



Stockton Planning Commission
Via e-mail only

June 9, 2017

Re: Land Use Options North of 8 Mile Road and Updated General Plan Goals

Chair Hull and Members of the Commission:

We are writing to document our comments before your Commission last night during the hearing on the General Plan Update, and to offer further comments on the staff's proposals for lands north of Eight Mile Road.

As we noted last night, we truly appreciate the efforts of staff and consultants to include public participation during the initial phases of this General Plan Update. For those of us who worked through the previous General Plan Update in 2007, the tenor of the public meetings and outreach between then and now is tremendously improved. Moreover, the new political and professional administration at City Hall has done a commendable job opening up this critical planning process and Stockton residents have responded with a much more democratic and fruitful participation at workshops and meetings held thus far.

With that being said, our organization has concerns regarding the staff and consultant's proposed solution for the expansion north of Eight Mile Road in the event of a large scale, catalytic institution requiring an amount of space that cannot be reasonably accommodated elsewhere within the existing city limits.

Policies for Lands North of 8 Mile Road

We are opposed to staff's proposed solutions for allowing growth north of Eight Mile Road. We believe the alternatives presented by staff are contradictory to what both the City Council and the general public have requested with regards to maintaining the existing city limits and focusing on infill and smart growth.

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At the April 4 City Council meeting, the Council spoke extensively about the need to reduce unnecessary growth outside of the city limits. The same meeting included a discussion regarding the extraordinary opportunities that could occur if a major user such as a large (500-acre) Tesla-type plant or a Cal State University campus were to be proposed north of Eight Mile Road (or elsewhere in the City). It was agreed by the Council that should such an opportunity present itself, it would be reasonable for the General Plan to allow flexibility to accommodate such a development, and staff was directed to develop a solution to address this.

We previously sent a letter to the City Council dated April 6, 2017 (in Attachment C) asking for clarification about the Council's direction to staff at the conclusion of the Council meeting. We also stated in our testimony at the Council meeting, and again last night at the Commission, that we are not opposed to consideration for an "extraordinary" opportunity on lands north of Eight Mile. We recommend that the new General Plan include a policy that states something along the lines of the following:

"The City will consider future amendments to the General Plan for extraordinary growth plans outside the Urban Services Boundary that include significant job generators or public institutions such as a college campus."

We believe such language is sufficient for consideration of future development north of Eight Mile Road, and would give staff the necessary policy language to approve such development without controversy in order to accommodate a significant employment anchor.

However, we are firmly opposed to staff's proposed solution which we feel contradicts the Council's direction that area north of Eight Mile Road be reclassified as "Open Space/Agriculture" as indicated through their support for Alternative C. We are opposed to a designation of any of these lands as "Urban Reserve" or as "Commercial/Industrial Economic Enterprise Overlay" (see below). The Council clearly gave direction for Alternative C—which determined that the current city limits would be honored-- and as such there should be no deviation from this direction. We believe that specific policy language—and not any type of special overlay zone-- is sufficient for prioritizing development in the event that an extraordinary opportunity presents itself. While we welcome a project north of Eight Mile that includes a catalytic institution, the people of Stockton have made it clear that excessive growth is not a priority, and as such the bar to development north of Eight Mile should remain high.

Why Have the Draft Land Use Maps Changed with No Public Review?

While we commend staff for the excellent public participation they have encouraged thus far, we are distressed at the lack of public review and comment for the newly drafted policy language and maps for expansion north of Eight Mile Road, neither of which was included in the Planning Commission materials released to the public the previous week.

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As we noted in our testimony last night, staff has now proposed four “options” on designating the lands north of Eight Mile Road. A two-page handout had apparently been prepared by staff and sent to Commissioners earlier, however the handout had not been included in the staff report that was posted on the City’s Web site in advance of the meeting (see Attachment A). We are dismayed that staff is requesting feedback and direction from the Commission on these four options without any public review.

