

# CHAPTER 1

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## Introduction and Readers Guide

### Introduction

This document and the Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report (RDEIR) that was circulated for public review on March 25, 2010 through May 27, 2010 (60-day public review period) is intended to constitute the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for Tulare County's (County) General Plan 2030 Update (proposed project). However, certification of the Final EIR rests with the Board of Supervisors; therefore additional materials may be added or modified by the County prior to the time of certification. (CEQA Guidelines §15090.) The information presented in this FEIR is being provided in accordance with the requirements of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 1, "Introduction and Reader's Guide," discusses the purpose of this document, public review process, CEQA requirements, and use of this document.
- Chapter 2, "Minor Revisions to the Recirculated Draft EIR," contains minor changes and edits to the text of the RDEIR made in response to the comments. These changes correct minor errors and provide clarifications and amplifications to the information previously provided; the changes do not constitute significant new information or result in any new significant impacts.
- Chapter 3, "Comments on the Recirculated Draft EIR," includes a copy of each of the comment letters received during the review period from March 25, 2010 to May 27, 2010. The individual comment letter numbers correspond to those responses provided in Chapter 5.
- Chapter 4, "Master Responses," is comprised of general responses that address similar comments received regarding certain specified subject areas.
- Chapter 5, "Responses to Comments on the Recirculated Draft EIR," contains the written responses to the individual comments received during the public review period for the RDEIR along with written responses to those comments.

It should be noted that throughout the FEIR, the terms "General Plan 2030 Update," "General Plan Update," and "proposed project" are used interchangeably to describe the General Plan 2030 Update, an amendment to the Tulare County General Plan that will be considered by County decision makers.

## Project Overview

The County of Tulare is in the process of amending and updating its existing general plan. The name used for the proposed amendment and update is the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update. The General Plan 2030 Update will reorganize, update, and modernize the County's general plan policies and documents as described in Chapter 1 of the Tulare County General Plan 2030 document. This FEIR for the General Plan 2030 Update was prepared in compliance with CEQA (Pub. Res. Code §§21000 et. seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14). The County of Tulare (County) is the Lead Agency for the environmental review of the proposed project and has the principal responsibility preparing the EIR and for approving the General Plan 2030 Update. As described in the CEQA Guidelines §15121(a), an EIR is a public information document used to inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a proposed project, as well as mitigation measures and alternatives to the project that would reduce or avoid adverse environmental impacts.<sup>1</sup> CEQA requires that state and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of plans and projects over which they have discretionary authority. The EIR is an informational document used in the planning and decision-making process. It is not the purpose of an EIR to recommend either approval or denial of a project.

The procedures required by CEQA “are intended to assist public agencies in systematically identifying both the significant effects of proposed projects and whether there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures which would avoid or substantially lessen such significant effects (Public Resources Code §21002).” As a general rule, “public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects.” However, “in the event specific economic, social, or other conditions make infeasible such project alternatives or such mitigation measures, individual projects may be approved in spite of one or more significant effects thereof.” (Ibid.)

Stated differently, under CEQA, a Lead Agency must make certain determinations before it can approve or carry out a project if the EIR reveals that the project will result in one or more significant environmental impacts.

Prior to its decision on whether or how to approve or carry out the proposed project, the Lead Agency must “certify” the FEIR. According to the CEQA Guidelines, “certification” consists of three separate steps. Prior to approving a project, the lead agency shall certify that: (1) the FEIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA; (2) the FEIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency and that the body has reviewed and considered the information contained in the FEIR prior to approving the project; and (3) that the FEIR reflects the Lead Agency's independent judgment and analysis (CEQA Guidelines, §15090(a); see also Public Resources Code, §21082.1(c)(3)).

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<sup>1</sup> The term “project” in CEQA includes any activity which may cause either a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and is undertaken by any public agency. (Pub. Res. Code §21065.) The proposed General Plan 2030 Update is therefore the “project” for purposes of CEQA review.

Before approving a project for which a certified FEIR has identified significant environmental effects, the lead agency must make one or more specific written findings for each of the identified significant impacts. These findings are limited to the following:

1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.
2. Such changes or alternations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.
3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the FEIR. (See CEQA Guidelines, §15091(a)).

If there remain significant environmental effects even with the adoption of all feasible mitigation measures or alternatives, the agency must adopt a “statement of overriding considerations” before it can proceed with the project. The statement of overriding consideration must be supported by substantial evidence in the record (CEQA Guidelines, §15092 and 15093).

These overriding considerations include the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the proposed project. The Lead Agency must balance these potential benefits against the project’s unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the Lead Agency may consider the adverse environmental impacts to be “acceptable” (CEQA Guidelines, §15093(a)). These benefits should be set forth in the statement of overriding considerations, and may be based on the FEIR and/or other information in the record of proceedings (CEQA Guidelines, §15093(b)).

Notably, the California Supreme Court, reflecting on this multi-step process for considering project impacts and benefits, has stated that, “[t]he wisdom of approving [any] development project, a delicate task which requires a balancing of interests, is necessarily left to the sound discretion of the local officials and their constituents who are responsible for such decisions. The law as we interpret and apply it simply requires that those decisions be informed, and therefore balanced.” (See *Citizens of Goleta Valley v. Board of Supervisors* (1990) 52 Cal.3d 553, 576).

## Project Description

### Project Setting and County Boundaries

Tulare County is located in a geographically diverse region with the peaks of the Sierra Nevada framing its eastern region, a foothill region west of the mountains, transitioning to the western portion of the County which includes the San Joaquin Valley floor, which is very fertile and extensively cultivated. The County is connected regionally via State Route 99 (SR 99), which is the primary north-south highway in the County. State highways 63 (north/south), 65 (north/south), 190 (east/west), and 198 (east/west) serve to connect the various cities, communities and regions within the County.

Tulare County consistently ranks amongst the top two leading agricultural-producing counties in the U.S., sharing this recognition with its larger neighbor to the north, Fresno County. In addition to agricultural production, the County's economic base also includes agricultural packing and shipping operations. Small and medium sized manufacturing plants are located in the Valley part of the county and are increasing in number.

