

## 4.9 LAND USE AND PLANNING

This chapter describes the land use character of the Southeast Greenway Area and evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with future development that could occur by adopting and implementing the proposed project. A summary of the relevant regulatory setting and existing conditions is followed by a discussion of potential impacts the proposed project and cumulative impacts.

### 4.9.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### 4.9.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

##### Regional Regulations

###### *Plan Bay Area*

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and ABAG's *Plan Bay Area* is the Bay Area's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/ Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). *Plan Bay Area* was prepared by MTC in partnership with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and adopted on July 18, 2013.<sup>1</sup> An update to *Plan Bay Area*, *Plan Bay Area 2040*, is currently underway. The SCS sets a development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network and other transportation measures and policies, would reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation (excluding goods movement) beyond the per capita reduction targets identified by California Air Resources Board (CARB). An overarching goal of *Plan Bay Area* is to concentrate development in areas where there are existing services and infrastructure rather than allocate new growth to outlying areas where substantial transportation investments would be necessary to achieve the per capita passenger vehicle, VMT, and associated GHG emissions reductions. Implementation of *Plan Bay Area* would achieve a 16 percent per capita reduction of GHG emissions by 2035 and a 10 percent per capita reduction by 2020 from 2005 conditions.<sup>2</sup>

##### Local Regulations

###### *General Plan 2035*

The City of Santa Rosa's *General Plan 2035* is a legal document, required by state law, which serves as the City's "constitution" for development and the use of its land. It is a comprehensive, long-range document, detailing proposals for the physical development of the city, and of any land outside its boundaries, but

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the Bay Area Citizens filed a lawsuit on MTC's and ABAG's adoption of Plan Bay Area.

<sup>2</sup> Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), 2013, Final Plan Bay Area, Strategy for a Sustainable Region, page 96.

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

within its designated Planning Area. Under State law, a city's general plan is the primary planning document and all other city plans and policies must be consistent with the adopted general plan.

The general plan is required to address the specified provisions of each of seven mandated elements including land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety, to the extent that the provisions are locally relevant. The General Plan 2035 is a dynamic document addressing issues related to physical development, growth management, transportation services, public facilities, community design, energy efficiency, greenhouse gas reduction strategies, and conservation of resources in the Planning Area. The General Plan 2035 includes 12 elements that establish long-term goals and policies to guide daily decision-making for development and conservation in Santa Rosa through the year 2035. The elements of the General Plan 2035 are listed below:

- Land Use and Livability
- Urban Design
- Housing
- Transportation
- Public Services and Facilities
- Open Space and Conservation
- Growth Management
- Youth and Family
- Economic Vitality
- Historic Preservation
- Noise and Safety
- Arts and Culture

All development in the city must conform to the land use designations outlined in the General Plan 2035. Goals and policies contained in the Land Use and Livability Element of the General Plan 2035 provide guidance on how land use designations should be developed to contribute to the overall character of Santa Rosa.

### *Santa Rosa City Code*

The *Santa Rosa City Code* (SRCC) contains all ordinances for the city, and identifies land use categories, site development regulations, and other general provisions that ensure consistency between the General Plan and proposed development projects. Besides the General Plan, the SCRR's Title 20, Zoning, is the primary tool that regulates physical development in Santa Rosa. The Zoning Code implements the goals and policies of the General Plan 2035 by classifying and regulating the uses of land and structure within the city. Per SRCC Section 20-10.020, Purposes of Zoning Code, the purpose of the Zoning Code is to provide standards for orderly growth and development of the city, and guide and control the use of land to provide a safe, harmonious, attractive, and sustainable community; implement the uses of land designated by the General Plan 2035 and avoid conflicts between land uses; maintain and protect the value of property; conserve and protect the open space, scenic beauty, and other natural resources of the city; protect the character, and social and economic stability of residential, commercial, and industrial areas; assist in maintaining a high quality of life without causing unduly high public or private costs for development or unduly restricting private enterprise, initiative, or innovation in design; and provide for appropriate citizen participation in the decisions. While other parts of the SRCC address specific technical issues that also affect land use and development, these are summarized where relevant in other chapters of this Draft EIR. For example, Title 16, Storm Water Enterprise, which deals with controlling and reducing flooding, is described in Chapter 4.8, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Chapter 17-16, Noise (in the SRCC) contains the noise standards that are discussed in Chapter 4.10, Noise, of this Draft EIR.

