

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

3.1.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The Lyons Canyon Ranch Project site encompasses 234.8-acres of land located in unincorporated Los Angeles County (refer to Exhibit 3-1, *Regional Location Map*). Lyons Canyon Ranch is contiguous to The Old Road on the east, west of Interstate 5, just south of Sagecrest Circle and north of Calgrove Boulevard near Towsley Canyon Park (refer to Exhibit 3-2, *Project Vicinity Map*).

3.1.2 PROJECT SETTING

Currently, the project site is predominantly vacant with no known on-site structures, but includes fencing and an abandoned water tank, water wells, and irrigation lines. Other utility structures, such as Southern California Edison electrical distribution lines, are adjacent to or traverse portions of the site. In October 2003, the Simi fire burned the entire project site.

Historically, the Lyons Canyon property was used as an outdoor set for filmmaking. Although undeveloped, the site is bisected by numerous dirt roads, which were created for various television and film productions. More specifically, Warner Bros. Studio purchased a portion of the subject property in 1984 to be used as the principal Hazzard County location for the “Dukes of Hazzard” television show. The property had one, small single family home at the time of purchase. The studio made improvements to the site including a new ranch house and a bunkhouse as well as several sets for production. While not an exclusive list, the following productions used the property over the years: “A-Team”, “Knight Rider”, “Riptide”, “Crazy Like a Fox”, Jake & The Fat Man”, “Murder She Wrote”, and “Tales From the Crypt”.

The project site is bounded immediately to the north by limited commercial and residential uses on Sagecrest Circle and the Stevenson Ranch development north of Sagecrest Circle, to the south by Towsley Canyon Park and vacant land, to the east by The Old Road, Interstate 5 and residential uses, and on the west by vacant land and open space.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Existing site characteristics associated with the project site and environmental topics are discussed in detail in Section 5.0, *Environmental Analysis*.

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3.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

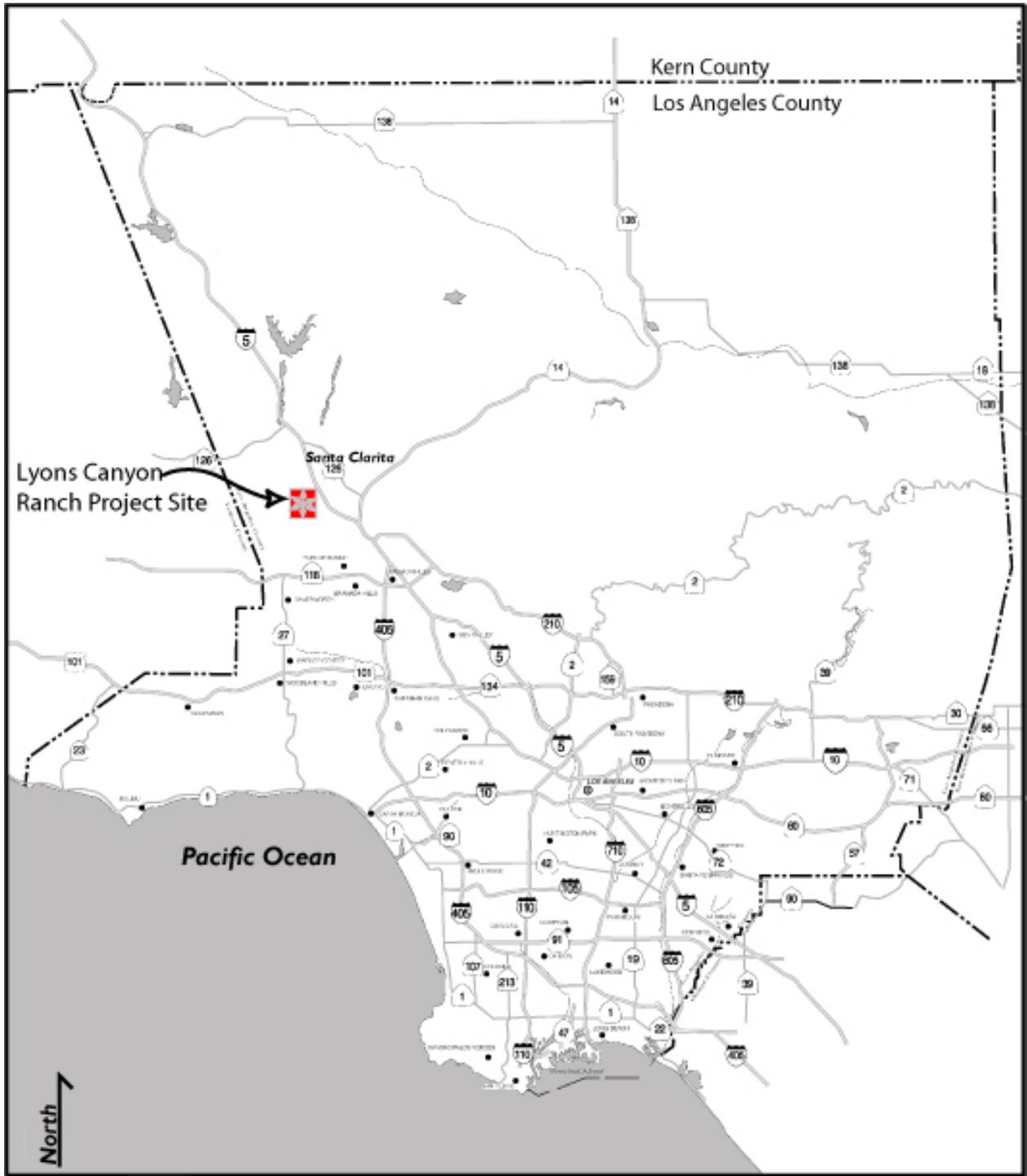
The primary goal of the project is to develop a high quality mix of residential dwellings, including single-family residences, and senior housing with a focus on natural open space conservation and orderly development of the project site. Listed below are additional project objectives that help achieve consistency with this primary goal:

- ◆ Create a semi-rural, non-suburban residential community utilizing a clustered development footprint;
- ◆ Conservation of sensitive habitat areas through avoidance, restoration, and native landscaping;
- ◆ Provide a range of housing types, including large lot single-family detached, smaller lot single-family detached, and multi-family family housing for seniors;
- ◆ Improve public safety in the region by dedicating a site for the construction of a new Los Angeles County Fire Station; and
- ◆ Provide opportunities for local and regional recreation through the dedication of open space, trails, and recreational facilities.

In addition, Lyons Canyon Ranch will achieve consistency with the following policies described in the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan:

- ◆ Permit appropriate land uses that are compatible with existing adjacent uses and with the resource values present in identified Significant Ecological Areas;
- ◆ Encourage the appropriate mix of land use types to prevent disharmony and degradation;
- ◆ Encourage development of convenient services to meet the needs of the Santa Clarita Valley including health; education; welfare; police and fire protection; governmental operations; recreation and cultural facilities; and public utilities.
- ◆ Provide an efficient local circulation pattern, both motorized and pedestrian.
- ◆ Encourage appropriate aesthetic (landscaping, signage, street furniture, design themes, etc.) measures so that each community can be clearly distinguished from neighboring ones.