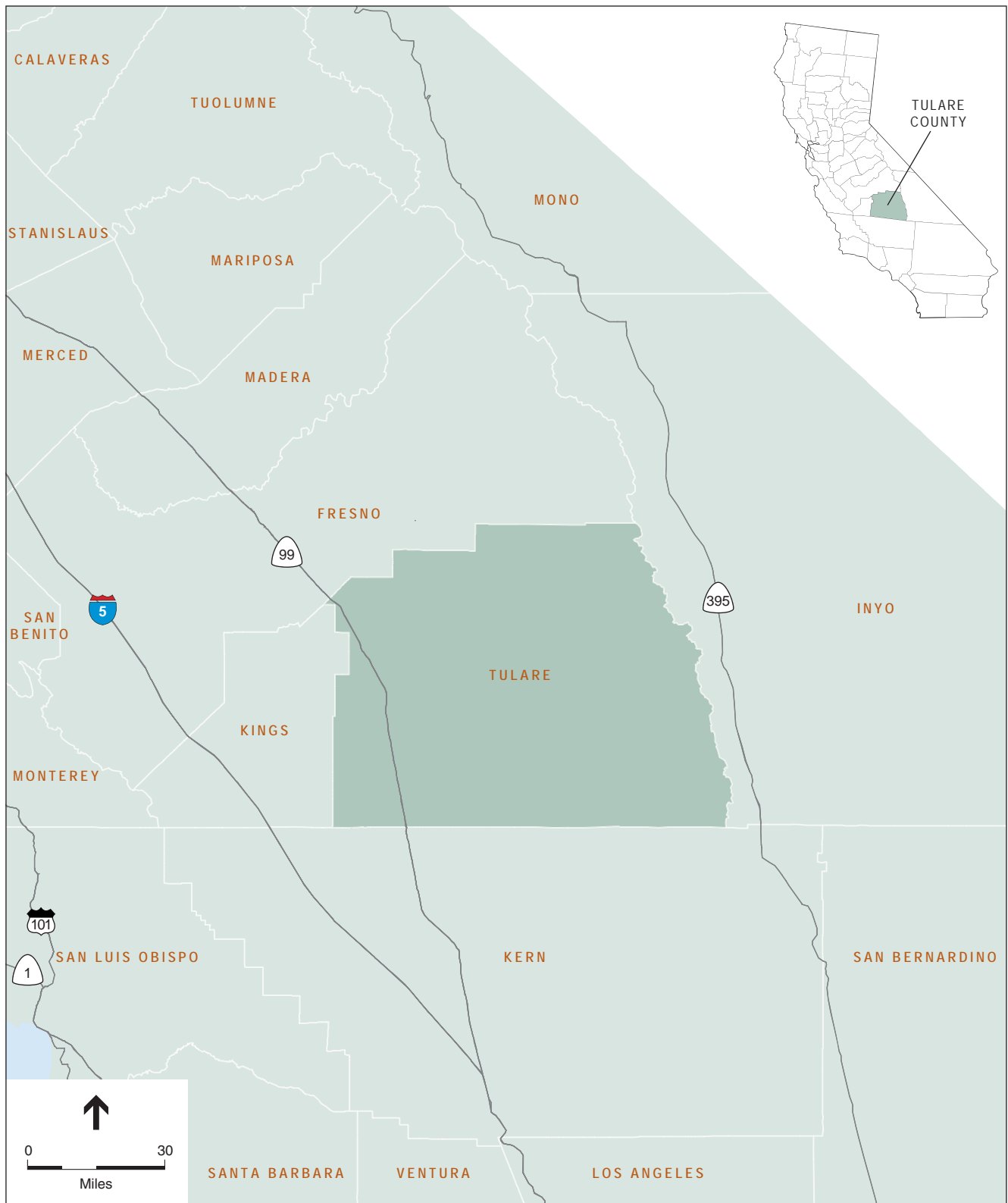
The County of Tulare is bordered by Fresno County to the north and Kern County to the south. Kings County is located on the west side of Tulare County while Inyo County borders the County to the east (see Figure 1-1). The crest of the Sierra Nevada mountain range forms the boundary with Inyo County. The northern border of Tulare County is an irregular line that passes just south of the Cities of Kingsburg and Reedley and State Highway 180. The southern border is a consistent east-west trending line, comprising the south standard parallel south of Mount Diablo, located north of the City of Delano in Kern County. The western border generally trends north-south in a straight-line north and south just east of the Cities of Corcoran and Hanford in Kings County.

## **Project Objectives**

Although the General Plan 2030 Update (the proposed project) was developed to meet several fairly broad objectives (i.e., the requirements of State law, etc.) the General Plan Update was also developed through an extensive public outreach process to reflect the specific policy needs within Tulare County. To help determine what these specific policy needs are, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors considered input received from the many community workshops, the Tulare County General Plan Update Technical Advisory Committee, and the Tulare County Planning Commission, on the fundamental values that would guide the preparation of the General Plan Update.

Overall, the objectives of the proposed project are to amend and update the policies of the General Plan to achieve the following:

- Provide opportunities for small unincorporated communities to grow or improve quality of life and their economic viability and to provide the framework for planning new self sustaining communities;
- Promote reinvestment in existing unincorporated communities in a way that enhances the quality of life and their economic viability in these locations;
- Protect the County's important agricultural resources and scenic natural lands from urban encroachment through the implementation of goals and policies of the General Plan;
- Strictly limit rural residential development in important agricultural areas outside of unincorporated communities' Urban Development Boundaries (UDBs) and cities' County Adopted City Urban Area Boundaries (CACUABs) and County Adopted City Urban Development Boundaries (CACUDBs) (i.e., avoid rural residential sprawl);
- Allow existing and outdated agricultural facilities in rural areas to be retrofitted and used for new agricultural related businesses (including value added processing facilities and uses) subject to specified criteria; and
- Enhance planning coordination and cooperation with the agencies and organizations with land management responsibilities in and adjacent to Tulare County.



SOURCE: DeLorme Street Atlas USA, 2001; and ESA, 2009

Tulare County General Plan Update . 207497

**Figure 1-1**  
Regional Locator

## Legal Requirements

### General Plans in California

State law requires each county and city to prepare and adopt a comprehensive and long-range General Plan for its physical development (Government Code Section 65300). Each General Plan must address the seven topics (referred to as “elements”) of land use, circulation, housing, open-space, conservation, safety, and noise as identified in State law (Government Code Section 65302), to the extent that the topics are locally relevant, i.e., to the extent the subject of the element exists in the planning area (Government Code Section 65301(c)). A summary of the primary objectives to be addressed within each of these elements is provided in Table 1-1. Cities and counties in the San Joaquin Valley must also address air quality matters as specified by Government Code Section 65302.1. Cities and counties may also include other topics of local interest, as they choose (Government Code Section 65303).

