

General Plan

Land Use Element

BACKGROUND TO THE 1993 GENERAL PLAN AS AMENDED

This background section text and maps were not updated as part of the 2011 amendments to the County General Plan.

County of Sacramento
Planning and Community Development Department

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN
LAND USE ELEMENT**

BACKGROUND SECTION IV

**RESIDENTIAL AND NONRESIDENTIAL
LAND USE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

INTRODUCTION

This section provides an inventory of existing land supply and projects the amount and location of land, and the density and intensity of development needed to accommodate future population and economic growth.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Residential data were compiled by zoning category and aggregated by General Plan designation for the unincorporated county.

COMPOSITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF RESIDENTIAL USES

Table II.3 summarizes the amount of land designated for residential uses in nineteen unincorporated community planning areas. Unincorporated Sacramento County contains 112,759 acres of vacant and developed land zoned for residential development. Further, 55,433 acres are designated for low density residential uses (1 to 12 units per acre) and 5,211 acres are designated for medium density residential development (13 to 40 units per acre).

Vacant Residential Land. Table II.3 shows the amount of vacant residential land for each residential land use designation. These lands total approximately 23,800 acres. Not all of this acreage is developable; 4,900 acres are located within flood zones, constrained by airport noise contours, or within aggregate resource areas. That leaves approximately 18,900 acres of unconstrained vacant residentially zoned land in the unincorporated county. However, further analysis of the vacant acreage may reveal additional lands with site specific constraints. The constraints may include restrictive parcel size and configuration, limited accessibility, lack of appropriate infrastructure, and proximity to wetland habitat.

If the unconstrained vacant lands were developed to their potential as determined by existing zoning, approximately 48,000 dwelling units housing 136,900 residents could be realized. Full development is unlikely during the planning period since combining zones may limit development potential, or owners may simply choose not to develop. Note that full development of these existing residential lands is not required prior to considering other areas for development. However, the County manages these vacant lands by supporting build-out in areas that are adequately served by county services and that receive light rail or express bus service. Build-out is also supported in areas where the expansion of urban services can occur efficiently.

COMPOSITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING STOCK

Table II.4 summarizes the distribution of existing housing stock in each of the eighteen unincorporated community plan areas. Single family homes dominate the housing mix in the county with 63% (149,368) of the units. Multiple-family units comprise 21% (49,864) of the existing housing units and duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes comprise 12% (27,836) of the total. Mobile homes account for 4% of the housing stock (9,812 units).

TABLE II.3

**INVENTORY OF RESIDENTIAL LANDS
BY GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATION AND COMMUNITY PLAN AREA
(Interpreted from existing zoning categories)**

UNINCORPORATED SACRAMENTO COUNTY

October, 1988

Community Plan Area	Agricultural Residential Acres	Low Density Residential Acres	Medium Density Residential Acres	Total¹ Residential Acres
Elk Grove	8,595	2,214	17	10,827
Consumnes	10,396	0	0	10,396
Arden Arcade	18	8,086	1,312	9,416
Citrus Heights	5	8,285	842	9,132
Rio Linda	7,355	1,434	46	8,835
Southeast	8,501	0	0	8,501
No. Highlands	1,384	6,753	14	8,151
South Sacramento	1,192	5,418	508	7,118
Rancho Cordova	21	5,947	619	6,587
Orangevale	2,930	2961	51	5,942
Carmichael	0	5,218	453	5,671
Vineyard	4,638	572	68	5,278
Fair Oaks	428	4,510	203	5,141
Franklin-Laguna	1,139	2,845	267	4,251
Rancho Murieta	2,742	731	19	3,492
Galt	2,277	0	0	2,277
North Natomas	30	134	774	938
Delta	297	324	18	639
South Natomas	<u>167</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>167</u>
Total Acreage	52,115	55,433	5,211	112,759
Vacant² Acreage	(-)15,512	(-)7,116	(-)1,159	(-)23,789
Developed Acreage	36,603	48,317	4,052	88,970
Percentage of Total	46%	49%	5%	100%

Footnotes:

1. Total residential acreage for each residential category do not include parcels located within Special Planning Areas (approximately 1% of total unincorporated County)
2. Vacant acreages for each residential category include lands that are located within zones, noise contours, and aggregate resource areas.

