



November 17, 2016

MEMO TO: Stanislaus County Planning Commission

FROM: Miguel Galvez, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Community Development

SUBJECT: PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING/SITE VISIT - USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2016-0055 – RECOLOGY

On Thursday, December 1, 2016, a Planning Commission Special Meeting, consisting of a site visit of the Recology composting facility will be conducted. The purpose of the site visit is for the Planning Commission to view current site conditions and operations of the proposed Use Permit application property. This Planning Commission Special Meeting will include a bus tour of the facility. As a site visit, it is a Special Meeting which is limited in scope – with no Commission action to be taken on the land use application.

Members of the public may attend the Special Meeting and a limited number of seats will be available to the public to participate in the bus tour. During the Special Meeting, members of the Planning Commission should adhere to the following protocols:

- Comments/questions from Commission members should be restricted to inquiries about the operations and site conditions. Questions should be directed to County staff, who may refer questions to the applicant when appropriate. Comments and any communication regarding the merits of the project are not appropriate during this Special Meeting.
- Care should be taken to avoid *ex parte* communications during this Special Meeting. Please refrain from communicating directly with members of the public or the applicant (including applicant staff and any representatives) about this project or other projects. Remember to direct all communication through County staff. Commission members should move about the site in a group and avoid private conversations among themselves, with the public, and with applicant representatives.
- County staff will inform members of the public and the applicant (including applicant staff and any representative) that direct communication with individual members of the Planning Commission is prohibited. As is the case for any meeting of the Commission, questions and comments should be directed to the Commission as a whole.
- County staff will inform members of the public that comments and questions related to the project will be heard at the regular Planning Commission Meeting, anticipated to be December 15, 2016.

UP PLN2016-0055
Planning Commission Memo
November 17, 2016
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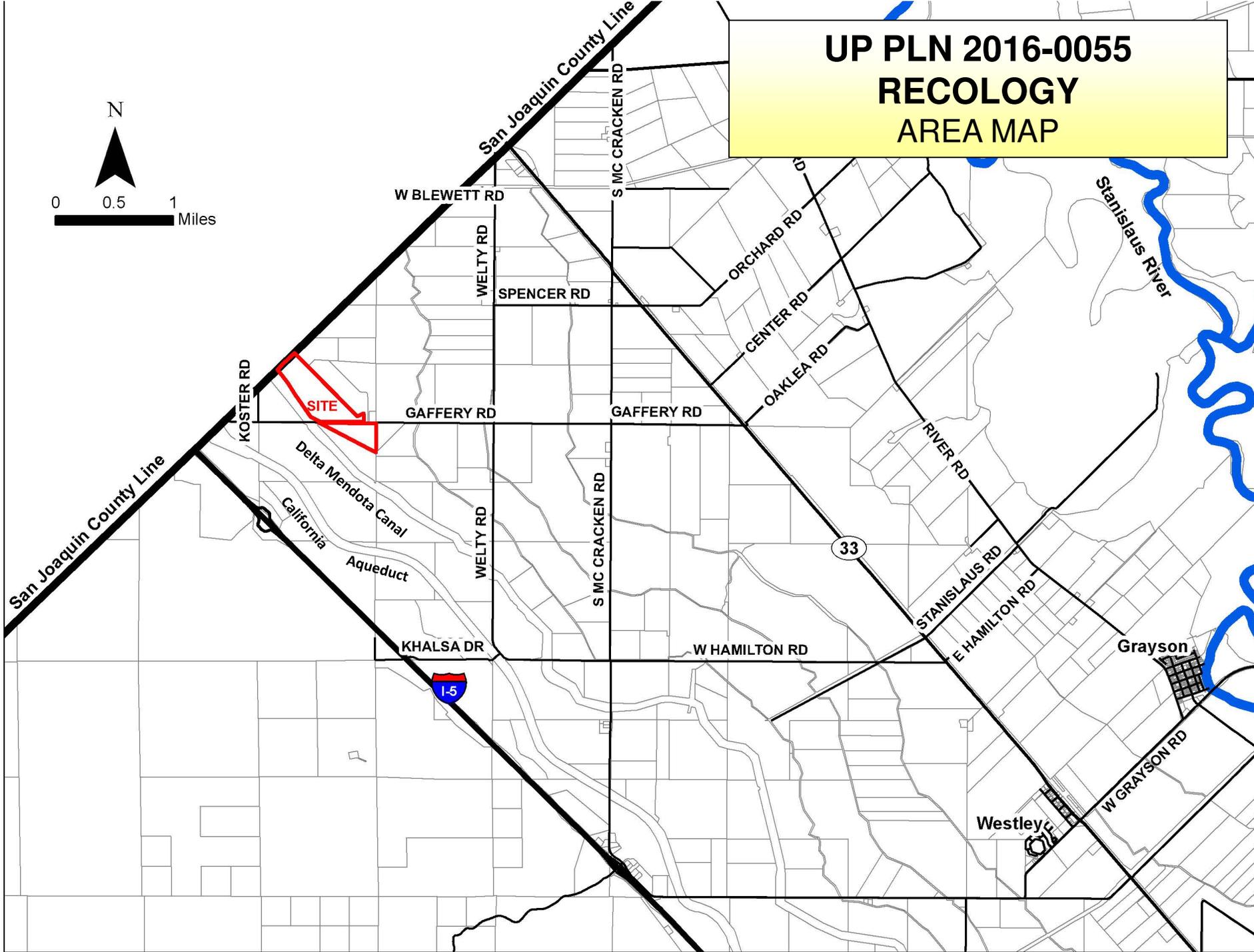
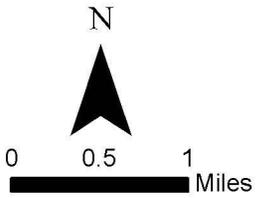
The CEQA Referral Initial Study for the Recology Use Permit, including a site plan, is available for your review at: <http://www.stancounty.com/planning/pl/act-projects.shtm>. Project location maps and a project description are provided as Attachments A and B.