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

### *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*

The *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (BPMP), adopted in 1994 and updated in 2010, provides an overview of the existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities within Santa Rosa, a recommended pedestrian and bikeway network, and design guidelines. The BPMP also includes goals and policies that promote walking and bicycling as viable, attractive, non-polluting forms of transportation and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to all areas of the city. The BPMP serves as a tool for guiding City staff and the development community in building a multi-modal transportation system that is pedestrian and bicycle “friendly” and encourages residents to use multi—modal forms of transportation. This plan is in alignment with the Transportation Element of the 2035 General Plan’s goals and policies.

### *Citywide Creek Master Plan*

The *Citywide Creek Master Plan* (CCMP), adopted in 2007 and updated in 2013, provides guidelines for the care, management, restoration, and enhancement of the network of creeks and waterways that flow through Santa Rosa. The CCMP is organized into six chapters; Introduction; Goals, Objectives, and Policies; Plan Concepts; Watershed-Specific Recommendations; Implementation Strategy; and References. Each chapter provides guidelines to aid the City’s decision-making when planning creek enhancement and restoration activities, coordinating and expanding creekside trail systems, making broader land-use planning decisions concerning creeks, and in the development approval process for projects proposed adjacent to waterways.

### *Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy*

The purpose of the Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy (Conservation Strategy) is to create a long-term conservation program sufficient to mitigate potential adverse effects on federally listed species and their habitat due to future development within the Santa Rosa Plain which is located in central Sonoma County. The Conservation Strategy study area boundaries encompass the following cities: Cotati, Rohnert Park, and portions of Windsor, Sebastopol, and Santa Rosa.<sup>3</sup> The Conservation Strategy serves as a guidance document for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to use in conjunction with their review of permits. Development projects within the Santa Rosa Plain area are individually required to mitigate impacts on the species covered in the Conservation Strategy if the project would affect the covered species. The Conservation Strategy was drafted in 2005; however, the document has not been adopted by either the City of Santa Rosa or Sonoma County.

## 4.9.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Existing Land Use Designations and Zoning Districts

The Southeast Greenway Area is comprised of approximately 57 acres of land located in southeast Santa Rosa that follows a 1.9-mile linear path from the Farmers Lane/Highway 12 intersection to Spring Lake

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<sup>3</sup> Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy, Figure 1, Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy Study Area, [https://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/recovery-planning/Santa-Rosa/Documents/Fig1\\_StudyAreaOverview.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/recovery-planning/Santa-Rosa/Documents/Fig1_StudyAreaOverview.pdf), accessed on June 23, 2017.

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

Regional Park. The project site is currently owned by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and is therefore not accessible to the public. As shown on Figure 3-6 in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, the project site does not currently have a General Plan land use designation. Under State law,<sup>4</sup> all parcels are required to be zoned consistent with the City's General Plan 2035. As shown on Figure 3-7 in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, the Southeast Greenway Area is comprised of various zoning districts including various types of residential, planned development and public facilities. However, these zoning districts were mere extensions of surrounding zoning districts that predate General Plan 2035. Given that the project site does not have any General Plan land use designation, the preliminary or "remnant" zoning districts do not authorize specific land uses.

### Existing Land Uses

The existing land uses in the Southeast Greenway Area are described by three subareas below.

#### *West Subarea*

The 18.3-acre West Subarea is comprised of four parcels following a lineal path from Farmers Lane to Wanda Way and Camden Court. The West Subarea is primarily composed of grassland with numerous swales, potential wetlands, and Matanzas Creek. An underground stormwater conduit, called the Spring Creek Diversion is also located along the southern edge of the Southeast Greenway Area from Franquette Avenue in this subarea to Summerfield road at the eastern edge of the Central subarea. Surrounding land uses include retail, office, multi-family residential uses, and Montgomery High School to the north; the continuation of the project site to the east; retail, senior housing, and Matanzas Creek to the south; and Farmers Lane/SR 12 to the west.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Central Subarea*