The data in Table II.4 can be aggregated in terms of General Plan designations. The Low Density Residential land use designation includes single family homes, mobile homes, and 2-4 unit attached dwellings, ranging in density from one to twelve dwelling units per acre. Dwellings in agricultural and agricultural-residential areas are also considered single-family residential uses. The housing stock within these residential designations comprises approximately 79% (187,016) of the all existing housing units in the unincorporated County. Medium density housing, at densities between 13 and 40 units per acre, comprise the remaining 21% of the existing units.

TABLE II.4

**INVENTORY OF HOUSING UNITS BY
HOUSING TYPE AND COMMUNITY PLAN AREA
UNINCORPORATED SACRAMENTO COUNTY**

June, 1989

Community Plan Area	Total Units	Single¹ Family	Mobile Homes	2-4 Units	5+ Units
Arden Arcade	42,991	21,790	423	5,021	15,757
Citrus Heights	37,785	23,093	2,005	4,826	7,861
Rancho Cordova	34,837	21,122	1,360	5,359	6,996
North Highlands	32,888	19,381	1,737	4,835	6,935
South Sacramento	23,637	15,247	2,164	2,543	3,683
Carmichael	19,175	12,276	16	2,545	4,338
Fair Oaks	11,957	8,638	14	1,141	2,164
Orangevale	9,982	7,673	477	528	1,304
Elk Grove	6,965	5,939	121	548	357
Rio Linda	5,844	5,460	220	100	64
Franklin Laguna	2,220	2,060	130	30	0
Delta	1,885	1,489	256	106	34
Cosumnes	1,804	1,329	458	13	4
Vineyard	1,332	1,238	93	1	0
Southeast	2,096	1,515	283	31	267
Rancho Murieta	875	689	29	135	22
South Natomas	404	251	7	68	78
North Natomas	<u>203</u>	<u>178</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Housing Units	236,880	149,368	9,812	27,836	49,864
Percentage of Total Units	100%	63%	4%	12%	21%

Footnote:

1. Single family totals include homes located in areas designated for Agricultural and Agricultural-Residential uses.

Densities of Existing Residential Development. Low density development (single family homes, mobile homes, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes) provides approximately 79% of existing housing units and occupies over 95% of the developed residential land. Medium density development (apartments, condominiums, and group homes) comprises 21% of the existing units occupying approximately 5% of the developed residential land. Thus, development in the unincorporated area is characterized by low density suburban sprawl. This pattern of development has made adequate infrastructure and services difficult to provide, increased traffic congestion, and diminished air quality. A more efficient pattern of land use can effectively address the shortcomings of continued suburban sprawl.

PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE DWELLING UNIT DEMAND

Projections of future housing needs in Sacramento County indicate that multiple family units will receive a greater share of the demand, paralleling a nationwide trend. Development at densities higher than the historical trend should provide more efficient delivery of public infrastructure and services, and require less capital investment.

Projected Demand and Share for New Housing. Historic building permit data for the region provide insight into the types of residential construction occurring in the Sacramento metropolitan area. Table II.5 shows the projected future housing market demand based on a study of housing construction rates and trends in unincorporated Sacramento County over the past four decades. Approximately 94,000 additional housing units will be needed to accommodate the additional population projected to reside in the unincorporated portions of Sacramento County between 1990 and 2010. Analysis of housing absorption between 1975-1991 indicated that 1.4 percent of all new housing in Sacramento County was in Agricultural-Residential zoned areas. Adjusting that percentage to future demand projections for the unincorporated area yields a demand projection estimate of 120 housing units per annum.

