

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Specific Plan provides the planning tools necessary to guide development of the 457 +/- acre McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan area (**Figure 1-1**). The Specific Plan area is located within Imperial County, California, in the General Plan designated "Heber Specific Plan Area." The project area is north of the Community of Heber and South of the City of El Centro. The Specific Plan area is bordered by McCabe Road on the north, Dogwood Road on the east, State Route 86 on the west, and the western extension of Correll Road on the south.

The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan (the Plan) establishes a framework for development of the area, including:

- Proposed land uses, development regulations, and design standards (Section 2.0);
- A vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation plan (Section 3.0);
- A plan for protecting and managing important natural resources (Section 4.0);
- Infrastructure facilities required, including financing and phasing, to support Plan development (Sections 5.0, 6.0, and 7.0); and
- Implementation and administrative processes needed to approve specific development projects in the Plan area (Section 8.0).

The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is designed as a multi-faceted residential community with parks, schools, commercial/office and other amenities all within a short walk of most of the homes in the planned areas. The Plan is comprised of four main components, the conventional residential area, a gated residential community, a business park/commercial area, and a village commercial area. Within these major areas are other uses including, parks, schools, and a community/joint use facilities.

Both the conventional residential area and the gated residential area are designed to offer a full range of residential options. The conventional residential comprises 210.8-acres and has housing options including flex-single family detached and attached homes, on lots from 2,000 to 3,400 square foot; small lot single family detached lots from 4,000 to 5,000 square foot; traditional single family detached lots from 6,000 to 7,200 square foot; and multi-family lots allowing a maximum of 22 units per acre. The gated residential 82.8-acres and offers; traditional single family detached lots from 6,000 to 7,200 square foot; mini-estate single family detached from 10,000 to 15,000 square foot; estate lots ½ acre; and multi-family lots allowing a maximum of 24 units per acre.

The Business Park area comprises approximately 8.4 acres located along State Route and adjacent to conventional multi-family residential. The business park area is intended be an employment generator providing multi-story office space buildings for lease or as commercial condos, business support services, and highway commercial uses. If at the time of development and the market warrants, the Business Park can be expanded in to adjacent multi-family residential area as a mixed use commercial/high density residential area with second-story offices or residential apartments above ground floor commercial uses.

The Village Commercial area comprises approximately 3.2 acres located within the center of the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan. It is intended to be a pedestrian friendly small town area

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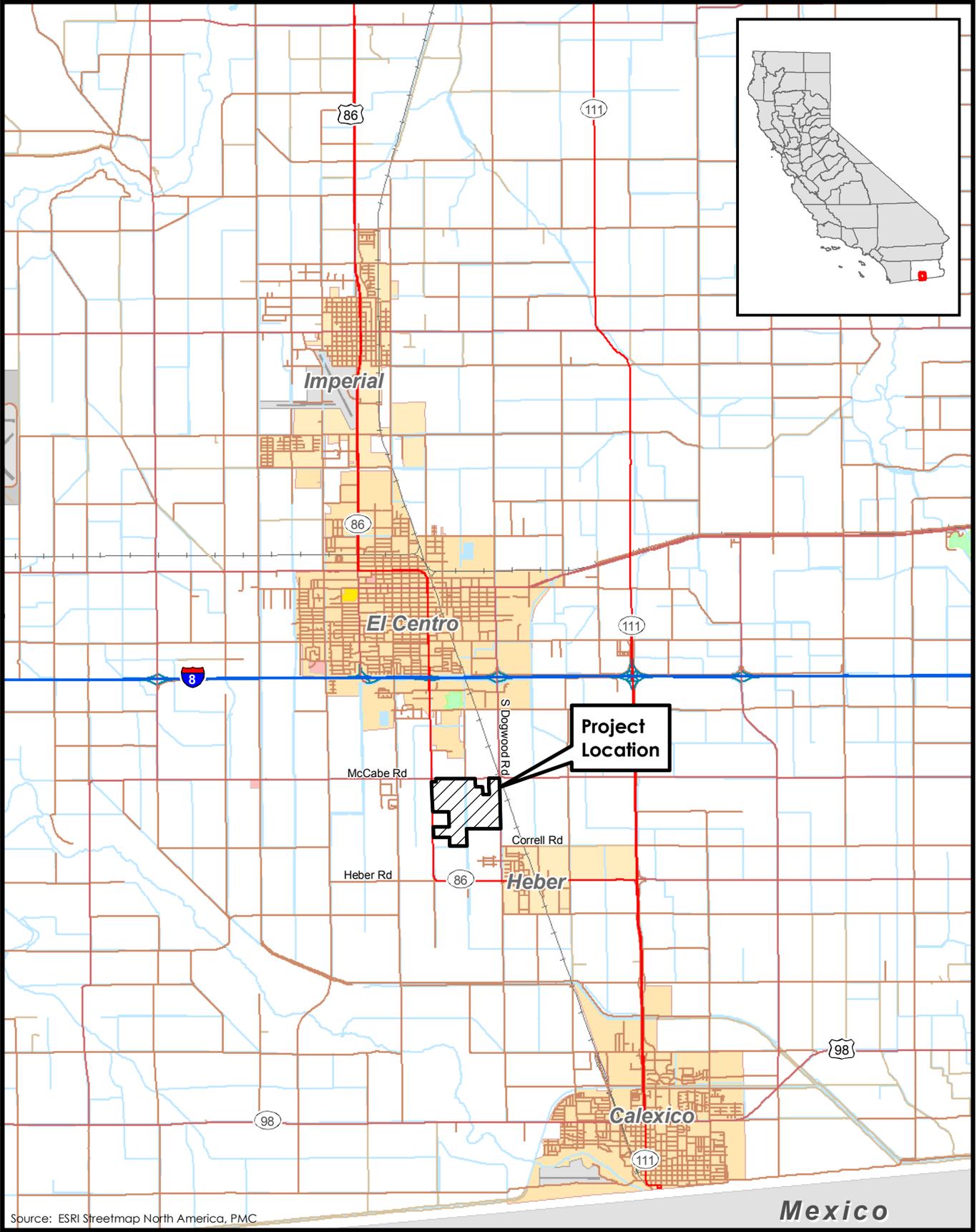
with support orientated retail/commercial, such as small grocery store, coffee shop local restaurants, drycleaners and so fourth.