Moreover, we have learned that staff has prepared a new “Preferred Land Use Alternative” map that appears to have been posted to the City’s “Envision Stockton” Web site Thursday morning, just before the Planning Commission and before the City’s Notice of Preparation public meeting. In this new map, staff has altered the area north of Eight Mile Road by placing a new zone over the land between I-5 and Davis Road and labeling the area in the legend as “Commercial/Industrial Economic Enterprise Overlay.” This new map differs from the previous two “Preferred Land Use Alternative” maps that were included in the NOP and in the Planning Commission staff report (see all three maps in Attachment B).

The hastily prepared materials regarding expansion north of Eight Mile Road are concerning to say the least, especially given the quality and transparent work conducted by staff during this General Plan update. Our organization would like an explanation as to why these very important materials are seemingly being debated with little to no time for evaluation by the public.

To reiterate, we strongly oppose any attempt to designate the lands north of Eight Mile Road for any use other than “Open Space/Agriculture” as was directed by Council and was the clear choice during all public outreach conducted by the city. We also oppose any designation of “Urban Reserve” or “Commercial/Industrial Economic Enterprise Overlay.” It is our desire to develop a reasonable solution to satisfy all parties, however we are prepared to mobilize opposition against these new items if we feel that the spirit of what the public and Council have articulated during the General Plan Update process is being circumvented by these new developments.

Comments on General Plan Goals

The City is at a very critical juncture for the General Plan Update program: assembling the goals and policies that will form the basis of the new Plan and the environmental analysis of that new proposed Plan.

Responding to the list of preliminary goals in the staff report, last night we offered these recommended additions, which we can provide details for in a subsequent letter:

- Broaden “Land Use” section to “Land Use/Economic Development/Housing” and put all relevant goals in one place;
- Add a “Sustainability/Climate Change” (or similar title) and put in relevant goals, as noted below;

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- Add a “Natural Resources” (or similar title) and put in relevant goals (air quality, agricultural resources, biological resources, water resources, etc.);
- Add goals that address climate change, greenhouse gas reduction, and clean energy (see proposed goal language in Attachment A);
- Add goal that addresses jobs/housing balance;
- Add goal that addresses need for City resiliency programs to combat climate changes due to rising sea levels and increased flood risk;
- Add goals (from Housing Element?) that address affordable housing and inclusionary housing;
- Add goal that specifically addresses City/developer funding for increased transit services;
- Add goals related to curtailing sprawl at the City fringes and conservation of agricultural resources; and
- Add more specific goals related to crime prevention as recommended by Commissioners and members of the public.

Thank you for your consideration of these important matters. We look forward to much more discussion and debate about these issues.

Very truly yours,

ss/Eric Parfrey

Chair, CCG and
Chair, Sierra Club California Executive Committee

cc: Mayor Michael Tubbs and Members of the Stockton City Council

Attachment A

Attachment A

Envision Stockton 2040 General Plan Update
Alternative C Modification Options for area north of Eight Mile Road

Notes:

- To be approved, a project would need to be inside the Sphere of Influence and Urban Services Boundary, have an urban land use designation (not open space/agriculture), and comply with applicable policies.
- Two sets of criteria are proposed below:
 - Land use map options: how the area is shown on the General Plan map.
 - Policy approach options: what policy statements say about the potential for development in the area.
- Council may select any combination of the map and policy options, or may direct staff to develop additional options for consideration.
- The table below lists four options based on combinations of two map options and two policy options and provides comments on the implications of each combination.

Land Use Map Options A or B	A) Keep existing Sphere of Influence boundary and maintain Village land use or change to other urban type designation(s) (e.g. Urban Reserve)	B) Remove area from Urban Services boundary and Sphere of Influence boundary and change to Ag/Open Space designation
Policy Approach Options 1 or 2	not consistent w/ UAP Map!	
1) Add language to consider development in the area, provided that the plans include significant job generators.	Map A + Policy 1: This combination would allow the most streamlined approach to approving potential new development by keeping the area within the existing Sphere of Influence inside the Urban Services Boundary, simplifying boundary issues, with proposals subject to general policy criteria.	Map B + Policy 1: This combination would require an extensive approval process by requiring an applicant to request amendments to the Sphere of Influence and Urban Services Boundary, with proposals subject to general policy criteria.
2) Same as #1 with requirements that jobs have above-median wage levels, reduce vehicle miles traveled, fully mitigate environmental impacts, and additional housing is linked to the additional jobs created and housing cost is correlated with job wage levels.	Map A + Policy 2: This combination would streamline the boundary portion of the approval process by keeping the area within the existing Sphere of Influence inside the Urban Services Boundary, but would require compliance with policy criteria that set high performance standards to allow potential new development in the area.	Map B + Policy 2: This combination would require the most extensive approval process by requiring an applicant to request amendments to the Sphere of Influence and Urban Services Boundary, and would require compliance with policy criteria that set high performance standards to allow potential new development in the area.