The 22.6-acre Central Subarea is comprised of three parcels following a lineal path from Wanda Way and Camden Court to Summerfield Road. The Central Subarea is primarily composed of undeveloped land and remnant walnut orchard on the eastern portion of the site. Sierra Park Creek and Spring Creek, tributaries of Matanzas Creek, flow through this subarea. Surrounding land uses include single- and multi-family residential, and retail to the north and south, religious institutional/school facilities to the north, and the continuation of the project site to the east and west.<sup>6</sup>

#### *East Subarea*

The 16.3-acre East Subarea is comprised of two parcels following a linear path from Summerfield Road to Spring Lake Regional Park. The East Subarea is primarily composed of grassland and rocky outcroppings, oak woodlands, two potential wetlands, and a small remnant walnut orchard. Surrounding land uses

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<sup>4</sup> California Government Code, Title 7, Planning and Land Use, Division 1, Planning and Zoning, Chapter 4, Zoning and Regulations, Article 2, Adoption and Regulations, Section 65860.

<sup>5</sup> City of Santa Rosa, Southeast Greenway, Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints, September 15, 2015, pages 13 to 26.

<sup>6</sup> City of Santa Rosa, Southeast Greenway, Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints, September 15, 2015, pages 27 to 38.

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

include single- and multi-family residential to the north and south, Spring Lake Regional Park to the east, and the continuation of the project site to the west.<sup>7</sup>

### 4.9.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant impact related to land use and planning if it would:

1. Physically divide an established community.
2. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the proposed project (including, but not limited to, the General Plan, specific plan, local coastal program or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
3. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

### 4.9.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

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**LU-1 Implementation of the proposed project would not physically divide an established community.**

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The physical division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a physical feature (such as a wall, interstate highway, airport, roadway, or railroad tracks) or the removal of a means of access (such as a local road or bridge) that could impair mobility or constrain travel within an existing community, or between a community and outlying areas.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project includes changes to the Land Use and Livability, Transportation, and Public Services and Facilities elements of the General Plan 2035 and also includes an amendment to the City's Zoning Ordinance for the Southeast Greenway Area, including assigning zoning districts and revising permitted uses, to ensure consistency with the General Plan 2035. Specifically, the Circulation Concept contains descriptions of multi-modal access points, crossings, and connections throughout the Southeast Greenway Area. The proposed pedestrian and bicycle connections would increase connectivity from Spring Lake Regional Park to downtown Santa Rosa and between neighborhoods located north and south of the Southeast Greenway Area.

Implementation and adoption of the proposed project would result in new development potential up to 47.2 acres of park and recreational uses including open space, 244 multi-family housing units, and 12,000 square feet of commercial space, in the Southeast Greenway Area only. As discussed under Section 4.9.1.2, Existing Conditions, the Southeast Greenway Area is composed of undeveloped parcels that are owned by Caltrans and are not publically accessible and is surrounded by residential, retail, and religious institutional/school facilities land uses. One of the objectives of the proposed project is to provide a continuous pedestrian, bicycle, and non-motorized transportation connections from Spring Lake Regional

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<sup>7</sup> City of Santa Rosa, Southeast Greenway, Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints, September 15, 2015, pages 39 to 48.

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

Park to Farmers Lane and links to downtown Santa Rosa, surrounding neighborhoods and schools, and the regional trail system. Future development under the proposed project would retain the existing roadway patterns and would include circulation improvements such as multi-modal access points, crossings, and connections that are intended to improve multi-modal access within the Southeast Greenway. These improvements do not propose any new major roadways or other physical features that would create new barriers on the project site. In addition, as described in Chapter 3, Project Description, the proposed project includes Land Use policies that promote orderly development and land use compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Therefore, the proposed project would not divide an existing established community. Impacts related to the division of an existing community would be *less than significant*.

**Significance Without Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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<b>LU-2</b>	<b>Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.</b>
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This section discusses future development consistency with the General Plan 2035 and how the proposed project is consistent with other applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations that concentrate on land use and planning.

### General Plan 2035 and Santa Rosa City Code

The General Plan 2035 and SRCC Title 20, Zoning Code, are the primary planning documents for the City of Santa Rosa. The proposed project would amend the General Plan 2035 to assign new General Plan land use designations and rezone the land within the Southeast Greenway Area to conform to the new land use designations. The proposed amendment is intended to ensure consistency between the General Plan 2035 and SRCC's Title 20, Zoning Code. Given that the General Plan is the overriding planning document for the City, and because the proposed project involves amending the General Plan and SRCC to increase consistency; the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* impact with respect to consistency with these planning documents.