TABLE II.8

**INVENTORY OF COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE LANDS
BY ZONING CATEGORY AND COMMUNITY PLAN AREA**

UNINCORPORATED SACRAMENTO COUNTY

October, 1988

(Acres)

Community Plan Area	<u>BP</u>	<u>SC</u>	<u>LC</u>	<u>GC</u>	<u>AC</u>	<u>TC</u>	<u>CO</u>	Total¹ ACRES
Arden Arcade	400	290	440	95	115	45	0	1,385
Citrus Heights	165	448	185	185	7	0	40	1,030
South Sacramento	70	305	335	205	30	55	0	1,000
North Highlands	115	180	315	310	40	40	0	1,000
Rancho Cordova	160	205	185	210	25	20	0	805
Carmichael	70	27	145	55	3	0	0	300
Fair Oaks	25	65	70	70	0	0	0	230
Orangevale	39	45	35	105	1	0	0	225
Franklin Laguna	0	40	50	10	15	63	0	180
Rio Linda	3	15	30	16	1	0	125	190
Elk Grove	15	25	85	40	10	0	0	175
Delta	1	0	14	20	0	0	135	170
Vineyard	18	20	5	22	0	0	0	65
South Natomas	0	0	0	17	0	18	0	35
Cosumnes	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	15
Southeast	0	0	5	10	0	0	0	15
Rancho Murieta	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	10
North Natomas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Galt	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Acreage		1,083	1,665	1,909	1,385	247	241	6,830
Vacant Acreage²	(-)290	(-)354	(-)507	(-)331	(-)19	(-)110	(-)106	(-)1,717
Developed Acreage	793	1,311	1,402	1,054	228	131	194	5,113

Footnotes:

1. Commercial and office acreages for each zoning category include parcels located within Special Planning Areas.
2. Vacant acreages for each commercial and office category include land that is located within flood zones, noise contours, and aggregate resource areas.

TABLE II.11

**VACANT COMMERCIAL ACREAGE BY
ZONING CATEGORY AND COMMUNITY PLAN AREA**

UNINCORPORATED SACRAMENTO COUNTY

October, 1988

(Acres)

<u>Community Plan Area</u>	<u>BP</u>	<u>SC</u>	<u>LC</u>	<u>GC</u>	<u>AC</u>	<u>TC</u>	<u>C-O</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>
North Highlands	55	85	135	95	0	5	0	375
South Sacramento	40	85	141	70	6	33	0	375
Rancho Cordova	85	40	55	65	0	0	0	245
Franklin Laguna	2	42	58	3	0	65	0	170
Citrus Heights	17	34	28	21	6	0	19	125
Orangevale	24	12	16	18	0	0	0	70
Arden Arcade	20	4	29	1	7	4	0	65
Elk Grove	9	5	27	14	0	0	0	55
Vineyard	18	20	0	7	0	0	0	45
Carmichael	17	18	4	1	0	0	0	40
Delta	1	0	2	6	0	0	21	30
Rio Linda	1	7	11	5	0	0	0	24
Fair Oaks	1	2	1	12	0	0	0	16
Cosumnes	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	7
South Natomas	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	7
Southeast	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
TOTALS	290	354	507	331	19	110	40	1,651

Projections for Future Commercial Uses. Future demands for retail and commercial office lands were projected separately.

Retail Land Demand. Approximately 9.8 million square feet of retail building area (Gross Leasable Area, GLA) are required to meet market demand in the unincorporated county between 1989 and 2010. Using the average FAR of .25 for retail uses in the urbanized area, the unincorporated county will need approximately 900 acres designated for retail uses between 1989 and 2010.

Increases in land costs and implementation of county policy will cause increased FARs in the future. As FARs increase, the acreage required to accommodate new development will decrease. For example, increasing the average FAR from .25 to .30 would reduce the land demand from 900 acres to 750 acres. A further increase in FAR to .35 would decrease the land demand to 650 acres.