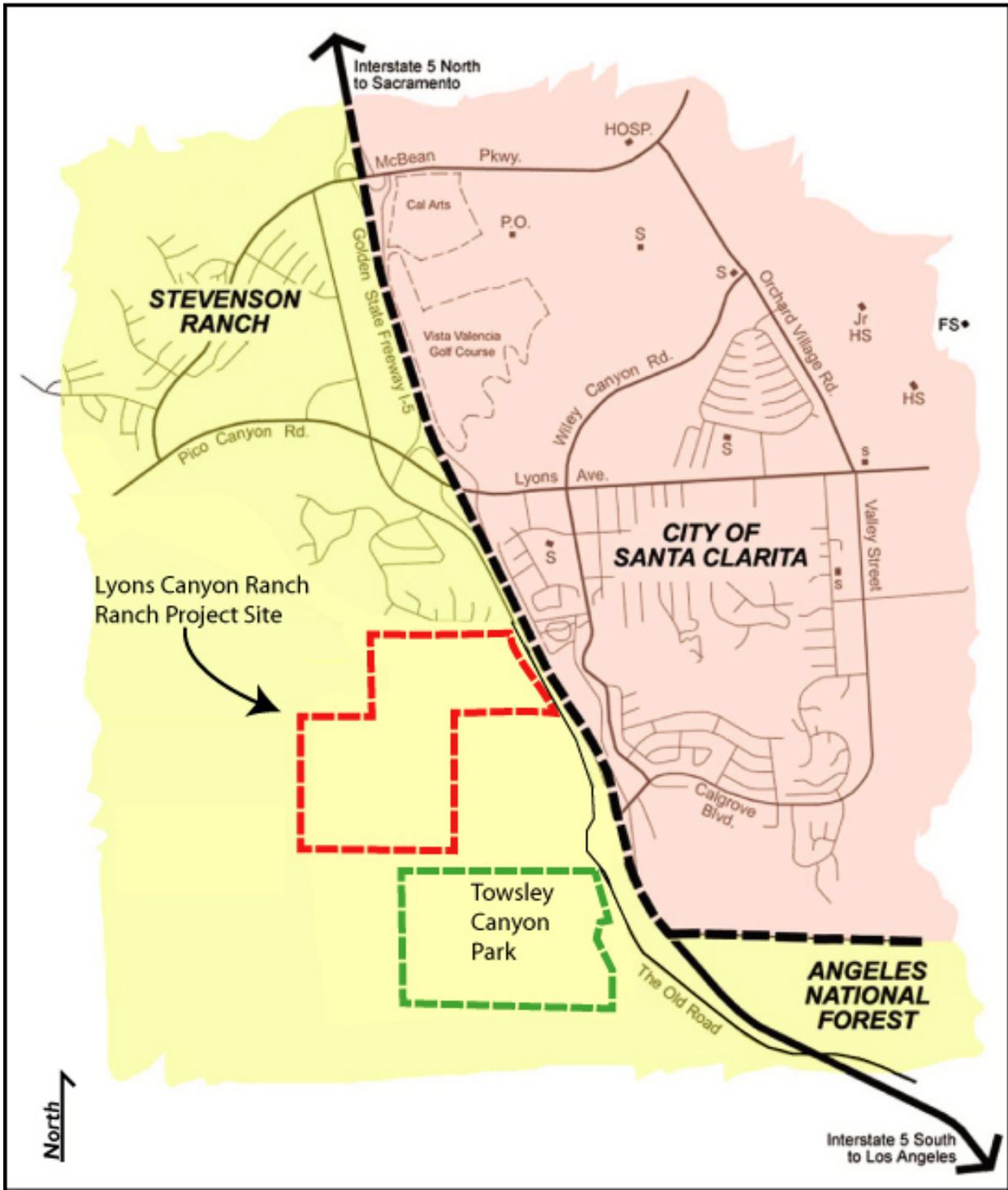
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Regional Vicinity Map

Exhibit 3-1

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Local Vicinity Map

Exhibit 3-2

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3.4 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The project includes a mix of single-family residential, senior housing, public facility, and open space uses. Table 3-1, *Lyons Canyon Ranch Land Use Summary*, provides a summary breakdown of the proposed uses in terms of acreage, the number and type of dwelling units, and parks/open space areas associated with implementation of Lyons Canyon Ranch. The proposed project areas indicated in Table 3-1 are illustrated in Exhibit 3-3, *Land Use Plan*. As indicated in Table 3-1, the 234.8-acre project site includes 93 single-family detached residential units, 93 senior condominium units, approximately 127 acres of recreation areas and undisturbed natural open space areas, and 43.3 acres of disturbed open space. The project also includes a 2.05-acre site for a new fire station, which is intended to serve the proposed development and surrounding areas.

3.4.1 OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LAND USES

The following describes the new land uses proposed by Lyons Canyon Ranch and the infrastructure improvements necessary to construct the development. This description is intended to provide a sufficient level of detail from which an evaluation and review of the environmental impacts of the requested Tentative Tract Map, Conditional Use Permit, and Oak Tree Permit can be made.

The project includes the development of 107 lots comprised of 93 single-family residential lots, 1 condominium lot proposed for development with 93 senior condominium units, five (5) open space lots, six (6) debris/detention basin lots, one (1) park lot, and one (1) fire station lot. The single-family detached units, and attached senior condominium uses are characterized by a lot orientation with a gross target density of 0.79 single-family dwelling units per acre.

The project site is currently located within unincorporated Los Angeles County, and is designated as Non-Urban 2 (N2), Hillside Mountain (HM), and Hillside Mountain-Significant Ecological Area (HM-SEA) in the County General Plan. The subject property is zoned Agricultural (A-2-2) and Commercial (C-3) (see Exhibit 3-4, *Land Use and Zoning Map*).

**Table 3-1
Lyons Canyon Ranch Land Use Summary**

Development Phase	Land Use	Gross Acres	Number of Lots	Dwelling Units
Residential				
1	Single-Family Residential	46.9	93	93
2	Senior Condominiums	9.26	1	93
Total Residential		56.16	94	186
Parks and Open Space				
1	Open Space Lot	6.13	1	
1	Open Space Lot	33.97	1	
1	Open Space Lot	10.22	1	
1	Open Space Lot	39.66	1	

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1	Open Space Lot	38.89	1	
Total Open Space Lots		128.87	5	
Total Recreation Lots		1.39	1	
Basin Lots				
1	Basin Lot	12.03	1	
1	Basin Lot	5.86	1	
1	Basin Lot	1.95	1	
1	Basin Lot	1.50	1	
1	Basin Lot	3.64	1	
1	Basin Lot	1.53	1	
Total Basins		26.51	6	
Fire Station		2.05	1	
Subtotal		214.98	107	186
Other Disturbed Open Space Areas (i.e. Graded Slopes)		9.78		
Streets		10.04		
Grand Total		234.8		186

The Lyons Canyon Ranch project intends to create a residential neighborhood with single-family detached and senior condominium units. The overall average lot size for the single-family residential lots is 21,048 square feet. The 93 senior condominium units are proposed on a 9.26 acre lot.