The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is presently bisected by within two elementary school districts the McCabe School District and the Heber Elementary School District. The Specific Plan provides provisions for two school sites one for each district.

The parks and open space areas comprise approximately 51.6 acres. Parks vary in size and use from largest an approximately 21.6-acre park, to the smallest a 0.1-acre parkway/paseo. The Specific Plan has both active recreational based parks and passive pedestrian based parks. The parks will also act as storm water retention areas for the Plan. The park and open space area includes the approximately 21.6-acre community/joint use facility park area. In addition to the dedicated parks and open space area the multi-family residential areas in both the conventional residential and gated residential will provide a minimum of 5% of their total area for parks/open space. Additionally the flex-single family lots residential areas will provide a minimum of 5% of their total area for parks/open space. Finally, the business park and village commercial areas will have small public open space/ art areas.

The Specific Plan's four main components, the conventional residential area, the gated residential area, the business/office park and the village commercial area, will be developed independently of one another over several years based upon market conditions. Each component may be developed over several phases with associated infrastructure and the community facilities (schools, parks, and the community/joint use facility) will be provided concurrently, generally proportionate to the percentage of residential units within the respective phase.

The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan assumes the long-term build-out of the planning area will inevitably experience changes in market conditions over time. The Plan has incorporated a number of significant variations; the first being the flex-single family residential areas that allow for a variety of different housing products; the lot size variable in each residential classifications; the mix use option adjacent to the business/office park; the gated residential area can be converted to conventional residential; and finally a limited allowance for relocation of land uses provided that the Land Use Plan, including the transfer of units not exceed the maximum number of 2,300 dwelling units in the Plan area.



Source: ESRI Streetmap North America, PMC



Figure 1-1
Project Location



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1.1 PLANNING OBJECTIVES

A Specific Plan allows a developer to comprehensively plan the land uses and public facilities of a large contiguous land area while maintaining a degree of design flexibility to respond to future conditions. The following planning objectives have been established to guide the development of the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan area:

- Develop a highly walk able community plan that integrates a variety of residential uses, including both conventional and gated communities, commercial areas, parks, schools, and other facilities essential to the daily lives of the residents.
- Provide a variety of housing opportunities, ranging in size and affordability, to meet the housing needs of the region.
- Incorporate the village commercial area to provide adequate service and shopping opportunities for both local residents and visitors.
- Provide the business/office park to support job creation within the Specific Plan area.
- Incorporate design features that support a unique living environment with a strong sense of community and social interaction.
- Use a series of parkland areas connected by a trails system to link compatible land uses that are within easy walking distance of each other.
- Promote an active lifestyle by providing a variety of recreational amenities such as the recreational sport facilities, passive parks, walking trails, bike routes, parks, and open spaces.
- Provide a park or open space within a five minute walking distance of most residences in the Plan area.
- Enhance the community's well-used sports facilities and reputation as a youth sports community by incorporating a variety of sports fields within many of the Plan's park areas.
- Design a safe and efficient circulation system that adequately supports the anticipated level of traffic in and around the Plan area.
- Provide public services that meet the needs of development in the Plan area including a potential sheriff store front in the village.
- Develop a financing and phasing plan that provides for the efficient and timely provision of infrastructure and public services as development occurs.
- Assist in the planning, design, construction and financing of school facilities to serve the Specific Plan area concurrent with the phasing of development of the residential land uses.

1.3 SPECIFIC PLAN PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan serves as the primary land use, policy, and regulatory document for the Plan area by providing for an efficient development planning and review process. This planning and review process emphasizes the direct and comprehensive correlation between land use, public services, and infrastructure necessary to support those land uses. When implemented together, the elements of the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan support the logical development of the Plan area by establishing a comprehensive planning program that is responsive to the opportunities and constraints of the area.

The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is both a policy and regulatory document. As a policy document, the Specific Plan applies the broader goals and policies of the Imperial County General Plan, Heber Specific Plan Area by establishing specific objectives for the Plan area. As a regulatory document, the Specific Plan specifies the land uses and associated development, as well as design and infrastructure standards that must be met to successfully implement the Specific Plan. Through the inclusion of development, design, and infrastructure standards (as well as the incorporation by reference of the applicable County of Imperial Land Use Ordinance provisions) this Plan creates standards specifically applicable to the Plan area. As a regulatory document, all subsequent design documents and development activities in the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan area are required to be consistent with the Specific Plan.

1.4 SPECIFIC PLAN AUTHORITY

Specific Plans are authorized and described in California Government Code §65450 et seq. As set forth in the Government Code, Specific Plans are required to contain the following information:

- The distribution, location, and extent of the use of land, including open space, within the area covered by the Plan.
- The proposed distribution, location, extent, and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities to be located within the Plan area and needed to support the proposed land uses.
- Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, as well as the standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources.
- A program of implementation measures, including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out the Plan.
- A statement of the relationship of the Specific Plan to the applicable General Plan.