Business and Professional Office Land Demand. The market demand for Business and Professional Office space is projected to be approximately 3.9 million square feet between 1989-2010. Assuming the current average FAR of 0.42, an additional 235 acres of land will be needed for office commercial uses. As General Plan policies are implemented and the cost of the land increases, the average FAR will increase and a corresponding reduction in land demand will occur.

Addressing the Projections for Commercial Uses. The land use strategy proposed in this Element includes increasing the intensity of commercial land uses in order to decrease the acreage required to meet the demands.

Retail Commercial. There are approximately 1,500 acres of vacant retail commercial lands in the county, with a projected demand of only 900 acres for the period from 1989-2010. However, some of the excess retail lands may not be appropriately located to serve urban growth areas. Additional land for retail commercial uses may need to be designated in and adjacent to growth areas. Some retail commercial lands that are located in developed areas, vacant, and easily accessible to transit service may also be designated for uses such as medium or high density residential development. New retail commercial uses are an integral part of Mixed-Use Developments such as transit-oriented development.

Office Commercial. There are 290 acres of vacant office commercial land in the county, with a projected demand of 235 acres, giving a relatively small oversupply. Additional office commercial land may be required in urban growth areas to meet community needs and to improve the balance of residential and employment uses in new areas. Some vacant office commercial land may be available for reuse. The reuse potential, however, represents only a fraction of the overall needs in this category. See Section III (Land Use Strategies) for further discussion of reuse as a land use strategy.

COMPOSITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF INDUSTRIAL USES

The unincorporated portion of Sacramento County contains over 37,000 acres of vacant and developed land zoned for industrial uses (Table II.12). This represents nearly 7% of the county's entire land area. A large proportion of that acreage is vacant, evenly divided among the zoning categories. Of the developed portion the large majority of the land is in M-1 and M-2 zoning.

Fifty-five percent of the county's industrially designated land is in the Highway 50 corridor in Rancho Cordova. Of the industrial land in that community, 71% is in Mather Air Force Base (5,250 acres) or Aerojet General (8,500 acres). Vineyard and North Highlands also have large acreages of land designated for industrial uses. Much of the industrial land in Vineyard is impacted by noise from Mather Air Force Base flight operations. In North Highlands, McClellan Air Force Base accounts for 3,500 acres of the industrial land.

Figure II.7 shows the location of the major concentrations of industrial zoned land within the unincorporated area.

