

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO  
CALIFORNIA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT**

**TO:** COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM:** DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**SUBJECT:** GROWTH AREA PLANS UPDATE

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**Overview**

The purpose of this update is to inform the Planning Commission about the status of several recently initiated growth area master plans as contemplated in the Sacramento County General Plan. The Board of Supervisors approved the 2030 General Plan in November 2011 with only minor adjustments to the Urban Policy Area (UPA). However, new policies were included to guide how the UPA will be expanded to create master plans for new communities based on smart growth principals. Since November 2011, the County has received and initiated four (4) requests to expand the UPA. One request is for the Northwest Master Plan in the Natomas area, which also includes a request to expand the Urban Services Boundary (USB), and the other three requests are located adjacent to each other along Jackson Highway in the southern portion of the County. In addition to these four growth area plan, the Cordova Hills master plan application was accepted in 2008, prior to the adoption of the 2030 General Plan and will soon be going to public hearing. One other master plan for a project inside the UPA is also pending in the Mather SPA.

This report summarized information for each project. Each of the master plans will be before your commission several times in the next year as they proceed pursuant to the Master Plan Guidelines adopted by the Board of Supervisors in January of 2012. These Guidelines call for periodic check-ins with the Planning Commisison and the Board of Supervisors. Prior to the first of these check-ins, this update will put the proposed plans into context with each other and provide the commissioners with an overall perspective of the pending growth area plans.

**Recommendation**

No action

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### I. BACKGROUND

On November 9, 2011, the Board of Supervisors approved the 2030 General Plan. This update only added one area, the West of Watt area, to the existing Urban Policy Area (UPA). As part of the General Plan, policies were added to the Land Use Element that require any expansion of the Urban Policy Area (UPA) to be accompanied by a request for a master plan consistent with policies in the General Plan. Also, on January 24, 2012, the Board adopted Master Plan Guidelines to assist the applicants and the staff in processing these master plans. The Guidelines break the process into 4 steps, and as the project moves between steps, there is a check-in process with both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. The Guidelines also direct that there be outreach, including the appropriate Community Planning Advisory Councils (CPACs).

Since the adoption of the General Plan last year, the Board has initiated four (4) growth area master plans. One plan is in the Natomas area of the County and also includes a request to move the Urban Services Boundary (USB) in addition to the UPA expansion. Three other plans are located along the Jackson Highway in the Vineyard Community. Additionally, two other master plans are in process. The Cordova Hills master plan, which is also seeking movement of the UPA, is located in the Cosumnes community area and was accepted as a private application by the Board of Supervisors to be processed currently with the update of the General Plan. This master plan will soon be moving into the public hearing process. There is also a master plan process in progress within the Mather Special Planning Area (SPA) which is already inside the UPA and, therefore, is not required to meet the General Plan policies related to new growth areas. Those policies, however, can be considered as guidelines for that master plan. The South Mather master plan is proposed by the County of Sacramento in partnership with Mather South LLC.

### II. DISCUSSION

A. Overview: Key strategies of the 2030 General Plan adopted on November 9, 2011 include a focus on economic growth and environmental sustainability, addressing the issues and needs of existing communities, and establishing a new framework for accommodating the growth of new communities based on smart growth principles. Approval of any new community, including expansion of the UPA, will be based on its ability to meet a robust set of criteria that clearly articulates the County's expectations for high quality design and the creation of complete communities that offer a range of housing, employment, commercial uses, transportation choices and community amenities. The General Plan sets important and vital standards for the quality design of new communities. Master Plans (including Special Area Plans) are detailed policy plans that identify allowable land uses and infrastructure needs for a specific geographic area. These plans are focused on implementation and are usually used to carry out specific development projects. Zoning, subdivision, and public works decisions must be in compliance with master plans. Master Plans, while not technically part of the General Plan, are designed to implement projects consistent with the General Plan, Community Plans or Community Action Plans. Special Planning Areas (SPAs)

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are a flexible mechanism to identify zoning and other requirements under unique circumstances. They have been more recently used to implement large master plans.

Following the approval of the General Plan last November, four new growth area's have been initiated by the Board of Supervisors. The attached map (Attachment A) shows the location of the four newest growth areas that would expand the UPA in Natomas and along Jackson Highway. This map includes other recently approved and pending master plans in the County so that the new growth areas can be seen in context with other development that is approved and pending. Master planning for the four new growth area plans outside of the UPA began with pre-applications for each project. During the pre-application process and as part of the project initiation step, the boundaries of the project areas as well as the master plan names have evolved. Attachment B summarizes the current master plan names, the former names and boundaries of the plans including describing the overall size of each master plan. Also attached to this report are the individual staff reports presented to the Board of Supervisors for the initiation of each of the four projects.