1.5 CONTENTS OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN

To meet the requirements described above, the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan includes the following components and features:

- Planning objectives that expand upon the Imperial County General Plan regarding land use, circulation, resource management, and public services/utilities (Section 1.0);

- Written and graphic descriptions of proposed land uses within the Plan area, with clearly identified specific development patterns and design standards (Section 2.0);
- Written and graphic depictions of the proposed vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation system for the Plan area and how that system will tie into adjacent properties (Section 3.0);
- Textual descriptions and graphic illustrations of significant natural resources in the Plan area and a plan for the conservation of important resources (Section 4.0);
- A public service and utility plan that includes the location and extent of public services and utilities necessary to serve the Plan area (Section 5.0 and 6.0);
- A public facility financing and phasing plan that provides the general framework for the financing and phasing of public improvements in the Plan area (Section 7.0); and
- An implementation program that describes the project review procedures and regulations for specific development projects within the Plan area and any future Plan amendments (Section 8.0).

1.6 PLAN AREA SETTING

1.6.1 REGIONAL AND LOCAL SETTING

The 457-acre McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan area is located in an unincorporated portion of Imperial County, California, adjacent to the northern border of the unincorporated Community of Heber. The Plan is bordered by McCabe Road on the north, Dogwood Road on the east, State Route 86 on the west, and the western extension of Correll Road on the south. Adjacent land uses are predominantly characterized by irrigated agricultural fields in active cultivation, urban development, along with several existing buildings located to the west and north of the Plan.

Regional access to the Plan area is provided by Interstate 8 (I-8) located north of the Plan area, State Route 111 located to the east of the Plan area; State Route 86 (SR-86) bordering the Plan area on the west, McCabe Road on the north, and Dogwood Road on the east of the Plan. A proposed western extension of Correll Road will provide additional access on the south of the Plan area.

There are several easements that surround and traverse the Specific Plan area. The Imperial Irrigation District (IID) owns the easements associated with existing canals, drains and electrical lines. The easements and their associated facilities will be retained, vacated or realigned as appropriate. Additionally, the County of Imperial and the State of California both own several easements associated with highways and roads adjacent to the Plan area.

1.6.2 PLAN AREA PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan area consists of generally flat terrain with very gentle topography sloping downward toward the northwest. The Specific Plan area is under various phases of active cultivation and contains canals and drains that are used to transport water to and from the agricultural resources located on-site. One major canal and two lateral canals are located within the Specific Plan area. Several unpaved roads traverse the site.

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The Specific Plan Area is under active cultivation. Crops grown in the Plan area typically include alfalfa and hay. These agricultural lands provide habitat for a variety of reptiles, mammals, and birds, including the burrowing owl. A majority of the Specific Plan area is designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance, with approximately 9 percent of the Plan area classified as Prime Farmlands.

The Plan area has no distinguishing natural features, although the man-made canals bordering the site include portions of the historic Imperial Irrigation District (IID) canal system, which is discussed in greater detail in Section 4.0 - Resource Management.

1.6.3 PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

One individual entity currently owns the land encompassing the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan area, which is comprised of five parcels. Clockwise from the northwest corner of the Plan to the southwest corner the five parcels area as follows; parcel one consists of 191.5 +/- acres; parcel two consists of 104.7 +/- acres, parcel three consists of 22.7 +/- acres; parcel four consists of 28.5 +/- acres; and parcel five consists of 41.1 +/- acres. Figure 1-2 depicts the five parcels that comprise the Plan area.

1.6.4 SUMMARY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE SPECIFIC PLAN

The opportunities and constraints described below are key factors influencing the development of the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan. These include physical conditions, such as the existing agricultural canals and drains with associated setback requirements, the boundary of the two school districts, and the three major roadways as shown in **Figure 1-3**. Other existing influencing factors are also described below.

General Location

The proposed McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is a 457-acre area located within the Imperial County General Plan's area that is designated as the Heber Specific Plan Area. The Specific Plan area is located north of the Community of Heber and South of the City of El Centro. The area is bordered by McCabe Road on the north, Dogwood Road on the east, State Route 86 on the west, and the western extension of Correll Road on the south.

