

3.1 Regional Environmental Setting

Section 15125 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR provide a description of physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project site as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published, or if no notice of preparation is published, at the time environmental analysis is commenced, from both a local and regional perspective. The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with a broad overview of the physical and planning environment in which the proposed project would be located. A more detailed, site-specific discussion of existing conditions is provided in each topical section. This information represents the baseline conditions against which the project is evaluated.

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

3.1.1.1 Location

Figure 3.1-1 shows the regional location of the project site. The project site is located in the Town of Loomis in western Placer County, approximately 25 miles northeast of Sacramento, near Rocklin. I-80 provides regional access to the site and Sierra College Boulevard provides local access. The location of the project site corresponds to Section 28 of Township 11 North and Range 7 East on the 7.5-minute Rocklin, California U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle.

3.1.1.2 Geologic Setting

Placer County lies within the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Province, just east of the western boundary of the adjacent Sacramento Valley (northern) portion of the Great Valley geomorphic province. About 400 miles long and 40 miles wide, the Great Valley is an asymmetrical, synclinal trough formed by tilting of the Sierran block, with the western side dropping to form the valley and the eastern side abruptly uplifted to form the Sierra Nevada. Great Valley sediments consist of a thick sequence of alluvial, basin, and plain sediments eroded from the Sierra Nevada and transported primarily by the Sacramento River and its tributaries (Kleinfelder 2017).

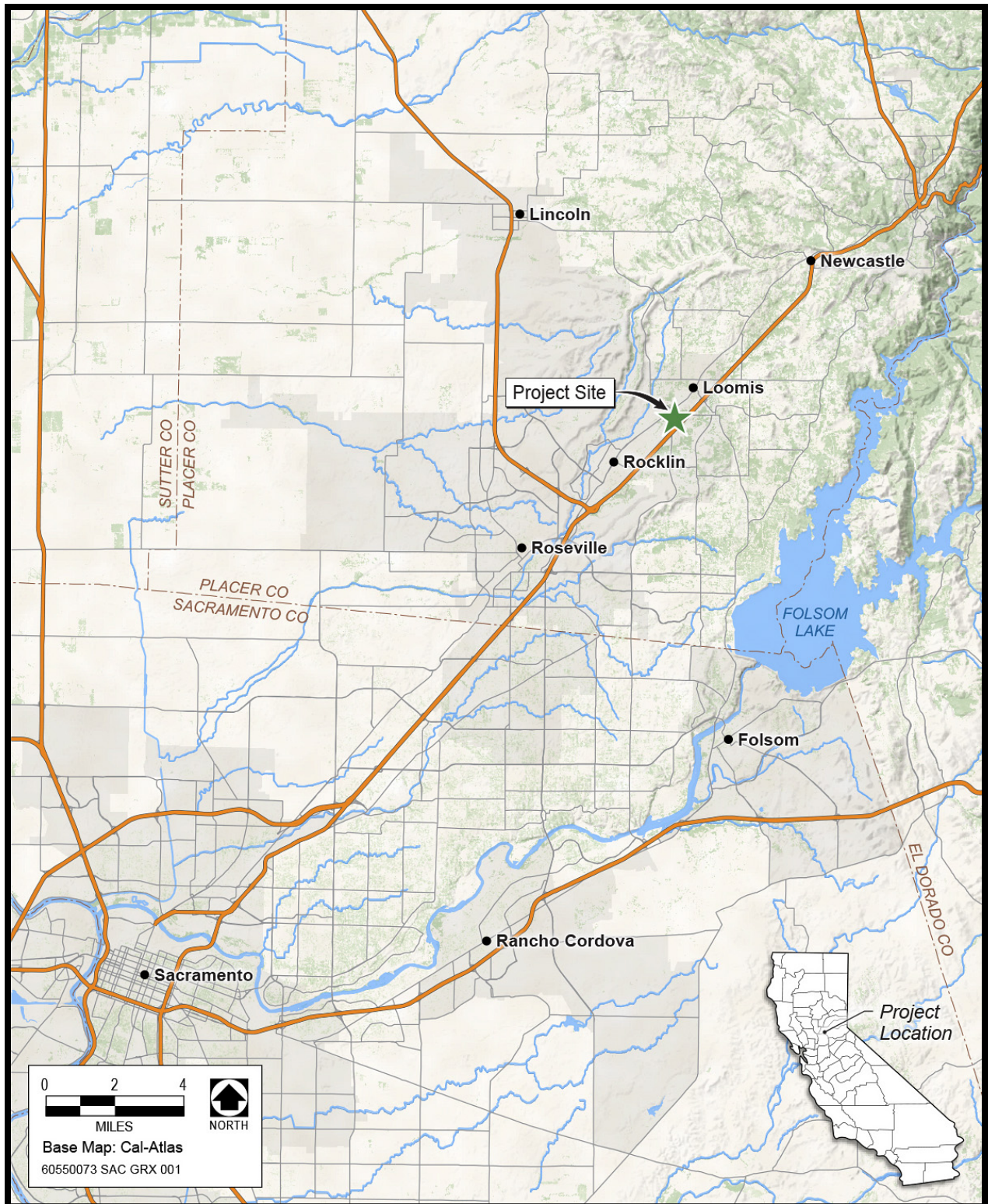
Western and central Placer County generally have low seismicity, while the eastern county in the vicinity of Lake Tahoe has relatively high seismicity. However, no inferred faults or fault zones in Placer County are considered sufficiently well-defined to warrant designation as hazard zones that require site-specific studies before land development.