**TABLE 1-1  
SUMMARY OF THE MANDATED ELEMENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN**

<b>General Plan Element</b>	<b>Primary Objectives</b>
Land Use Element	Provides the general distribution and intensity of land uses within the planning area.
Air Quality	Describes requirements for San Joaquin Valley in accordance with Government Code 65302.1.
Circulation Element	Identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed transportation facilities and utilities.
Housing Element	Includes a comprehensive assessment of current and future housing needs for all segments of the County population, as well as a program for meeting those needs.
Open Space Element	Provides measures for the preservation of open space, for the protection of natural resources, the managed production of resources, and for public health and safety.
Conservation Element	Addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources.
Safety Element	Establishes policies to protect the community from risks associated with natural and human-made hazards such as seismic, geologic, flooding, wildlife hazards, and air quality.
Noise Element	Identifies major noise sources and contains policies intended to protect the community from exposure to excessive noise levels.

A comprehensive General Plan provides the jurisdiction, whether a city or a county, with a consistent framework for future land use decision making. The General Plan has been called the “constitution” for land use development to emphasize its importance to land use decisions. Once a General Plan is adopted, its maps, diagrams, and development policies form the basis for the jurisdictions zoning, subdivision, and public works actions. Under California law, no specific plan, area plan, community plan, re-zoning, subdivision map, nor public works project may be approved unless a jurisdiction finds that it is consistent with its adopted General Plan. The County’s jurisdiction is only the unincorporated territory; it has no jurisdiction in city incorporated territory for this purpose.

The County may adopt all or individual elements including the combining of elements in the General Plan in a format deemed appropriate or convenient by the legislative body so as to best fit the County’s unique circumstances (Government Code Section 65301). In doing so, the County must ensure that the General Plan and its component parts comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of development policies (Government Code Section 65300.5). For the

purpose of this amendment, the County has chosen to update most of its general plan mandatory elements (identified above in Table 1-1). The County's Housing Element is included in the General Plan Update by reference and is being updated as is required by State Law. The Housing Element is scheduled to be adopted and certified on a separate track as per State requirements. The County has previously adopted several optional elements, including the Flood Control Master Plan and the Animal Confinement Facilities Plan-Phase I, which will remain in effect but will not be amended or changed as part of this project.

Table 1-2 illustrates how these various elements (left column of table) relate to the mandatory elements identified in State law. For County elements with no check mark, this is considered an optional element. In addition to the various elements identified in the table, the General Plan contains a number of Area Plans, Sub-Area Plans, Community Plans, and County Adopted City General Plans, and will also contain future adopted Corridor Plans and Hamlet Plans. The overall structure of the General Plan (effective in specified, defined unincorporated areas), is described in greater detail below.

**TABLE 1-2  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND THE STATE-  
MANDATED ELEMENTS**

Tulare County General Plan Elements	State-Mandated Elements							
	Land Use	Noise	Circulation	Housing	Open Space	Conservation	Safety	Air Quality
<b>Part I</b>								
Planning Framework	●							
Agriculture					●	●		
Land Use	●							●
Economic Development								
Housing				●				
Scenic Landscapes					●	●		
Environmental Resources Management					●	●		
Air Quality							●	●
Health & Safety		●					●	●
Water Resources						●	●	
Animal Confinement Facilities Plan	●				●		●	●
Transportation & Circulation			●					●
Public Services & Facilities			●					
Flood Control Master Plan	●						●	
<b>Part II</b>								
Area & Corridor Plans	●		●		●	●		
<b>Part III</b>								
Community, Sub Area, & County Adopted City General Plans	●	●	●		●			

## **Description of the Proposed Project**

Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update is the product of an update process that would add a variety of important new goals and policies to existing components of the County's General Plan. In addition, some obsolete policies of the General Plan will be deleted by this update process. In many cases, those obsolete policies will be replaced by new provisions. Further, a Work Plan, consisting of implementation measures, is proposed.

The General Plan 2030 Update consists of a comprehensive update of Tulare County's existing General Plan. The historic three tier structure will remain, formalized as three "Parts." The key General Plan Update policy document includes Part I: the Goals and Policies Report and Part II: Area Plans. Part III consists of individual, existing Community, sub-area and other localized plans. The current adopted plans in Part III will not be changed as part of this update, except that the Planning Framework (Part 1, Chapter 2) of the General Plan Update modifies the Urban Development Boundaries for Dinuba (revised by this update to include the Dinuba Golf Course) and Pixley (revised by this update to include Harmon Field). Another key document is the 2010 Background Report (included as Appendix B of the RDEIR).

### ***Part I: Goals and Policies Report***

Part I (the Goals and Policies Report) of the General Plan 2030 Update Amendment document would compile, modernize, and add goals and policies to guide future land use decisions within the County unincorporated areas. The accompanying Work Plan identifies implementation measures that will ensure the goals and policies of the General Plan Update are carried out. This section identifies how this document is organized and provides a summary of its content.

The Goals and Policies Report (Part I of the General Plan Update) sets out a hierarchy of goals, policies, and implementation measures designed to guide future development in the County. To provide a comprehensive and easy-to-use format, the Goals and Policies Report is divided into four components. Each component contains a set of related elements that have been grouped together based on the close relationship of those elements. A summary of the four components is provided below.

Each component will start with an overview of the elements contained in that component and present the guiding principles used in the preparation of these elements. The individual elements will build on these guiding principles, with each element containing a set of goals and policies that will be used to guide the future land use of the County. At the end of each element or chapter is a proposed work plan (list of implementation measures) showing how the goals and policies will be implemented. All four components and the various elements that comprise each component are summarized below in Table 1-3.



