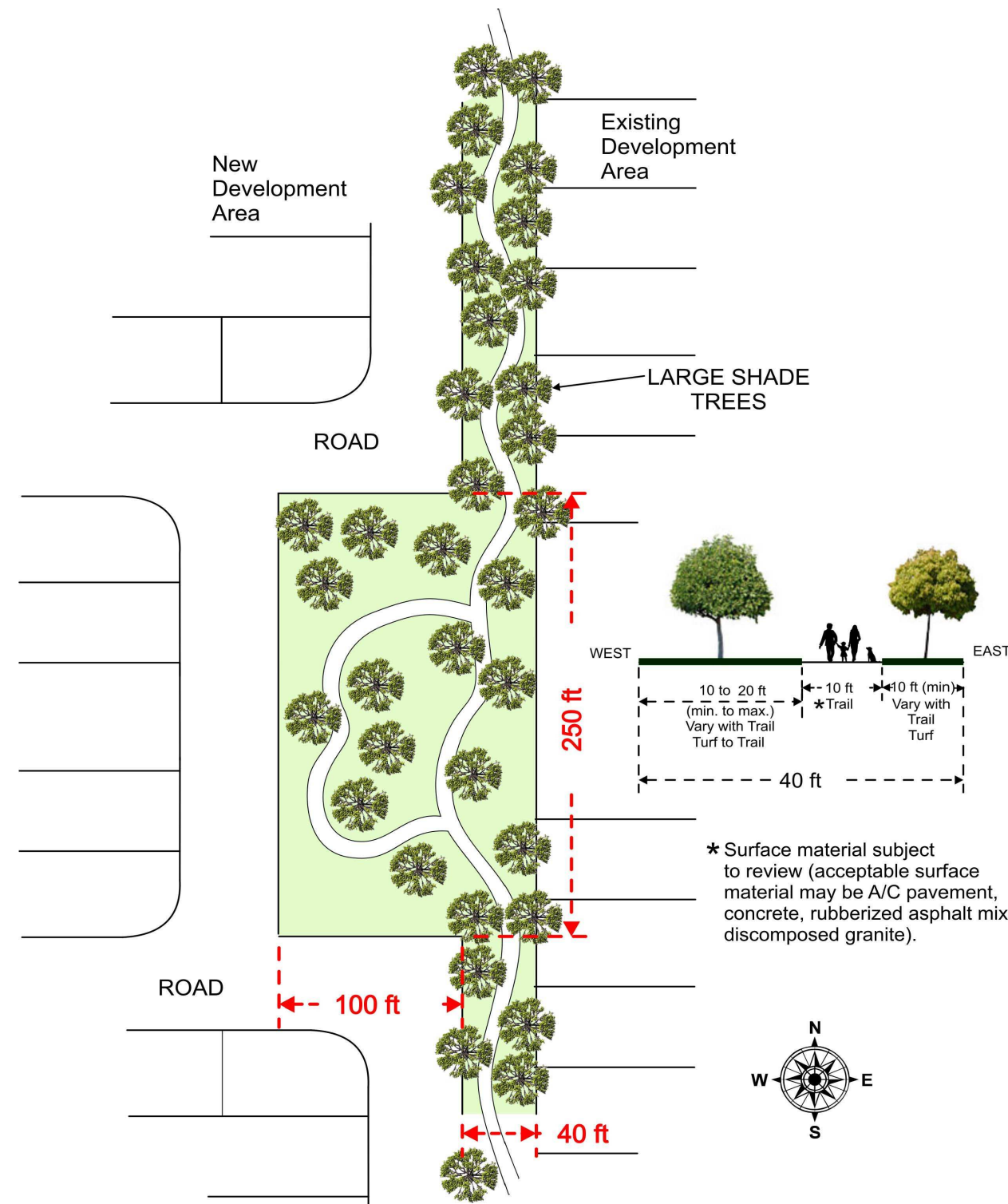
LATON NEIGHBORHOOD PARK CONCEPTUAL PLAN

FIGURE 3-1

Map Prepared by: J.Hernandez
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COMMUNITY PLAN LATON