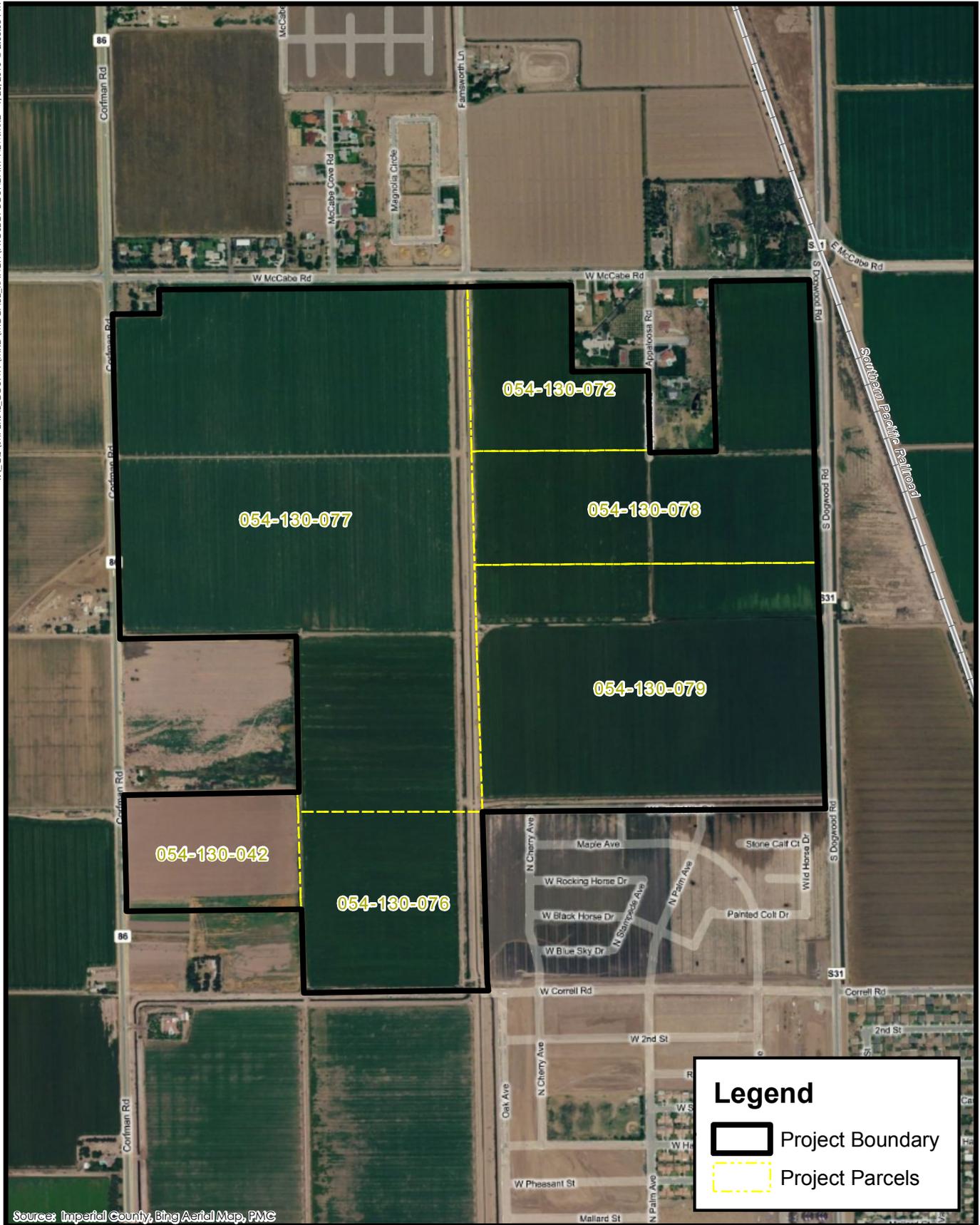


Figure 1- 2
Specific Plan Boundary

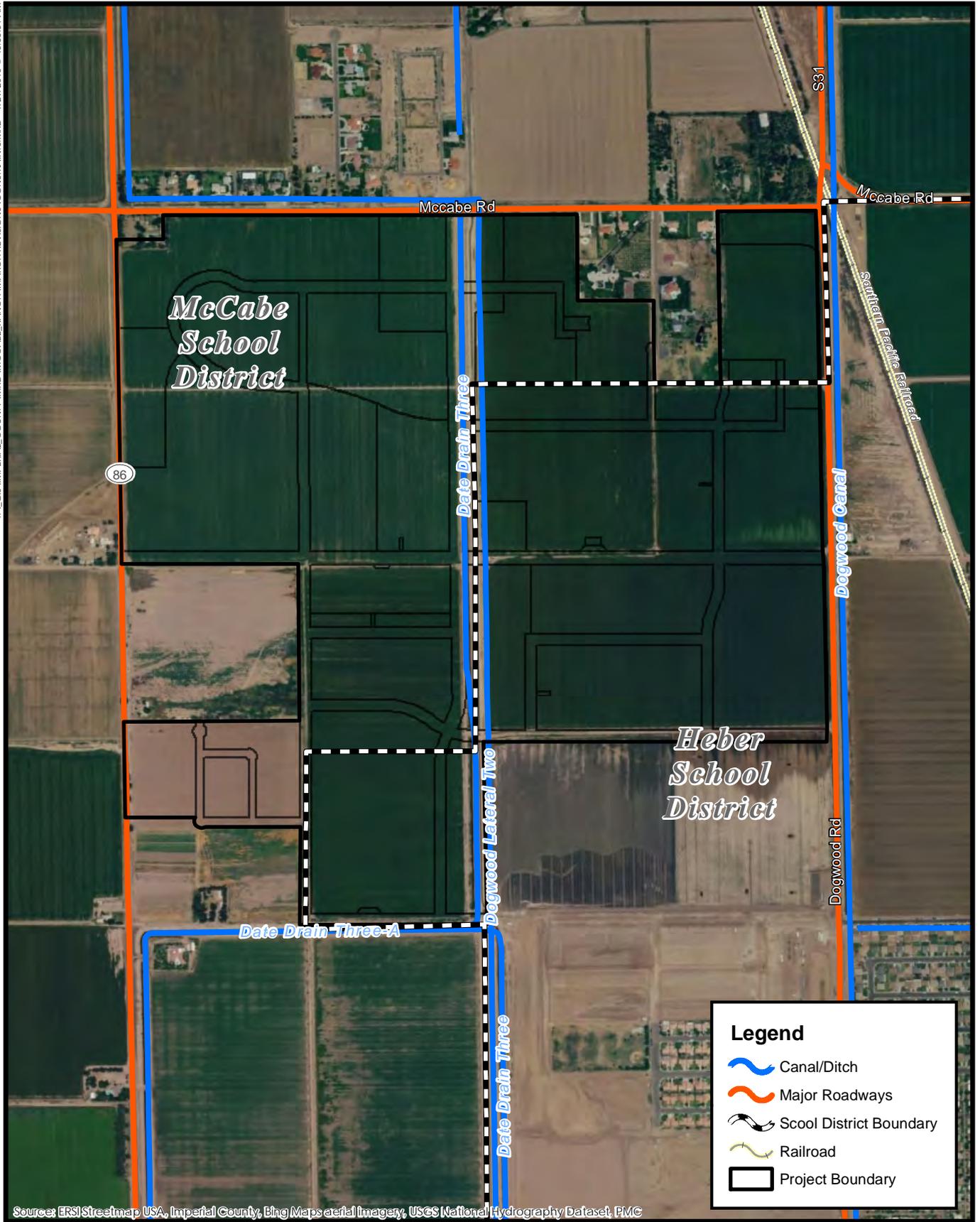


Figure 1-3
Constraints

Additionally, medical facilities, public services, dining, shopping and cultural events are located a short distance to the north in the City of El Centro as well as to the south in the unincorporated community of Heber, and further south in the City of Calexico. The Specific Plan area roadways provide easy access to these amenities through numerous connections to the State Highway system and regional arterial system. Location and accessibility of the Plan area provide local and regional residents easy access to the Plan's recreational amenities such as the golf course, community parks, trails, and lake.

Topography and Site Drainage

The Plan area is nearly level with very gentle topography sloping toward the northwest. This presents challenges for on-site drainage and detention, common to developments throughout the Imperial Valley. As a result, the Plan includes open space areas within the community that also play a role in the Plan area's comprehensive site drainage, detention, and storm water management system. These open space areas also allow for better absorption and filtering of rain water, thereby reducing pollution and the potential for localized flooding.

Canals, Drains and Easements

The Imperial Irrigation District provides irrigation water to existing agricultural operations within the Plan area through a system of canals and drains. The canals provide water to irrigate the farm fields while drains remove the excess water from the fields. In addition to the IID canals and drains, the fields within the Plan area contain a system of smaller private canals and drains that perform the same function as IID canals and drains, but on a smaller scale.

The layout of the Specific Plan incorporates these IID canals and drains. The future Farnsworth Road right-of-way is located west Date Drain #3, the Dogwood Road Lateral #2 and existing power line easements. The proposed roadway crossings over the canals are located where those crossings are most feasible; and, are limited to the minimum number necessary to provide adequate access to the Plan area and connection to adjacent properties. The operation of IID canals and drains during and subsequent to development within the Plan area will be maintained. The proposed project will avoid direct interface with these canals. Additionally, the project developer will develop barrier fences or walls near park, residential and recreational areas to prevent access to the canals or drains from within the Specific Plan area. Access to these areas shall only be provided to IID employees and emergency response teams.

