

4 PLAN CONCEPT

Chapter Four provides an overview of the major concepts of the Northwest Chico Specific Plan, including the location and nature of land uses, roadways, storm drainage, parks and other public amenities. These concepts are presented graphically in Figure 4-1. This chapter also includes a discussion of several issues affecting implementation of the Plan in the short-term, such as the location of the All Star Pac cold storage facility. Chapters Five, Six and Seven present more detailed policies to guide implementation of the Specific Plan illustrative concept. The principle components of the Northwest Chico Specific Plan are described below.

A. Residential Neighborhoods

Most of the existing agricultural, manufacturing and vacant properties in the Northwest Chico Specific Plan Area will be converted to residential uses. The residential neighborhoods in the Plan Area will provide a range of housing types with easy access to retail and open space opportunities. The residential neighborhood will connect to a network of major streets at multiple access points to ensure community connectivity. The streets themselves will be an important public amenity for the residential neighborhoods and will include separated sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled street lamps and street trees.

As described below, new single-family and multi-family residential development and mixed-use development will occur in several key areas.

1. Single-Family Residential

Approximately 340 acres in the Plan Area will be dedicated to new and existing single-family residential uses, resulting in about 1,025 new single-family units over the long-term. This single-family housing will be accessible from major arterials in the Plan Area, including Nord Highway and Sycamore Road at the north, Eaton Road at the south and the Esplanade. As described in more detail below, single-family residential properties will face directly onto the Mud and Sycamore Creek levees in many cases, providing direct access to a proposed walking and biking trail along the creeks. Most homes

will front on relatively narrow roadways that include sidewalks and street trees. The homes will include façade details such as porches, steps and window reveals. Garages will be set back farther from the street than the main façade to further create a pedestrian-orientation.

2. Multi-Family Residential

Approximately 165 acres in the Plan Area will be dedicated to new and existing multi-family residential uses. Dwelling types in this category will include townhouses and garden apartments. The majority of the multi-family areas will be located along the Esplanade in the center of the Plan Area to create a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use street and allow residents to easily walk from their homes to nearby commercial and recreation opportunities. In addition, increased population densities along the Esplanade will help support increased transit service on this corridor.

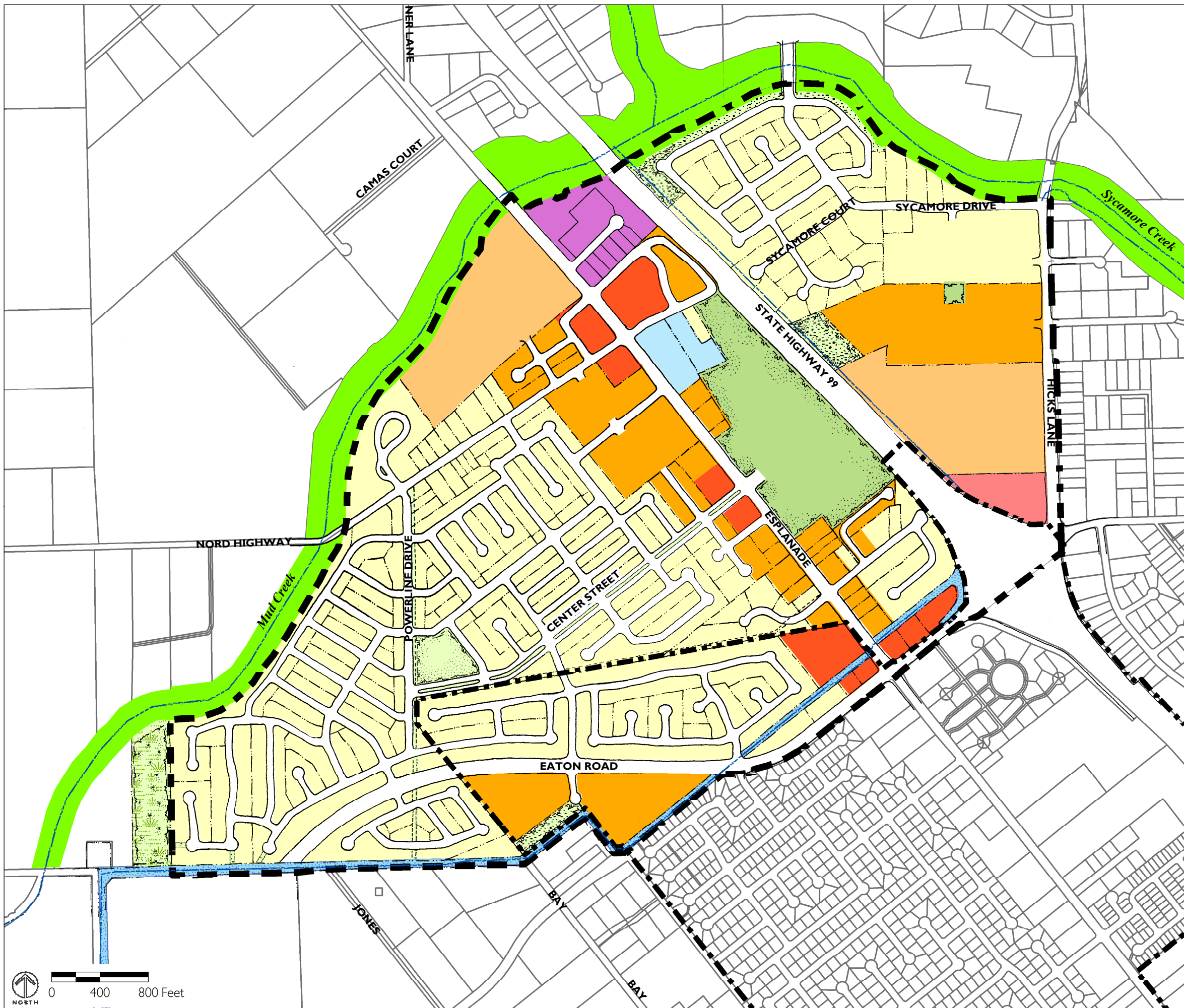
Multi-family development along the Esplanade will be two to three stories in height and provide appropriate amenities, such as active common areas and internal circulation systems that connect to the larger neighborhood. Multi-family buildings will be oriented to the adjacent public street by providing entryways or other entry features along the street. More detailed design guidance for the development of multi-family housing is included in Chapter Seven.