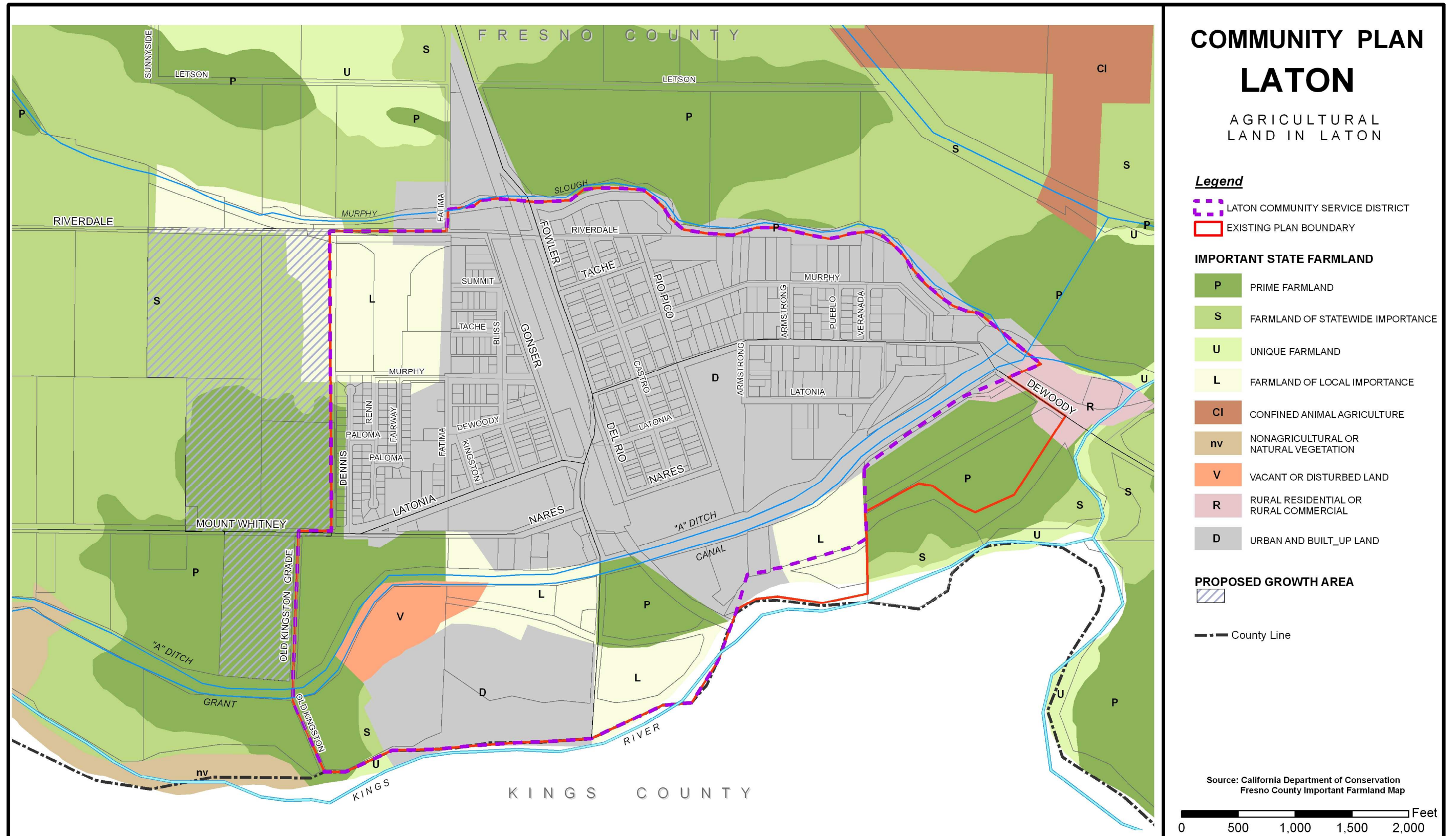


LATON WALKING TRAIL CONCEPTUAL PLAN

FIGURE
3-2

Map Prepared by: JHernandez
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COMMUNITY PLAN LATON

AGRICULTURAL
LAND IN LATON

Legend

- LATON COMMUNITY SERVICE DISTRICT
- EXISTING PLAN BOUNDARY

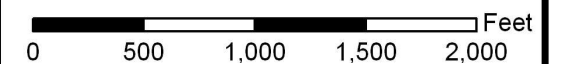
IMPORTANT STATE FARMLAND

- P PRIME FARMLAND
- S FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE
- U UNIQUE FARMLAND
- L FARMLAND OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE
- CI CONFINED ANIMAL AGRICULTURE
- nv NONAGRICULTURAL OR NATURAL VEGETATION
- V VACANT OR DISTURBED LAND
- R RURAL RESIDENTIAL OR RURAL COMMERCIAL
- D URBAN AND BUILT_UP LAND