Several easements surround and traverse the Plan area. The Imperial Irrigation District (IID) owns several easements associated with existing canals, drains and electrical lines. The easements and their associated facilities will be retained, vacated or realigned as appropriate. Additionally, the County of Imperial owns several easements associated with highways and roads adjacent to the Plan area.

Existing and Future Site Access

The Specific Plan area's western property line is adjacent to SR-86, the eastern property line is adjacent to Dogwood Road, the northern property line is adjacent to McCabe Road and the southern property will be located on the extension of Correll Road. The southern extension of Farnsworth Road will bisect the Plan with a north south orientation, and a new road will bisect the Plan with an east west orientation.

Access to the Plan area from the existing and future roadways is limited by roadway regulatory policies, thereby influencing ingress and egress into the Specific Plan area. In urban areas SR-86

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is a State highway and road access points are recommended to be no closer than ¼ mile (1,320 feet) apart. Local road access points to a State highway in rural areas are recommended to be no closer than ½ mile (2,640 feet) apart. The Specific Plan area is in an area transitioning from rural to urban.

The General Plan's Circulation Element designates Dogwood Road as a future eight lane prime arterial. Local road access points are recommended to be no closer than approximately 1,320 foot spacing. Similarly, intersection spacing on McCabe Road and Correll Road is also recommended to be no less than 1,320 feet.

Future offsite roadway extensions also impact the access locations for the Specific Plan area. Farnsworth Road north of the Specific Plan area is planned to be extended south to intersect with Correll Road. Correll Road from the southeast of the Specific Plan area is planned to be extended northwest to intersect with SR-86. Both of these roadways could be extended into the Plan area as extensions of the offsite local road system.

The layout of the Specific Plan maintains the 2,640 foot recommended intersection spacing on SR-86 with approximately 2,750 feet between the intersections of McCabe Road and the Plan area's Main Entry along SR-86 and 1,230 feet between the intersection of the Main Entry Parkway and Correll Road. The Specific Plan area's local road intersections with Farnsworth Road, Dogwood Road and McCabe Road average more than 1,320 feet.

Railroad

The Union Pacific Railroad is located east of the Plan, but impacts the plan where the rail line bisects the intersection of McCabe Road and Dogwood Road.

Utility Lines

There is an IID power line that bisects the Plan parallel to the Dogwood Lateral #2. The State of California has established recommended minimum setbacks from high tension power lines to the nearest schools. The location of the two elementary schools is outside of the 150-foot setback line recommended by the State of California.