Each of these master plans will be processed independently of each other; however, in particular the plans along Jackson Highway, need to be reviewed in the context of each other. Planning expects to have regular check-ins with both the Vineyard and the Cordova CPACs during the processing of the plans along Jackson Highway. In addition, each project will also be presented to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors prior to the initiation of the environmental review process. Other specific outreach will occur for each plan as needed with specific neighborhoods and community groups, along with infrastructure and service providers and County Departments. Intergovernmental coordination with other jurisdictions is also an important part of the outreach process. For the Northwest Plan in the Natomas area, on-going regular communication has been occurring with the staff of the City of Sacramento. For the projects along Jackson Highway, a process for coordination with the City of Rancho Cordova will be established to provide periodic check-ins with the staff and elected officials.

Each of these master plans are in varying different stages of preparation. Although all were initiated in the last five months, some of the plans have more details available at this time than others. None of the plan areas have finalized conceptual plans. Since each of the plans will back before your Commission prior to the initiation of any environmental documents, this update is focused on the location of each plan and the relationship, if any, between each of the other plans.

- B. Northwest Master Plan (Natomas) Initiation: The Northwest Master Plan was initiated by the Board of Supervisors on February 7, 2012. Attachment C contains the materials submitted to the Board of Supervisors for that initiation. Staff has been working with the landowners on the Natomas Joint Vision area pursuant to an MOU approved by the Board of Supervisors and City Council in 2002 and a Special Planning Area study initiated by the Board on January 13, 2010. The initiation of the master plan is a continuation of those efforts with the focus on the conservation strategy and the

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preparation of technical studies, both of which will inform a land use plan. Also, the Sacramento County Airports System (SCAS) is beginning an update to the Sacramento International Airport Master Plan. Coordination between these concurrent efforts will be a priority.

The master plan area is 24,000 acres and generally located in the northwestern portion of the County on both sides of the Sacramento International Airport and on both sides of Interstate 5 and Highway 99/70 north and west of the City of Sacramento. It is important to note that the Northwest Master Plan is expected to include both urban and non-urban land uses, as preliminarily identified in the Broad Visioning sketches presented to the Board in April 2009. Therefore, the planning effort will study the entire area comprehensively.

- C. NewBridge Specific Plan (and Eagles Nest Master Plan) Initiation: The NewBridge Specific Plan was initiated by the Board of Supervisors on February 7, 2012. Attachment D contains the materials submitted to the Board of Supervisors for that initiation. Staff has been working with the landowner on this master plan since April 2010. This initiation is a continuation of that effort. Staff anticipates returning to the Planning Commission in late August, and then to the Board of Supervisors to discuss this project more specifically prior to the issuance of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the environmental document which is anticipated this fall.

During the initiation hearings, the exact boundary of the master plan on the western side was noted as an issue to be resolved in coming months, prior to start of any environmental analysis of the plan. This area contains parcels that were not part of either the Jackson Township nor the NewBridge pre-application processes. Since the initiation in February, staff has held two meetings with the affected property owners and resolved the issue by including all of the parcels into one or the other of each of the two master plans. As a result of the additional properties being added, that are not, at this time, planned to be part of the NewBridge Specific Plan, led to a larger master plan of which the NewBridge Specific Plan will be a subset. The larger master plan area is called Eagles Nest Master Plan. Additionally, due to a portion of the Specific Plan area being encumbered by a Williamson Act Contract, the area along the north side of Jackson Highway owned by Triange Rock will also be part of the Eagles Nest Master Plan, and not be included in the NewBridge Specific Plan. Attachment A shows the updated boundaries of the Eagles Nest Master Plan. The specific plan will be processed currently with the Master Plan.

The master plan area is approximately 1,150 acres and generally bounded by Kiefer Avenue on the north, Sunrise Blvd and the Folsom South Canal on the east, Jackson Highway on the south and includes properties on both sides of Eagles Nest Road on the west. The applicants are in the process of updating the draft land use plan that was prepared during the pre-application process. That updated plan will be available for the workshop on this project in August.

- D. West Jackson Highway Master Plan Initiation: The West Jackson Highway Master Plan was initiated by the Board of Supervisors on April 17, 2012. Attachment E

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contains the materials submitted to the Board of Supervisors for that initiation. Staff has been working with Stonebridge on a pre-application process for the New Brighton Specific Plan since January 28, 2009. Upon adoption of the General Plan, and the requirement for a master plan with cohesive, contiguous boundaries, the master plan effort was expanded and Granite Properties was added to the application for the West Jackson Highway Master Plan. The New Brighton Specific Plan will be processed separately after the approval of master plan. Attachment A shows the final boundaries initiated by the Board in April. Staff anticipates returning to the Planning Commission this fall for a more specific discussion of the master plan before issuance of the NOP for the project later this fall or early winter. It is anticipated that a draft master plan will also be available at that time.