Certain soils with high clay content may expand or shrink under different soil moisture conditions, which could lead to structural damage. Soils considered to have moderate to high shrink-swell potential are limited to the low-lying areas, which are concentrated in western Placer County, from the city of Rocklin to the county line (Placer County 1994).

3.1.1.3 Climate

Placer County includes portions of three California air basins: Sacramento Valley, Mountain Counties, and Lake Tahoe. Existing air quality varies substantially between these air basins. Loomis is located within the Sacramento Valley Air Basin.

The Sacramento Valley Air Basin is characterized by cool winters and hot, dry summers, tempered by occasional westerly breezes from the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta. Weather in summer, spring, and fall is generally a result of the movement and intensity of the semipermanent high-pressure area located in the Pacific Ocean several hundred miles to the west. Winter weather is generally a function of the size and location of low-pressure weather systems originating in the north Pacific. Average high temperature typically varies from 54 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter to approximately 92 degrees in the summer. The area averages approximately 25 inches of rain per year, with most rainfall occurring between November and April (HBG 2017).



Source: Data compiled by AECOM in 2018

Figure 3.1-1. Regional Map

3.1.1.4 Hydrology

The Town is located in the Dry Creek watershed. The watershed covers about 101 square miles of land area in Placer and Sacramento counties, with headwaters located in the upper portions of the Loomis Basin near Penryn and Newcastle. Ultimately, Dry Creek empties into the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal, a human-made flood control channel that captures runoff west of the unincorporated communities of Rio Linda and Robla in Sacramento County. The Natomas East Main Drainage Canal directs water southward, eventually emptying into the Sacramento River in Discovery Park. Dry Creek experiences frequent flooding events in the Rio Linda area, well downstream of the Loomis planning area (Placer County 1994).

3.1.1.5 Land Use

Loomis is a rural community encompassing approximately 4,600 acres. The predominant land uses are single-family residential and large-lot residential-agricultural. Many residents maintain small-scale “hobby” agricultural activities on small ranches. The portions of town south of I-80 and west of Sierra College Boulevard support the majority of the residential-agricultural uses. The Town’s more compact residential development is concentrated near the Taylor Road corridor. A small industrial area is located in the northeastern part of Loomis. East of the Loomis town limits are unincorporated areas of Placer County, including the community of Penryn. To the west are the rapidly growing cities of Rocklin and Roseville, which are immediately adjacent to almost all of Loomis’s western corporate limits.