B. Commercial and Mixed-Use Areas

New commercial and mixed-use areas will be clustered on the Esplanade, within easy walking or biking distance of the residential neighborhoods. These areas will be well-served by bus transit on the Esplanade and businesses will benefit from their location on one of Chico's primary arterials. Three new mixed-use nodes along the Esplanade are described in more detail below.

FIGURE 4-1

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



-  Study Area
-  City Limit Line
-  Creeks and Drainage
-  Single Family Residential
-  Mobile Home Park
-  Multi-family Residential
-  Retail Trade Services
-  Mixed-Use Commercial
-  Manufacturing & Warehousing
-  School
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Park with Detention
-  Wetland/Detention
-  Detention Facility
-  SUDAD
-  Creekside Greenway

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1. Nord Highway and the Esplanade

A mixed-use area will be located at the intersection of the Esplanade and Nord Highway. This node will contain neighborhood-serving retail, such as retail shops, personal services, restaurants and small scale businesses and personal services. The area is surrounded by a range of housing types as well as Shasta Elementary School. It is also adjacent to the northern entrance to DeGarmo Park. This intersection will be a vibrant mix of commercial, residential and civic uses and will serve as a gateway into the Plan Area.

2. The Esplanade and Center Street

This mixed-use node, shown in Figure 4-2, will be located on the Esplanade directly across from the entrance to DeGarmo Park. It will be part of the primary entrance to DeGarmo Park and serve as a distinct center within the Plan Area. This active neighborhood-serving center will contain a vertical mix of uses, with one to two levels of housing provided above a retail ground floor. This center will provide a mix of neighborhood-serving businesses such as restaurants, shops and personal services and will link DeGarmo Park with the surrounding retail and residential uses. The link between the park and the commercial node will be enhanced by new crosswalks and a pedestrian median on the Esplanade, as shown in Figure 4-2. The result will be a dynamic neighborhood center in the heart of the Plan Area.

3. Eaton Road and the Esplanade

The third mixed-use area will expand on the existing commercial uses that currently exist at Eaton Road and the Esplanade. The existing uses include a gas station and several small service and retail stores. As with the other commercial nodes along the Esplanade, this area will contain neighborhood-serving retail uses, such as small stores, restaurants, businesses and personal services. The area will be within easy walking distance to the Brentwood subdivision directly to the west and to the residential development planned on portions of the Plan Area west of Highway 99.

C. Circulation Pattern

As Figure 4-1 illustrates, a new circulation pattern will be introduced into the Plan Area. Generally, the circulation pattern will ensure strong connectivity between the residential neighborhoods, the area's network of open space and parks, and the mixed-use neighborhood centers on the Esplanade. All of the streets will be attractive and safe in order to encourage walking and bicycling through the area. Chapter Five of this Plan includes detailed design specifications for major roadways in the Plan Area.

This circulation pattern includes two new major collector streets that will provide key connectivity in the Plan Area. Powerline Drive will be a north-south street that will extend south from Nord Highway. Center Street will be an east-west street stretching between Powerline Drive and the Esplanade. These two new streets will directly access the existing larger street hierarchy in the Plan Area, including the Esplanade and Nord Highway.

Residential neighborhoods on both sides of Highway 99 will connect to the major streets within the Plan Area at multiple access points to ensure connectivity. Streets will define the residential neighborhoods by providing a continuous character for the area and will include street trees, separated sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled street lamps and street furniture. The streets themselves will serve as a significant amenity for the new residential neighborhoods in the Plan Area, including street trees, sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented lighting, and in some case, walking and biking paths along center medians.

A dedicated bicycle path will run along Powerline Drive connecting to striped bicycle lanes along Eaton Road and the Esplanade, as described in more detail in Chapter Five.

D. Parks and Open Space

Public parks and other open space amenities will contribute to the quality of the neighborhoods in the Plan Area. The parks will connect to a larger network of walkable streets and a potential trail network on the creek levees. This section describes the parks in the Plan Area, as well as the relationship between the new residential development and the creekside levees, an important open space edge on the northern- and western-most residential portion of the Plan Area.

1. DeGarmo Community Park

As shown in Figure 4-1, the future site of the planned 35-acre DeGarmo Community Park lies between Highway 99 and the Esplanade, adjacent to Shasta Elementary School. As Figure 4-3 illustrates, the park will have five baseball fields, two soccer fields, basketball courts, a skate park, a picnic pavilion, a recreation facility, an aquatic facility and parking areas.

As a community park, it will serve the entire Plan Area, but will also be an important amenity within easy walking distance of the new residential neighborhoods on and near the Esplanade. DeGarmo Park, in combination with Shasta Elementary School, will create a public-use activity node on the Esplanade. The mixed-use neighborhood center at the intersection of the Esplanade and Center Street will directly align with the planned entry to DeGarmo Park.

2. Neighborhood Parks

Two smaller neighborhood parks will serve the Plan Area. One is a 4.5 acre neighborhood park on the east side of Powerline Drive and just north of the existing Brentwood subdivision. This neighborhood park will be similar to Nob Hill Park in southwest Chico and will also serve as a storm water detention basin for the area just as Nob Hill Park serves as a storm drainage detention facility for the Nob Hill subdivision.