The Special Meeting is scheduled to start at 2:00 p.m. and will be conducted at the Recology facility located at 3909 Gaffery Road. Planning Commission members are advised not to travel to the site with more than one other Commissioner.

Attachment:

- A. Maps
- B. Excerpt from the November 2, 2016, Initial Study, including Project Description.

UP PLN 2016-0055 RECOLOGY AREA MAP



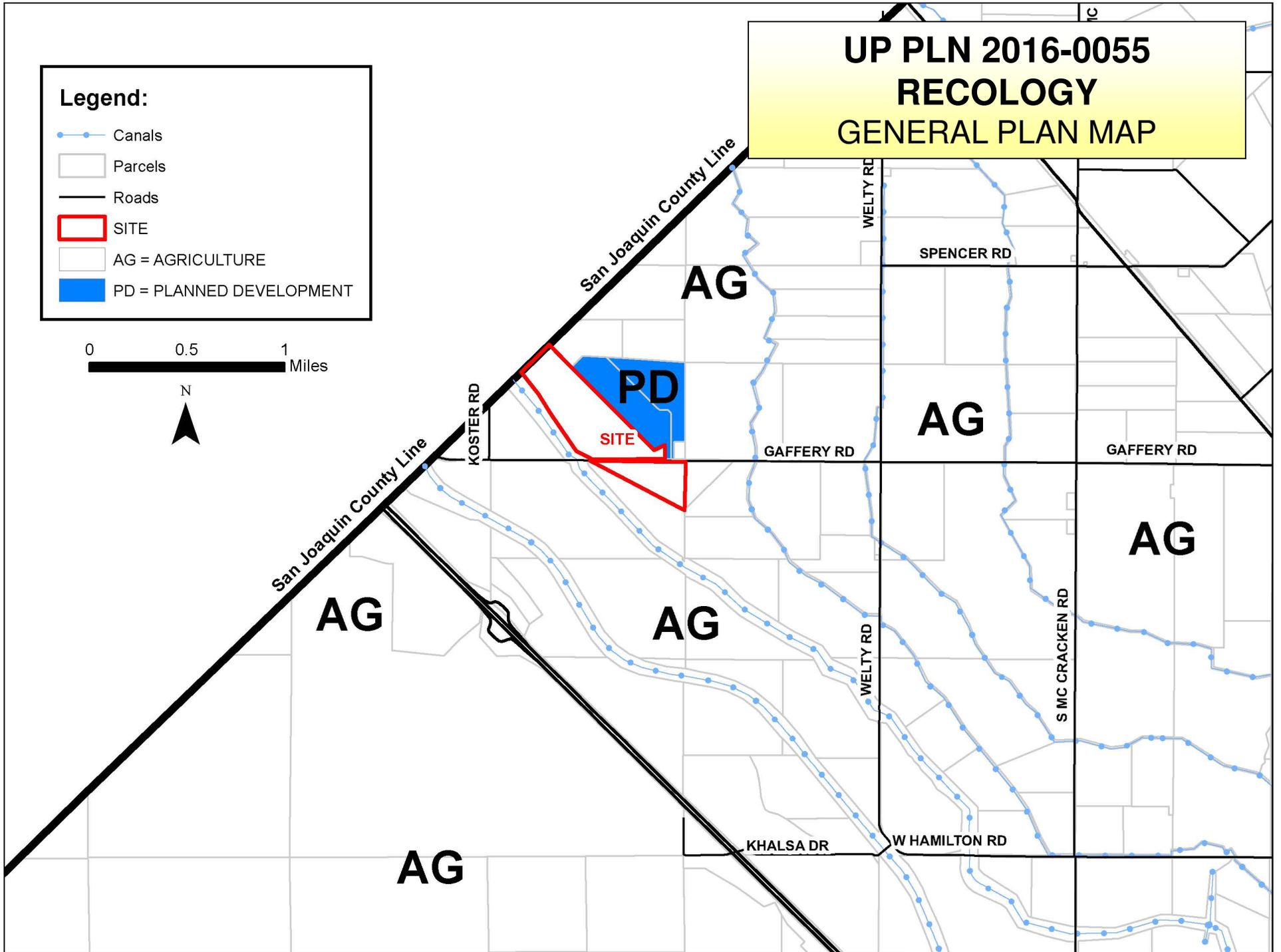
ATTACHMENT A

UP PLN 2016-0055 RECOLOGY GENERAL PLAN MAP

Legend:

- Canals
- Parcels
- Roads
- SITE
- AG = AGRICULTURE
- PD = PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