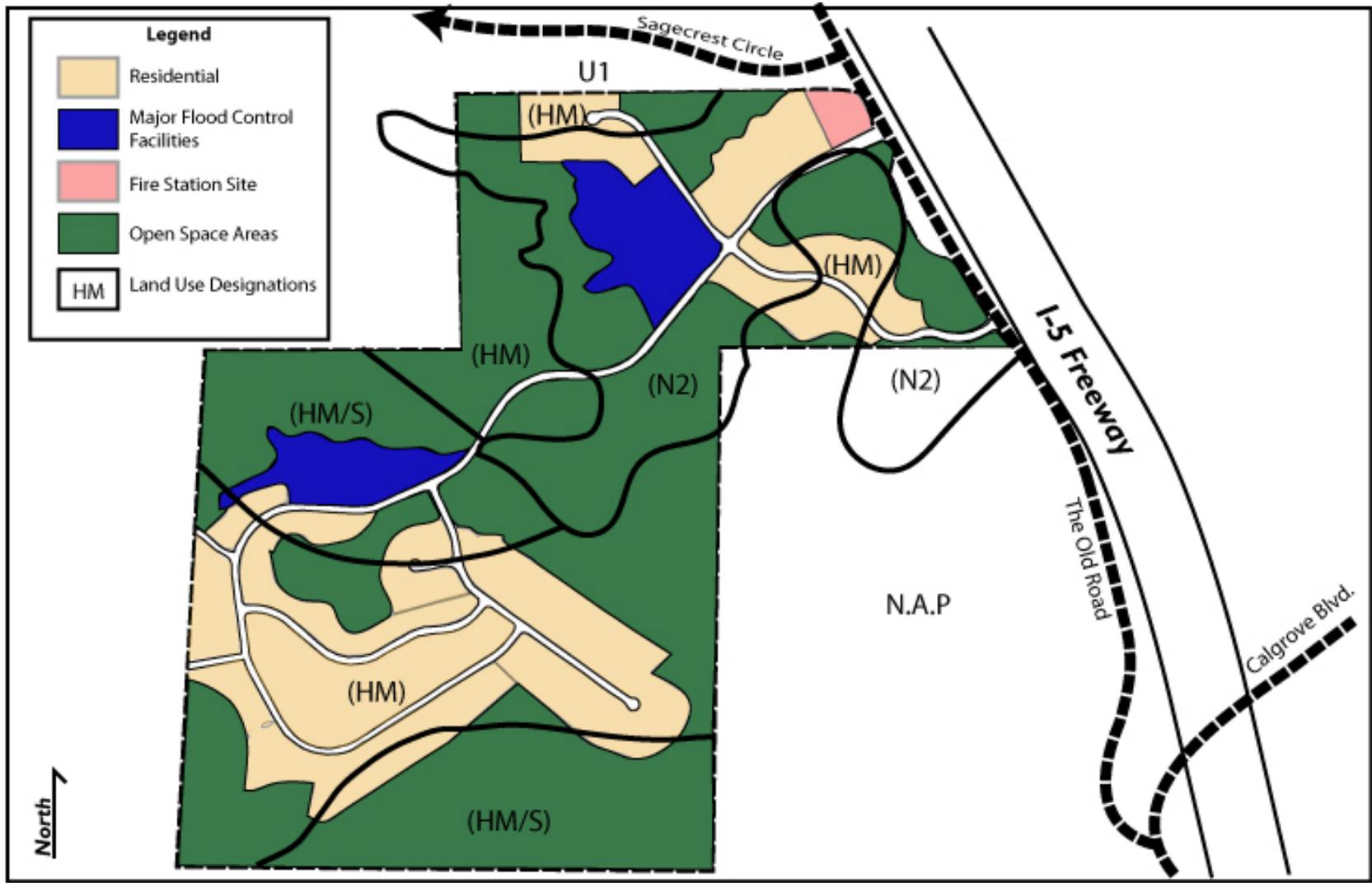
RESIDENTIAL USES

The areas designated for residential development are clustered in three locations. Seventy-one (71) lots in the southwestern portion of the site are planned for large single-family homes. The primary access to this residential enclave is provided by “A” Street from the Old Road. Two small areas designated for detached single-family and detached senior housing are located on “E” and “F” Streets in the community’s northern region. Fifteen (15) lots are planned for detached single-family residences and are located along “E” Street, which connects to The Old Road. Seven (7) lots are planned for detached housing units located on “F” Street. The senior housing condominium component is located in the project’s northeastern region. The 9.26-acre condominium lot lies on the northern side of “A” Street, which serves as the community’s main entrance from The Old Road. A 1.39-acre Park Lot is also proposed at the intersections of “B”/”D” Streets and “C”/”D” Streets within this area of residential uses.

OPEN SPACE AND PARKS

The project proposed to voluntarily dedicate approximately 128 acres of open space (Lots 103-107) in perpetuity via an appropriate legal instrument. These natural areas will provide a natural setting for the neighborhoods and will preserve the majority of on-site oak trees, riparian areas, and significant ridgelines. An additional 46.67 acres will remain as disturbed open space (i.e. graded cut and fill-slope areas, recreation areas, detention/debris basin lots, and on-site trails). The total on-site disturbed/undisturbed open space areas will total 170.3 acres (72.5%). A 1.39 acre neighborhood park is proposed in the southwest portion of the project. An additional recreation area will be provided within the senior housing area (Lot 94).

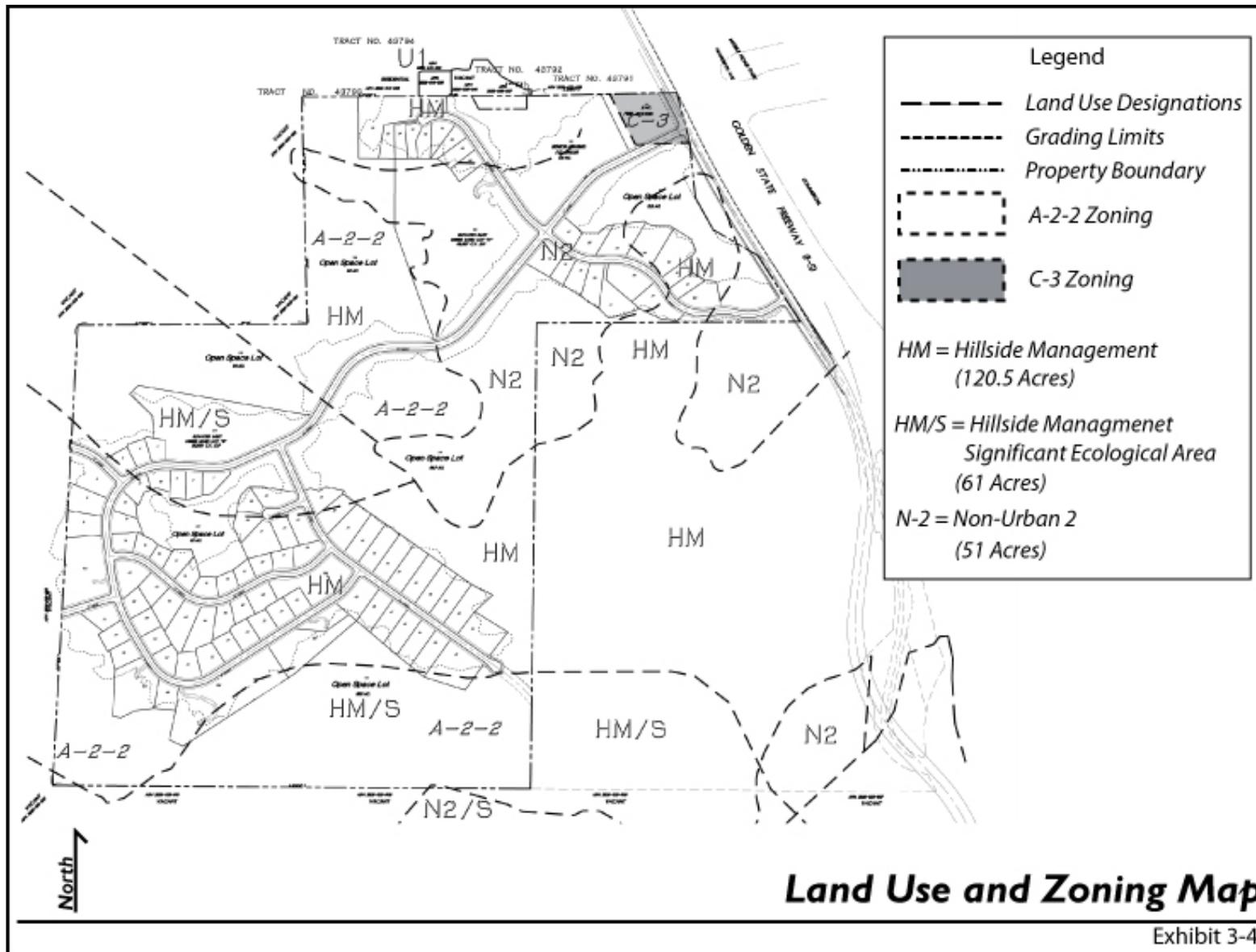
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Land Use Map