Because a portion of this park site is potentially unavailable for development in the near-term due to an existing business on the site, the All Star Pac company, the park and adjacent residential areas have been designed in a way that allows them to be developed in phases. More detail about the phasing of the park and All Star Pac are discussed in Section G of this chapter.



As shown above, Nob Hill Park will be a model for a new park and drainage facility in the western portion of the Plan Area

The second neighborhood park is a one-acre park to be constructed east of Highway 99, near Hicks Lane and Sycamore Drive, with an exact location to

be determined in the first stage of development for the Webb Homes parcel east of Highway 99. The park will be a small pocket park serving the immediate neighborhood. The small park could provide a children's play area, sitting areas and picnic tables, similar in size, scale and features to the existing Rotary Park off Park Avenue in the southern part of Chico.



Rotary Park, as shown above, will be a model for a new neighborhood park in the eastern portion of the Plan Area

3. Creekside Levees and Adjacent Roadways

As illustrated in Figure 4-4, the levees of Mud and Sycamore Creeks will be incorporated as a public open space amenity in the Plan Area. A regional recreation trail will run along the top of levee, with access points from each street that intersects the creek. This gravel trail will serve pedestrians and bicyclists. The trail design and construction, including appropriate landscaping of the levees, will be completed by the City in coordination with Butte County, which maintains and operates the levee system. The City will ensure that the design of the trail will be compatible with the County's routine maintenance of the levees and commits to maintaining the trail itself.

Residential properties will face onto the levees along residential streets that include parking on both sides of the street. The sides of the levee across from the houses on these streets will be landscaped with trees and ground cover to ensure an adequate setback from the slope of the levee. In addition, a paved path will run along this landscaped edge to improve internal pedestrian connectivity within the Plan Area. Each side of the street will be flanked by a row of street trees.

E. Drainage

Several storm water drainage detention facilities will be strategically located throughout the Plan Area to accommodate the storm water run-off associated with new development. The section provides a general overview of the approach to storm water detention in the Plan Area. More specific detail including size and depth of detention facilities, outflow directions and pipe sizing is included in Chapter Eight about Plan Area infrastructure.

The preferred locations for these detention facilities are shown in Figure 4-5 and are described below. The detention facilities will be aggregated to serve multiple properties to more efficiently manage the storm water runoff and will be attractively integrated into the Plan Area's open space network. Poli-

cies regarding the design of drainage facilities in the Plan Area is included in Chapter Seven.

1. Drainage Facilities West of Highway 99

Two options for accommodating storm water drainage west of Highway 99 are presented below. The first option is the preferred approach, however, as described below, certain constraints may make it infeasible. Therefore, a second option is also presented.

a. Preferred Drainage Solution

The proposed storm water detention facilities west of Highway 99 will accommodate the entire area south of Mud Creek and north of the current SUDAD system south of Eaton Road. This area will be served by two multi-use detention facilities as shown in Figure 4-5.

The first of these facilities will be the neighborhood park at Powerline Drive and Center Street, which will also serve as a detention facility during the wet season. This five-acre neighborhood park will be designed to include moderate slopes on the periphery, which transition to a primary surface located four to five feet below grade to control flooding while maximizing park usability.

An additional major detention facility will be located outside the Plan Area, adjacent to the most western corner of the Plan Area, between the Plan Area boundary and Mud Creek, as shown in Figure 4-5. This facility will also provide wetland value. Two individually owned parcels exist in this area. Hydrologic modeling indicates that only the parcels immediately adjacent to the Plan Area would be required to accommodate project drainage. The City will pursue an appropriate design based on wetland value, owner cooperation and flood control needs. The detention/wetland facility is not anticipated to serve as a wetland mitigation bank, or otherwise be developed to meet specific regulatory agency standards for mitigation creation.

Locating the drainage basin adjacent to the western corner of the Plan Area will allow nearby parcels within the Plan Area, owned by Epick Homes, to

be developed in the short-term. Further, the detention/wetland facility will provide the 100-foot buffer required by the City between agricultural uses and residential development along this part of the Plan Area boundary.

b. Alternative Drainage Solution

The drainage scenario described above represents the preferred approach to accommodating storm water drainage in the Plan Area. It will accommodate all anticipated storm water run-off west of Highway 99 and removes the development constraint that the City's agricultural buffer policies presents along the far western border of the Plan Area.

However, there are several potential constraints to this drainage scenario in the short-term. Butte County approval may be required to create the detention/wetland facility adjacent to the Plan Area. In addition, the property would need to be purchased from a private party, so landowner cooperation will be required.

Figure 4-6 shows an alternative approach to accommodating storm water drainage west of Highway 99 should the preferred approach not be viable. This approach will accommodate storm water run-off in two drainage facilities. The first one will be located just north of Nord Highway where it intersects with Mud Creek. A second facility will be located at the south end of the Plan Area, just below Eaton Road and adjacent to the existing SUDAD facility. This facility will be designed as an aesthetically pleasing open space amenity, similar to the photographs of detention swales below.