Natural Gas Lines

Natural gas lines run along the east side of Dogwood Road. The pipe line provides the closest gas conduits to the Plan area and are located more than 1,310 feet from the nearest proposed elementary school site.

Imperial Earthquake Fault

The Specific Plan is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone and no active fault is known to exist below the Plan area. The Imperial fault zone is the closest major fault system to the site. Much of the Imperial fault zone, including the strands mapped east of the subject site, has been designated by the State of California as being within Earthquake Fault (Alquist-Priolo Special Studies). The Earthquake Fault Zone (Special Studies) maps for the area indicate that the limits of the fault zone boundaries and the mapped strands of the Imperial fault are approximately 5 miles north and east of the project site. Nevertheless, all habitable structures in the Specific Plan are planned to meet the California Building Code Zone 4 requirements of Southern California.

Residential, Commercial, and Business Park Markets

Population and employment growth throughout Southern California, Imperial County and City of El Centro have contributed to increased housing demand as people search for affordable housing opportunities and different kinds of housing products. The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan creates a range of housing choices on a variety of different lot sizes that accommodates a wide income range. Numerous amenities such as the village town center, community joint use facility, and the various parks, enhance the appeal of the Plan area. The more compact lot arrangements as well as the housing choices accommodate a broader spectrum of price points, while the estate and mini-estate areas allow the Plan blend into the existing developments along McCabe Road.

According to the SCAG Profile of Imperial County (May 2009), in 2008 unincorporated Imperial County had approximately 19,891 jobs, greater than its 2003 level. The job growth rate in the unincorporated area was lower than the 12.3 percent growth rate in Imperial County. The projections developed represent a range of estimates for potential population, dwelling units, and employment for the unincorporated areas of Imperial County.

In order to determine approximately how many new jobs will be produced by build-out of the Specific Plan the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of the commercial planning areas were used on a 2:1 basis to indicate the ratio of gross building square footage permitted on a parcel to net square footage of the parcel. The Square Feet /Employee factor is a factor that indicates the number of square feet of building space per employee and is used to estimate the number of jobs for a given land use designation. The factors for the commercial land use designations are Commercial Retail at 500 square feet per employee at a FAR of 2:1 would be 69,696 square feet divided by 500 or 139 employees and Commercial Office at 300 square feet per employee at a FAR of 2:1 would be 182,952 divided by 300 or 610 employees.

Construction of the proposed Specific Plan would also create temporary construction jobs. However, because most construction related work is specialized and required for specific tasks at specific phases of the project and due to market condition sit is too speculative to ascertain how many temporary construction-related employment opportunities would be generated at during the project's construction process.

The gated community portion of the Plan appeals to residents seeking enhanced privacy and security, while providing a full range of home choices. If the gated community is precluded by market conditions, a conventional residential community may be developed in its place.

The local community retail commercial market is expected to be satisfied by proposed Village located in the center of the Plan, along with the City of El Centro's IV Mall, Commons, and Plaza developments to the north. The Plan's business/office park commercial uses allow for employment, services, retail, and entertainment opportunities for Plan area residents. Pedestrian links encourage residents to walk or bike to the mixed-use area.

Public Facilities and Recreation Needs

The Community of Heber is expanding and a significant portion of that growth, including the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan, is occurring on the north side of the unincorporated Community. This will require the expansion of community facilities. An initial review of local public facilities identified that a community park is anticipated to be needed on the north side of the Heber.

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The Plan provides for a community park with active sports related recreation, neighborhood parks, mini-parks, community/joint use facility, open space areas, bike routes, tree-lined sidewalks, and various walking trails. The variety of recreational amenities provides recreational opportunities for a wide segment of the community.

The Plan provides public facilities to meet the needs of Plan area residents as well as residents beyond the Plan area. A potential fire station site would serve the Plan area and surrounding community as well as a sheriff's storefront office located within the Village. An electrical substation is expected and would provide for the energy needs of the community. In addition, the Plan also accommodates the potential inclusion of religious, cultural, and community facilities located at various sites throughout the Plan area.

Development Phasing / Agricultural Operations

The Plan area is currently an ongoing agricultural operation. For a long term development plan such as the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan, these operations will be maintained on those portions of the property that have not been developed. This requires development phasing to be structured around the maintenance and access to irrigation water and other agricultural operation factors.

The layout of the Plan and the phased development of the Plan allows for the continuation of agricultural operations and access to irrigation water. Slight modifications to the on-site canal and drain systems will be required. Where developed land is adjacent to agricultural fields, buffering practices such as temporary landscaping and berms may be used to minimize any potential incompatibilities.

New Community Planning and Development Techniques

Throughout the United States, the overall approach to master planned communities has changed significantly in the last 15 years. The emphasis is on techniques to create stronger communities with a wider variety of housing types, public facilities and transportation options.

The Specific Plan contains a stronger orientation towards pedestrian and bicycle access while still accommodating vehicular needs. The Specific Plan emphasizes walkability through residential neighborhood design by featuring more compact lot arrangements, front porches and residential units that front the street. In addition, a series of interconnected streets and a variety of public spaces such as sidewalks, parks and trails connect various land uses and provide increased access and travel options to residents. The Plan applies a variety of these techniques in the context of the Plan area's unique environment.

Hazardous Materials

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment was prepared by Ninyo and Moore for the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan area. The results of the Phase 1 study did not reveal any obvious Recognized Environmental Conditions except:

- Probable historical use of bio-accumulative pesticides in the Plan area and adjacent properties.
- Potential unauthorized release of unleaded gasoline at an adjacent property to the west.