PROPOSED GROWTH AREA

- PROPOSED GROWTH AREA
- County Line

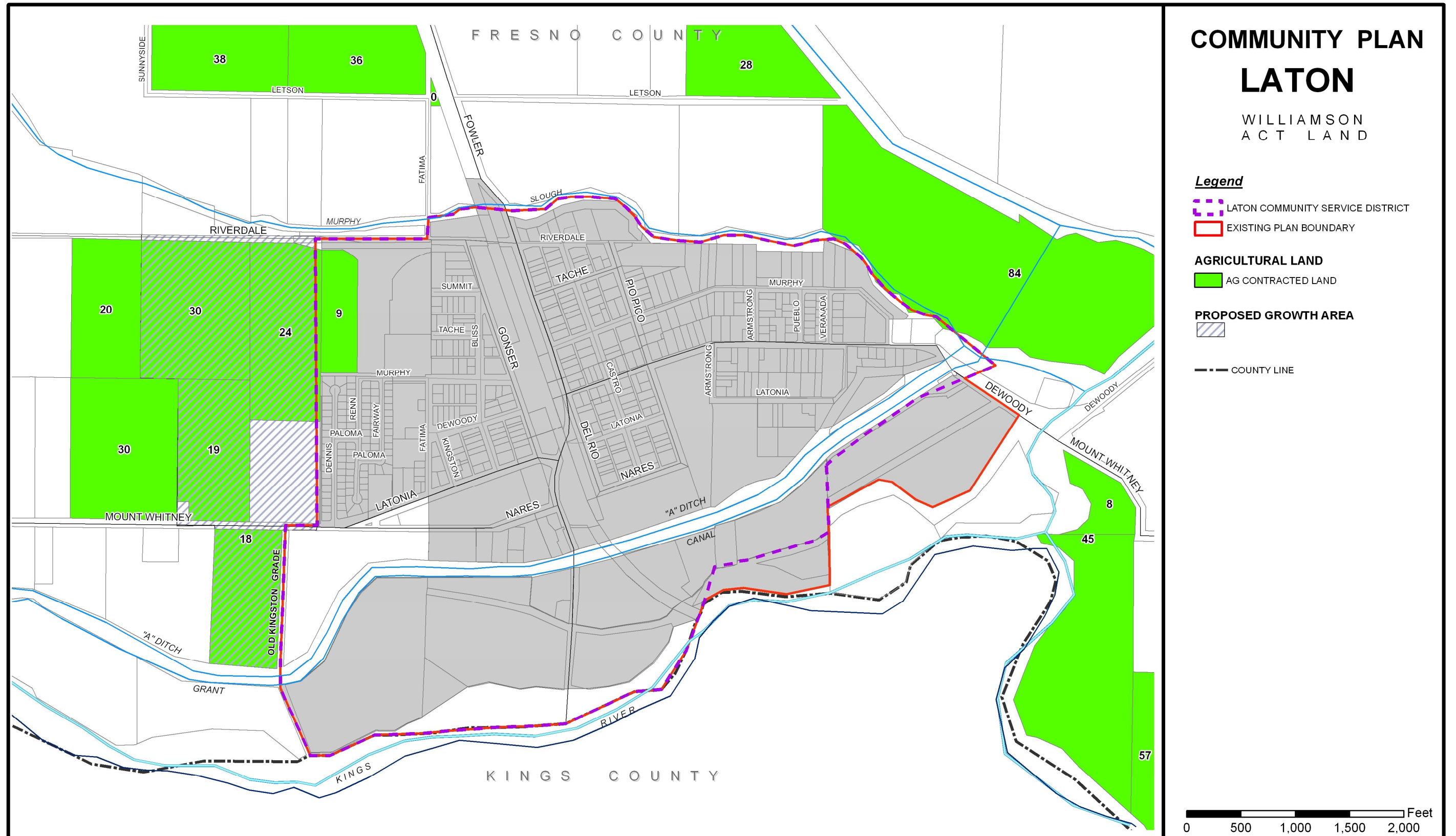
Source: California Department of Conservation
Fresno County Important Farmland Map



AGRICULTURAL LAND IN LATON

FIGURE
3 - 3






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COMMUNITY PLAN LATON

WILLIAMSON
ACT LAND

Legend

-  LATON COMMUNITY SERVICE DISTRICT
-  EXISTING PLAN BOUNDARY
- AGRICULTURAL LAND**
-  AG CONTRACTED LAND
- PROPOSED GROWTH AREA**
- 
-  COUNTY LINE



WILLIAMSON ACT LAND

FIGURE
3 - 4

Map Prepared by: HLuna
Y:\ArcGIS Maps\General Plan\Community Plans\Laton\Figure 3-4 Laton Williamson Act Land.mxd

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4.0 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT



The Transportation Element addresses existing and proposed transportation systems and identifies goals and policies for transportation system implementation. The Laton community is also subject to the Fresno County General Plan Transportation Element's County-wide goals and policies. The County Transportation Element should be consulted for further clarification.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Circulation System (Streets and Highways)

The Fresno County Circulation System is a plan for streets and highways designed to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods and for safe access to properties. Laton's circulation system is an integral part of the County-wide system. Many of the community's roads extend beyond the Planning Area boundary providing connectivity to a variety of destinations.

The County's Transportation and Circulation Element incorporates State freeways and highways and the County's own system of roadways as its basic framework. The circulation system brings together the circulation plans of the cities and unincorporated communities into a unified, functionally integrated countywide system, which is correlated with the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The County's circulation system is based on a functional system providing for six levels of service, of which the following three are found in Laton:

Arterials: Provide for mobility within the County and its cities, carrying through traffic on continuous routes and joining major traffic generators, freeways, expressways, and other arterials. Access to abutting property and intersecting local streets will generally be restricted.

Collectors: Provide for internal traffic movement within communities and connect local roads to arterials. Access to abutting property and intersecting local streets will generally be allowed.

Local Roads: Provide direct access to abutting property and connect with collector roads, arterial roads, and expressways.