Examples of aesthetically pleasing storm water facilities

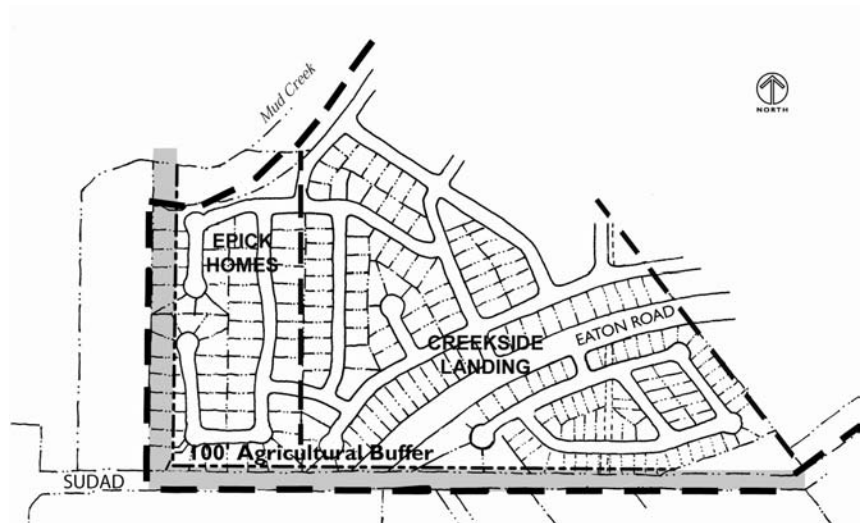
2. Drainage Facilities East of Highway 99

The development proposed for east of Highway 99 will be accommodated by two additional storm water detention facilities. As Figure 4-5 indicates, the area north of Sycamore Road will be served by a drainage facility that also serves as a visual amenity adjacent to the Mud Creek. Located along the levee, the detention facility will work as a large swale along the residential

street at the north of the project, flowing west and gathering in a larger basin. The larger basin will have gradually sloping sides allowing the basin to be visually attractive. The drainage facility will release into Mud Creek in a similar fashion to the existing system at that location. A second detention facility will function as the drainage facility for the development south of Sycamore Drive and west of Hicks Lane. This drainage facility will drain south to the existing SUDAD system west of Highway 99.

F. Agricultural Buffers

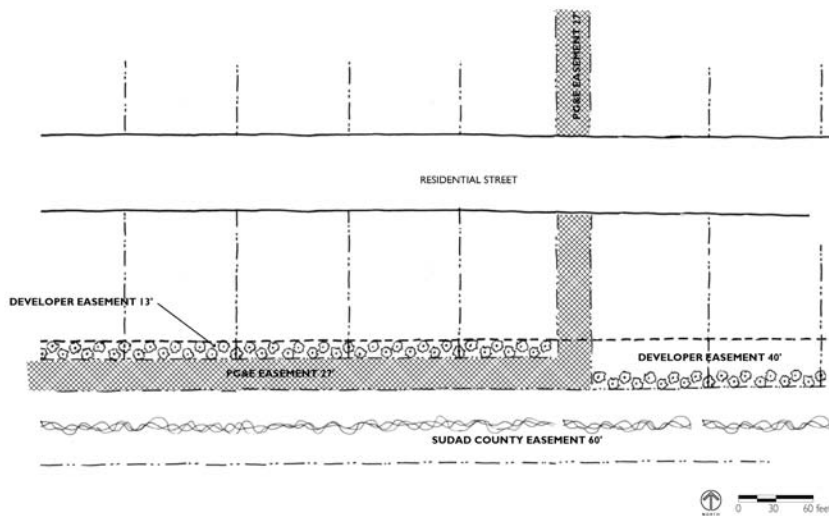
As explained in Chapter Three, the City of Chico generally requires a 100-foot-wide buffer between any agricultural lands using spray pesticides, and residential uses. A buffer will be necessary between the orchards to the south and west of the Plan Area (near the southwest corner of the Plan Area) and the proposed residential uses on the Creekside Landing and Epick Homes sites within the Plan Area. The illustration below shows where the 100-foot buffer is required in the Plan Area.



Location of City required 100-foot agricultural buffers

As discussed in the previous section, if the preferred drainage scenario is implemented and a wetland/drainage facility is created along the western boundary of the Epick Homes site, no additional agricultural buffer along the western edge would be required because the County’s 300-foot buffer would be accommodated by the drainage facility.

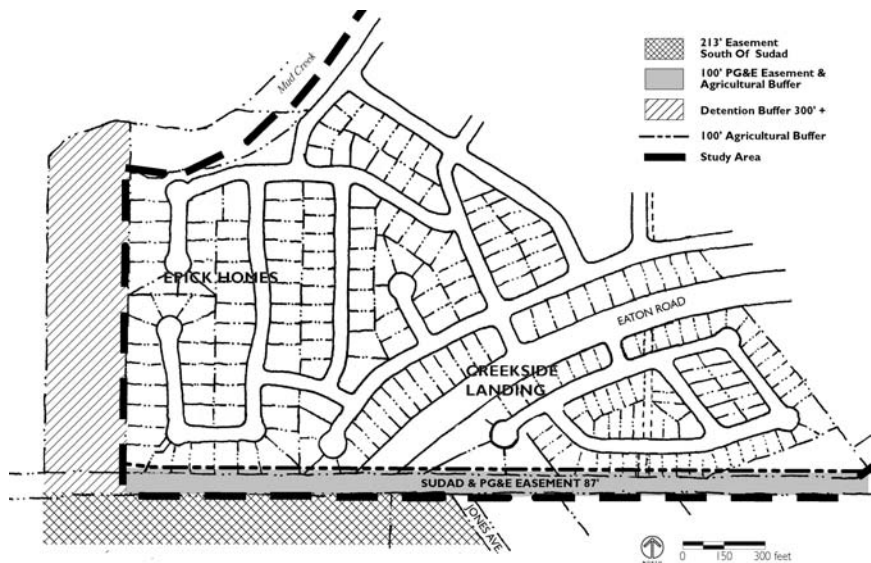
In their discussions as part of the Ad Hoc City/County Cooperative Planning Committee, the City and County agreed that along the southern boundary of the study area, a 100-foot buffer is appropriate east of Jones Avenue. This buffer will be accommodated through the SUDAD channel and PG&E easement that already exists, plus a landscaped buffer north of the SUDAD for a total width of 100 feet. The landscaped buffer, which may be located within proposed residential parcels, will contain a 8-foot solid fence and a double row of plantings of fast-growing trees (which must retain leaves during the agricultural spraying season) to provide screening from agricultural spraying. This buffer is illustrated below.