0 0.5 1 Miles



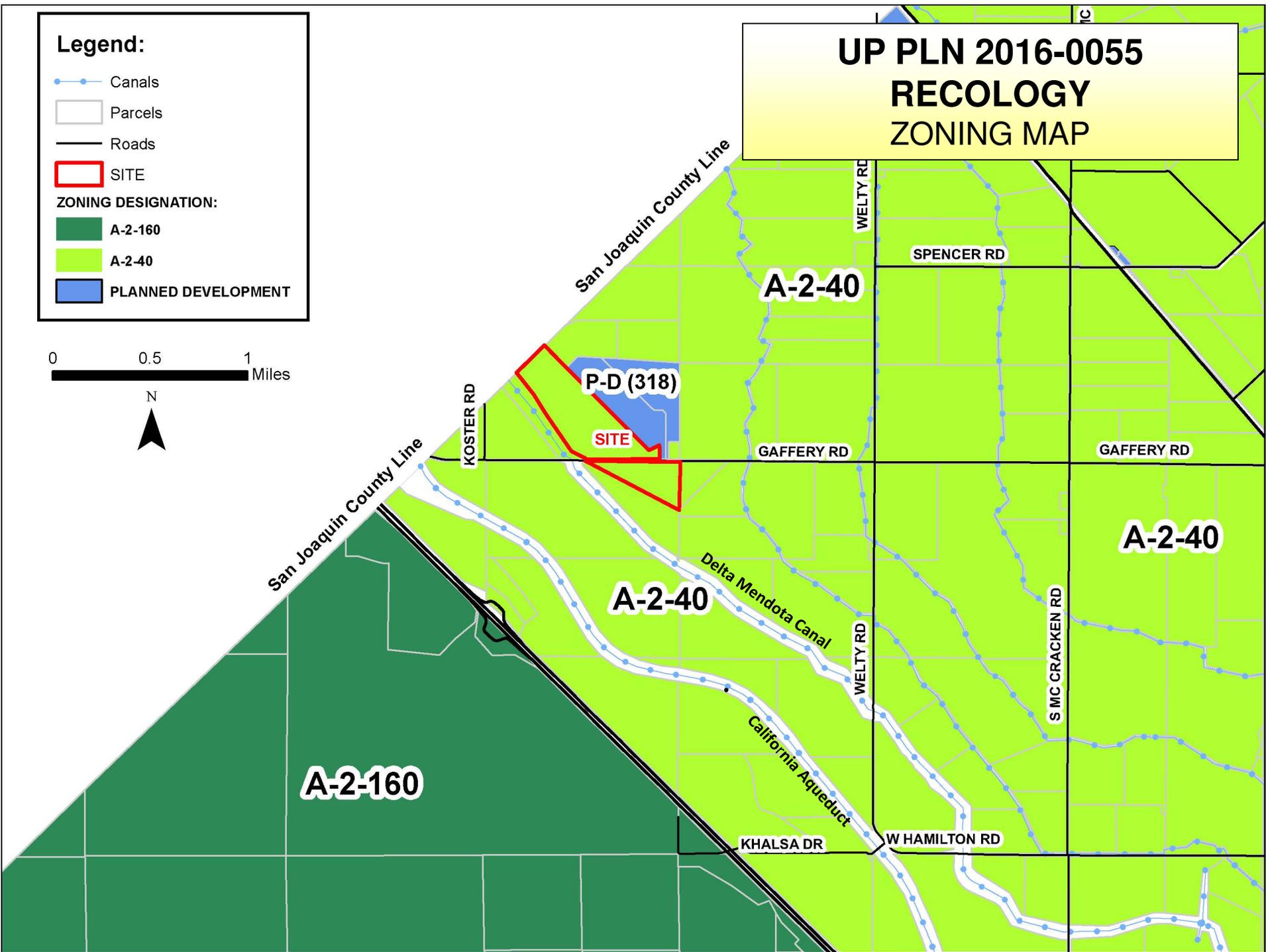
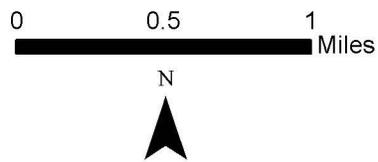
UP PLN 2016-0055 RECOLOGY ZONING MAP

Legend:

- Canals
- Parcels
- Roads
- SITE**

ZONING DESIGNATION:

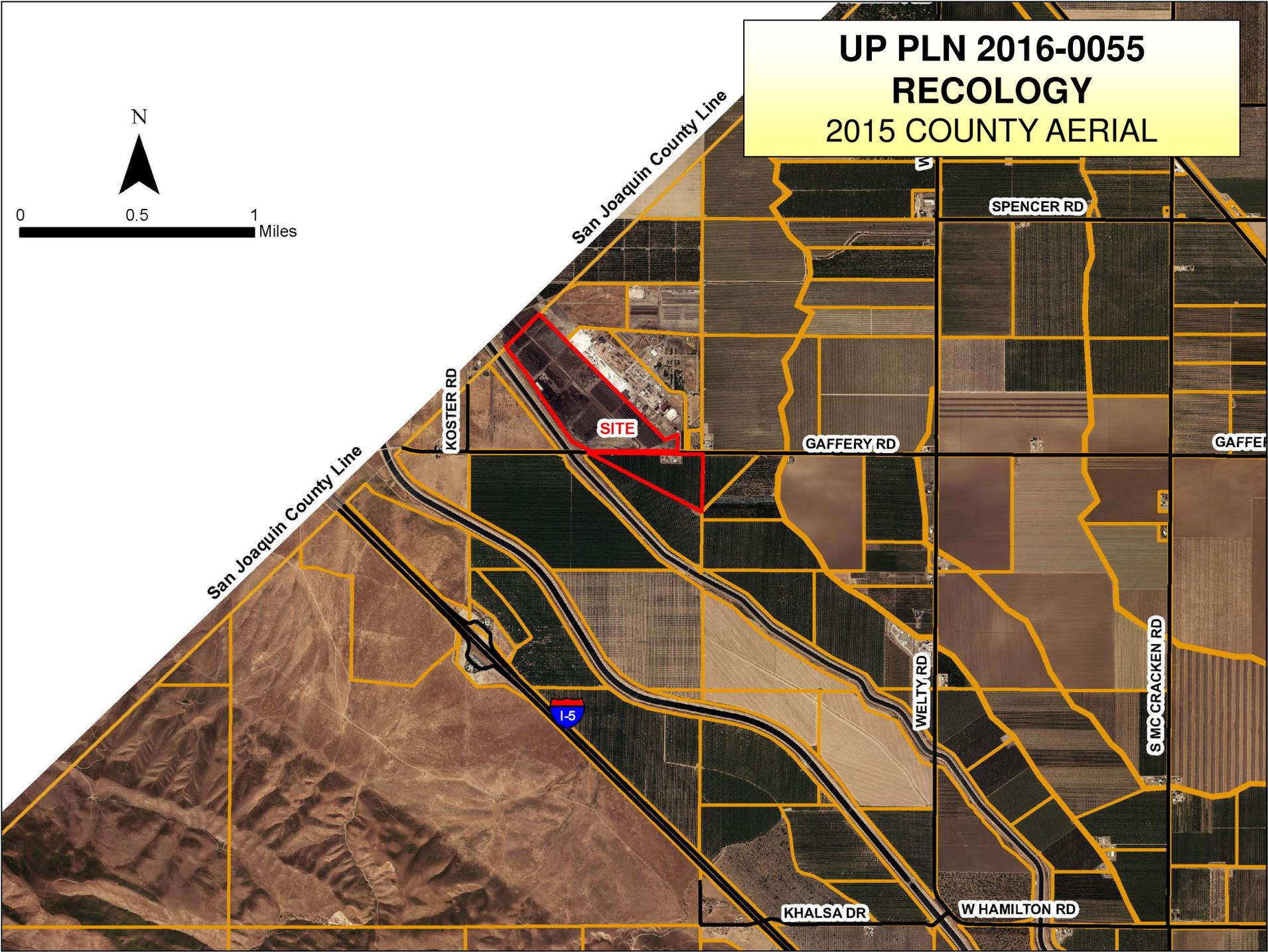
- A-2-160
- A-2-40
- PLANNED DEVELOPMENT