TRANSPORTATION IN LATON

Introduction

The circulation system in Laton is restricted due to canals, dead end streets, the Kings River and the railroad right-of-way. Murphy Slough Canal and Grant Canal are significant geographic limitations to north-south circulation. The railroad tracks, the linear areas of undeveloped land adjacent to the tracks and Fowler Avenue bisect the community and greatly limit east-west circulation.

Streets that cross over canals and the river and those that cross the railroad right-of-way/ Fowler Avenue need to be improved and maintained through programmed road maintenance. New development will be required to construct roadways to provide for maximum transportation connectivity.

An important goal of the Laton Community Plan is to provide for a unified and coordinated community-wide street system that connects with adjacent communities and major travel routes. The Laton circulation system is designed to enhance community connectivity and promote multi-modal transportation options that accommodate pedestrians, bicycling, public transit, and motor vehicles, while establishing safe non-motorized access to job centers, school sites and community services.

Plan policies require new development to be designed with interconnected transportation modes and routes to complete the road grid network that matches the existing community grid. Residential developments that have self contained street systems and little or no connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods will be discouraged.

Proposed new development will be required to install necessary streets, which must be stubbed out to adjacent unimproved land designated for future urban use to assure connectivity and proper circulation. Additionally, interior street patterns within new subdivisions need to integrate neighborhoods and provide for continuous routes throughout the community to the extent feasible.

Access from residential developments along arterials will be limited by requiring development to back-on to such streets. When developments back-on to major roadways ornamental fencing, landscaping and waiver of access will be required.

An important element in the circulation plan is the future development of a green belt pathway (pedestrian and bike trail) along the existing CSD service boundary (Old Kingston Road) generally between Murphy Canal and Grant Canal to provide access to recreational and open space amenities. The installation of pedestrian pathways in new developments will be encouraged to allow for unobstructed pedestrian flow within the neighborhood.

To assure pedestrian safety, sidewalks, paths, and crosswalks will be required to facilitate safe access to schools and other areas with significant pedestrian traffic. Installation of these improvements will be encouraged to the extent feasible in existing neighborhoods where they do not currently exist.

Air Transportation System

There are no air transportation services in Laton. The Fresno Yosemite International Airport provides the nearest commercial freight and passenger service, as well as a full range of general aviation services. The nearest general aviation facilities are located at the Hanford Municipal Airport, a public airport located one mile southeast of the CBD of Hanford, in Kings County, about six miles south of Laton. The airport is owned by the City of Hanford. The Hanford Municipal Airport covers an area of 132 acres and maintains one asphalt paved runway.

Rail Transportation System

Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) railroad tracks running north-south bisect the community along the Fowler Avenue right-of-way. This line is utilized by both freight and passenger trains. Approximately forty (40) freight and passenger trains pass through Laton daily, including Amtrak's "San Joaquins" trains. The San Joaquins runs daily from Jack London Square Station in Oakland and the I Street Station in Sacramento to the Truxtun Avenue Station in Bakersfield, with bus connections to many destinations in Southern and Northern California. Normally, twelve (12) Amtrak trains pass through Laton every day on routes from Bakersfield to Sacramento and Oakland. The nearest Amtrak station is located in Hanford, California, approximately 6 miles south of Laton.

The alignment for the Merced-Bakersfield segment of California's proposed High-Speed Train System that will pass through Fresno County is currently being planned. Consideration has been given for use of the existing BNSF railroad corridor through the southern San Joaquin Valley. At this time, the County supports a bypass alignment that would avoid running the High Speed Train system through Laton. Discussions are on-going and the ultimate alignment of the new system is yet to be determined.

Public Transit System

Transit service in Laton is provided by the Kings Area Rural Transit (KART). KART operates scheduled fixed route service between the community of Laton and destinations to Kings County communities Monday through Saturday.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 9: Provide for a unified and coordinated community-wide street system which moves people and goods in an orderly, safe, and efficient manner, connecting with adjacent communities and major travel routes, separating industrial traffic from residential traffic, and maximizing the use of site planning techniques to improve traffic safety.

Policies:

- 9.1 Implement the standards identified in the Transportation and Circulation Element of the Fresno County General Plan.
- 9.2 New development shall be designed with interconnected transportation modes and routes to complete a road grid network that matches the existing community grid.
- 9.3 Discourage residential developments which have self contained street systems and little or no connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods. If the land bordering a proposed new development is vacant and designated for future urban use, new streets shall be "stubbed out" to the boundary between the development and adjacent property. Street stubs shall be provided at a minimum of 1/4 mile (1,320 feet) intervals.