Mitigation is suggested by the Phase I Environmental Hazards Report, prepared by Ninyo and Moore and is included as mitigation in the Draft EIR.

1.7 PLANNING BACKGROUND

1.7.1 SPECIFIC PLAN INITIATION

A prior concept master plan layout for the development of McCabe Ranch II area was prepared in 2000, however only a 79 acre portion known as the McCabe Ranch Specific Plan was ever formally submitted to the County of Imperial and developed. The McCabe Ranch Specific Plan permitted three residential types single family detached 6,000 square foot lots, single family detached or attached 5,000 square foot lots, and multifamily lots. The McCabe Ranch Specific Plan also included a 5 acre park/retention area there was no commercial portion, or school sites.

This McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is now proposing to develop the remaining 457 acres and complete the original vision of a master plan community designed to accommodate the wants and needs of the full spectrum of the Imperial Valley population, from first time buyer starter homes, to 1/2 acre estate lots, and everything in-between. The Specific Plan also calls for both internal commercial uses centered on a village town center designed to encourage pedestrian traffic and minimize the need for the Plan's residents to have to leave their community. As well as a job inducing external commercial area designed for the development of multi-story business/office park opportunities. Up to two schools along with community and safety facilities have also been incorporated into the Plan.

In response to restrained demand for housing the McCabe Ranch Specific Plan covering only the first 79 acres went forward first. With that project completed now is the time to complete the property owner's original goals with the development of this McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan.

1.7.2 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

As described in California Government Code §65453, a specific plan shall be prepared, adopted, and amended in the same manner as a general plan. Accordingly, Government code §65351 states that during the preparation or amendment of the general plan, the planning agency shall provide opportunities for the involvement of citizens, California Native American Indian tribes, public agencies, public utility companies, and civic, education, and other community groups, through public hearings and any other means the planning agency deems appropriate.

Additionally, at least one public hearing is required before the Imperial County Planning Commission, and one public hearing is required before the Imperial County Board of Supervisors. Thus, at a minimum, public input regarding the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is provided at the Imperial County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings prior to the adoption of this Specific Plan. However, additional meetings may be held with community groups as well as other interested parties to address issues related to the Plan and the Plan area.

1.7.3 RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND REGULATIONS

The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is closely related to several documents that will also have a bearing on development within the Plan area. This section describes the relationship between this Plan and other applicable regulatory documents.

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The Plan area is within the jurisdiction of unincorporated Imperial County. The Imperial County General Plan serves as the blueprint for future growth and development and establishes policies for lands located within the unincorporated areas of Imperial County. The Land Use Element of the Imperial County General Plan designates the Plan area as a "Specific Plan Area," specifically the Heber Specific Plan. The Heber Specific Plan Area is intended to allow commercial, residential, industrial and other employment oriented development in a mixed use orientation. It shall also include open space/recreation area with at least one 40 acre or larger regional park along McCabe Road. The Heber Specific Plan shall include a public facilities financing plan outlining capital improvement needed for the project, feasible financing mechanisms, and timing for their construction. This includes sewer, water, and fire and police protection.

1.8 IMPERIAL COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

1.8.1 SPECIFIC PLANS

The Imperial County General Plan describes specific plans as planning tools used to implement the General Plan for large development projects such as a planned community. In addition, the General Plan states that specific plans should be utilized where existing conventional zoning regulations do not provide adequate controls over land use and development. Upon adoption, a specific plan serves as an amendment to the Imperial County General Plan for a very defined and detailed area.

The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan implements the goals and policies of the Imperial County General Plan by providing development guidelines that reflect the unique opportunities and constraints of the Plan area. According to Government Code §65454, a Specific Plan must be consistent with the adopted General Plan. The Specific Plan's consistency with the Imperial County General Plan and the proposed General Plan amendments are described below in relation to each individual General Plan Element.

1.9 LAND USE ELEMENT

The Plan area is designated as a Specific Plan Area. The Specific Plan area classification is intended to provide for low to high density residential, commercial, and industrial development, and a full level of urban services. The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is consistent with the goals of a Specific Plan.

1.9.1 HEBER SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

The Heber Specific Plan Area includes approximately 4,834 acres between the Jasper and Willoughby Roads on the south, the State Route 86 to the west, McCabe Road to the north, State Route 111 to the east, and a 1,320 foot strip of land east of State Route 111 running from Correll Road and Heber Road. The Heber Specific Plan Area is designed to allow for mixed use development within the Heber Public Utility District due to its ability to offer urban level services.

Objectives

- The Heber Specific Plan Area is intended to allow commercial, residential, industrial and other employment oriented development in a mixed use orientation. It shall also include open space/recreation area with at least one 40 acre or larger regional park along McCabe Road.

- The Specific Plan will be coordinated with the City of El Centro and the Heber Public Utility District.
- Public services will be provided concurrent with need.

Policies

- The Specific Plan shall allow for a wide range of development opportunities which can conform in a mixed use setting.
- The Specific Plan shall include architectural and landscape design guidelines which assure sensitivity to the regional corridor of Highway 111.
- The Specific Plan shall include a public facilities financing plan outlining capital improvement needed for the project, feasible financing mechanisms, and timing for their construction. This includes sewer, water, and fire and police protection.

The Specific Plan shall be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Report which includes the analysis of project impacts to include the following: Agriculture, air and water quality, biology, cultural resources, growth inducement, traffic, visual/aesthetics, and such other issues as required by the County of Imperial and other Responsible Agencies.