**TABLE 1-3  
COMPONENTS OF THE GOALS AND POLICIES REPORT, PART I**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Chapter and Element</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 1 Introduction</li> </ul>
Component A. General Plan Framework	<p>This component introduces the Goals and Policies Report, provides a profile of Tulare County and establishes a Planning Framework Element for the County. Contents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 2 Planning Framework Element</li> </ul>
Component B. Prosperity	<p>This component includes the elements that shape the County's land use and economic futures. Contents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 3 Agriculture Element</li> <li>• Chapter 4 Land Use Element</li> <li>• Chapter 5 Economic Development Element</li> <li>• Chapter 6 Housing Element [not amended or changed by this project]</li> </ul>
Component C. Environment	<p>This component covers topics related to natural and cultural resources and public health and safety. Contents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 7 Scenic Landscapes Element</li> <li>• Chapter 8 Environmental Resources Management Element</li> <li>• Chapter 9 Air Quality Element</li> <li>• Chapter 10 Health and Safety Element</li> <li>• Chapter 11 Water Resources Element</li> <li>• Chapter 12 Animal Confinement Facilities Plan [adopted 2000; not amended or changed by this project]</li> </ul>
Component D. Infrastructure	<p>This component covers the infrastructure systems necessary to ensure adequate services and capacity of desired growth. Contents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 13 Transportation and Circulation</li> <li>• Chapter 14 Public Facilities and Services</li> <li>• Chapter 15 Flood Control Master Plan [adopted 1972; not amended or changed by this project]</li> </ul>

### ***Component A. General Plan Framework***

To help focus growth in the County, the General Plan Goals and Policies Report includes a Planning Framework Element. This element describes community and hamlet planning boundaries, and describes the relationship between unincorporated areas and cities. This latter relationship is of primary importance as most of the county's future growth is anticipated to occur within cities and the unincorporated areas near cities.

To specifically focus this growth, the Planning Framework Element includes a set of policies designed to address this issue. These policies are summarized below in Table 1-4 with further detail provided in the Goals and Policies Report. Key to these policies are the County Adopted City UAB and UDBs (CACUAB and CACUDB) for each city. A variety of measures are identified in the policies to help focus growth within these areas. For example, Policy PF-4.20 "Application of a Checklist to Control Development in a CACUDB" calls for the County to work with individual cities using the Rural Valley Lands Plan or a similar checklist to evaluate applications for special use permits, variances, or land divisions within CACUDBs to address impacts on regional issues (i.e., transportation infrastructure, availability of water, etc.).

**TABLE 1-4**  
**SUMMARY OF POLICIES (SECTION 2.4 – CITIES) FROM PLANNING FRAMEWORK ELEMENT**

PF-4.1	CACUABs for Cities	PF-4.15	Urban Improvement Areas for Cities
PF-4.2	CACUDBs for Cities – Twenty Year Planning Area	PF-4.16	Coordination with Cities in Adjacent Counties
PF-4.3	Modification of CACUABs and CACUDBs	PF-4.17	Cooperation with Individual Cities
PF-4.4	Planning in CACUDBs	PF-4.18	Future Land Use Entitlements in a CACUDB
PF-4.5	Spheres of Influence	PF-4.19	Future Land Use Entitlements in a CACUAB
PF-4.6	Orderly Expansion of City Boundaries	PF-4.20	Application of a Checklist to control Development in a CACUDB
PF-4.7	Avoiding Isolating Unincorporated Areas	PF-4.21	Application of the RVLP Checklist to Control Development in a CACUAB
PF-4.8	General Plan Designations Within City UDBs	PF-4.22	Reuse of Abandoned Improvements in a CACUDB
PF-4.9	Updating Land Use Diagram in CACUDBs	PF-4.23	Reuse of Abandoned Improvements in a CACUAB
PF-4.10	City Design Standards	PF-4.24	Annexations to a City within the CACUDB
PF-4.11	Transition to Agricultural Use	PF-4.25	Sphere of Influence Criteria
PF-4.12	Compatible Project Design	PF-4.26	City 50 Year Growth Boundaries
PF-4.13	Coordination with Cities on Development Proposals	PF-4.27	Impacts of Development within the County on City Facilities
PF-4.14	Revenue Sharing		

## ***Part II: Area Plans***

Part II includes three “Area Plans,” one for each of the three major geographic areas of the County. They are:

- Rural Valley Lands Plan
- Foothill Growth Management Plan
- Mountain Framework Plan

Part II also includes a new Corridor Framework Plan, which would establish policies that would guide the future, potential location and adoption of Corridor Plans within the County. Any such adopted Corridor Plan would be included in Part III. Part II of the General Plan provides the policy guidance required to address matters specific to defined geographic areas and corridors in the County.

## ***Part III: Community, Sub-area and County Adopted City General Plans***

Part III of the General Plan 2030 Update consists of a number of existing planning documents: Sub-Area Plans, County Adopted City General Plans, and Community Plans. Each of these plans, described in Table 1-5, applies tailored policies to specified portions of the County. These existing plans would not be revised or readopted as part of the proposed General Plan Update with two exceptions: the Planning Framework (Part I, Chapter 2) of the General Plan Update will modify the Urban Development Boundary for the Pixley Community Plan to include the Harmon Field Airport and the Urban Development Boundary for the Dinuba County Adopted City General Plan to reflect the recently annexed Dinuba Golf Course, residential and wastewater treatment area.

Furthermore, the General Plan 2030 Update anticipates the future adoptions of additional Sub-Area Plans, County Adopted City General Plans, and Community Plans, as well as Mountain Service Center Plans, Hamlet Plans, and Corridor Plans. These anticipated plans are discussed below. Each, when adopted, will be included in Part III. Thus, Part III includes the following plans, shown in Table 1-5.