Exhibit 3-3

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PUBLIC SERVICES

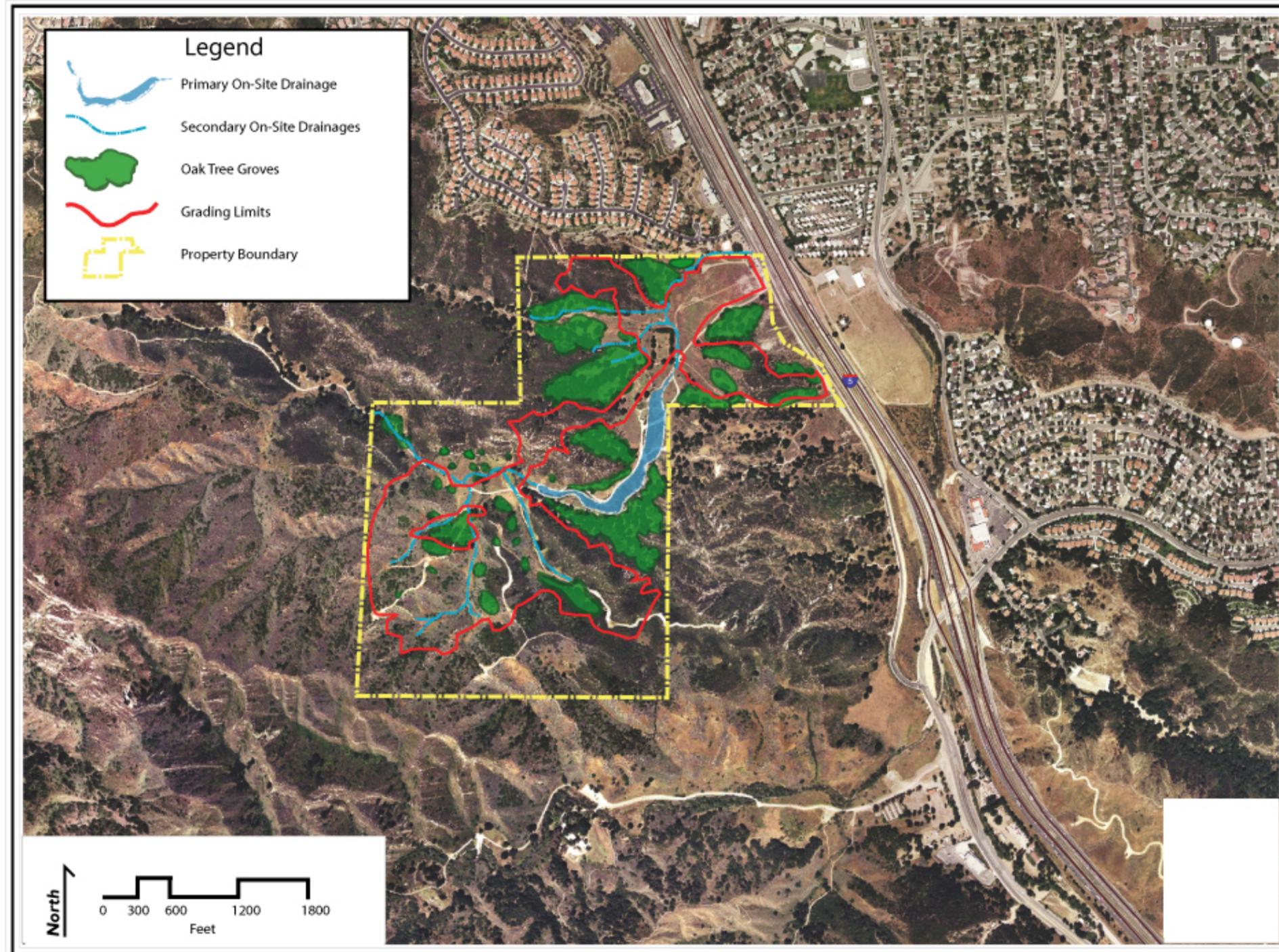
A new fire station site is proposed to be dedicated to the Los Angeles County Fire Department in the northeast corner of the development boundary. This facility will be built by the Los Angeles County Fire Department and will consist of approximately 8,000 square feet on 2.05 acres.

The project residents will generate revenue in the form of property taxes and fees, etc., which will be available to the County and other agencies to fund public services to the site. Capital improvements, in the form of roadway and drainage improvements, will also be constructed as part of the project or provided directly through various forms of development fees, including, but not limited to, fire facilities fees, wastewater connection fees, library fees, water connection fees, bridge and thoroughfare fees, and school fees.

3.4.2 PROJECT DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The design of the project was influenced by both on- and off-site considerations, including site characteristics/visual context and surrounding land uses. Three natural features dominate the project site: oak trees, a central stream/wetland, and hillside areas. A total of 1,395 oak trees are present on the subject site. Site topography is defined by primary and secondary ridgelines, which are visually prominent, as well as on-site watercourses and associated riparian vegetation in the canyons. Development areas have been sited to minimize impacts to the natural features and/or incorporate them into the neighborhood design as recreational amenities and natural areas.

The design of building areas and major circulation routes intend to minimize impacts to oak tree areas grading on or near on-site ridgelines. The residential development areas have been located behind primary ridgelines. The majority of steep slope areas on-site are preserved natural habitat areas. Preservation of these areas also provide view opportunities for many of the proposed home sites at higher elevations and result in project screening from sensitive view corridors. The on-site riparian/watercourse areas have been preserved in their natural state in some locations or incorporated into passive recreational features (such as trails) that are intended to provide opportunities for habitat enhancement and mitigation. Exhibit 3-5, *Design Influences Map* illustrates the proposed development in relation to natural features.



Design Influences Map

Exhibit 3-5

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3.4.3 CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

ACCESS

Two primary entrances to the community are proposed from The Old Road: Street “A” and Street “E”. These streets are approximately 1,100 feet apart. Street “A” is proposed as the community’s main access road, and extends from The Old Road to the southwest portion of the site, where it intersects with Streets “B”, “C”, and “D”. Streets “A”, “B”, “C”, and “D” provide access to the majority of the large lot single-family neighborhood (Lots 1-71). Street “G” also provides access to a small number of homes within this neighborhood. Future Streets “H” and “I”, proposed along the subject property’s western edge will provide connection points to the properties located west of the site.