### Other Land Use Plans

The proposed Land Use, Transportation, and Public Service and Facilities goals and policies would be adopted as part of the proposed project and would require local planning and development decisions to consider land use impacts. This section describes the goals and policies that future development within the Southeast Greenway Area would be required to abide by, thereby ensuring the proposed project would be consistent with the applicable land use regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

### *Plan Bay Area*

As described above, one of the overarching goals of the *Plan Bay Area* is to concentrate development in areas where there are existing services and infrastructure rather than allocate new growth to outlying areas where substantial transportation investments would be necessary to achieve the per capita passenger vehicle, VMT, and associated GHG emissions reductions. The proposed project includes the following goals and policies that would encourage the reduction of vehicle usage and promote non-vehicular travel in order to decrease GHG emissions, thereby ensuring consistency with *Plan Bay Area*:

### Land Use and Livability Policies

***Goal LUL-OO***     ***Develop the Southeast Greenway to support a walkable, livable neighborhood, promote economic vitality, and encourage social equity.***

Policy LUL-OO-1     Develop the site between Hoen Avenue Frontage Road and the Highway 12 onramp with a mix of residential and commercial development. Residential uses are required on this site and should be maximized. Lodging uses are allowed. Development of the site will require provision of pedestrian and bicycle access to the Southeast Greenway trails to the north.

Policy LUL-OO-2     Create a Southeast Greenway gateway on the western edge of the Greenway that offers a prominently visible entrance to the open space and increases visitor awareness of the amenity.

Policy LUL-OO-3     During the next General Plan update, consider a future planning effort for the area south of the Southeast Greenway between Franquette Avenue and Summerfield Road to identify land uses which would enable these properties to redevelop to improve the interface with the Greenway.

Policy LUL-OO-4     Seek opportunities for shared parking to serve the Southeast Greenway. These include Montgomery High School, Spring Lake Regional Park, and adjacent non-residential uses.

***Goal LUL-PP***     ***Design uses on the Southeast Greenway to maximize the Greenway's safety, accessibility, and respect for adjacent neighborhoods.***

Policy LUL-PP-1     Require all new development on or abutting the Southeast Greenway to front the Greenway with windows and entries, and limit fencing height and material to ensure views from private property into the Greenway to enhance public safety.

Policy LUL-PP-2     Locate new residential uses at select locations along the Southeast Greenway where they can access existing streets and infrastructure. These new uses should be sensitively designed to consider the scale of neighboring residential areas, maintain public views of the hills, and limit shade on the Greenway's recreation areas.

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

### Transportation Goals and Policies

**Goal T-N** *Provide a continuous pedestrian, bicycle, and non-motorized transportation connection from Spring Lake Regional Park to Farmers Lane and link to downtown Santa Rosa, surrounding neighborhoods and schools, and the regional trail system.*

Policy T-N-1 Provide separate trails for bicycle and pedestrian use, and permit them to meander to respond to topographic or other features in the Southeast Greenway. Separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities should join together to cross streets and creeks for safety and habitat protection.

Policy T-N-2 Provide multi-use path crossings where the Southeast Greenway intersects with Hoen Avenue, Franquette Avenue, Yulupa Avenue, and Summerfield Road to enhance the crossings for cyclists and pedestrians at these locations. These could include enhanced crosswalks, median refuges, pedestrian and bicyclist activated signals and warning signage for drivers.

Policy T-N-3 Identify and sign a bicycle route from the Southeast Greenway to Downtown that is direct, well-marked, and easy to navigate, while ensuring multiple connections. Consideration should be given to the following routes as identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to determine the highest priority for improvement: Franquette to Sonoma Avenue; Hoen Avenue to Sonoma Avenue; Hoen Avenue to Hahman Drive to Sonoma Avenue; and Vallejo Street to E Street.

Policy T-N-4 Ensure additional bicycle facilities connect to the Southeast Greenway as proposed in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Policy T-N-5 Provide for parking on the Southeast Greenway and seek shared parking opportunities in adjacent non-residential uses, such as Montgomery High School, the Friedman Center, and Spring Lake Regional Park in future design phases of the project to maximize a park once experience and minimize parking in surrounding neighborhoods.

