

Notice of Preparation

To: State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: City of Ceres
2220 Magnolia Street
Ceres, CA 95307

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

City of Ceres will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study ([] is [X] is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Barry C. Siebe at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: West Ceres Specific Plan

Project Applicant, if any: City of Ceres

Date 12/22/2008

Signature [Handwritten Signature]

Title Planning Manager

Telephone 209-538-5762

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P. O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613
For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SCH # _____

Project Title: West Ceres Specific Plan

Lead Agency: City of Ceres

Contact Person: Barry Siebe

Mailing Address: 2220 Magnolia Street

Phone: 209-538-5762

City: Ceres

Zip: 95307

County: Stanislaus

Project Location: County: Stanislaus

City/Nearest Community: Ceres

Cross Streets: Whitmore Avenue and Crows Landing Road

Zip Code: 95358

Lat. / Long.: 37 ° 36 ' 16 " N / 120 ° 59 ' 22 " W

Total Acres: 960

Assessor's Parcel No.: Numerous - See attachment A

Section: _____

Twp.: _____

Range: _____

Base: _____

Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: CA-99

Waterways: Tuolumne River

Airports: N/A

Railways: UPRR

Schools: Numerous Modesto Unified and Ceres Districts Schools

Document Type:

- | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--|
| CEQA: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NOP | <input type="checkbox"/> Draft EIR | NEPA: <input type="checkbox"/> NOI | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Document |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Cons | <input type="checkbox"/> Supplement/Subsequent EIR | <input type="checkbox"/> EA | <input type="checkbox"/> Final Document |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neg Dec | (Prior SCH No.) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Draft EIS | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mit Neg Dec | Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> FONSI | |

Local Action Type:

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Plan Update | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Rezone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annexation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Plan Amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Master Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prezone | <input type="checkbox"/> Redevelopment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Plan Element | <input type="checkbox"/> Planned Unit Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Permit | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Permit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Site Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Division (Subdivision, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Development Type:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential: Units <u>2450 to 3650</u> Acres <u>294</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Facilities: Type _____ MGD _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Office: Sq.ft. <u>up to 384,000</u> Acres <u>17.7</u> Employees <u>1090</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation: Type _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial: Sq.ft. <u>up to 942,000</u> Acres <u>81.6</u> Employees <u>1430</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining: Mineral _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial: Sq.ft. <u>up to 555,300</u> Acres <u>61.7</u> Employees <u>1150</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Power: Type _____ MW _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <u>two elementary school sites totaling 16 acres</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Waste Treatment: Type _____ MGD _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational <u>43 acres of parks and plazas and 27 acres of open space</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous Waste: Type _____ |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>173.9-acre existing Stanislaus County facilities (jail, ag center, family services, etc), 126.6-acre existing G3 industrial facility, existing Carol Lane neighborhood totaling 18.9 acres</u> |

Project Issues Discussed in Document:

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual | <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Land | <input type="checkbox"/> Flood Plain/Flooding | <input type="checkbox"/> Schools/Universities | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Land/Fire Hazard | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewer Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Supply/Groundwater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological/Historical | <input type="checkbox"/> Geologic/Seismic | <input type="checkbox"/> Septic Capacity | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland/Riparian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Minerals | <input type="checkbox"/> Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Zone | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid Waste | <input type="checkbox"/> Growth Inducing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drainage/Absorption | <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing Balance | <input type="checkbox"/> Toxic/Hazardous | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic/Jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services/Facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic/Circulation | <input type="checkbox"/> Cumulative Effects |
- Other Attachment A includes a discussion of the analysis proposed in the EIR.

Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:

See Attachment A: Project Description for more details. The site is currently largely in agricultural use and would require a GP amendment and pre-zoning.

Project Description: (please use a separate page if necessary)

The project as proposed includes approval of the West Ceres Specific Plan (WCSP) and annexation of the plan area into the City of Ceres, with related approvals. The proposed development is envisioned as a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly community with a diverse mix of home types and a jobs/housing balance including up to 4260 new commercial, office and industrial jobs and up to 3650 new homes. The plan also includes two elementary school sites as well as parks and open space to support the proposed community.

See Attachment A: Project Description for additional details.

Note: The state Clearinghouse will assign identification numbers for all new projects. If a SCH number already exists for a project (e.g. Notice of Preparation or previous draft document) please fill in.

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with an "X".
If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "S".

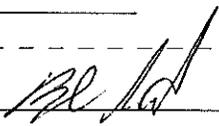
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Resources Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Office of Historic Preservation
<input type="checkbox"/> Boating & Waterways, Department of	<input type="checkbox"/> Office of Public School Construction
<input type="checkbox"/> California Highway Patrol	<input type="checkbox"/> Parks & Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Caltrans District # <u>10</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pesticide Regulation, Department of
<input type="checkbox"/> Caltrans Division of Aeronautics	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Utilities Commission
<input type="checkbox"/> Caltrans Planning (Headquarters)	<input type="checkbox"/> Reclamation Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional WQCB # <u>5S</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Commission	<input type="checkbox"/> Resources Agency
<input type="checkbox"/> Colorado River Board	<input type="checkbox"/> S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Commission
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation, Department of	<input type="checkbox"/> San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers and Mtns Conservancy
<input type="checkbox"/> Corrections, Department of	<input type="checkbox"/> San Joaquin River Conservancy
<input type="checkbox"/> Delta Protection Commission	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
<input type="checkbox"/> Education, Department of	<input type="checkbox"/> State Lands Commission
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Commission	<input type="checkbox"/> SWRCB: Clean Water Grants
<input type="checkbox"/> Fish & Game Region # <u>4</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> SWRCB: Water Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Food & Agriculture, Department of	<input type="checkbox"/> SWRCB: Water Rights
<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry & Fire Protection	<input type="checkbox"/> Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
<input type="checkbox"/> General Services, Department of	<input type="checkbox"/> Toxic Substances Control, Department of
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Services, Department of	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Resources, Department of
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing & Community Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Waste Management Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Native American Heritage Commission	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Office of Emergency Services	

Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date 12/23/08 Ending Date 1/21/09

Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):

Consulting Firm: <u>Lamphier-Gregory</u>	Applicant: <u>City of Ceres</u>
Address: <u>1944 Embarcadero</u>	Address: <u>2220 Magnolia Street</u>
City/State/Zip: <u>Oakland, CA 94606</u>	City/State/Zip: <u>Ceres, CA 95307</u>
Contact: <u>Rebecca Gorton</u>	Phone: <u>209-538-5762</u>
Phone: <u>510-535-6690</u>	

Signature of Lead Agency Representative:  Date: 12/22/08

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21161, Public Resources Code.

ATTACHMENT A: WEST CERES SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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SITE LOCATION AND CONDITIONS

LOCATION

The 960-acre West Ceres Specific Plan (WCSP) area is located in an unincorporated area of Stanislaus County, adjacent to the City of Ceres. The City of Ceres is located south of Modesto, and approximately 10-miles northwest of the City of Turlock, along State Route 99 (SR 99). (Figure 1) The Specific Plan area boundaries are:

- Whitmore Avenue to the north,
- Union Pacific Railroad to the east,
- Service Road to the south, and
- Ustick Road to the west.

The Specific Plan area is directly accessible from Whitmore Avenue, Crows Landing Road, and Service Road from existing and anticipated interchanges with SR-99.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND EXISTING USES

Figure 2 shows the properties that make up the Specific Plan area, with APNs and ownership.

Stanislaus County has land and facilities to the east of Crows Landing Road amounting to 19% of the Specific Plan area including a County jail, Sheriff’s administration and training facility, Agricultural Center, and Family Services, as well as additional area for future expansion of facilities and uses. The County’s plans for continuation and expansion of uses in this area will be accommodated in the plan.

The remaining area to the east of Crows Landing Road is the existing G3 Enterprises facility, representing 13% of the Specific Plan area. These properties include an industrial labeling and logistics facility as well as a retail corner at Whitmore Avenue and Crows Landing Road.

Carol Lane is an existing dead-end street (accessed off Whitmore Ave.) with a residential neighborhood consisting of 24 rural residential parcels generally ranging in size from approximately one half acre to one and a half acres in size, and 2 parcels at the corner of Whitmore Avenue making up the Whitmore Church of Christ. The Carol Lane neighborhood represents 2% of the Specific Plan area. This existing neighborhood is expected to remain under the proposed Specific Plan, which would focus on appropriate adjacent uses and buffers.

The remaining 66% of the Specific Plan area includes 22 parcels primarily in agricultural use with some scattered rural home sites. This is the main area being planned for new development in the Specific Plan. This area also includes the existing El Rematito Flea Market, located at the northwest corner of Crows Landing Road and Hackett Road.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

The West Ceres Specific Plan area currently falls under the jurisdiction of Stanislaus County, but is within the Phase 1, Phase 2 and Reserve Urban Growth Areas of the City of Ceres 1997 General Plan (Figure 3). Accordingly, the City of Ceres General Plan designates lands uses for the West Ceres Specific Plan (WCSP) in anticipation of its eventual annexation and development.

Lands within the City of Ceres Urban Growth Area are divided between Phase 1, Phase 2 and Reserve Areas to indicate the timing of development anticipated in these areas. The proposed plan would represent an acceleration of the timing implied by the current Urban Growth Area designations. A General Plan Amendment, including revision of the Urban Growth Areas would be required.

The City of Ceres General Plan (General Plan) designates the following uses in the WCSP: (See Figure 3)

- Office (O)
- Community Commercial (CC)
- Light Industrial (LI)
- General Industrial (GI)
- Community Facilities (CF)
- Residential Reserve (RR)

ADJACENT USES

The WCSP area is surrounded by a variety of land uses as summarized below:

- Low-density residential subdivision and industrial uses to the north (City of Modesto)
- Low-density residential subdivision to the east (City of Ceres)
- Industrial, commercial and agricultural uses to the south (City of Ceres and unincorporated areas)
- Agricultural uses to the west (unincorporated)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The project as proposed includes approval of the West Ceres Specific Plan (WCSP) and annexation of the Specific Plan area into the City of Ceres. Development as proposed in the WCSP would require a number of other City approvals, including environmental review, a General Plan Amendment, and rezoning.

The WCSP is being developed as a policy document to guide future growth, land use, infrastructure and public service planning and investment in the Specific Plan area, and as a regulatory document to provide rules and standards by which new development within the Specific Plan area may proceed. It would contain design guidelines and development standards to regulate development within the Specific Plan area.

The Preferred Concept Plan (as of December 2008) is included as Figure 4. In total, the Specific Plan area would result in a new mixed-use master planned community expected to support development of a total of approximately:

- 2450 to 3650 residential units;
- up to 942,000 square feet of retail commercial;
- up to 384,000 square feet of office space;
- 555,000 to 606,000 square feet of light industrial and/or Research and Development uses;
- 16 acres of schools;
- and 70 acres of parks and open space.

Additionally, some existing uses would be anticipated to remain under the plan, including:

- the existing 18.9-acre Carol Lane neighborhood;
- the G3 industrial facility, which would be expected to continue to expand on their 126.6 acre site,
- and the 173.9-acre County facilities which would be expected to continue to develop based upon their master plan for the site.

A breakdown of the acreage in each land use can be found in Figure 4.

DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

The residential land use districts in the WCSP are envisioned to provide quality housing to people of all income levels, ages and family size – creating a vibrant and diverse community both demographically and architecturally. These residential districts will be organized such that high density development will be located near retail, employment and transit corridors along Crows Landing Road. This will place the highest concentration of residents within walking distance of transit, jobs and services. Uses will gradually transition to low-density single family detached units along the western project boundary at Ustick Road. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the anticipated residential units in each of the land uses categories.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

Consistent with the General Plan, WCSP will include a Low Density Residential District with a 7 dwelling unit/acre maximum density. This district is generally intended for single-family detached and duplex/halfplex residential units.

Medium Density Residential (MDR)

Consistent with the General Plan, WCSP will include a Medium Density Residential District with a 7-12 dwelling unit/acre range. This district is intended to include a range of housing types, such as standard lot single family detached, small lot homes, cluster homes and cottages.

High Density Residential I (HDR I) (12-18 du/ac.)

This High Density Residential I designation is proposed to have a 12-18 dwelling unit/acre range. This district is intended as a transition between medium density and the upper range of High Density Residential with housing types ranging from small lot, cluster and cottage homes to attached townhomes, within the prescribed density limits.

High Density Residential II (HDR II) (18-25 du/ac.)

This High Density Residential II designation is the upper end of HDR and is proposed to have an 18-25 dwelling unit/acre range. This district is anticipated to include mostly attached housing types, such as apartments, condominiums, townhomes and live-work units.

Table 1: WCSP Anticipated Residential Units

Residential Land Use	Land Use Designation	Gross Acres	Specific Plan Gross Density Ranges	Estimated Units Low Range	Estimated Units High Range	Estimated Average Units
Low Density	LDR	140.8	4.5-7 du/ac	633	985	739
Medium Density	MDR	78.4	7-12 du/ac	549	940	659
High Density	HDR	39.3	12-18 du/ac	472	707	412
High Density	HDR	31.7	18-24 du/ac	570	760	634
Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use ¹	NC/HDR	32.2 @25%	Assume 20 du/ac	160	160	160
Office Mixed Use ¹	O/HDR	17.7 @25%	Assume 20 du/ac	88	88	88
Residential Totals		340.1		2472	3640	2692

¹ Some residential development is allowed in the Neighborhood Commercial and Office Mixed-Use designations, as outlined in the discussions of those land use designations.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL, OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL USES

Regional Commercial (RC)

The Regional Commercial district is envisioned to allow a variety of retail uses and services, including large-scale shopping centers, wholesale “club” type stores, factory outlets, and other

commercial uses such as retail stores, food and drug stores, apparel stores, specialty shops, home furnishings, restaurants, entertainment uses, and other similar uses that serve a community wide and regional market.

- Primary Use Commercial –100% (31.8 ac.) Up to approximately 500,000 square feet of regional commercial uses could be anticipated.
- Job generation estimate--700 jobs (based on average 715 gross building s.f. per job)
- Residential – Not to be permitted in this district.

Community Commercial

This district is envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented, retail transition from the Regional Commercial use to the neighborhood “core” of the West Ceres community (referred to as the Mixed Use Center). This district is intended to be a somewhat lower intensity use than the RC district, with retail stores, food and drug stores, apparel stores, specialty shops, real estate offices, restaurants, florists, hotels/motels, and other community serving uses.

- Primary Use Commercial – 100% (15.1 ac.) Up to approximately 150,000 square feet of community commercial uses could be anticipated.
- Job Generation estimate--220 jobs (based on an average of 671 s.f. per job)
- Residential – Not to be permitted in this district.

Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and High Density Residential (HDR) – Mixed Use

This Mixed Use district is envisioned as a pedestrian oriented, mixed use retail core of the West Ceres community, referred to as the Mixed Use Center. This district is intended to be a highly visible, high intensity, active, social, and cultural gathering place and “hub” of the West Ceres community– where buildings open onto wide sidewalks allowing outdoor dining and retail displays.

- Primary Use Commercial and Office– 75% minimum (24.2 ac.) 100% maximum (32.2 ac.). Up to approximately 291,700 square feet of neighborhood commercial and office uses could be allowed. An additional approximately 60,000 square feet of office and/or up to 160 residential units could be allowed over retail uses
- Job Generation estimate--@75%--500 jobs; @100%--680 jobs (510 retail jobs + 170 office jobs above retail) (based on an average of 631 s.f. per job for neighborhood commercial and 350 s.f. per job for office)
- Secondary Use Residential – 25% maximum (8.0 ac.) Only high density residential would be allowed, supporting bus transit and placing a high concentration of residents within close walking distance of work and services. At 20 units per acre this could be up to 160 units.

Office (O) Mixed use

The Office Mixed Use district is intended for professional and administrative office uses such as finance, insurance, and banking, arranged in a well landscaped, campus-style setting, with accessory supporting commercial uses such as copy centers, cafes, retail sales and services.

- Primary Use Office and Accessory – 75% minimum (13.3 ac.) 100% maximum (17.7 ac.) Up to approximately 324,000 square feet of office park uses could be allowed.

- Job Generation estimate--@75%--700 jobs; @100%—920 jobs (based on an average of 350 s.f. per job)
- Residential – 25% maximum (4.4 ac.) Only high density residential would be allowed, supporting bus transit and placing a high concentration of residents within close walking distance of work and services. At 20 units per acre, this could be up to 90 units.

Light Industrial (LI)

The Light Industrial district will be more fully explored as the Specific Plan is drafted, as there are currently two scenarios for development of this area, a business park or a light industrial park, as described below.

Business Park

The Business Park scenario is envisioned as a campus-style setting for research and development, light manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and related supporting uses.

- Primary Use –100% maximum and minimum (61.7 ac.) Up to approximately 605,500 square feet of business park uses could be allowed.
- Job Generation estimate- @100%--1780 jobs (based on an average of 341 s.f. per job)
- Residential – Not to be permitted in this district.