Loomis can be divided into three planning areas: the North Planning Area, the South Planning Area, and the Town Center. The project site is located in the southernmost portion of the Town Center (Figure 3.1-1). The Loomis Town Center is a 490-acre area that lies on both sides of I-80 and south of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The Town Center encompasses Loomis’s main commercial core along Taylor Road, several established and newer residential areas, and a substantial amount of vacant and underutilized land.

The North Planning Area, north of I-80, contains all existing commercial, office, and industrial development located within the town limits. This planning area also contains all medium-density and multifamily residential development, as well as larger areas designated for rural residential development. The South Planning Area, south of I-80, consists mostly of rural residential development.

The *Town of Loomis General Plan (General Plan)* includes goals and policies for the Town Center that are intended to create a focal point for personal shopping and services in the community. The General Plan policies encourage commercial uses along Sierra College Boulevard. Commercial development in the Town Center would also allow a significant amount of growth in Loomis to be contained in the area north of I-80. This would be consistent with existing Town patterns of growth, as well as development trends along the I-80 corridor.

The General Plan designates most of the project site as General Commercial (CG), with a portion on the east side designated as Residential–Medium-High Density (RMH) (Figure 3.1-3). According to the General Plan, the CG designation is intended mainly for retail and service commercial uses located outside of the downtown core (Town of Loomis 2001). Zoning for the property is General Commercial (CG) (Figure 3.1-3). CG zoning is applied to areas appropriate for a range of retail and service land uses, including shops, personal and business services, and restaurants. Residential uses may also be accommodated.

3.1.2 Regional Planning

3.1.2.1 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is the metropolitan planning organization responsible for developing the federally required Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the state-required Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) in coordination with the 22 cities, six counties (including Placer and El Dorado Counties), and other partner agencies in the greater Sacramento region. In 2016, SACOG approved the 2036 MTP/SCS, a regional transportation plan and land use strategy designed to support good growth patterns, including:

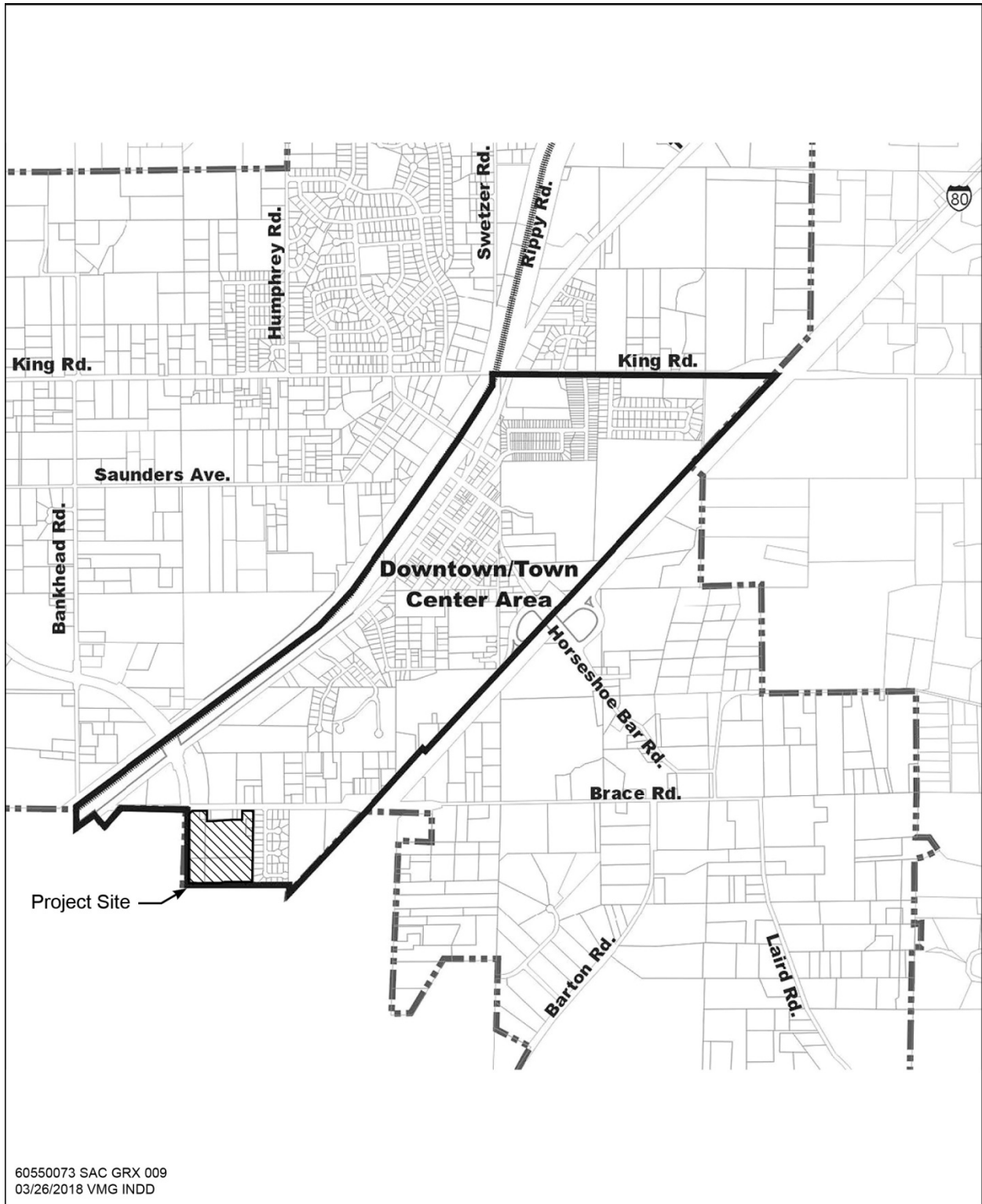
- increased housing and transportation options;
- inwardly focused growth and improved economic viability of rural areas;
- minimized direct and indirect transportation impacts on the environment;
- a transportation system that delivers cost-effective results and is feasible to construct and maintain;
- effective connections between people and jobs;

- improved opportunities for businesses and citizens to easily access goods, jobs, services, and housing; and
- real, viable choices for methods of travel.