### Public Services and Facilities Goals and Policies

**Goal PSF-J** *Provide natural open space, educational and cultural opportunities, and active and passive recreation for residents and visitors.*

Policy PSF-J-1 Coordinate with Santa Rosa City School District and Montgomery High School to share educational, recreational and parking facilities to the greatest extent feasible.

Policy PSF-J-2 Site the locations of community gardens as closely as possible to access points from neighboring residential areas to encourage use and activity.

Implementation and adoption of the aforementioned goals and policies would ensure consistency with the *Plan Bay Area* by promoting non-vehicular travel in order to decrease GHG emissions. Therefore,

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with the *Plan Bay Area* and the impact would be *less than significant*.

### *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*

As described above, the BPMP serves as a tool to promote and develop a convenient multi-modal transportation system for pedestrians and bicyclist within the City of Santa Rosa. The proposed project includes Transportation goals and policies (listed above) that would provide a variety of multi-modal transportation facilities within the Southeast Greenway Area and connections to existing bicycle facilities in Santa Rosa. Implementation and adoption of these aforementioned policies would ensure consistency with the BPMP by providing multi-modal transportation opportunities. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with the BPMP and the impact would be *less than significant*.

### *Citywide Creek Master Plan*

The CCMP provides guidelines for the care, management, restoration, and enhancement of the network of creeks and waterways that flow through Santa Rosa. In addition, the CCMP serves as a tool to aid the City's decision-making during the development approval process for projects proposed adjacent to waterways. The proposed project includes the following goal and policies that would promote the restoration of the areas surrounding the creeks that traverse the project site:

### Land Use and Livability Policies

***Goal LUL-NN***      ***Develop the Southeast Greenway sustainably to enhance and protect wetlands, wildlife habitat, groundwater and air quality.***

Policy LUL-NN-1    Restore or enhance the areas around the three creeks that cross the Southeast Greenway: Matanzas Creek, Sierra Park Creek, and Spring Creek, consistent with the Citywide Creek Master Plan.

Policy LUL-NN-2    Maximize open space and native plantings in the Southeast Greenway to provide a wildlife corridor to the greatest extent possible and reduce maintenance costs with the use of self-sustaining plant species.

Policy LUL-NN-3    Increase stormwater infiltration and groundwater recharge.

Implementation and adoption of these aforementioned goal and policies would ensure consistency with the CCMP by requiring the restoration of areas surrounding the tree creeks that traverse the project site and maximizing park and recreational opportunities throughout the Southeast Greenway Area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with the CCMP and the impact would be *less than significant*.

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

### Summary

As discussed above, the proposed project would not conflict with the applicable land use plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact in the Planning Area. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

**Significance Without Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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<b>LU-3</b>	<b>Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.</b>
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As described above under Section 4.9.1.1, Regulatory Framework, the Conservation Strategy has not been formally adopted by the City of Santa Rosa. Although portions of the City are located within the Conservation Strategy study area, the project site is located outside of these boundaries.<sup>8</sup> Given, that there are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans in force which would apply to the proposed project, there would be *no impact* with respect to conservation plan conflicts

**Significance Without Mitigation:** No impact.

### 4.9.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

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<b>LU-4</b>	<b>Implementation of the proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, would not result in significant cumulative impacts with respect to land use and planning.</b>
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As described in Chapter 4.0, Environmental Evaluation, of this Draft EIR, the cumulative impact for land use and planning includes potential future development under the proposed project combined with effects of development on lands within the city. A cumulative impact would be considered significant if, taken together with past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects in the identified area, would conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations.

As discussed above the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations. In addition, the proposed project would not physically divide an existing community, nor would the proposed project conflict with an adopted conservation plan. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulative land use and planning impact and the impact would be *less than significant*.

**Significance Without Mitigation:** Less than significant.

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<sup>8</sup> Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy, Figure 1, Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy Study Area, [https://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/recovery-planning/Santa-Rosa/Documents/Fig1\\_StudyAreaOverview.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/recovery-planning/Santa-Rosa/Documents/Fig1_StudyAreaOverview.pdf), accessed on June 23, 2017.