Light Industrial Park

The Light Industrial Park scenario is envisioned as an alternative land use for this 61.7-acre area. This alternate use would be seen as a setting for light industrial and heavy commercial uses, including light manufacturing and fabricating, contractor’s yards and offices, motor vehicle service and repair, wholesale uses, lumber yards, hardware stores, other similar industrial and heavy commercial uses, offices and recreational uses.

- Primary Use –100% maximum (61.7 ac.) Up to approximately 555,300 square feet of light industrial uses could be allowed.
- Job Generation estimate- @100%--1150 jobs (based on an average of 480 s.f. per job)
- Residential – Not to be permitted in this district.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

The project would require the expansion, improvement and construction of new infrastructure and public facilities on the project site. This includes approximately 70 acres of parks and open space, which would include passive recreation and open space uses, trails, and sports fields and courts.

Fire protection to the currently unincorporated Specific Plan area and the surrounding areas is currently provided by the Westport Fire Protection District. As part of the annexation process, it is anticipated that Fire District boundaries will be reorganized so that the Specific Plan area will become annexed to the fire protection service area of the City of Ceres Fire Department. At this point, the Ceres Fire Department considers it unlikely that they will be able to maintain adequate response times to serve the Specific Plan area from existing stations, and they will continue to be consulted regarding the possibility of a new 1-acre station site within the Specific Plan area. While a potential location for

this facility has been identified on the Preferred Concept Plan (Figure 4), the ultimate location will be determined in consultation with the Fire Department.

Currently, law enforcement service to the unincorporated Specific Plan area is provided by the County Sheriff's Office. Once annexed, the Specific Plan area will fall within the service area of the City of Ceres Police Department. To serve the proposed West Ceres community, the Ceres Police Department may pursue a substation within the Specific Plan area. The Police and Fire Departments could support a combined new facility, of which the police substation would need approximately 800 square feet for their substation, if needed.

The eastern portion of the Specific Plan area, between the Union Pacific rail line and Crows Landing Road, is within the Ceres Unified School District. The western portion of the Specific Plan area, from Crows Landing Road to Ustick Road, is located within the Modesto School District. The possibility of a school district boundary change so that the entire Specific Plan area falls within the Ceres Unified School District is being explored. Based on preliminary discussions with both school districts, two elementary school sites have been included in the Specific Plan area (see Figure 4). It is anticipated that middle school and high school students can be accommodated in existing facilities in either District.

The project would include the development of an internal circulation system of neighborhood, collector, and arterial roads and streets, as well as improvements to existing arterial roadways that run through and along the perimeter of the project site, where warranted. The ultimate configuration and characteristics of the roadways will be determined through traffic projection analysis.

Potable domestic water would be provided by the City of Ceres Municipal Utilities Department water distribution system for the majority of the Specific Plan area. The possible exception includes the existing G3 facility, which is currently being served by the City of Modesto and is likely to remain on their services. Other existing facilities within the Specific Plan area will need to be upgraded in order to meet the project needs. A looped system will be required between the trunk mains in Whitmore Avenue and Service Road. Any proposed well and tank sites within the WCSP project will also be interconnected with the City's transmission system providing additional pressures and capacity for the proposed project. The number of wells, tanks, and pumping facilities will be determined based on the final land use plan and incorporated into future landscape areas where possible.

Wastewater flows generated by the project would be collected by the City of Ceres sanitary sewer system and conveyed to the City of Ceres Wastewater Treatment Plant located southeast of the project at the intersection of Service Road and Blaker Road. Existing trunk mains in Service Road within a quarter of a mile to the project will provide the sewer connection for the project.

Stormwater facilities would include regional detention/retention facilities, upgrading and upsizing of existing drainage lines and structures, improvements to existing pump stations, and the construction of new discharge facilities. Enhancement of drainage channels and detention/retention basins will be explored in the Specific Plan to serve aesthetic purposes such as open space, bike trails, wetland preserves and habitats.

PROPOSED ANALYSIS

An Initial Study Checklist has not been prepared for this Notice of Preparation. The City of Ceres, as Lead Agency for the project, intends to prepare a comprehensive EIR for the project, which will address all environmental issues related to the project. The following is a summary of the environmental issues anticipated to be addressed in the Draft EIR for this project.

AIR QUALITY

Primary air quality issues associated with this project would be impacts to regional air quality from indirect sources (i.e., project traffic generation) and evaluation of appropriate buffers between planned sensitive uses and sources of air pollution or odors. An air quality analysis will be prepared in accordance with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) CEQA Guidelines and will include assessment of construction impacts, regional air quality impacts, traffic-related carbon monoxide concentrations, and global climate change/greenhouse gas emissions.

AESTHETICS

Design plans for development at the project site will be reviewed and issues will be addressed related to possible adverse effects on scenic vistas, scenic resources, degradation of the existing visual character of the site or vicinity, and any new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views of the area. Graphics created for the Specific Plan will illustrate the visual character of the proposed new community.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Environmental impacts associated with the conversion of land currently in agricultural use to non-agricultural uses will be evaluated, as will potential conflicts with Williamson Act provisions.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

A literature review and field survey will be conducted to document and describe on-site biological resources, identify any potentially significant impacts to these resources from development of the site, and provide any needed mitigation recommendations to reduce or avoid biological impacts to the extent possible. Key biological resources in the general area are wetlands (and associated sensitive species such as fairy shrimp), valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and nesting raptors, including Swainson's hawk and burrowing owl. As most of the Specific Plan area appears to be leveled and intensively cultivated orchards or irrigated pasture, sensitive habitats and species may be few or none.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC

A records search and field survey will be conducted to identify any significant cultural or historic resources within the project site. Preliminary research suggests there are no currently identified cultural/historic resources on site, though at least two structures appear to date from a historic period and may need to be evaluated.