Street “E”, located approximately 1,100 feet south of Street “A”, provides secondary access from the Old Road and direct access to lots 72-86. Street “F” provides access to lots 87-93 and intersects with “A” Street. This circulation system will provide vehicle access to all proposed residential units consistent with Los Angeles County standards.

The circulation system for Lyons Canyon Ranch consists of a number of local roadway types, including a secondary highway (The Old Road), collector streets (“A” Street and “E” Street), and local streets (“B,C,D,F,G,H,I” Streets). Exhibit 3-6, *Circulation Plan*, illustrates the proposed roadway network and the proposed width of each road right-of-way. In general, the secondary highway will provide thorough access to large volumes of traffic between major activity locations and generators, while direct and indirect access into the residential community will be provided by the collector and local streets.

Regional access to the project site will be provided via Interstate 5, the Golden State Freeway, which runs generally north-south east of the project site. On and off-ramps in both directions are located at Calgrove Boulevard, near the southeast corner of the project site. Calgrove Boulevard intersects with The Old Road, which parallels Interstate 5 as a frontage road adjacent to the project site. Access to the project site from Interstate 5 is also provided in both directions via the Pico/Lyons Avenue on/off-ramps located north of the site.

Arterials/Highways

The Old Road, along the eastern edge of the Lyons Canyon Ranch site, is classified as a secondary highway according to the County of Los Angeles highway design requirements. It currently consists of two travel lanes, one in each direction, and does not have shoulder improvements such as curbs and gutters, sidewalks, or landscaping along the project’s frontage. The circulation plan for the project proposes to improve The Old Road along the project frontage with curb, gutter, and sidewalks.

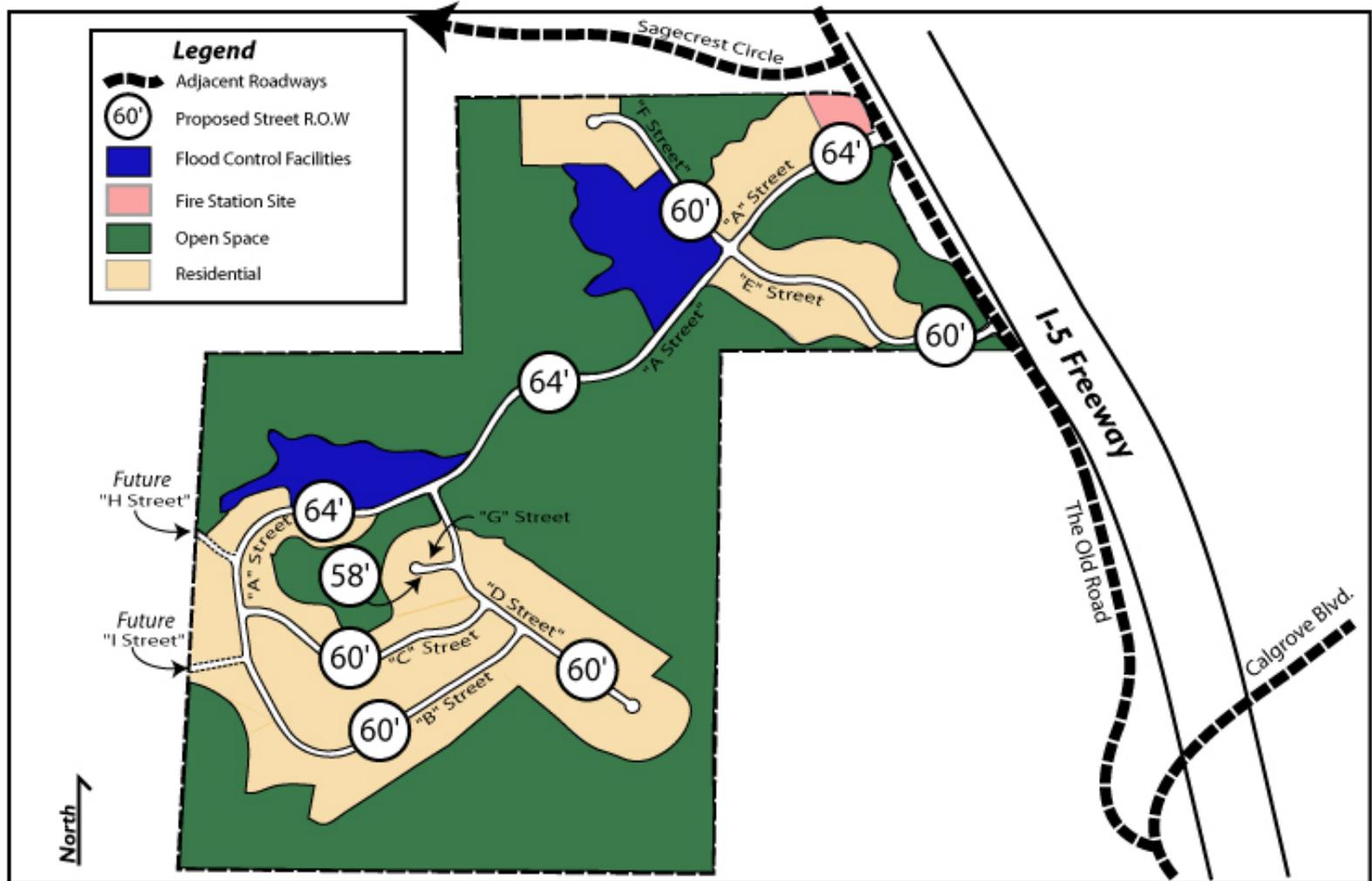
The ultimate right-of-way for The Old Road from Sagecrest Circle (at the northeast corner of the site) to the southern most project frontage is proposed to be 80 feet. The expanded right-of-way will

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accommodate two travel lanes in each direction, an 8-foot sidewalk on the west side of The Old Road and a 4-foot sidewalk on the east side of The Old Road.

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Circulation Map

Exhibit 3-6

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Collector Streets

A collector road classification is given to roadways that typically have two travel lanes in each direction and connect to arterial highways. The inclusion of a small amount of additional paving to accommodate additional traffic volumes differentiates collectors from local streets (described below). A collector street (community parkway), “A” Street, is proposed to be the primary roadway providing a connection to The Old Road at the northern project entry. “A” Street consists of two 12-foot travel lanes, one in each direction, with an 8-foot-wide parking lane on each side for a 40-foot curb-to-curb paving section. Also, “A” Street has a 6-foot meandering sidewalk within a 12-foot landscaped parkway. The two travel lanes and the parkways will all be located within the 64-foot right-of-way. In addition, the two tap streets (“H” Street and “I” Street) proposed for future access to the west, will be located within a 64-foot right-of-way.

Local Streets/Residential Streets

Local street classifications are given to roadways that serve lower density uses. Typical streets in this classification are residential streets, service roads, and public alleys. Paving widths may vary, depending on terrain, parking configurations, and fire department requirements. Parking restrictions may apply in locations of minimal paving widths to meet fire department access requirements. Local residential street sections are proposed throughout the project. Streets within the clustered single-family residential areas will be designed and approved with site plans/subdivision maps for each of the planning areas. Neighborhood streets will have a 60 foot right-of-way on “B, C, D, E, and F” streets. “G” Street will have a 58-foot right-of-way. All streets will be constructed to Los Angeles County public street standards. Private/shared driveways will be utilized for interior circulation within the single-family areas.