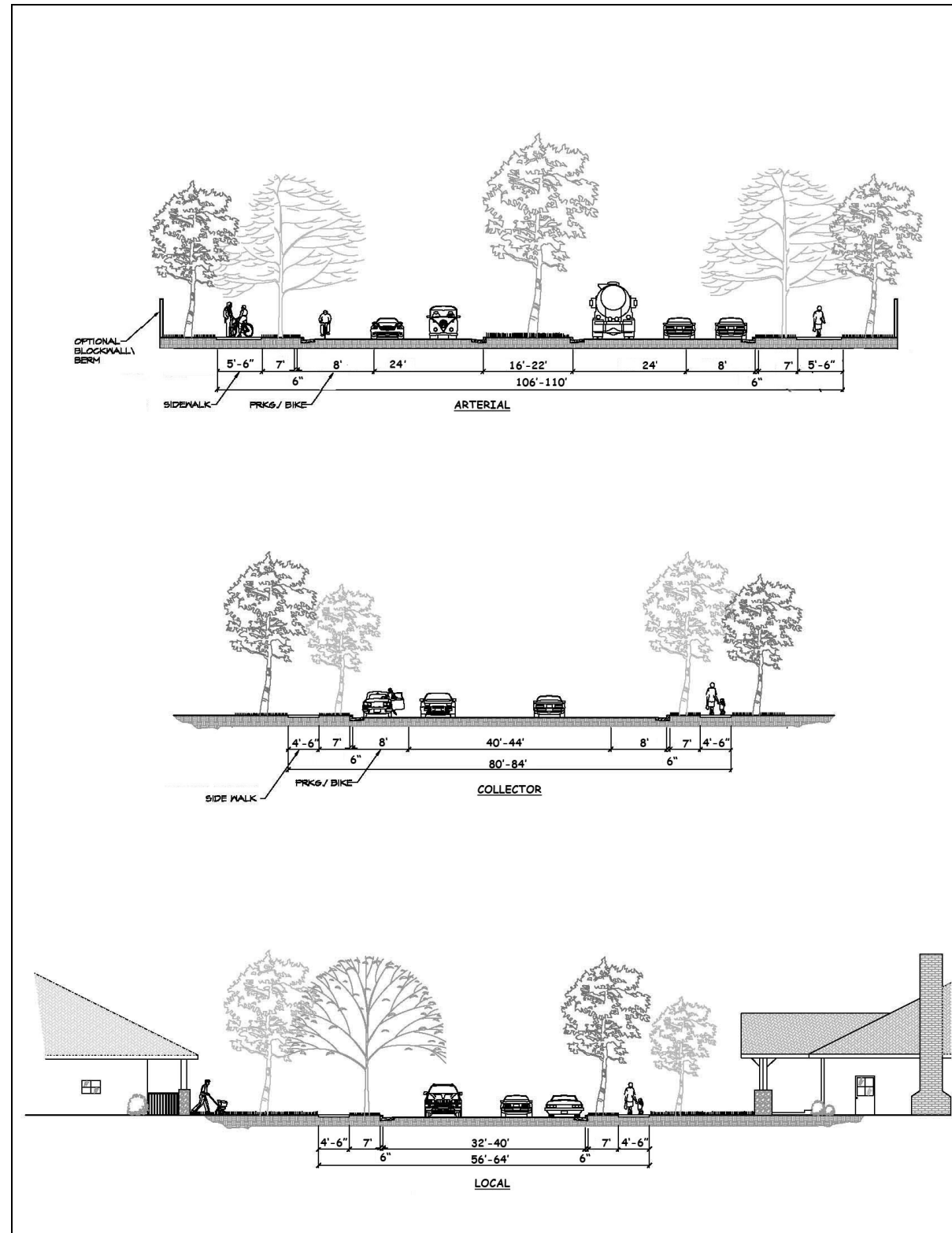
- 9.4 Require street patterns for interior roadways within new subdivisions that integrate neighborhoods and provide for continuous routes throughout the community to the extent feasible.
- 9.5 Local streets shall be designed to include detached sidewalks and parkway strips between the curb and sidewalk according to the County's Roadway Design Standards.
- 9.6 Limit access from residential developments along arterials by requiring development to back-on to such streets. When developments back-on major roadways ornamental fencing, landscaping and waiver of access shall be required.
- 9.7 Promote and develop design standards for local streets that reduce right-of-way width and paving, and utilize parkway strips.

Goal 10: Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation by encouraging the use of bicycles and providing a safe walking environment for pedestrians.

Policies:

- 10.1 The Laton circulation system shall enhance community connectivity and promote multi-modal transportation options that accommodate pedestrians, bicycling, public transit, and motor vehicles, while establishing safe non-motorized access to job centers, school sites and community services.
- 10.2 Encourage transit alternatives to meet the basic transportation needs of the young, the elderly, the handicapped, and individuals without access to an automobile.
- 10.3 Require the installation of bike parking racks and/or lockers at public and private places of assembly such as parks, schools, office buildings, churches, and retail commercial developments.
- 10.4 The development of a "transit center" should be explored to promote alternate transportation modes between the community, and employment centers and commercial areas in surrounding cities. The center should be located near the CBD area.
- 10.5 Sidewalks, pathways, and appropriate crosswalks shall be located to facilitate access to schools, business, recreational facilities and other areas with significant pedestrian traffic. The installation of pedestrian paths, including sidewalks, in new developments shall be encouraged by the County to allow for unobstructed pedestrian flow from within a neighborhood. Installation of these improvements shall be encouraged to the extent feasible in existing neighborhoods where they do not currently exist.
- 10.6 Promote bicycle safety education programs in elementary, middle and high schools.
- 10.7 Require developers of new residential neighborhoods to install street lighting to increase neighborhood illumination.
- 10.8 Work with developers and existing landowners to create a green belt pathway (pedestrian and bike trail) along Old Kingston Road between Murphy Canal and Grant Canal to provide access to recreational and open space amenities.