GEOLOGY/SOILS

The extent to which development of the project site as proposed would have an environmental effect related to geology and soils will be evaluated including review of published maps and reports and site reconnaissance by a professional geologist. Key issues include expansive soils, liquefaction of soils at depth, and seismically induced ground-shaking hazards.

HAZARDS/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The extent to which development of the project would have an environmental effect related to hazards and hazardous materials will be evaluated. The existing site use is largely agricultural and the primary concern in the conversion of agricultural land to residential and commercial use is the potential for chemicals used in agriculture, such as pesticides, fertilizers, and petroleum hydrocarbons, to be present in soils at the site.

HYDROLOGY/WATER QUALITY

The extent to which development of the project would have an environmental effect related to geology and soils will be evaluated, including assessment of: local drainage patterns and capacities, runoff and its effects on storm drain levels, the potential for increased risk of flood hazard exposure, the potential of non-point source pollutants to impact the water quality of receiving waters, and the potential for increased soil erosion.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

Noise issues would include the noise and land use compatibility of proposed land uses and the potential for the project to result in temporary or permanent increases in noise levels at nearby sensitive receivers. The primary existing noise sources affecting the Specific Plan area are traffic noise, train noise, and localized noise from existing facilities or agricultural use. Measurements of ambient noise levels would be made at locations representative of both existing and planned sensitive uses and future noise levels will be calculated based on the results of the ambient noise measurements, future traffic volume projections, and railroad activity projections. Noise impacts would be assessed with respect to applicable City policies and appropriate CEQA significance criteria. The impact assessment will also evaluate the potential for any offsite noise impacts associated with the project, which would include construction noise impacts on existing residences surrounding the Specific Plan area.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

The extent to which the proposed development would induce substantial population growth will be evaluated within the context of existing plans.

PUBLIC SERVICES

The extent to which the proposed development would require new or physically altered governmental facilities associated with the provision of fire protection services, police protection services, schools, parks and other public facilities (e.g., libraries, civic office space, etc.) will be evaluated.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Existing transportation data will be collected and evaluated. The evaluation will include City and County roadways, State highways, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities. In consultation with City of Ceres staff, 18 study intersections and 8 roadway segments most likely to be impacted by the proposed project were identified for analysis. These locations are listed below and highlighted in Figure 5.

Intersections:

1. Crows Landing Road / SR99 Northbound Ramps
2. Crows Landing Road / Hatch Road
3. Carpenter Road / Whitmore Avenue
4. Ustick Avenue / Whitmore Avenue
5. Crows Landing Road / Whitmore Avenue
6. Morgan Road / Whitmore Avenue
7. Blaker Road / Whitmore Avenue
8. Whitmore Place / El Camino Avenue
9. Whitmore Place / Whitmore Avenue
10. Crows Landing Road / Hackett Road
11. Carpenter Road / Service Road
12. Crows Landing Road / Service Road
13. Morgan Road / Service Road
14. Blaker Road / Service Road
15. Central Avenue / Service Road
16. Mitchell Road / Service Road
17. Carpenter Road / Keyes Road
18. Crows Landing Road / Keyes Road

Roadway Segments:

1. Crows Landing Road north of Hatch Road
2. Crows Landing Road north of Whitmore Avenue
3. Crows Landing Road south of Whitmore Avenue
4. Whitmore Avenue east of Crows Landing Road
5. Whitmore Avenue east of Blaker Road
6. Service Road east of Central Avenue
7. SR 99 north of Crows Landing Road
8. SR 99 south of Mitchell Road

Locations on State Route 99 (SR 99) will be evaluated using Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) methods in compliance with the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Guide for the

Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies. The cumulative traffic volumes will be projected using the StanCOG travel demand model. The land use and circulation assumptions in the model will be reviewed and, if necessary, modified to reflect the future developments and roadway improvements as well as the land use assumptions in the General Plan for the study area. This would form the basis for the baseline cumulative conditions. Turning movements for the baseline cumulative condition at the study intersections will be forecasted using the Furness process. Forecasts for the project will be generated using the same process described above. The land use and roadway network will be modified to reflect the project changes. Turning movements for the cumulative with project condition will be developed using the Furness process. Intersection and roadway level of service at the study intersections will be reported per HCM and/or City of Ceres policies.

An assessment of circulation within the study area will be performed based on the project's circulation system. Emphasis will be placed on identification of safety hazards at potential conflict points such as driveways, connectivity of proposed roadway network, traffic-carrying capacity, and effectiveness of traffic control devices.

The projected changes in transit demand will be qualitatively discussed and potential impacts identified.

An evaluation will be performed of the project's potential impacts on existing or planned County, City, or StanCOG Regional Bicycle Transportation Master Plan and Bicycle Action Plan facilities located within 1/4 mile of the project site, or that may have a potential for significant environmental impact due to the project. We will also review any proposed on-site bicycle facilities for consistency with the City's goals and policies as well as potential conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians.

An evaluation will be performed of the project's potential impacts on any pedestrian facilities that may have a potential for significant environmental impact due to the project including proposed on-site facilities.

UTILITIES/SERVICE SYSTEMS

The extent to which development of the project site as proposed would affect existing water supply, treatment and delivery systems, existing wastewater collection and treatment systems, existing storm drainage systems, and existing solid waste collection and disposal services will be evaluated.