3.4.4 PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

To provide usable areas for passive recreational activities, Lyons Canyon Ranch includes the dedication of four open space areas in perpetuity. The four Open Space Lots are best suited for native habitat restoration, but it is envisioned that they could support uses such as a trailhead staging area and nature interpretation with limited areas for picnicking. The areas proposed for perpetual dedication as undisturbed open space will consist of approximately 128.87 acres of oak tree-wooded hills, riparian habitat, walnut woodlands, and chamise chaparral. An additional 36.29 acres of disturbed open space is also proposed as illustrated on *Exhibit 3-8. Open Space Map*. A portion of these areas will require fuel modification in accordance with the Los Angeles County Fire Department regulations (refer to *Exhibit 3-9. Fuel Modification Plan*).

A 1.39-acre Park Lot area is planned for use as an active recreation area for residents of Lyons Canyon Ranch. This park will be privately maintained by the project’s Homeowner’s Association (HOA) and is envisioned as a small landscaped open area with pedestrian paths along the street edges. The 6.13 acre Open Space Lot 107 is also planned for use as a passive recreation area for residents of Lyons Canyon Ranch and will also be maintained by the project’s HOA.

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Trails

Lyons Canyon Ranch incorporates both on-site local trails and a regional trail easement as part of its mobility and recreation components (refer to Exhibit 3-7, *Trails Plan*). The plan recognizes that bicycle and pedestrian circulation is fundamental to creating a pedestrian-friendly/open space-oriented community. The project's on-site local and regional trail alignments will be open to the public and accessible to equestrians, hikers, joggers, and bicyclists. In addition, the internal street system of Lyons Canyon Ranch will provide pedestrian walkways along the collector road and all neighborhood streets. These trails would be privately maintained by the project's Homeowners Association. To the extent feasible, off-street trail connections will be designed without prohibitively steep topography that could limit their design and use.

Existing regional trails are located south and northwest of the project site. These trails are part of Towsley Canyon Park and a larger informal regional trail network present throughout the Santa Clarita Valley. The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation has requested that the project dedicate to the County of Los Angeles a 12-foot wide public trail easement for riding and hiking through the central portion of the site (refer to Exhibit 3-7, *Trails Plan*). This trail easement, identified as the Gavin Canyon Trail, would connect to the existing and future trails planned west of the project site. Portions of this regional trail within the proposed project development envelope will be constructed as part of the proposed project and maintained by the County of Los Angeles. The portions of the trail easement outside of the proposed development areas will remain natural or will be minimally improved by the County of Los Angeles.

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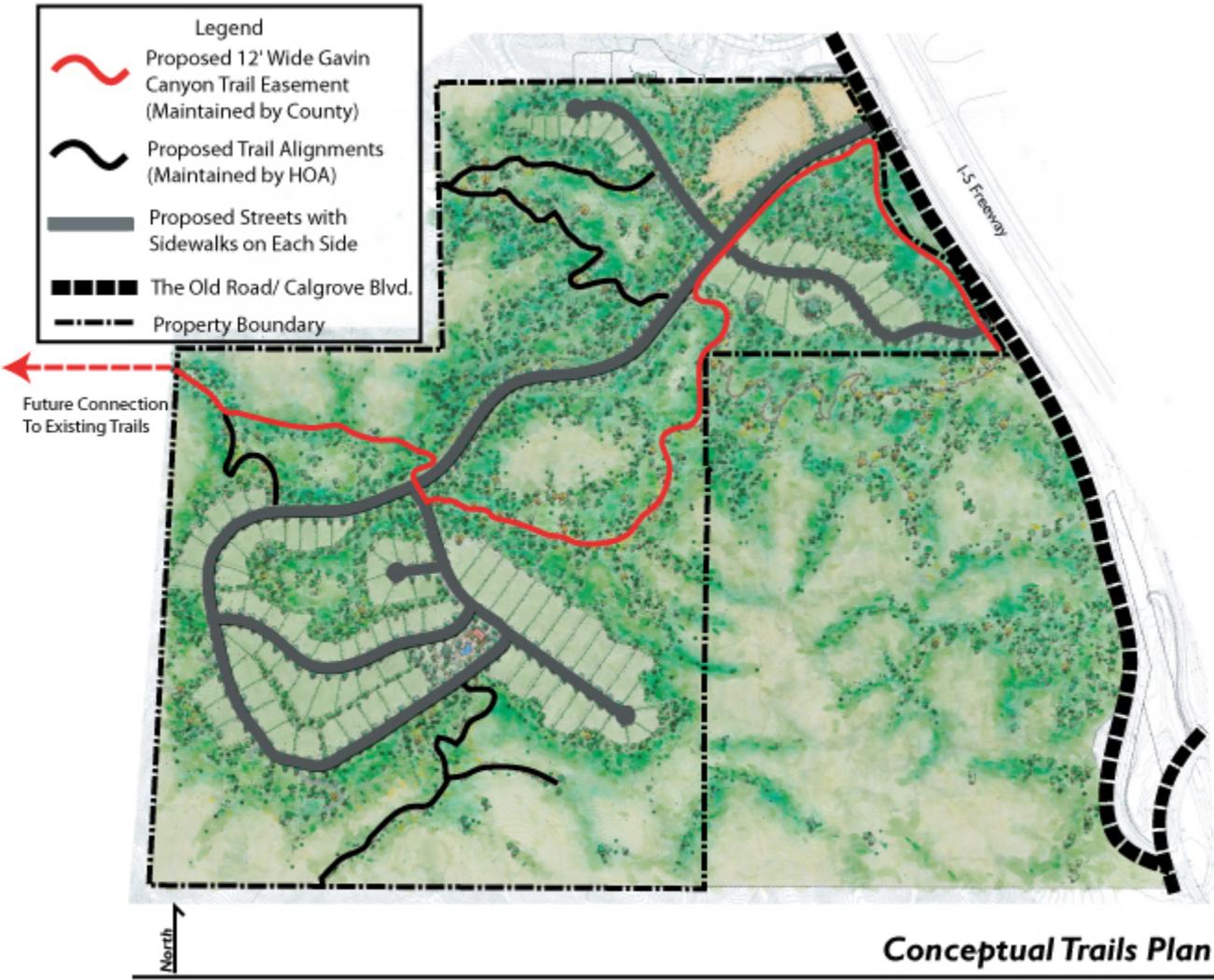
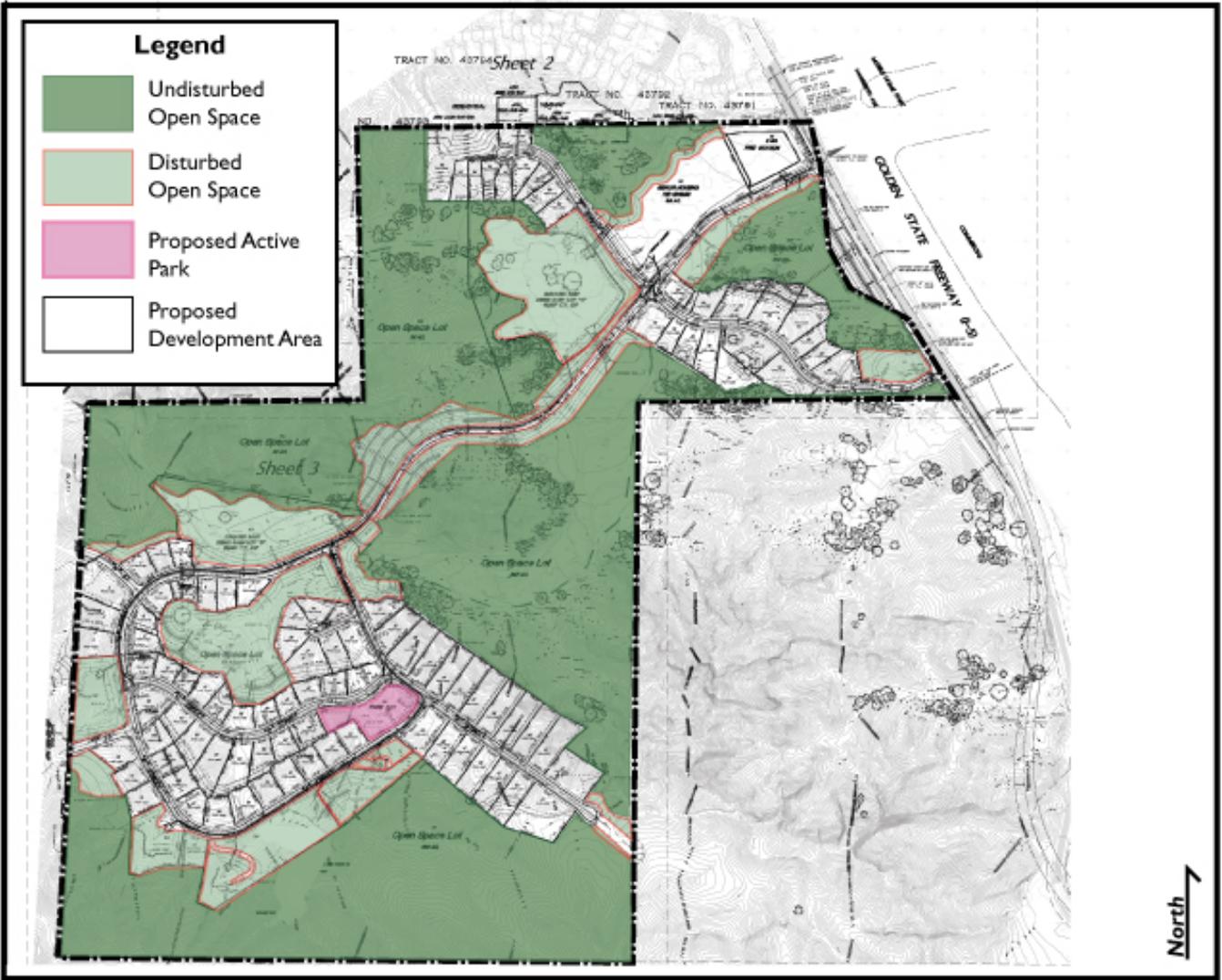