**TABLE 1-5**  
**PART III COMPONENTS: SUB-AREA PLANS, COUNTY ADOPTED CITY GENERAL PLANS, COMMUNITY PLANS, HAMLET PLANS, MOUNTAIN SERVICE CENTER PLANS, CORRIDORS (SEE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE, PART I, CHAPTER 1, PAGES 1-4 THRU 1-70 III)**

Component	Description
Existing Sub-area Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Western Divide North Half Plan (a Sub-Area plan located within the boundaries of the Mountain Framework Plan) (adopted 1990; amended 1994)</li> <li>• Juvenile Detention Facility-Sequoia Field Land Use and Public Buildings Elements (adopted 1995)</li> <li>• Kennedy Meadows Plan (a Sub-Area plan located within the boundaries of the Mountain Framework Plan) (adopted 1986; amended 1995)</li> <li>• Kings River Plan (a Sub-Area plan located within the boundaries of the Rural Valley Lands Plan) (adopted 1975)</li> <li>• Sequoia Field Land Use and Public Buildings Element (adopted 1981)</li> </ul>
Mountain Framework Plan Sub-areas (Sub-area Plans not yet adopted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Western Divide South Half Plan</li> <li>• Posey Plan</li> <li>• Redwood Mountain Plan</li> <li>• South Sierra Plan</li> <li>• Upper Balch Park Plan</li> </ul>
County Adopted City General Plans	<p>Eight existing County Adopted City General Plans, including two neighborhood plans, that cover the areas between the city limit lines of the eight incorporated cities in Tulare County and the County-adopted Urban Area Boundaries and Urban Development Boundaries for those cities (note that Tulare County does not have the authority to regulate land use within the city limits of those cities):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dinuba (adopted 1964)</li> <li>• Exeter (adopted 1976)</li> <li>• Farmersville (adopted 1976)</li> <li>• Lindsay (adopted 1981)</li> <li>• Porterville (adopted 1990) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ East Porterville Neighborhood Plan (adopted 1990)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tulare (adopted 1980)</li> <li>• Visalia (adopted 1992) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Patterson Tract Neighborhood Plan (adopted 1992)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Woodlake (adopted 1986)</li> </ul>
Additional County Adopted City General Plans	<p>The Goals and Policies Report calls for adopting two additional County Adopted City General Plans. Both of these areas have established Urban Development Boundaries and the Plans will become components of Part III when adopted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delano</li> <li>• Kingsburg</li> </ul>
Existing Community Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutler/Orosi Community Plan (adopted 1988)</li> <li>• Earlimart Community Plan (adopted 1988)</li> <li>• Goshen Community Plan (adopted 1978)</li> <li>• Ivanhoe Community Plan (adopted 1990)</li> <li>• Pixley Community Plan (adopted 1997)</li> <li>• Poplar/Cotton Center Community Plan (adopted 1996)</li> <li>• Richgrove Community Plan (adopted 1987)</li> <li>• Springville Community Plan (adopted 1985)</li> <li>• Strathmore Community Plan (adopted 1989)</li> <li>• Terra Bella/Ducor Community Plan (adopted 2004)</li> <li>• Three Rivers Community Plan (adopted 1980)</li> <li>• Traver Community Plan (adopted 1989)</li> </ul>

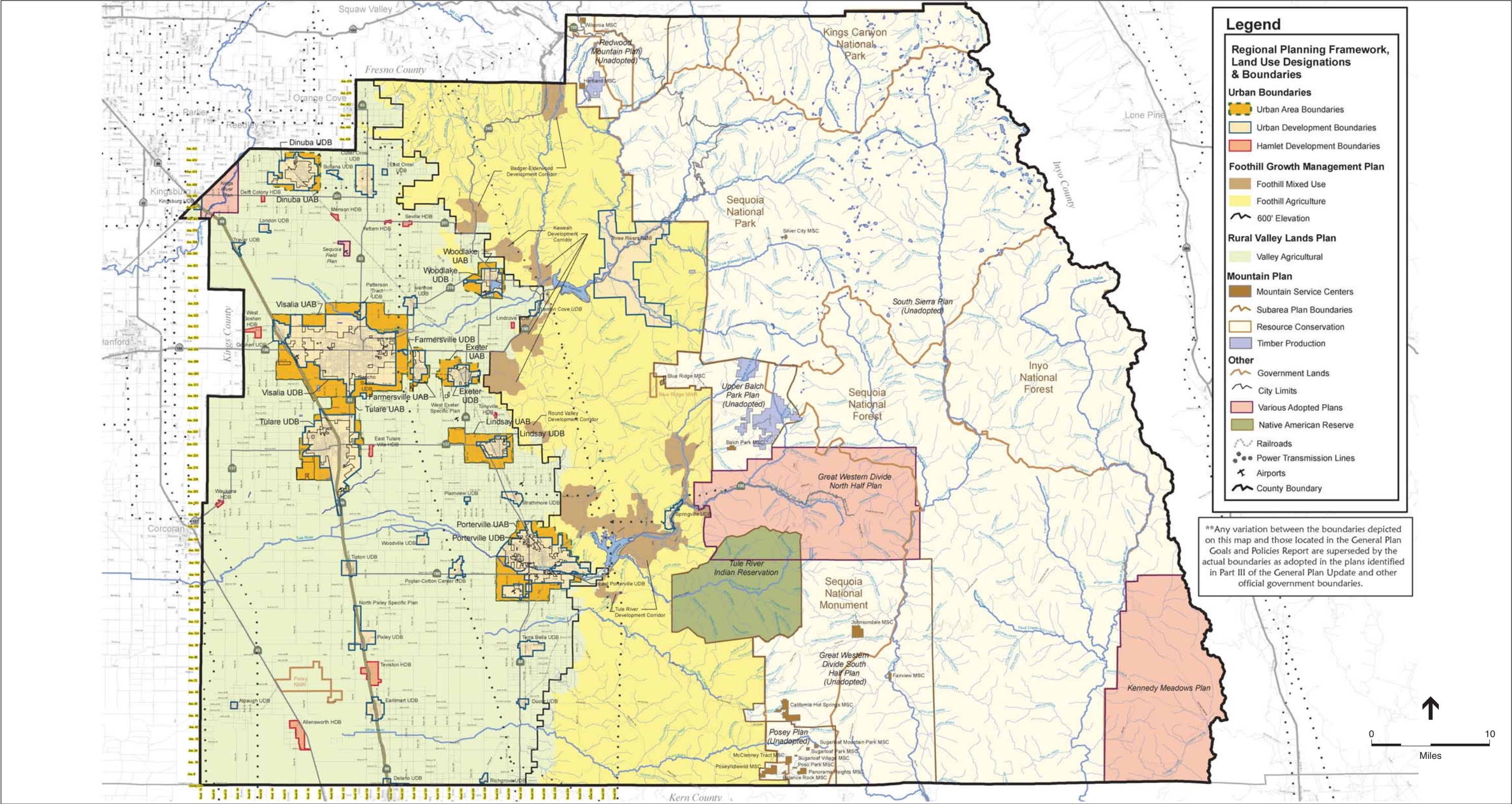
**TABLE 1-5**  
**PART III COMPONENTS: SUB-AREA PLANS, COUNTY ADOPTED CITY GENERAL PLANS,**  
**COMMUNITY PLANS, HAMLET PLANS, MOUNTAIN SERVICE CENTER PLANS, CORRIDORS (SEE**  
**GENERAL PLAN UPDATE, PART I, CHAPTER 1, PAGES 1-4 THRU 1-70 III)**