TABLE II.12

**INVENTORY OF INDUSTRIAL LANDS
BY ZONING CATEGORY AND COMMUNITY PLAN AREA**

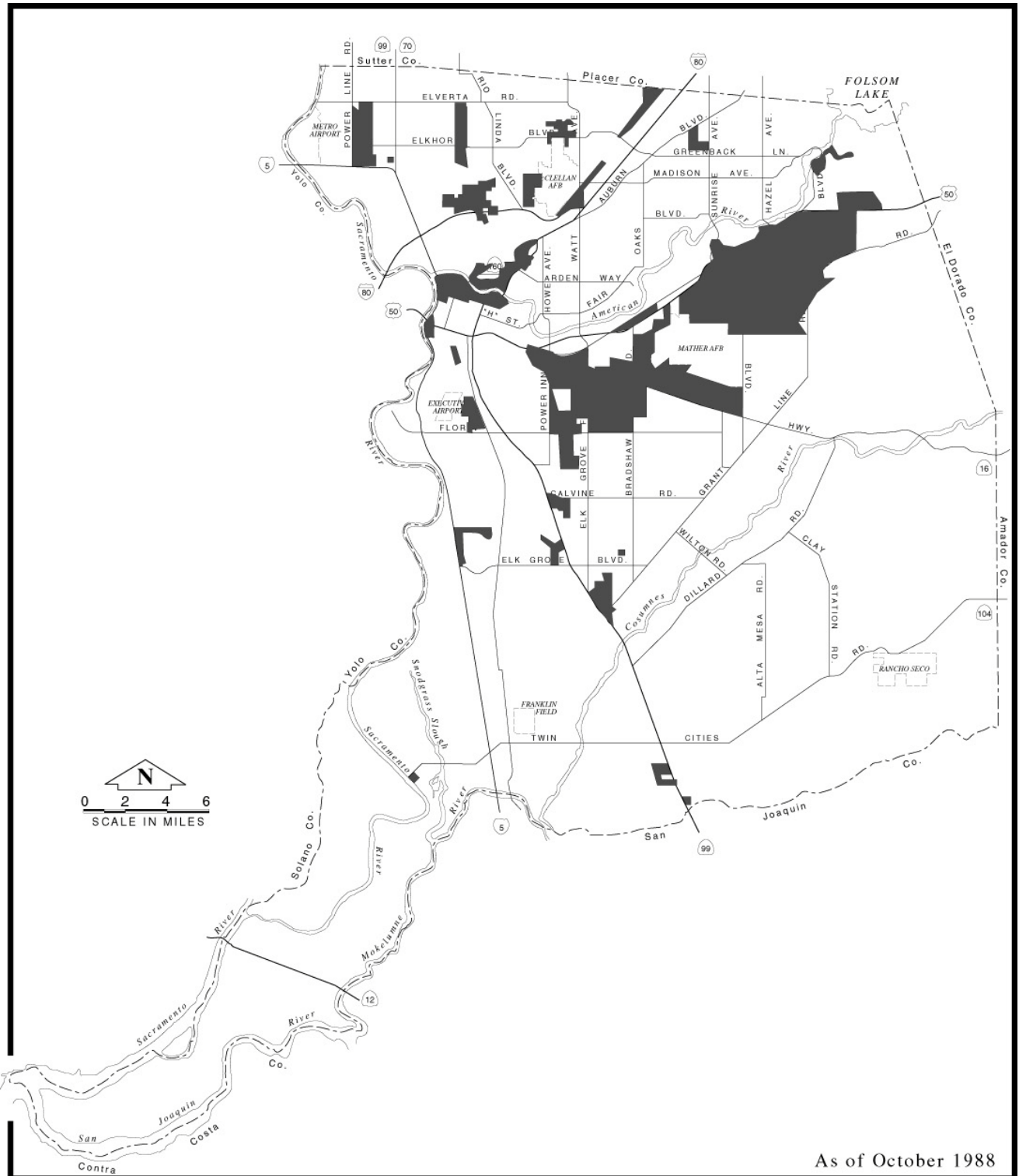
UNINCORPORATED SACRAMENTO COUNTY

October, 1988

(Acres)

<u>Community Plan Area</u>	<u>MP</u>	<u>M-1</u>	<u>M-2</u>	<u>IR</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>
Rancho Cordova	1,500	5,745	11,720	1,405	20,370
Vineyard	0	935	1,015	2,585	4,535
North Highlands	115	3,045	290	95	3,545
Cosumnes	0	0	1,755	0	1,755
Elk Grove	368	352	700	0	1,420
North Natomas	1,250	0	0	0	1,250
South Sacramento	105	645	390	0	1,140
Franklin-Laguna	767	283	0	0	1,050
Rio Linda	0	250	240	520	1,010
South Natomas	245	530	0	10	785
Citrus Heights	165	100	25	0	290
Delta	0	32	53	0	85
Galt	0	65	0	0	65
Southeast	0	7	18	0	25
Rancho Murieta	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Acreage	4,522	11,992	16,206	4,615	37,355
Vacant Acreage	(-)3,860	(-)2,710	(-)3,875	(-)3,545	(-)13,990
Developed Acreage	662	9,282	12,331	1,070	23,345

Intensity of Existing Industrial Uses. Industrial land use intensities are quantified in terms of Floor Area Ratios (FARs). Table II.13 presents the average FAR for each industrial zoning category in the unincorporated area.