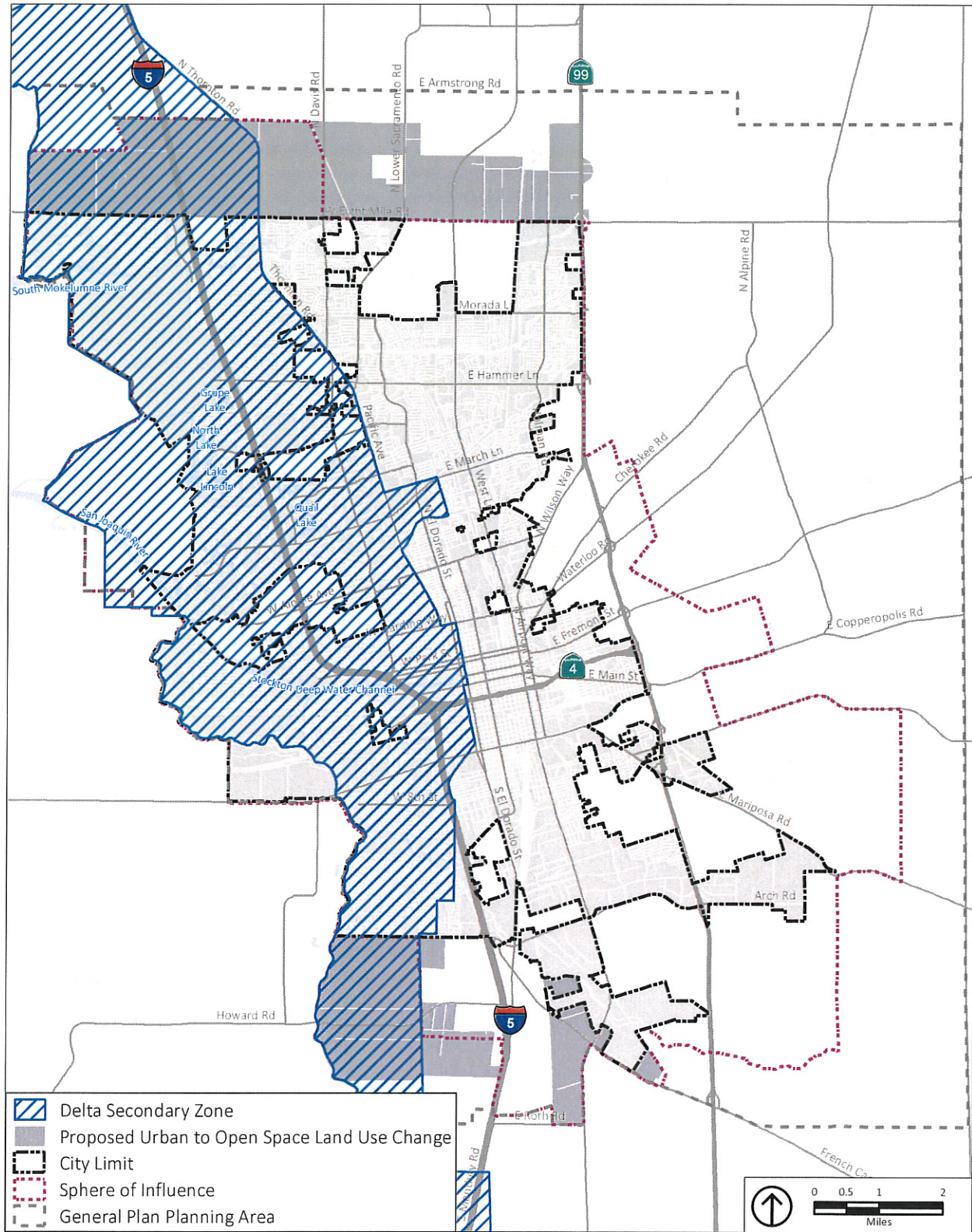
No!