Exhibit 3-7

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Open Space Map

Exhibit 3-8

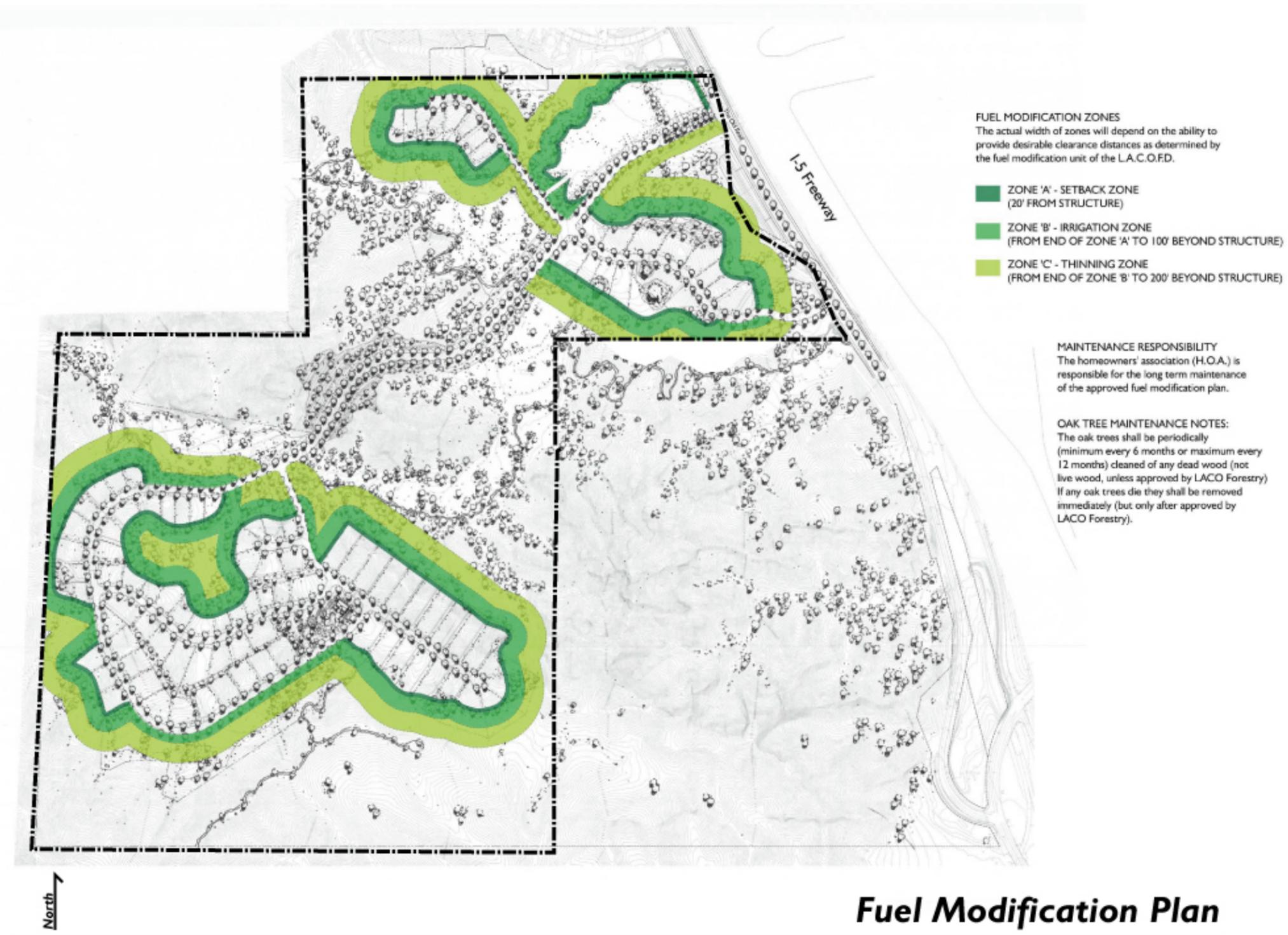


Exhibit 3-9

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3.4.5 GRADING CONCEPT

The project site will be mass-graded in one phase, with a total grading volume of 3.8 million cubic yards (1.9 million CY cut and 1.9 million CY fill), which will be balanced on-site. Grading of the project site is anticipated to take approximately 24 months to complete.

The Conceptual Grading Plan for the development of the Lyons Canyon Ranch area is shown in Exhibit 3-10 and Exhibit 3-11, 3D Grading Concept. The intent of the grading design is to provide development sites while maintaining the hillside character of the site. The concept transitions from the hillside areas to flatter areas where more development flexibility is available, providing natural open space in steeper areas, thereby contributing to the community character. By providing development sites at varying elevations, the grading plan provides opportunities for a variety of views, both on- and off-site, a physical separation of various residential products, and the preservation of areas of natural landforms.