100-foot agricultural buffer along the southern boundary of the Plan Area, required east of Jones Avenue.

West of Jones Avenue, however, a 300-foot buffer will be required as shown in the figure below if Butte County provides the City with the right of emi-

ment domain to require the additional 213 feet of the adjacent property necessary to create a 300-foot buffer in this area. If the power to use eminent domain is determined to be infeasible, then a 100-foot buffer, as described previously, will be required.



Location of expanded 300-foot buffers if acquisition of adjacent properties is successful.

G. Phasing

This section provides an overview of some of the key issues regarding phasing of development under the Specific Plan. More detail is included in Chapter Nine.

1. Overall Phasing

The west side of the Plan Area, bounded by Highway 99 and Mud Creek, will likely develop first, in a two to five year time frame. As is described in more detail in Chapter Nine, the City anticipates four specific development projects within the west part of the Plan Area to move forward as part of this

first phase of development. The development of properties east of Highway 99 is considered more long-term, with likely development on a five to ten year horizon.

2. All Star Pac Site

As noted previously, all of the land needed to construct the neighborhood park and detention storm water facility at the intersection of Powerline Drive and Center Street may not be available in the near-term. The All Star Pac business may continue in this location for an indeterminate period of time.

To remain viable as a business, All Star Pac will require adequate clearance west of its primary building for truck loading, unloading and circulation. There is also a weigh station on the site that will need to remain active and may need to be moved elsewhere on the site. Therefore, the neighborhood park, residential parcels and street network in the vicinity of the business have been designed in a way that allows development in this area to be accomplished in phases.

The build-out condition envisioned by this Specific Plan is shown in Figure 4-1. Figure 4-7 illustrates a first phase of development that will allow the All Star Pac business to remain operational while surrounding development occurs. In this first phase, approximately 3.3 acres of the park will be built, including detention facilities and landscaping, as well as a playground and picnic area on higher areas. Center Street will run along the property and intersect Powerline Drive. In the later phase, if the property owner is willing to sell the property, the remaining portions of the park will be built.

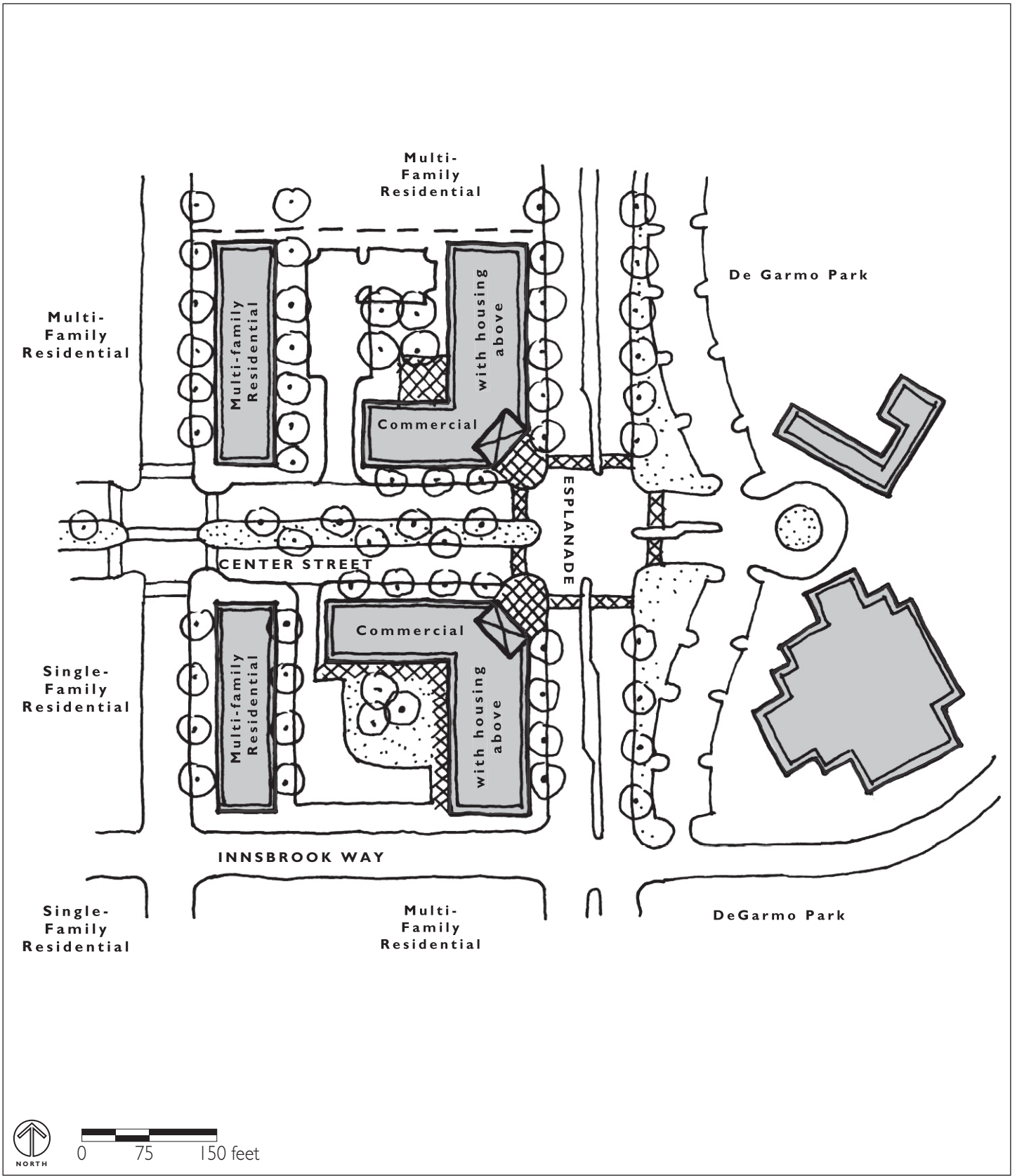


FIGURE 4-2

MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



Source: Chico Area Recreation District,
 Land Image Landscape Architects. March 11, 2003