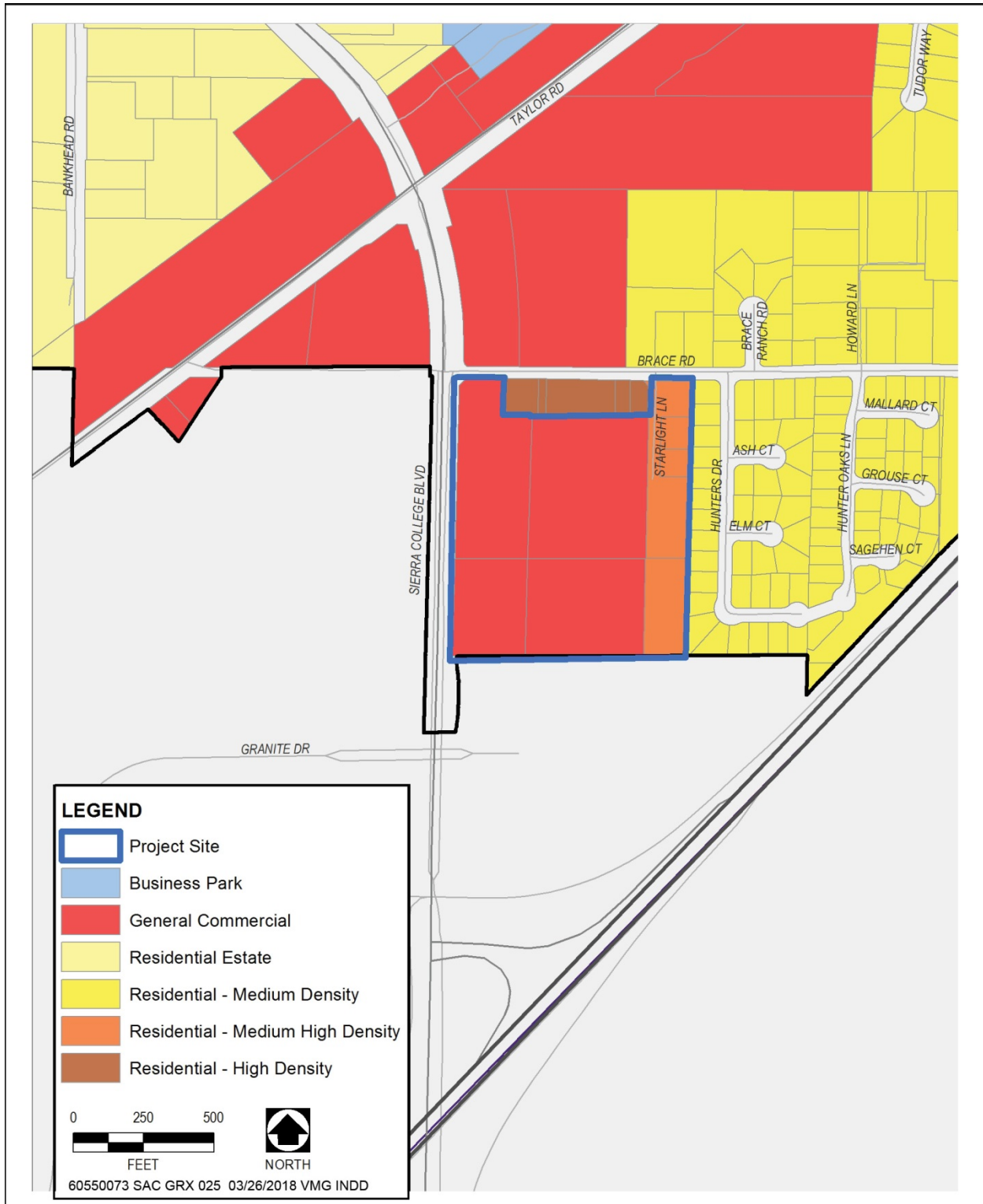
The MTP/SCS includes a land use strategy to improve mobility and reduce travel demand from passenger vehicles by prioritizing compact and transit-oriented development, reducing the growth in vehicle miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions. The MTP/SCS also includes projections for the location of growth within the region, between jurisdictions and among housing place types (i.e., infill and greenfield development).

According to the MTP/SCS, Loomis is a small, rural community that has experienced very little growth in the past 10 years despite its location in the fast-growing southwestern Placer County. The General Plan aims to maintain the Town's rural character overall, with the *Loomis Town Center Master Plan* supporting some infill and redevelopment in the downtown area. Because of this, the MTP/SCS designates the Town Center area as a Center and Corridor Community, while characterizing the housing and industrial employment areas that border the Town Center as an Established Community and identifying the remaining portions of Loomis as a Rural Residential Community.

MTP/SCS-identified growth of 1,629 new employees and 779 new housing units by 2036 is expected to happen slowly over the planning period in the Center and Corridor Community and Established Community. This growth is consistent with the uses included in the General Plan and current project applications, ranging from rural residential to mixed-use development with neighborhood-supporting commercial, office, and industrial employment. Employment growth will be concentrated along the I-80 corridor and in the Town Center area.