"not consistent"

Attachment B

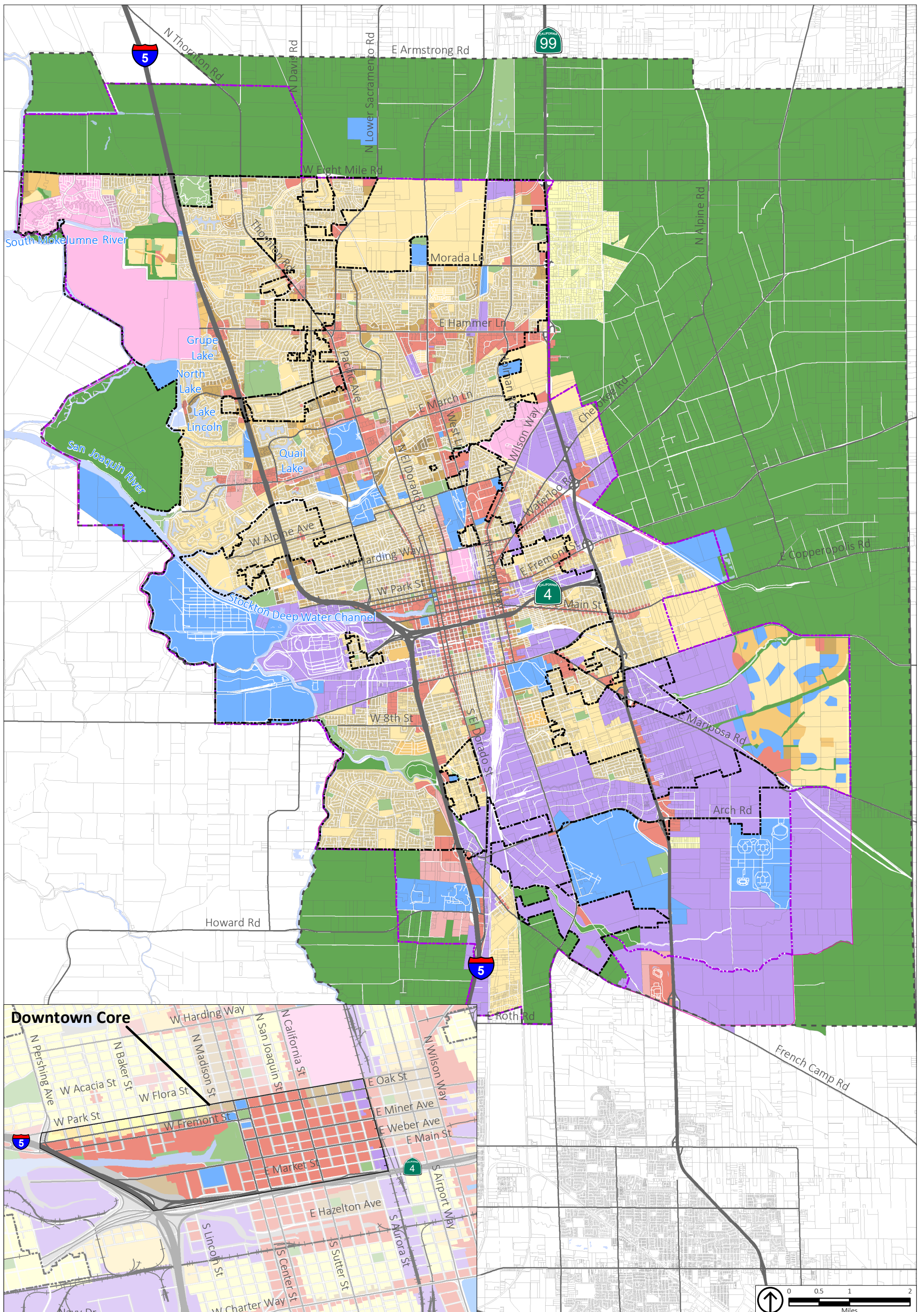


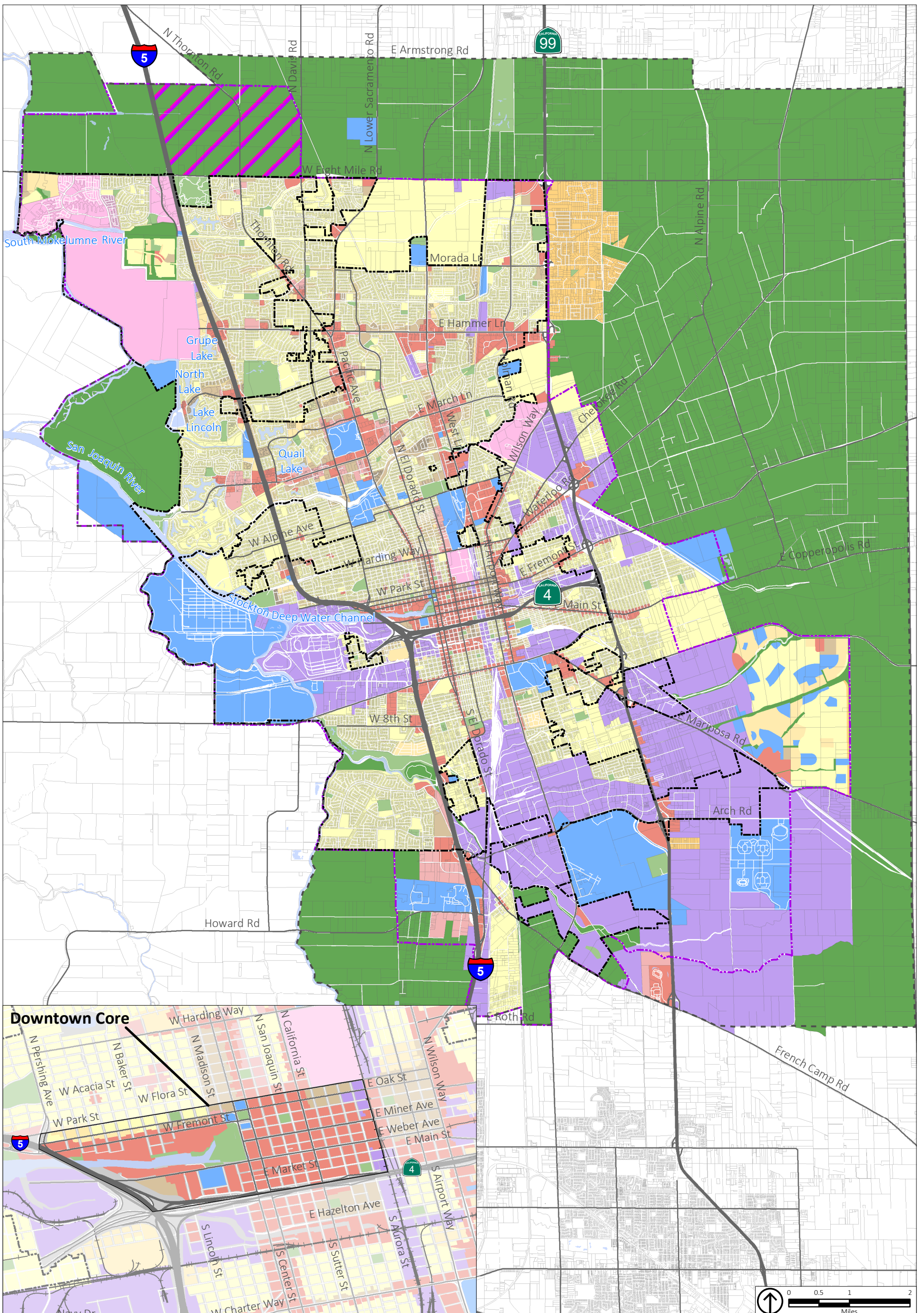
NOTICE OF PREPARATION



Source: City of Stockton, 2016; Placemarks, 2017.