FIGURE 4-3

DEGARMO COMMUNITY PARK

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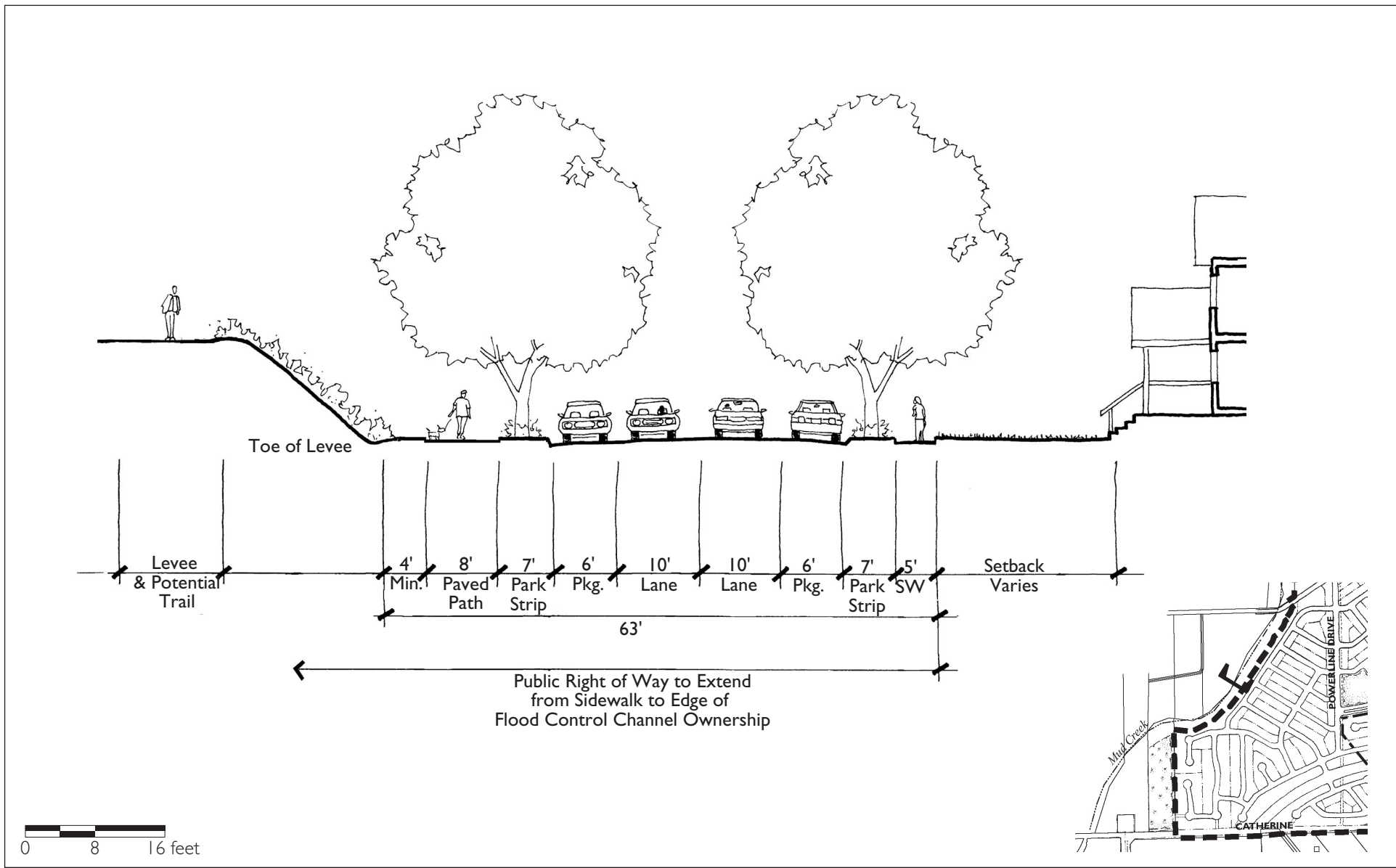