The master plan area is 5,900 acres and is generally bounded on the west by Watt Avenue, on the north by the existing UPA north of Jackson Highway, on the east by Excelsior Road and on the south by Elder Creek Road with a small extension to Florin Road on the eastern end adjacent to Excelsior Road.

- E. Jackson Township (Excelsior Estates) Initiation: The Jackson Township Master Plan was initiated by the Board of Supervisors on June 19, 2012. Attachment F contains the materials submitted to the Board of Supervisors for that initiation. Staff did some work with the majority property owner, Angelo G. Tskapoulos in 2011 on a pre-application process for Excelsior Estates. The master plan area was expanded slightly to include additional properties to the east in the area between NewBridge and the subject master plan. The project was renamed Jackson Township as part of the initiation. Staff anticipates returning to the Planning Commission this winter for a more specific discussion of the master plan and land use plan before issuance of an NOP early next year.

The master plan area is 1,329 acres and is generally bounded by Excelsior Road on the west, both sides of Keifer Blvd on the north, the Eagles Nest Master Plan on the east and Jackson Highway on the south.

- F. South Mather: The South Mather Master Plan is part of the Mather Special Planning Area and is focused on redevelopment of the former Mather Air Force Base. County Economic Development has partnered with Mather South LLC to master plan and develop approximately 850 acres within the Urban Planning Area (UPA). The proposed project is bounded on the west by Zinfandel Drive (formerly Eagles Nest Road), north of Kiefer Blvd, west of the Folsom South Canal, and south of Douglas Road. Attachment A indicates the location of the South Mather master plan area in relationship to other master plans in the area. Unlike the other growth area master plans, this project site is already located within the UPA and therefore the growth area policies will be analyzed as “guidelines” rather than strict requirements.

It is anticipated that Mather South LLC will submit a pre-application late this year or in early 2013.

- G. Cordova Hills: The Cordova Hills master plan was accepted as a private application and is currently in process. A Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was released

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on the project on January 9, 2012. It is anticipated that public hearings will begin at the Planning Commission later this summer. Attachment H shows the land use plan for this master plan.

Grant Line Road, a two-lane thoroughfare, extends along the western Project boundary. The eastern side of the Project abuts Carson Creek and the northern boundary line of the property is Glory Lane, which is a two-lane gravel road that intersects Grant Line Road just south of Douglas Road. The Kiefer Landfill and the 2,000-foot buffer zone are southwest of the Project. Attachment A shows the location of this master plan in relationship to the other growth area plans.

- H. Conclusion: These master plans for new growth will help the County achieve our General Plan objectives specifically related to Sustainable Growth and Economic Development. Together, the UPA and the USB promote orderly growth and the efficient extension of infrastructure and the provision of urban services. The 2030 General Plan introduces a new framework for considering requests to expand the UPA by requiring any expansion to meet a series of “smart growth” performance criteria that will require “complete communities” and promote a healthy local economy. These master plans call for the land and infrastructure resources to be planned and utilized in an efficient and productive manner to promote a high quality of life for residents of the County and to enhance the fiscal stability of the County positioning the County for economic recovery. Today’s market downturn provides an opportunity for planning efforts to address key economic opportunities and land use issues consistent with the General Plan, including relationships with the Sacramento County Airport System, flood protection and habitat preservation. One example is the concurrent on-going effort to complete the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan.

No action is to be taken by the Commission on this update. This update to the Planning Commission is intended to give the Commissioners an overview of the growth areas. More specific details will be available for each of the master plans as they move forward in the process. Most of the projects are in the early stages of review and the Commission will have an opportunity to review and comment on the plans prior to the initiation of the environmental documents. The Cordova Hills project has a DEIR and will be scheduled for public hearings before the Commission later this summer. All of the projects have had or will have regular check-ins with the appropriate CPACs.

### III. ATTACHMENTS

- A. New Growth Area map
- B. Summary of Growth Area projects
- C. Northwest Master Plan initiation package – February 7, 2012
- D. NewBridge initiation package – February 7, 2012
- E. West Jackson Highway initiation package – April 17, 2012
- F. Jackson Township initiation package – June 19, 2012

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This staff report was prepared on July 9, 2012.