Figure 1: Project Vicinity

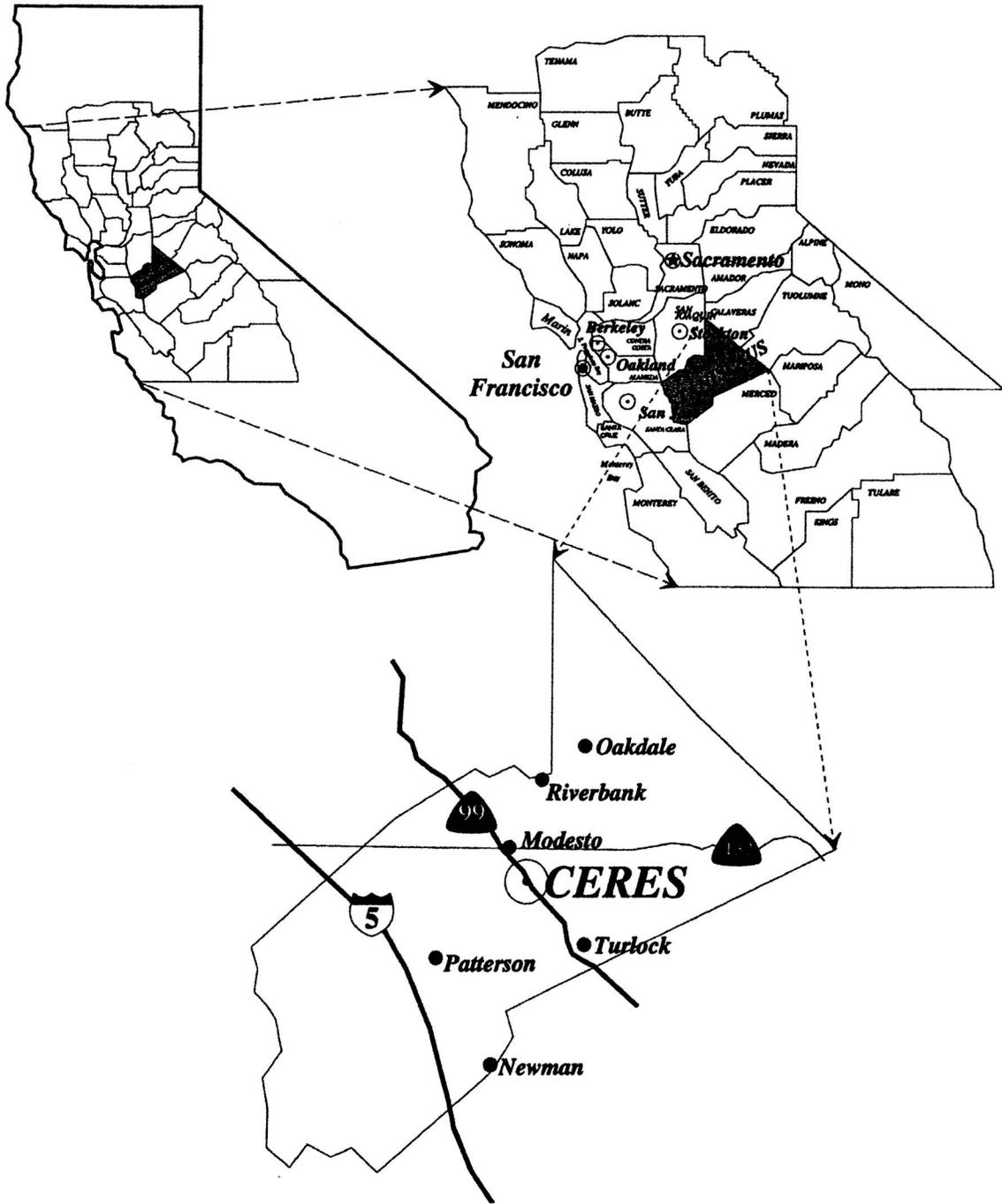
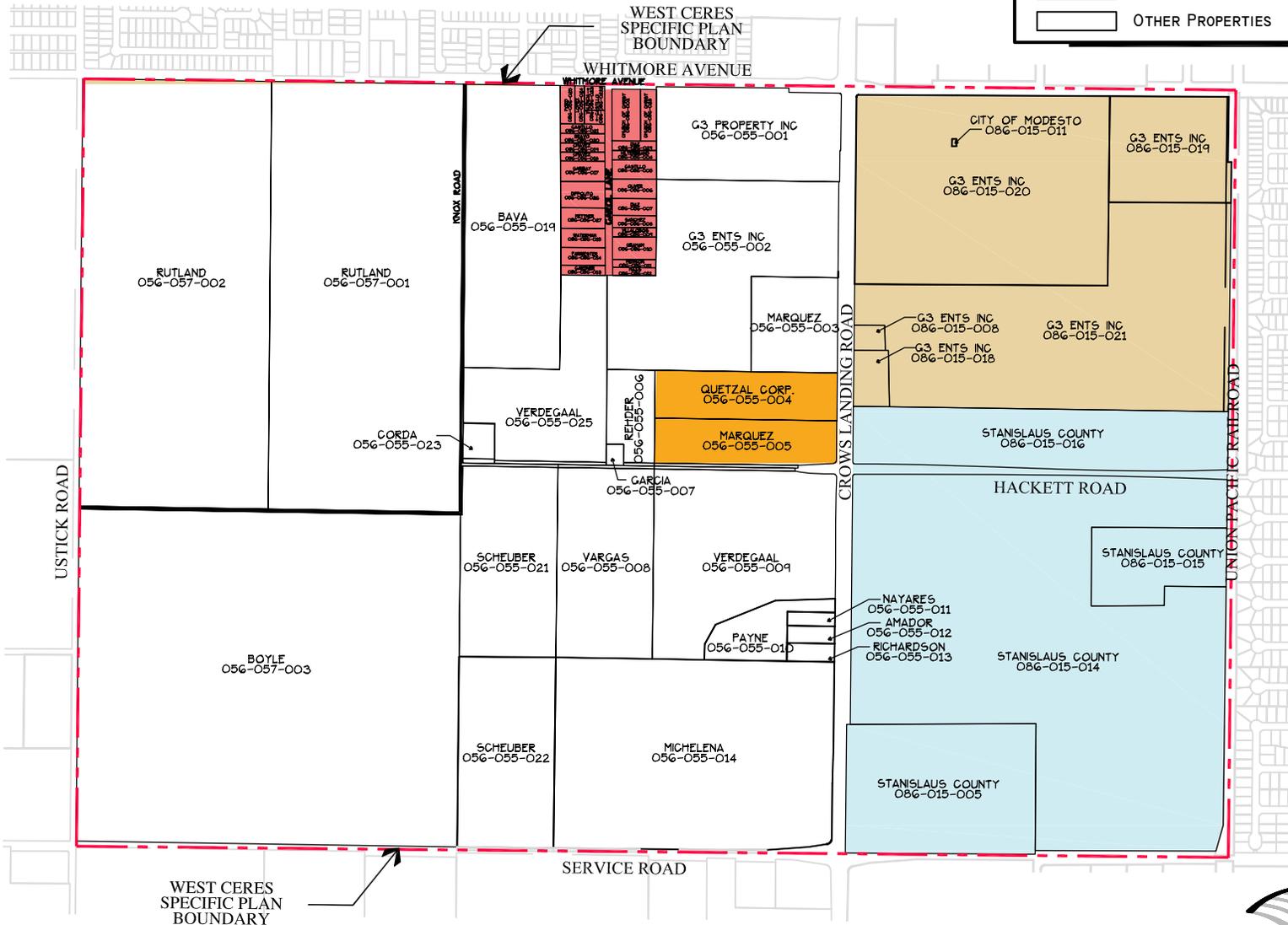