FIGURE 4-4

LEVEE TRAIL SECTION

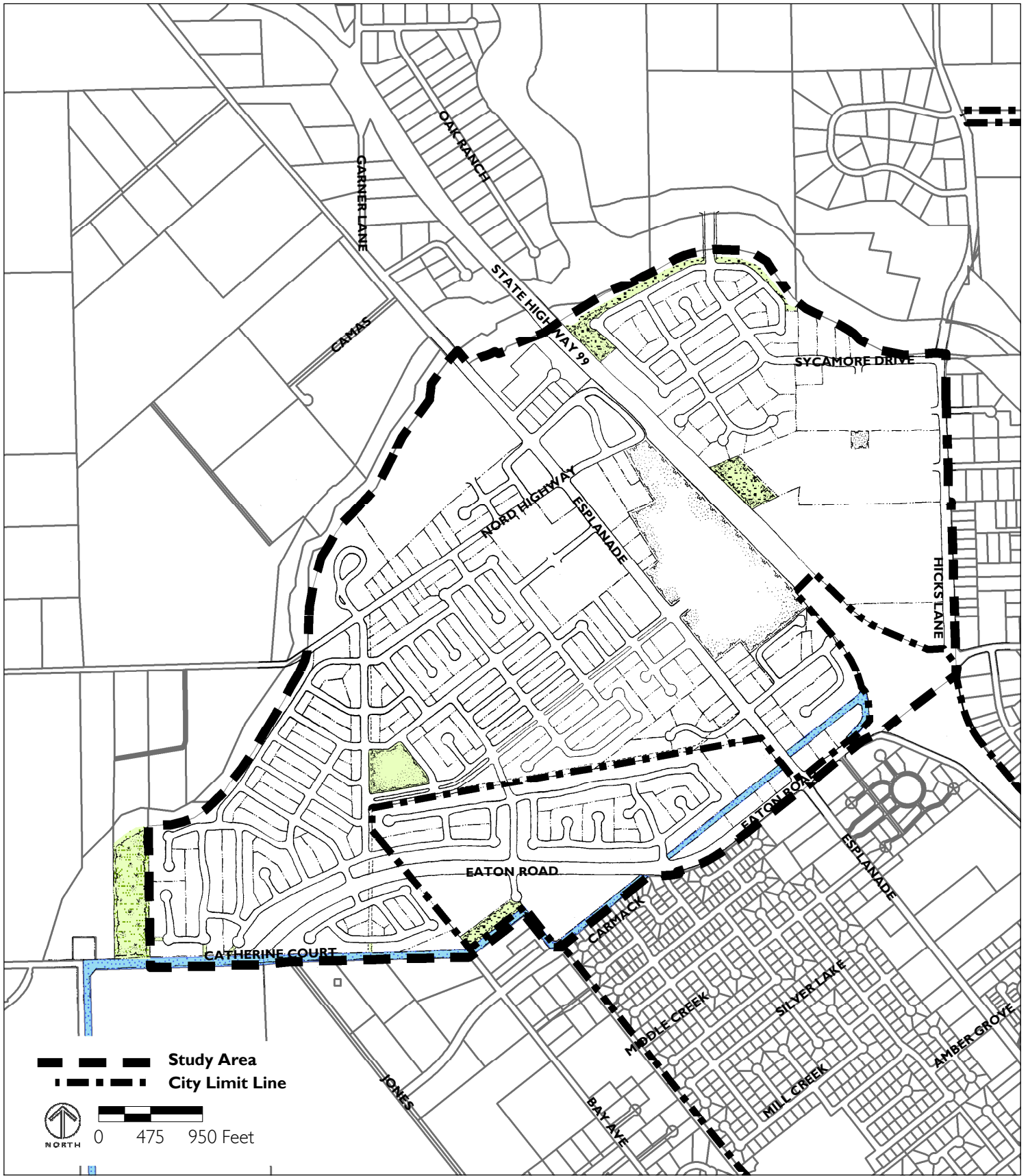


FIGURE 4-5

- Park with Detention
- Wetland/Detention
- Detention Facility
- SUDAD

PREFERRED DRAINAGE SCENARIO

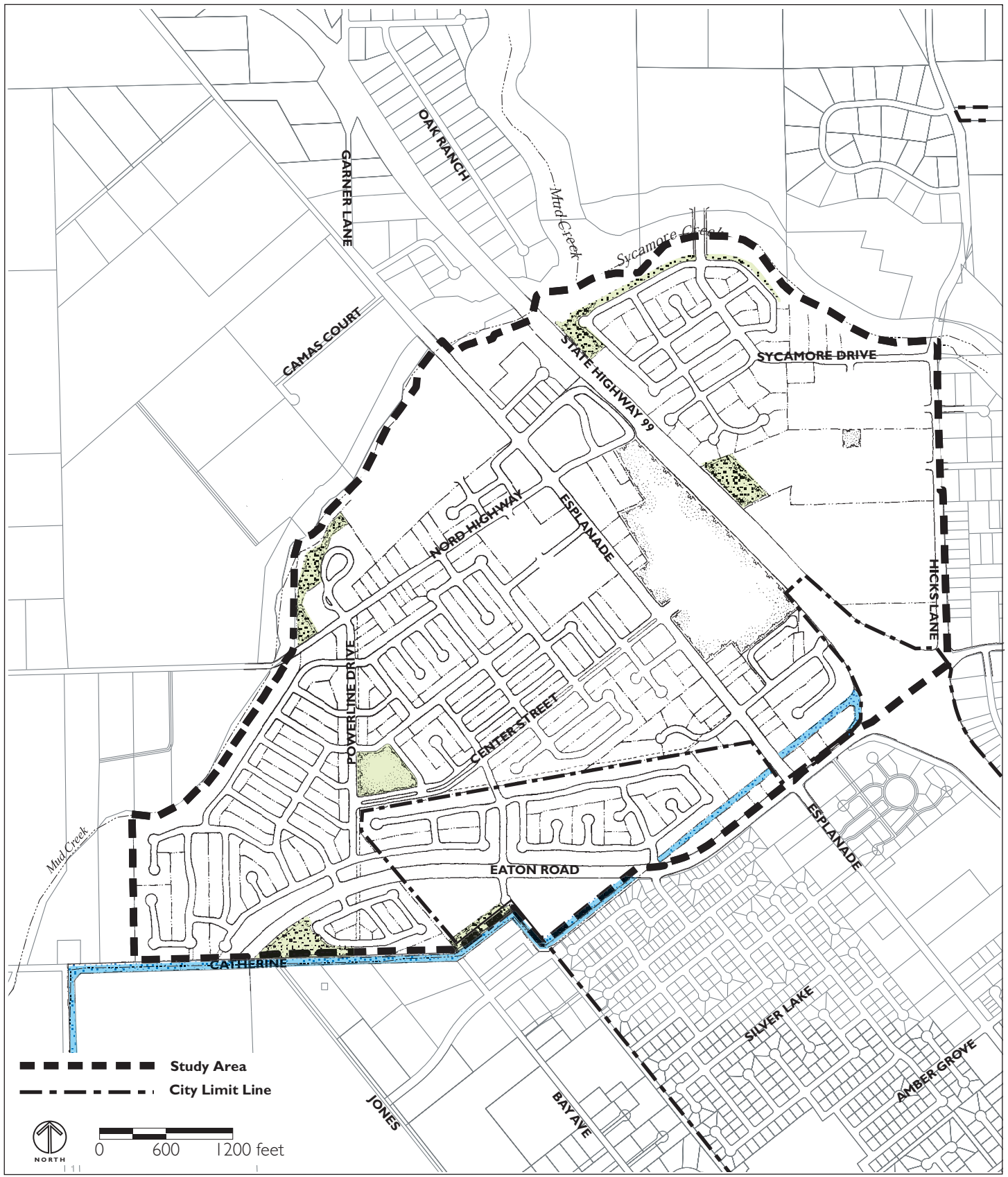



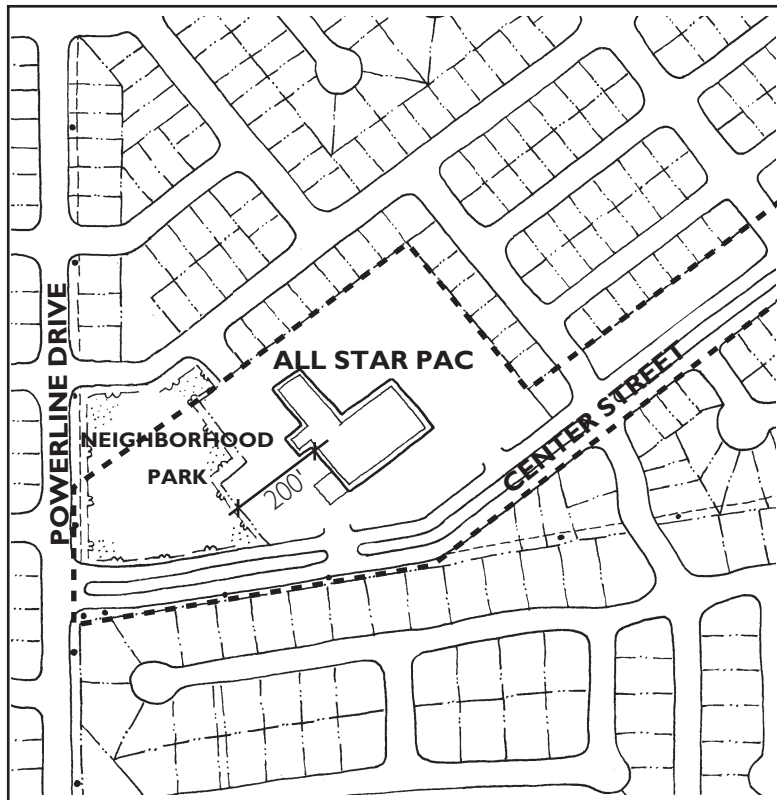


FIGURE 4-6

ALTERNATIVE DRAINAGE SCENARIO

-  Park with Detention