Figure 4-1
Road Sections



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5.0 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES



A number of public services in Laton are provided by the Laton Community Services District (CSD). Currently the CSD provides street lighting, solid waste pickup, stormwater, fire protection, wastewater collection and treatment, and water supply and distribution to property within the CSD's boundaries. Solid waste services are provided through a contract with a private provider. Other public facilities and services in Laton are described in this Element.

PUBLIC SERVICES

In addition to the services provided by the Laton CSD, the following agencies provide services to the community:

Law Enforcement

Fresno County Sheriff - The Fresno County Sheriff provides law enforcement services to the community. Officer's respond to law enforcement needs from the Sheriff Department's Area 3 headquarters, located in Selma approximately 12 miles northeast of Laton. The Plan provides for the potential development of a police sub-station on land designated for public safety use located along Fowler Avenue west of the Central Business District.

Public Education

The Laton Unified School District - The Laton Unified School District (LUSD) provides public education in Laton. The District is comprised of three traditional mission schools and one alternative educational campus: Laton High School, Conejo Middle School and Laton Elementary School and Laton Community Day School. The District serves approximately 800 students.

- *Laton Elementary School* - Laton Elementary School (6065 Latonia) has an enrollment of about 375 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade.
- *Conejo Middle School* - Conejo Middle School (6065 Latonia) has an enrollment of about 175 students in grades 6th through 8th grade.
- *Laton High School* - Laton High School (6449 Dewoody) has an enrollment of about 210 students in grades 9th through 12th grade.
- *Laton Community Day School* - The Laton Unified School District also operates the Laton Community Day School, an alternative educational single classroom facility with an emphasis on agribusiness. The school serves students from Conejo Middle School and Laton High School.

**Table 5-1
Laton Unified School District Facilities
and Approximate Enrollment**

LUSD School	Approximate Number of Students
Laton Elementary School	375-400
Conejo Middle School	175-200
Laton High School	210-225
Laton Community Day School	Up to 5
Source: Laton Unified School District	

Fire Protection

Laton Volunteer Fire Department - The Laton Volunteer Fire Department provides basic fire protection services to the community. In support of the volunteer firefighters, the Laton CSD maintains a firehouse (20800 Fowler Ave), fire engines and related equipment. The CSD's volunteer fire department has mutual aid agreements with Kings County Fire Department and the Fresno County Fire Protection District to provide additional fire protection services.

Library Services

Laton Branch, Fresno County Library – The Laton Branch Library (6313 DeWoody Street) is a division of the Fresno County Library system, which provides collections and services through its Central Resource Library located in downtown Fresno and 34 branches. The County library is part of the San Joaquin Valley Library System (SJVLS), a cooperative network of 9 public library jurisdictions in the counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, and Tulare.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 11: Ensure that Laton residents have public facilities and services that are sufficient to meet the community's current and future needs, and are designed and located such that they will minimize negative effects on residents.

Policies:

- 11.1 Encourage the CSD to update its water and wastewater master plans and the updating of other master plans (*i.e., drainage*) related to infrastructure development in Laton as needed on a periodic basis.
- 11.2 New development shall not be approved unless it can be demonstrated that adequate public services (water, wastewater, parks, storm water drainage, law enforcement, fire protection, library, education) are available or will be available, and the CSD has agreed to serve and/or annex the property into its service boundary.

- 11.3 Require construction and extension of infrastructure necessary for new development projects to take place in accordance with adopted General Plan goals and policies and current master plans.
- 11.4 Encourage the CSD to use reimbursement agreements or other financing techniques to reimburse developers for any over sizing costs incurred during development of their projects that may be required to plan and prepare for future growth.
- 11.5 Developers shall prepare an infrastructure and public services assessment report as part of any LAFCO application for annexation of territory into the CSD to determine infrastructure needs, feasibility, timing and financing. The County shall not approve new development where existing facilities are inadequate unless the applicant can demonstrate that all necessary public facilities will be installed or adequately financed and maintained (*through fees or other means*).
- 11.6 New development shall provide neighborhood parks and/or the payment of fees, with the minimum standard of five acres of improved parkland per 1,000 population. Ideally, each new residence should be within ¼ mile of a neighborhood or pocket park.
- 11.7 New development shall incorporate designs to control runoff and construction drainage to minimize erosion and non-point pollution.
- 11.8 To encourage groundwater recharge, ponding basins shall be designed as retention basins. In areas where urbanization or drainage conditions preclude the acquisition and use of retention-recharge basins, the County shall encourage the local agencies responsible for flood control or storm water drainage to discharge storm or drain water into major canals and other natural water courses subject to the following conditions:
 - a) The volume of discharge is within the limits of the capacity of the canal or natural water course to carry the water.
 - b) The discharge complies with the requirements of applicable state and federal regulations (*e.g., National Pollution Discharge Elimination System*).
 - c) The agency responsible for ownership, operation, or maintenance of the canal or natural water course approves of the discharge.
- 11.9 Implement Fresno County General Plan policies that promote water conservation (Public Facilities and Services Element).
- 11.10 Where possible, parks should be developed in conjunction with existing and future drainage basins to create a larger combined open space along with additional space for active and passive recreation. Existing drainage basins should be adapted for park use where possible. Safety concerns must be addressed and adequate space at or above street level should be provided.