Component	Description
Additional Community Plans	<p>The Goals and Policies Report designates eight additional communities and calls for adopting a Community Plan for each. Each of these Communities has an existing Urban Development Boundary except Sultana. These Community Plans will become components of Part III of the General Plan when adopted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alpaugh</li> <li>East Orosi</li> <li>Lemon Cove</li> <li>London</li> <li>Plainview</li> <li>Sultana</li> <li>Tipton</li> <li>Woodville</li> </ul>
Mountain Service Center Plans	<p>The Goals and Policies Report designates certain existing developed areas within the boundaries of the Mountain Framework Plan as Mountain Service Centers and calls for adopting Mountain Service Center Plans (as a part of the Mountain Sub Area Plans) for these locations. When adopted, these plans will become components of Part III of the General Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balance Rock</li> <li>Balch Park</li> <li>Blue Ridge</li> <li>California Hot Springs/Pine Flat</li> <li>Fairview</li> <li>Hartland</li> <li>Johnsondale</li> <li>McClenney Tract</li> <li>Panorama Heights</li> <li>Posey/Idlewild</li> <li>Poso Park</li> <li>Silver City</li> <li>Sugarloaf Mountain Park</li> <li>Sugarloaf Park</li> <li>Sugarloaf Village</li> <li>Wilsonia</li> </ul>
Hamlet Plans	<p>The Goals and Policies Report also designates certain locations as Hamlets and calls for the adoption of a Hamlet Plan for each of these. When adopted, Hamlet Plans will become part of Part III of the General Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allensworth</li> <li>Delft Colony</li> <li>East Tulare Villa</li> <li>Lindcove</li> <li>Monson</li> <li>Seville</li> <li>Teviston</li> <li>Tonyville</li> <li>Waukena</li> <li>West Goshen</li> <li>Yettem</li> </ul>
Corridor Plans	<p>The Corridor Framework Plan in Part II establishes policies that would guide the potential adoption of "Corridor Plans" within the County. When adopted the Corridor Plans will become part of Part III of the General Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Mooney Corridor Concepts Plan (suspended by Tulare County Board of Supervisors, General Plan Amendment 04-001 and Resolution No. 04-0651 pending adoption of the Corridor Framework Plan)</li> <li>Additional Corridor Plans to be determined</li> </ul>

## Buildout and Population Growth Assumptions under the Proposed Project

The review of the proposed project includes an analysis of development which could occur if currently vacant land were developed according to the urban growth areas identified in the land use map (shown in Figure 1-2 and 1-3), land use designation descriptions for each planning area of the County, and the policy direction outlined in the Planning Framework Element (see Part I, Chapter 2) of the Goals and Policies Report. For purposes of this EIR analysis and for consistency with existing Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) and State Department of Finance projections, it is assumed that this build out would occur by 2030. However, it is possible that maximum growth or "theoretical buildout" identified under the proposed project may not occur by the horizon year of 2030. To help clarify the role of the two agencies referenced for the population data used in the RDEIR, demographers from the California Department of Finance develop and provide annual estimates of current population