-  Detention Facility
-  SUDAD

**Phase I
Neighborhood Park
3.3 ac**



**Phase 2
Neighborhood Park
4.5 ac**

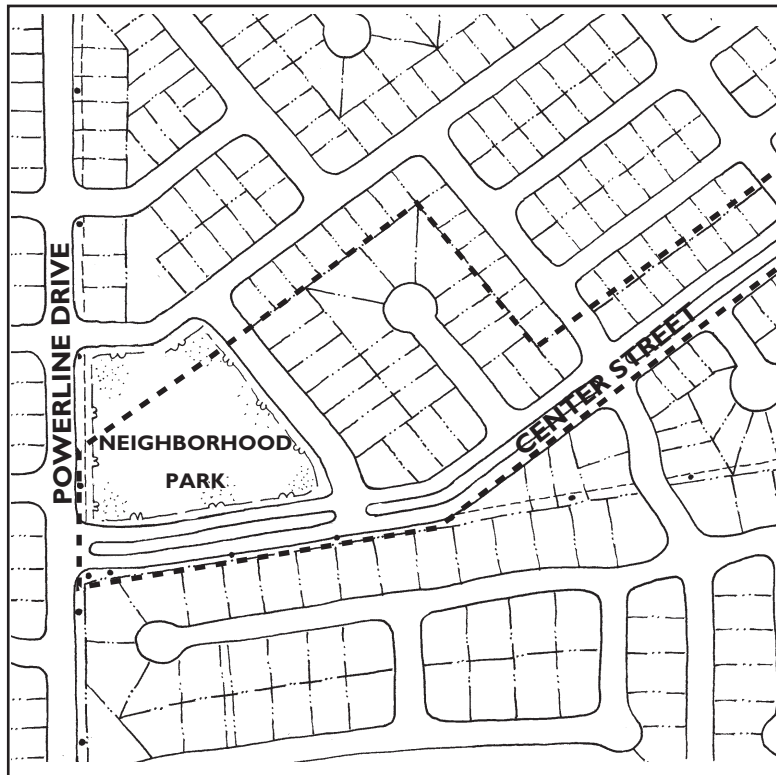


FIGURE 4-7

- Power Line Poles
- — — Power Line Easements
- - - - - All Star Pac Property Line

ALL-STAR PAC PHASING

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