- 11.11 Law enforcement services shall be provided by the Fresno County Sheriff Department's Area 3 headquarters, located in Selma, approximately 12 miles northeast of Laton.
- 11.12 Explore locating a Fresno County Sheriff sub-station on land designated public facilities on the west side of Fowler Avenue adjacent to Laton's firehouse. Alternative sources of funds for the provision of adequate services, such as a Mello-Roos assessment district, shall be explored.
- 11.13 Basic Fire protection services shall be provided by the Laton volunteer fire department. These services will be supplemented as needed through a mutual aid agreement with the Kings County Fire Department and the Fresno County Fire Protection District.

Goal 12: Implement water conservation measures as necessary to ensure sufficient water supplies for human consumption, sanitation, and fire protection.

Policies:

- 12.1 Require new construction and development to install water-conserving fixtures and appliances to reduce the amount of new demand.
- 12.2 Encourage the retrofitting of existing systems with water-conserving fixtures and appliances.
- 12.3 Require new construction and development to incorporate the principles and practices of sound landscape design and management, particularly those conserving water and energy.
- 12.4 Encourage the retrofitting of existing landscapes to incorporate the principles and practices of sound landscape design and management, particularly those that conserve water and energy.
- 12.5 Utilize the programs and assistance of state and regional water agencies to increase water conservation throughout the community.

Goal 13: Encourage adequate educational facilities to serve the existing community, as well as new development.

Policies:

- 13.1 Refer development proposals to the Laton Unified School District for review and comment to ensure that adequate school facilities are implemented to serve the proposed development.

- 13.2 Encourage the Laton Unified School District to coordinate any new school locations with the County's development guidelines as adopted in the Fresno County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, the Laton Community Plan and with property owners to ensure that school facilities are located in areas where they are planned and programmed.
- 13.3 Commercial development will generally be discouraged when located within 500 feet from the entrance to a public school. If commercial uses are proposed within 500 feet from the entrance to a public school, the proposed uses shall be reviewed by the Laton Unified School District to determine if such uses would generate any safety, nuisance or other issues of concern. The District's comments shall be taken under consideration by the County. Proposed uses may be allowed, conditionally approved (requirement of a conditional use permit) or disallowed.

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6.0 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM



The implementation programs listed in Table 6-1 and adopted in the Fresno County General Plan are applicable to the Laton Community Plan and will be implemented as appropriate:

**Table 6-1
Implementation Programs**

Program	Description	Associated Policies	Responsibility	Timeframe
LU-A	The County shall prepare an inventory of vacant parcels within the community.	2.2, 2.3, & 7.2	Department of Public Works and Planning	Ongoing
LU-B	The County shall investigate and seek to obtain alternative funding sources for infrastructure improvements.	2.3	Department of Public Works and Planning	Ongoing
LU-C	The County shall prepare and adopt a set of standards for architectural review of commercial, industrial and multi-family projects.	4.1, 4.3 & 6.2	Department of Public Works and Planning and Board of Supervisors	Ongoing
LU-D	The County shall prepare a plan and/or guidelines identifying requirements for offsetting conversion of agricultural lands. Such offsets may include but are not limited to (a) conservation easements, (b) purchase and/or transfer of development rights and/or (c) agricultural mitigation fees. Prior to adoption of said plan and/or guidelines, each development proposal subject to Policy 8.1 shall identify through the development review process proposed offsets, which shall be evaluated for acceptance by the County.	LU-A.1, LU-G.21, LU-G.22, LU-G.23	Department of Public Works and Planning	FY 10-11
LU-E	The County shall require that all developers within the new growth area participate in creation of a funding mechanism for construction of a Neighborhood Park and a Pedestrian and Bike Trail.	4.3, & 4.4	Department of Public Works and Planning	Prior to recordation of a Final Map within the new growth area.
LU-F	The County shall require the first-in developer to provide a cost estimate for construction and long-term maintenance of the Neighborhood Park and the Pedestrian and Bike Trail.	4.3, & 4.4	Department of Public Works and Planning	Prior to recordation of a Final Map within the new growth area.