SOURCE: County of Tulare, 2008; and ESA, 2009

**Figure 1-2**  
Land Use Diagram



Legend

Regional Planning Framework,  
Land Use Designations  
& Boundaries

Urban Boundaries

Urban Area Boundaries

Urban Development Boundaries

Hamlet Development Boundaries

600' Elevation

Rural Valley Lands Plan

Valley Agricultural

Various Adopted Plans

Government Lands

Railroads

Power Transmission Lines

Airports

County Boundary

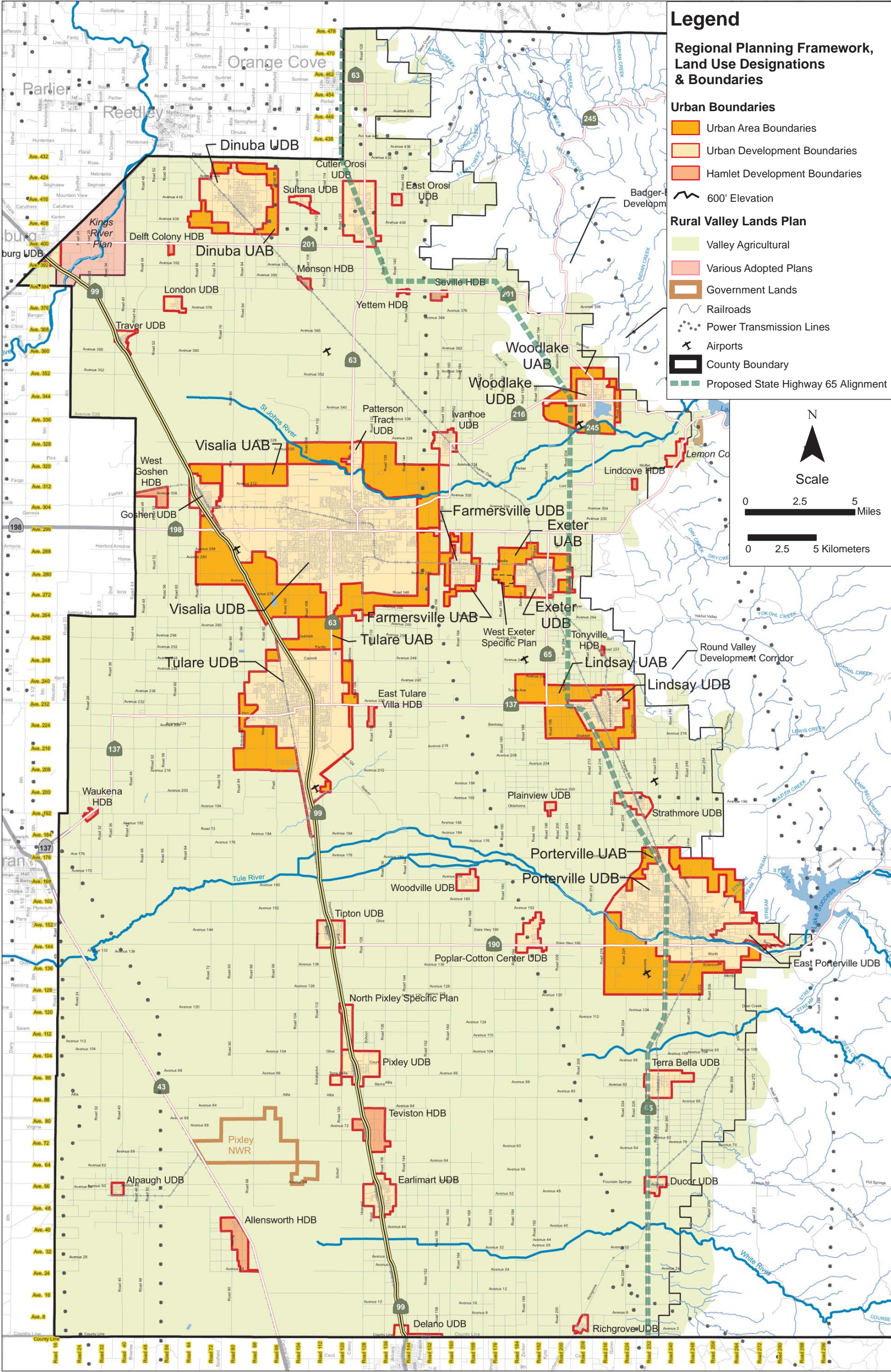
Proposed State Highway 65 Alignment

N

Scale

0 2.5 5 Miles

0 2.5 5 Kilometers



SOURCE: County of Tulare, 2008; and ESA, 2009

Tulare County General Plan Update . 207497

Figure 1-3

Rural Valley Lands Plan Portion of the Land Use Diagram



and housing statistics for both cities and counties within California along with population projections for a variety of target years. The regional transportation and planning agency for the County, TCAG, considers these statistics for its own planning efforts. The California Department of Finance is considered a reputable source of information that is used by planning agencies and jurisdictions throughout the State of California.

Although it is not possible to give a precise breakdown between the various uses which may occur, residential uses would be expected to be part of most mixed use development. In many cases, theoretical buildout may be less than the maximum allowed densities and intensities due to a number of factors, including:

- A property owner may seek less development than is allowed under the General Plan Update;
- Environmental constraints may result in lower intensity of development than allowed on some parcels;
- Policies or regulations (e.g., height limits, setbacks, infrastructure constraints etc.) may lower the amount of development allowed on a particular parcel, and/or
- Infrastructure constraints such as water or sewer may limit the amount of development.

An example of a community with constraints is Springville. Springville is currently under a wastewater moratorium by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Further constraints within the community are the slope percentage, grading, existing urban development, floodway, biological, cultural and many other issues. These constraints limit the density of urban development within the community. The analysis in the RDEIR also takes into consideration historic development patterns to project the type of development that would occur in areas with the new, mixed use designation. Existing zoning, roads, existing development, slope percentage, water and sewer capacity, and many other constraints would remain in place and would greatly reduce the maximum build-out potential. It is highly unlikely that most of the vacant land in these areas will develop to a maximum of 30 units an acre.

The review of the proposed project is based on a projected year 2030 population of 742, 970. This population estimate is based on projections provided by TCAG (TCAG, page 1, 2008) and the State Department of Finance (California Department of Finance, pages 18-19, 2007). Using these population projections as a base, the County considered several population growth scenarios that addressed the County's incorporated and unincorporated areas ability and capacity to grow and accommodate future population. These population growth scenarios were addressed during the General Plan Alternatives Phase and are described in greater detail in the Policy Alternatives Newsletter (August 2005) located on the County's website (<http://generalplan.co.tulare.ca.us/documents.html>). In reviewing these population growth scenarios and TCAG traffic modeling projections, it was determined (with County Board of Supervisor direction) that the unincorporated portions of the County could accommodate approximately 25% of future new growth. Table 1-6 identifies this expected population growth for both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County that would occur under the proposed project. Consequently, 75% (235,480) of the new population growth is expected, under the General Plan Update, to occur within the cities as they expand into the CACUDBs and their Spheres of Influence. The remaining new population growth, 25% (78,490) is expected to occur mainly within unincorporated communities and hamlets and foothill development corridors, urban and

regional growth corridors, and mountain service centers. These future growth assumptions are consistent with several of the General Plan 2030 Update objectives specific to growth issues and the policy guidance provided in the Planning Framework Element.

**TABLE 1-6  
POPULATION GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION**

City/County	2007 Population Estimate	2007 Population Distribution	Percent of Net New Growth	2007-2030 Net New Growth	2030 Population Estimate	2030 Population Distribution
County Adopted Cities (UDB)	284,910	66%	75.0%	235,480	520,390	70%
Unincorporated County	144,090	34%	25.0%	78,490	222,580	30%
Total	429,000	100.0%	100.0%	313,970	742,970	100.0%

SOURCE: California Department of Finance, pages 18-19, 2007; Tulare County Association of Governments, page 1, 2008.

Major infrastructure investments by the public and private sectors are a necessary precursor to accommodate anticipated growth within the County. As a result of the availability of public services and guided by policies included in the General Plan Update, a majority of future development is expected to occur within established Urban Development Boundaries (UDBs), Urban Area Boundaries (UABs), Hamlet Development Boundaries (HDBs), and other identified growth areas. Each of these areas are discussed above and identified in the General Plan Update Land Use Diagram.