The grading plan also reflects incorporation of two techniques: lot terracing and “landform” grading. Lot terracing allows lots to step down in elevation parallel to hillside contours. A graded vertical separation is provided between side yards or rear yards creating views, separation, and landscaping areas for buffering or privacy. Terracing permits elevation differences of the existing landform to be maintained. Landform grading uses rounded slope faces, feathered top and toe of slope transitions, undulation of graded slopes, and variable slope face ratios. The project’s proposed cut and fill areas are illustrated in Exhibit 3-12 Cut and Fill Map.



3-D Grading Concept - "Bird's Eye" View from North

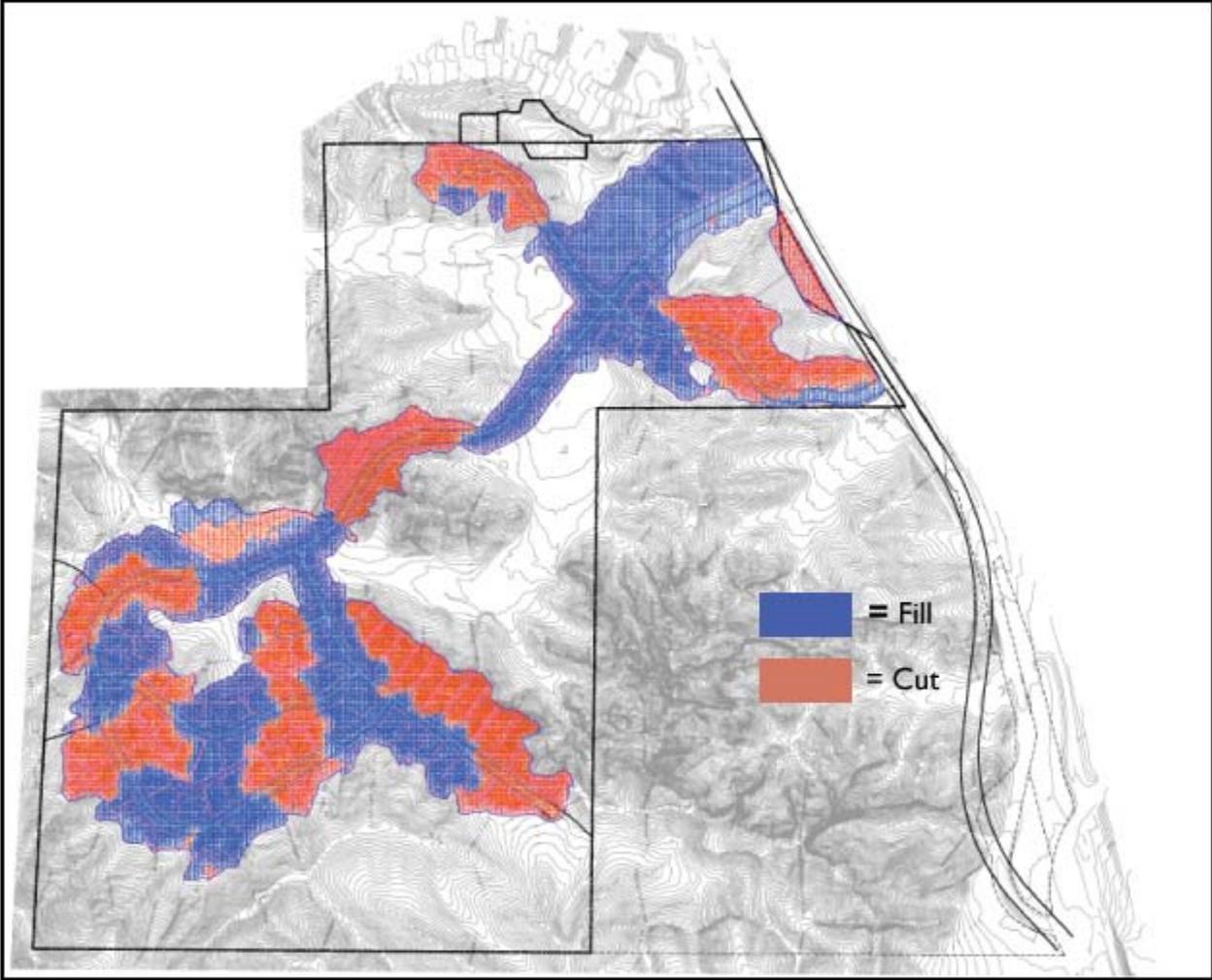
Exhibit 3-10



3-D Grading Concept - "Bird's Eye" View from South

Exhibit 3-11

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Proposed Cut and Fill Map

Exhibit 3-12

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3.4.6 UTILITIES

WATER SERVICE

The project site is not located within a defined service area for the Valencia Water Company or the Newhall Water District. The site is located within the service area of the Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA). However, Valencia Water Company (VWC) provides the nearest water service to properties north of the project site. Therefore, the project will require annexation into the water service area boundary for Valencia Water Company before water service can be provided.

SEWER SERVICE

Currently the project site is located outside the service boundaries of the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts' and will need to be annexed into Los Angeles County Sanitation District No. 32 before service can be provided for the proposed development. Due to the location of the project, the flow from the site will have to be transported to the Districts' facilities by local sewer lines. The nearest sewer line is located approximately 400 feet north of the subject site. This line is the Sanitation District's Valencia Trunk Sewer, a 24-inch diameter trunk sewer with the capacity of 5.3 million gallons per day.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SERVICE

Three private waste haulers currently are permitted to collect residential, commercial, and industrial waste in Los Angeles County. These haulers operate in a franchise system and will be responsible for refuse collection within the proposed project.

3.4.7 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION/PHASING

It is anticipated that the overall project will be developed in over a period of five years. Construction is expected to begin in late 2006 or early 2007. Infrastructure improvements will occur prior to or concurrent with building site preparation.

The estimated phasing provided is based on current good faith expectations and may change due to market conditions or unforeseen circumstances. Phases may be implemented in any order consistent with existing infrastructure capacities or concurrent improvements.

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3.5 PROJECT APPROVALS

The project applicant is requesting approval of the following entitlement applications, which govern the development activities on the project site as described above and in more detail later in this section:

- ◆ **Tentative Tract Map No. RTM TR53653.** Approval of the Tentative Tract Map is required to subdivide the site into 107 lots.
- ◆ **Conditional Use Permit No. RCUP200500088.** A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required for development within hillside management areas and the County's designated Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs). Although the CUP procedure provides flexibility in some development code regulations to account for the widely varying needs of certain uses, developments within SEAs must demonstrate compatibility with the natural, biotic, and open space resources inherent to these areas.

The Conditional Use Permit also includes the density bonus request pursuant to County Code Section 22.56.202. Under the County's Zoning Code, a project can request a density bonus of up to 50% provided that at least 50% of the dwelling units requested as part of the density bonus for the development are provided for income-qualifying residents or senior citizens. The Lyons Canyon Ranch project is requesting a 46% density bonus (60 units) and proposes to designate 93 units of the total density as senior housing.

- ◆ **Oak Tree Permit No. ROAK200500039** An Oak Tree Permit is required for the project pursuant to County Code Sections 22.56.2020, 22.56.2070, and 22.56.2180. A total of 1,395 oak trees are located within the subject site. The proposed project would require the removal of 162 oak trees and encroachment into the dripline of an additional 54 oak trees. Eighty-one (81) Heritage oak trees were identified on the subject site. The proposed project will require removal of 13 Heritage oak trees and encroachment into the dripline of an additional 6 Heritage oak trees. The remaining 1,179 oak trees would be avoided by the proposed project and preserved in the open space preserve areas of the site or in small internal park areas containing the avoided trees.