Figure 2
Proposed Urban to Open Space Land Use Changes





Source: City of Stockton, 2017; PlaceWorks, 2017.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  Residential Estate |  Village |  Industrial |  General Plan Planning Area |
|  Low Density Residential |  Mixed Use |  Institutional |  City Limit |
|  Medium Density Residential |  Commercial |  Parks and Recreation |  Sphere of Influence |
|  High Density Residential |  Administrative Professional |  Open Space/Agriculture | |
| | |  Commercial/Industrial Economic Enterprise Overlay | |

DRAFT - APRIL 17, 2017
Preferred Land Use Alternative

Attachment C



Via e-mail

April 6, 2017

Re: Clarification of Motion to Support Alternative C for the updated General Plan

Mayor Michael Tubbs and Members of the Stockton City Council

We are writing you this letter following Tuesday night's Council session on the General Plan Update to try to clarify the intent of the motion that was passed.

The final motion on this very complicated issue was, as is often the case, confusing in its actual implementation.

It's important that we all come to an agreement on the motion while it's still fresh in our head, because now staff will interpret Council action as they prepare the "preferred land use alternative."

The intent of the motion as we heard it expressed by Councilman Holman at the end of the meeting was to direct staff to proceed with Alternative C and "add to it to allow us to take advantage of opportunities that occur within the sphere of influence" by adding some language but that it "would not necessarily say we're going to develop in that area."

These "opportunities" are clearly directed at the ag lands controlled by Spanos north of Eight Mile Road. There was some discussion by other Council members of extraordinary opportunities that could occur such as locating a large (500-acre) Tesla-type plant (up to 10,000 jobs) or a Cal State University campus.

In fact, I noted in my written remarks (attached) that the Council could address such opportunities by including policies in the new General Plan "allow consideration of future amendments to the General Plan to consider extraordinary growth plans outside the Urban Services Boundary if significant job generators (e.g., Tesla-type employers) or public investments (e.g., Cal State University) are proposed."

The appropriate way to implement this direction is to add one or more policies to the new General Plan which say something to the effect:

“The City will consider future amendments to the General Plan for extraordinary growth plans outside the Urban Services Boundary that include significant job generators or public institutions such as a college campus.”

We sense there is some intense confusion over how to implement Mr. Holman’s motion (which passed with Councilwoman Fugazi voting No). Prior to the vote, Councilman Wright stated that the motion should only apply to projects north of Eight Mile Road that were real “home runs” like Tesla or CSU, and that he would not support “500 acres of warehouses.”

The confusion arises because the City cannot retain the existing Sphere of Influence (see the attached current SOI map) and/or designate areas for future urban development north of Eight Mile Road (or anywhere outside the existing Urban Services Boundary) without violating the expressed goals and land use pattern of Alternative C (attached).

Alternative C is described as “relatively dense infill development,” and “At the edges of the city , this scenario would eliminate the “village” concept from the current General Plan, **shrink the current Sphere of Influence, and reserve much of the area beyond the city limit for open space and agricultural uses.**” (emphasis added)

All of the Council members agreed that the public wants Alternative C and all Council members expressed support for that alternative, not Alternatives A or B, which propose urban development north of Eight Mile Road.

We respectfully request that Councilman Holman and Mayor Tubbs clarify that the intent of the motion is to support Alternative C, which includes direction to shrink the Sphere of Influence back to Eight Mile Road, and to add one or more General plan policies that explicitly state the City will consider future amendments to the General Plan for development north of Eight Mile Road for extraordinary projects that reap huge and tangible benefits to the City.

To be clear, we will vigorously oppose any attempt to retain the existing Sphere of Influence line which includes the Spanos lands north of Eight Mile Road. We hope that we will not have to organize public opposition to the new General Plan over this issue, but we are prepared to do so.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to much more discussion and debate about these issues.

Very truly yours,

ss/Eric Parfrey

Chair, CCG and
Chair, Sierra Club California Executive Committee

encl: Parfrey comments to Council; existing SOI map; Alternative C