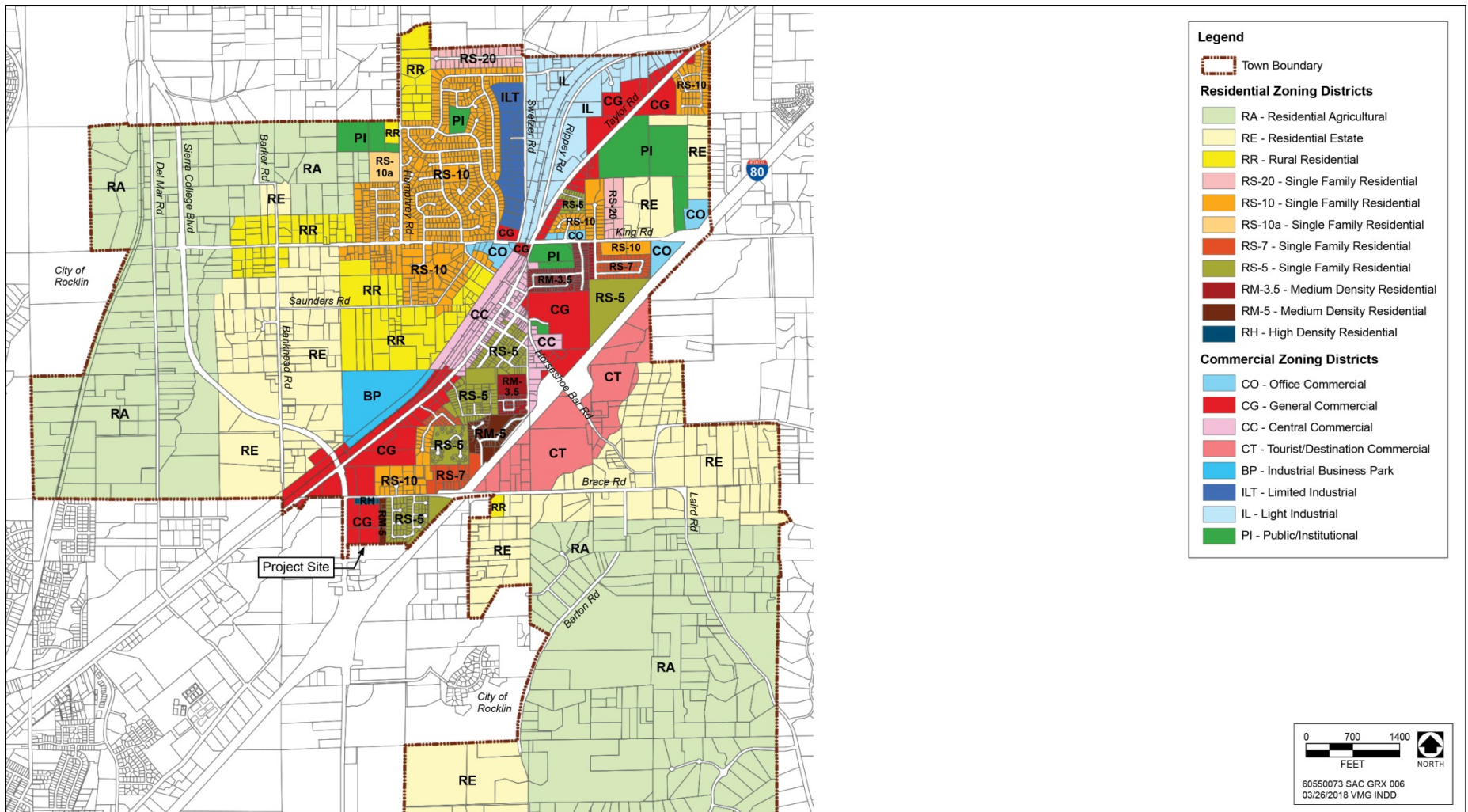


Source: Data compiled by AECOM in 2018
Figure 3.1-2. Downtown Town Center



Source: Data provided by Town of Loomis and compiled by AECOM in 2018

Figure 3.1-3. General Plan Land Use Designations



Source: Data provided by Town of Loomis and compiled by AECOM in 2018

Figure 3.1-4. Loomis Zoning Designations

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