Guidance for focusing this population growth will be provided by the various policies and implementation measures outlined in the General Plan Update, in particular those found in the Planning Framework and Land Use Elements. Several of these key policies from the Planning Framework Element are identified below:

## ***Planning Framework Element***

### **Section 2.1 General**

**PF-1.1 Maintain Urban Edges:** The County shall strive to maintain distinct urban edges for all unincorporated communities within the valley region or foothill region, while creating a transition between urban uses and agriculture and open space *[New Policy] [1964 General Plan; Major Issue 1-Retention of community identity, preservation of the agricultural economic base and control of urban sprawl; Policy 1] [1964 General Plan; Pg. I-6; 1964].*

**PF-1.2 Location of Urban Development:** The County shall ensure that urban development only takes place in the following areas:

1. Within incorporated cities and CACUDBs;
2. Within the UDBs of adjacent cities in other counties, unincorporated communities, planned community areas, and HDBs of hamlets;
3. Within foothill development corridors as determined by procedures set forth in Foothill Growth Management Plan;



4. Within areas set aside for urban use in the Mountain Framework Plan and the mountain sub-area plans; and
5. Within other areas suited for non-agricultural development, as determined by the procedures set forth in the Rural Valley Lands Plan [*Urban Boundaries Element, as amended*].

**PF-1.3 Land Uses in UDBs/HDBs:** The County shall encourage those types of urban land uses that benefit from urban services to develop within UDBs and HDBs. Permanent uses which do not benefit from urban services shall be discouraged within these areas. This shall not apply to agricultural or agricultural support uses, including the cultivation of land or other uses accessory to the cultivation of land provided that such accessory uses are time-limited through Special Use Permit procedures [*New Policy*].

**PF-1.4 Available Infrastructure:** The County shall encourage urban development to locate in existing UDBs and HDBs where infrastructure is available or may be established in conjunction with development. The County shall ensure that development does not occur unless adequate infrastructure is available, that sufficient water supplies are available or can be made available and that there are adequate provisions for long term management and maintenance of infrastructure and identified water supplies [*New Policy*].

**PF-1.6 Appropriate Land Uses by Location:** The County shall utilize the Land Use Element and adopted County Adopted City General Plans, Community Plans, Hamlet Plans, Planned Communities, Corridor Areas, or Area Plans to designate land uses and intensities that reflect and maintain the appropriate level of urbanized development in each County Adopted City General Plan, Community Plan, Hamlet Plan, Planned Community, Corridor Area, or Area Plan [*New Policy*].

**PF-1.10 Non-Conforming Uses – General:** Any previously and legally established use, building, or parcel that may not be expressly permitted by this plan in any given land use designation or the implementing zoning shall be allowed to continue in accordance with the Tulare County Zoning Ordinance and General Plan [*New Policy*].

## Section 2.2 Communities

**PF-2.6 Land Use Consistency:** The County shall require all community plans to use the same land use designations as used in this Countywide General Plan (See Chapter 4, Land Use). All community plans shall also utilize a similar format and content. The content may change due to the new requirements such as Global Climate Change and Livable Community Concepts, as described on the table provided (Table 2.2-2: Community Plan Content). Changes to this format may be considered for unique and special circumstances as determined appropriate by the County. Until such time as a Community Plan is adopted for those communities without existing Community Plans, the land use designation shall be mixed use, which promotes the integration of a compatible mix of residential types and densities, commercial uses, public facilities, and services and employment opportunities [*Urban Boundaries Element; Chapter IV; C. Current and Advanced Planning; Implementation Program C-1*] [*Urban Boundaries Element; Chapter IV; Pg; 19; 1988, Modified*].

## Implementation of the Proposed Project

Implementation Measures set forth at the end of each Element and Chapter of Part I and Part II of the General Plan 2030 Update will constitute a preliminary anticipated work plan to assist in carrying out the goals and policies of the General Plan 2030 Update. An Implementation Measure is a specific action, program, procedure, or technique. The Implementation Measures are provided to help ensure that appropriate actions are taken to implement the General Plan. The Implementation Measures state which policy (ies) the Implementation Measure supports, which County departments are responsible for seeing that this implementation is achieved, and provides an anticipated timeline for completion of the Implementation Measure. They are generally set out in the following format.

Implementation	Implements what Policy	Who is Responsible	2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2030	On-Going
1. The County shall work with TCAG to develop an enhanced public information program aimed at reducing trips and improving air quality awareness [New Program] [RACM, Resolution 2004-0067; TU 17.2].	AQ-1.1 AQ-4.5	RMA	■			

**EXAMPLE**

Implementation Measures describe actions that are concrete and measurable so their completion can be easily monitored in annual reports. The following principles guide action on these Implementation Measures:

- The timelines associated with the Implementation Measures are general guidelines for completion of the work plan.
- Completion of various tasks under the work plan is subject to available staff, financial resources, and other considerations.
- Implementation can take time, especially when needed resources are limited and required for more than one Implementation Measure.
- Because implementation will take time and will be costly, the County will need to prioritize Implementation Measures. It is contemplated that this ongoing process is part of the County's annual general policy-making function and budget cycle.
- While the policies identify specific programs, Implementation Measures may be adjusted over time, without amending the General Plan 2030 Update, based on new information, changing circumstances, and evaluation of their effectiveness, so long as they remain consistent with the intent of the General Plan 2030 Update and adopted mitigation measures.

## Program EIR and Final EIR Process

This FEIR is prepared as a program EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. A program EIR assesses the broad environmental impacts of a program (a series of related projects) with the understanding that a more detailed site-specific review may be required to assess future projects implemented under the program. Please refer to Chapters 1 and 2 of the RDEIR for additional discussion of the program EIR and subsequent environmental review.

The RDEIR for the General Plan 2030 Update was submitted to the State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2006041162) and released for public and agency review on March 25, 2010. This 60-day public review and comment period concluded on May 27, 2010. During the review period, forty-four (44) letters were received. These letters with comments pertaining to the RDEIR are included in Volume II of this FEIR, with a summary provided in Chapter 3 of this FEIR.

This document includes comments and responses to comments on the RDEIR and, along with the RDEIR, comprises the FEIR for the proposed project. The County Board of Supervisor's will certify the FEIR at a public hearing.

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines (§15132) this FEIR consists of:

- a) The RDEIR.
- b) Comment letters and recommendations received on the RDEIR.
- c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the RDEIR.
- d) The responses of the lead agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process.
- e) Any other information added by the lead agency prior to certification of the FEIR.

Items (c) through (d) are included in this document (see chapters 3-5 of this FEIR). Item (a) and Item (b) are each bound separately. Revisions to the RDEIR including minor edits and corrections, revisions made as result of comments received and clarifications and modifications are presented in Chapter 2 of this FEIR. Consequently, this FEIR document and the RDEIR together shall comprise the FEIR.