1.9.2 HOUSING ELEMENT

Residential development in the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan area will provide up to 2,374 additional dwelling units in the region. The extensive variety of detached, attached, and multi-family units, including rental units, enhances opportunities for affordable housing in the region consistent with the goals and policies of the Housing Element.

1.9.3 CIRCULATION AND SCENIC HIGHWAY ELEMENT

The Specific Plan area includes an internal circulation system that expands upon the current General Plan circulation system. An amendment to the Circulation Element of the General Plan may be required to ensure that the proposed roadways of the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan are consistent with the goals of the County's General Plan.

1.9.4 NOISE ELEMENT

Certain portions of the Specific Plan area surrounding roadways and the Southern Pacific Railroad are located within a Noise Impact Zone. The Imperial County General Plan defines Noise Impact Zones as an area which may be exposed to noise greater than 60 dBA CNEL. No portion of the Specific Plan area is located within a noise contour of any airport. The Specific Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report identify the measures necessary to ensure that sensitive receptors in the Plan area are not negatively impacted by noise from surrounding roadways and the Union Pacific Railroad.

1.9.5 SEISMIC AND PUBLIC SAFETY ELEMENT

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is located five miles north and east of the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan area is not located within any other identified hazard areas and is consistent with the policies of the Seismic and Public Safety Element.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.9.6 CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The Conservation and Open Space Element addresses the following eight environmental resources: 1) biological resources; 2) cultural resources; 3) soils; 4) minerals; 5) energy; 6) regional aesthetics; 7) air quality; and 8) open space. The proposed project is consistent with the goals and policies of this Element, with the exception of Goal 4 which encourages the preservation of contiguous farmlands and prime soil areas. More than 99 percent of the Plan area is located on land classified as agricultural land by the Department of Conservation, with approximately 90 percent of the Plan area designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance and 9 percent Prime Farmland. However, the Imperial County General Plan designates the Plan area as Specific Plan Area, which includes urban areas are characterized by a full level of urban services, in particular public water and sewer systems, and contain or propose a broad range of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. As described in more detail below, the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan designation of Specific Plan Area.

1.9.7 AGRICULTURAL ELEMENT

Goal 1 of the Agricultural Element encourages the preservation of All Important Farmlands. More than 99 percent of the Plan area is located on Farmland of Statewide Importance and Prime Farmland. However, Objectives 1.1 states "maintain existing agricultural land outside of urbanizing areas..." while Objective 1.6 states "recognize and preserve unincorporated areas of the County, outside of city sphere of influence areas..." The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is located in an urbanizing area within the Sphere of Influence of the Community of Heber. Additionally, the Land Use Element of the Imperial County General Plan designates the Plan area as being within the Heber Specific Plan Area. The McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Agricultural Element.

1.9.8 GEOTHERMAL, ALTERNATIVE ENERGY AND TRANSMISSION ELEMENT

The Specific Plan area is not located within a known geothermal resource area. Land uses for geothermal purposes are regulated by the Imperial County Planning and Development Services Department through land use designations and conditional use permits (CUPs). The Specific Plan is consistent with the goals and policies of the Geothermal, Alternative Energy and Transmission Element.

1.9.10 WATER ELEMENT

The Water Element identifies and analyzes the types of water resources within Imperial County and establishes goals and policies to preserve and enhance water availability, distribution, conservation, and quality. The Specific Plan is consistent with the goals and policies of the Water Element.

1.10 HEBER URBAN AREA PLAN

The Heber Urban Area Plan was adopted by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors on October 24, 1994, with the most recent update coming on December 16, 2003, comprises approximately 1,040 acres, of which the majority is under private ownership. The planning area includes the townsite of Heber and the surrounding rural agricultural area. Within the townsite, the existing land uses consist primarily of single family homes, including a significant number of mobile homes on individual lots. The Heber Urban Area Plan goals and objectives are intended to serve as long-term principles and policy statements representing ideals which have been

determined by the citizens as being desirable and deserving of community time and resources to achieve. These goals and objectives are important guidelines for land use decision making.

1.11 IMPERIAL COUNTY LAND USE ORDINANCE

The Imperial County Land Use Ordinance is the primary implementation tool for the Land Use Element of the Imperial County General Plan. The Land Use Ordinance identifies specific types of land use, intensity of use, and development performance standards applicable to specific areas and parcels of land within a City. The land use types, use regulations, and development design standards within this Plan supersede the standards contained within the Land Use Ordinance. However, the Land Use Ordinance applies to all other topic areas not specifically discussed in the Plan.

1.12 COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

An EIR for the McCabe Ranch II Specific Plan project accompanies the Plan. The EIR, prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), examines the potential environmental impacts of the implementation of the Specific Plan and identifies mitigation to reduce impacts to below a level of significance. It serves as the base environmental document for the purposes of evaluating subsequent entitlements associated with the Plan. The EIR is to be certified concurrently with the adoption of the Specific Plan.

A mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) is adopted in accordance with Public Resources Code §21081.6 to ensure implementation of the EIR mitigation measures. As applicable, future development within the Plan area is required to implement the mitigation measures in the MMRP as specified.

In accordance with California Government Code §65457, subsequent development proposals within the Plan area, if consistent with this Plan and the impact analysis and mitigation measures of the certified EIR, may be within the scope of the adopted EIR. Imperial County staff will determine if further environmental analysis is required for any amendment to the Plan.