Program	Description	Associated Policies	Responsibility	Timeframe
TC-A	The County shall work with public transit providers to determine the feasibility and the requirement for a transit facility in Laton.	11.1 & 11.2	Department of Public Works and Planning	Ongoing
PF-A	Fresno County shall determine the mechanism for establishing the pro rata fees for preparation of the Community Plan and EIR, and identifying the parties responsible for collecting and distributing subsequent revenues.	12.4 & 12.5	Department of Public Works and Planning and Board of Supervisors	FY 10-11
HS-C.A	The County shall continue to participate in the Federal Flood Insurance Program. The County shall maintain flood hazard maps and other relevant floodplain data and shall revise or update this information as new information becomes available. In the County's review of applications for building permits and discretionary permits and proposals for capital improvement projects, the County shall determine whether the proposed project is within the 100-year floodplain based on these maps.	HS-C.7	Department of Public Works and Planning, Planning & Resource Management Department	Ongoing
HS-C.B	The County shall continue to implement and enforce its Floodplain Management Ordinance.	HS-C.8	Department of Public Works and Planning, Planning & Resource Management Department	Ongoing
HS-C.C	The County shall continue to develop and review relevant dam failure evacuation plans and continue to provide public information on dam failure preparedness.	HS-C.13	Department of Public Works and County Office of Emergency Services	Ongoing

LAND USE / ZONING CONSISTENCY TABLE

Zoning Compatibility

The State requires that consistency exist between the General Plan, which represents long-range public policy, and the Zoning Ordinance, a set of specific legal regulations. The Zoning Compatibility Matrix (Table 6-2) is a method of defining consistency by comparing each zone district with land use categories set forth in the General Plan. The matrix illustrates the suitability of the specific zone districts with the policies in the text of the General Plan.

The matrix which follows applies three degrees of compatibility to land use designation and zoning.

- Compatible: Zones that specifically implement the policies in the General Plan.

- Conditionally Compatible: Zones that may be compatible with the policies of the General Plan under certain circumstances.
- Not Compatible: Zones that are inconsistent with the General Plan policies for a particular land use designation.

Zoning Compatibility Matrix Exceptions

Zone districts which exist at the time of the broad-scale rezoning to attain consistency with the General Plan and which are not included as “Compatible” or “Conditionally Compatible” on the Matrix may be found to be “Conditionally Compatible” under the following conditions:

- The subject property is developed with a permitted and functioning use.
- The existing use and other uses that might be permitted by the existing zone district will not inhibit or obstruct the development of that area to its planned future use.

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**Table 6-2
Zoning Consistency Matrix**

LATON COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE/ZONING CONSISTENCY																																
Land Use Designations	Zone Districts																															
	R-C	O	AE	AL	R-R	R-A	R-1-A	R-1-AH	R-1-E	R-1-EH	R-1-B	R-1-C	R-1	R-2/R-2-A	R-3/R-3-A	T-P	C-P	R-P	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	C-6	C-R	C-M	M-1	M-2	M-3	P	P-V		
RESOURCE																																
Open Space	●	○	○	○																												
Public Lands and Open	●	●	○																													
RESIDENTIAL																																
Low Density Residential			○	○		○	●	●	○	○	●	○	●		○		○	○														
Medium Density			○	○						○	●	●	○		○		○	○														
Medium High Density Res.				○						○	●	●	○	○	○		○	○				○										
COMMERCIAL																																
Central Business				○									○	●	●		○	○					●								○	
Service Commercial				○											○									●								○
Special Commercial				○																			○	○								○
INDUSTRIAL																																
Limited Industrial				○																						●	●	○	○	○		
PUBLIC																																
Public Facilities			○	●									○	○	○										○	○						
OVERLAY																																
Reserve Overlay			○	●									○	○	○				○			○			○	○						
<p>● = compatible use ○ = conditionally compatible use □ = limited to Sierra-South and/or Sierra-North Regional Plans</p> <p>1) Subject to more detailed zoning compatibility matrices in regional, community, and specific plans, the urban development policies, and the following:</p> <p>a) Zone districts which exist at the time of broad scale rezoning and which are not included as "Compatible" on the matrix may be found to be "Conditionally Compatible" under the following circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The subject property is developed with a permitted and functional use. 2) The existing use and other uses which might be permitted by the zone district will not inhibit or obstruct the development of the surrounding area to its planned future use. <p>b) The provisions of "a" above shall also apply to legally established uses in areas designated for Agriculture which did not have the appropriate zoning for the sue at the time of broad scale rezoning. In such cases, conditional zoning should be applied to limit development to the existing uses and limit impacts on surrounding properties.</p> <p>c) Zoning districts in addition to AL (Limited Agriculture) District may be permitted within the "Reserve" land use designation under the following circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The proposed zone district is considered "Compatible" or "Conditionally Compatible" with the underlying urban use reflected on the County Community Plan. 2) The provisions stated in Policies LU-G.15, LU-G.22 are met. 																																

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