As of October 1988



FIGURE II.7 Major Concentrations of Industrial Land Uses

Prepared by the Sacramento County Planning and Community Development Department

TABLE II.14

**VACANT INDUSTRIAL LAND
BY ZONING CATEGORY AND COMMUNITY PLAN AREA
UNINCORPORATED SACRAMENTO COUNTY**

October, 1988

(Acres)

Community Plan Area	MP	M-1	M-2	IR	Total Vacant Acres
Rancho Cordova	1,064	480	573	1,238	4,355
Vineyard	0	632	400	1,915	2,947
Cosumnes	0	0	1,440	0	1,440
North Natomas	1,250	0	0	0	1,250
Franklin-Laguna	755	278	0	0	1,033
Elk Grove	367	306	236	0	909
Rio Linda	0	71	61	384	516
South Natomas	109	337	0	8	454
North Highlands	50	243	97	0	390
South Sacramento	100	210	64	0	374
Citrus Heights	165	97	0	0	262
Galt	0	51	0	0	51
Delta	0	1	4	0	5
Southeast	0	3	0	0	3
Rancho Murieta	0	1	0	0	1
Total	3,863	2,710	3,875	3,545	13,990

Industrial-Office Uses. The communities of North Natomas, Rancho Cordova, Franklin-Laguna, and Elk Grove contain 90% of the county's vacant MP or Office-Industrial lands in the unincorporated county. Other communities with some vacant MP include Citrus Heights, South Natomas, South Sacramento and North Highlands.

Light and Heavy Industrial Uses. Vacant light and heavy industrial lands in the M-1 and M-2 zones are concentrated in Rancho Cordova, Vineyard and Cosumnes. These three communities have approximately 43% of the county's vacant industrial land. Other communities with some vacant light and heavy industrial areas include Elk Grove, Rio Linda, North Highlands, South Natomas, Franklin-Laguna, South Sacramento, Citrus Heights, and Galt.

Industrial Reserve (IR) lands are those currently used for agriculture or aggregate resource extraction with future potential for conversion to industrial uses. The three communities with significant amounts of IR lands are Rancho Cordova, Vineyard, and Rio Linda.

Addressing the Market Demand for Industrial Uses. A demand of 2.28 million square feet of office industrial uses is projected for the unincorporated county between 1988 and 2010. Assuming the existing average FAR of 0.48, 110 acres will be needed to meet demands. The

projected demand of 36.58 million square feet of floorspace for industrial manufacturing, translates into a need for 2,800 acres of land assuming the average FAR of 0.30. General Plan policies recommending increased intensities may reduce the amount of land needed to meet the projected demand for industrial uses.

Estimate of Excess Industrial Supply. The amount of excess industrially zoned land in the unincorporated county is considerable. In the office industrial (MP) category, the existing 3,863 acre supply easily accommodates the projected demand for 110 acres between 1989 and 2010. This results in more than 3,700 acres of excess land designated for office industrial uses.

In the heavy and light industrial category, the existing 6,585 acres of designated land easily accommodates the estimated demand for 2,800 acres between 1989 and 2010. This amounts to a 3,785 acre oversupply.

The 3,545 acres of Industrial Reserve land adds to the total acreage of vacant, industrially zoned land. Note also that areas designated for Industrial Extensive uses, but are zoned for agricultural, are not included in the inventory.

The vast oversupply of industrially zoned land within the county is in part a result of the need to create buffers around incompatible uses (e.g. McClellan AFB, Aerojet General) or the need to protect certain resources (e.g. aggregate mining). The oversupply is also a result of the need to provide a wide variety of industrial areas to attract desirable industries, especially in light of the intense competition from other jurisdictions for those industries.

Industrial lands should be efficiently used by advocating the reuse of industrial areas for medium and higher densities when supported by adequate public infrastructure and served by light rail or express bus service.