FIGURE 2 PROPERTY OWNERSHIP WEST CERES PLANNING AREA MAY 2008

LEGEND

- G3 ENTERPRISES FACILITY
- EL REMATITO FLEA MARKET
- STANISLAUS COUNTY PROPERTIES
- CAROL LANE NEIGHBORHOOD
- OTHER PROPERTIES



NOT TO SCALE

WOOD RODGERS

DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE DESIGN SOLUTIONS

580 Second Street Ste. 200 Tel 510.208.2400
Oakland, CA. 94607 Fax 510.208.2401

Figure 3: Ceres General Plan Designations

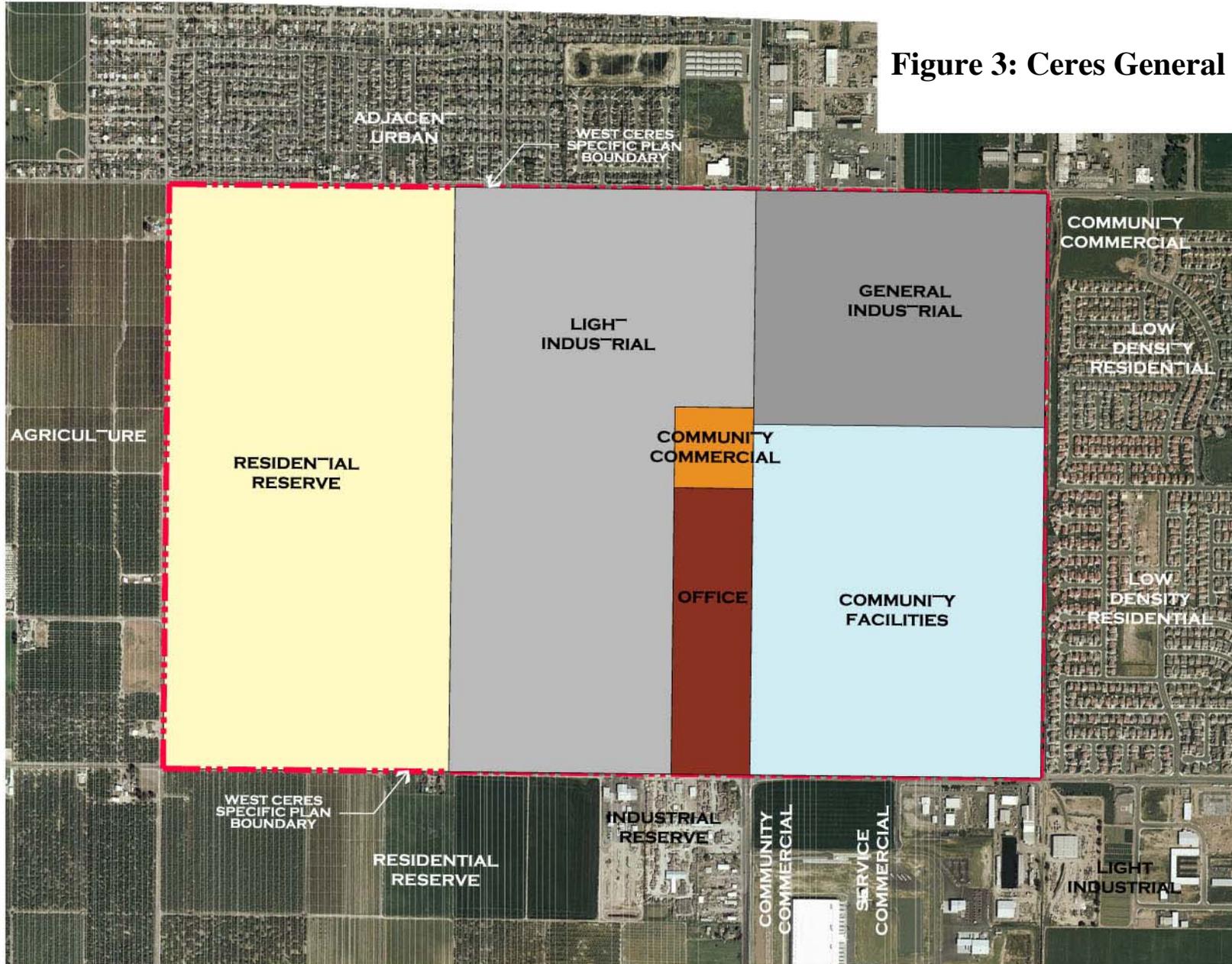
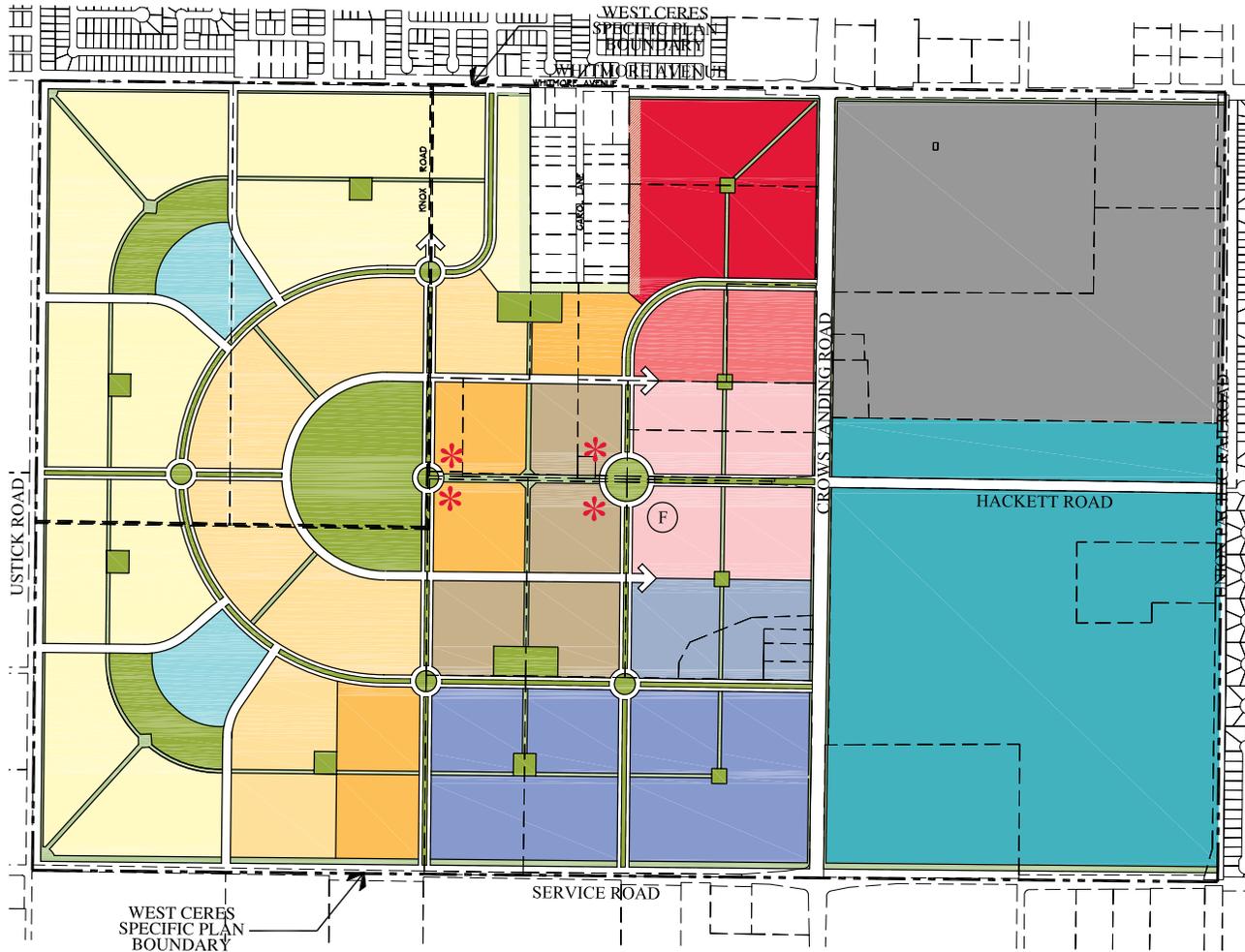


Figure 4: Preferred Concept Plan West Ceres Specific Plan

NOVEMBER 2008



LAND USE SUMMARY

GENERAL PLAN	LAND USE	DENSITY RANGE	ACREAGE
	LDR	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	7 du/ac max. 146.0
	MDR	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	7-12 du/ac 77.6
	HDR I	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL I	12-18 du/ac 38.4
	HDR II	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL II	18-25 du/ac 31.9
	RC	REGIONAL COMMERCIAL	- 34.1
	CC	COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL	- 15.3
	NC/HDR	NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL	18-25 du/ac 32.2
	O/HDR	OFFICE MIXED-USE	18-25 du/ac 17.7
	LI	LIGHT INDUSTRIAL	- 61.7
	GI	GENERAL INDUSTRIAL	- 126.6
	CF	COMMUNITY FACILITIES	- 173.9
	S	POTENTIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	16.1
	P	PARKS/PLAZAS	- 43.2
	P	PARKWAYS/LANDSCAPE CORRIDORS	- 26.9
	CAROL LANE		- 18.9
	CAROL LANE BUFFER		
	STREETS		98.9
	POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL SITE		
	POTENTIAL FIRE STATION/POLICE SUBSTATION		
TOTAL			959.4

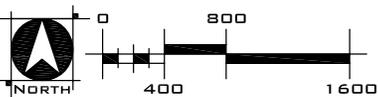


Figure 5: Plan Area and Study Intersections