**UP PLN 2016-0055
RECOLOGY
2015 COUNTY AERIAL**



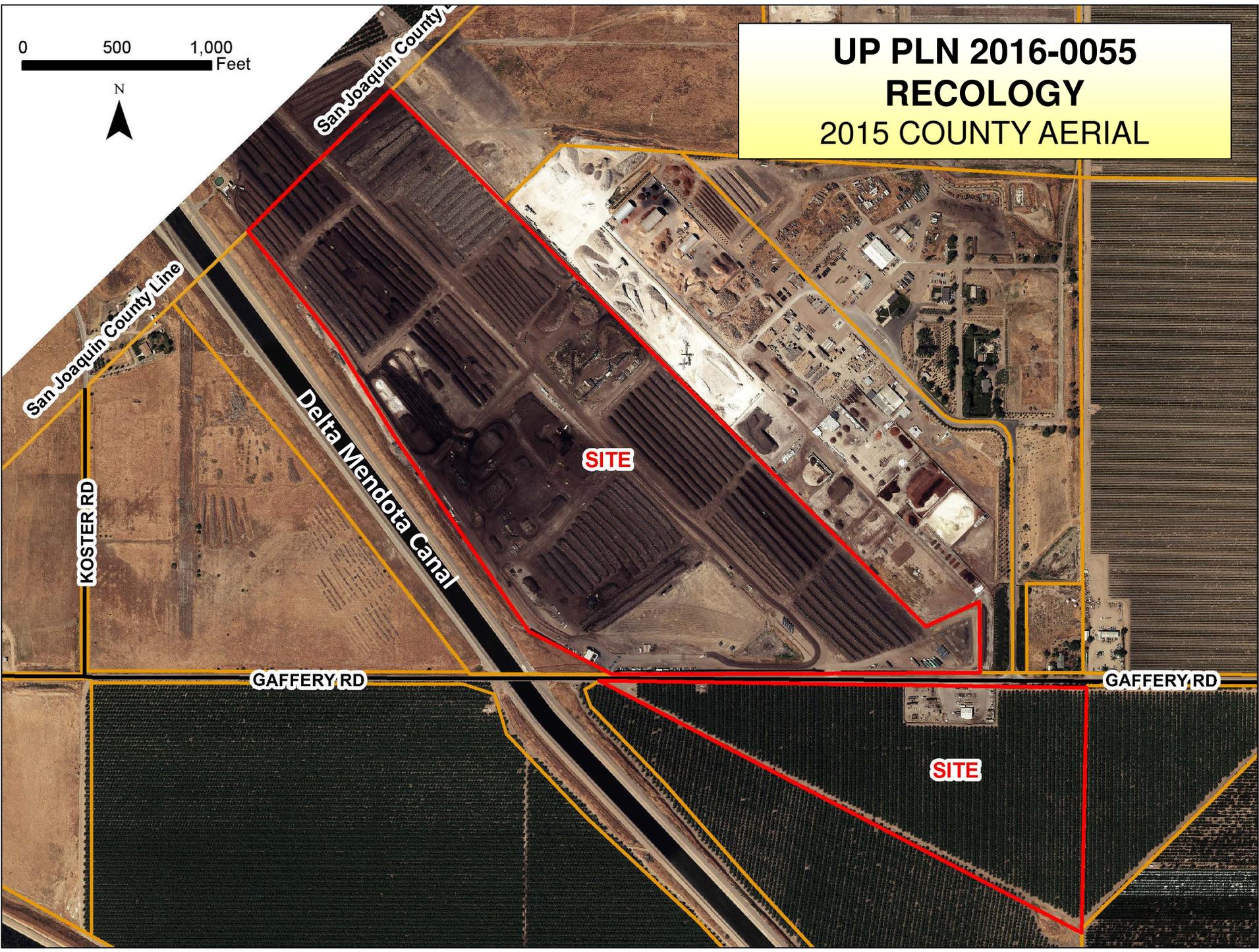
0 0.5 1 Miles



0 500 1,000 Feet



UP PLN 2016-0055
RECOLOGY
2015 COUNTY AERIAL



San Joaquin County Line

San Joaquin County Line

KOSTER RD

Delta Mendota Canal

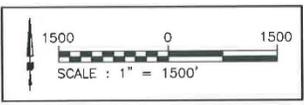
SITE

GAFFERY RD

GAFFERY RD

SITE

AREA MAP
 RECOLOGY BLOSSOM VALLEY ORGANICS - NORTH (VERNALIS)
 3909 GAFFERY ROAD, VERNALIS, CALIFORNIA



Map prepared by EBA CONSULTING, 825 SERRANO AVENUE, SUITE C, VERNALIS, CA 95608, TEL: (977) 244-0784

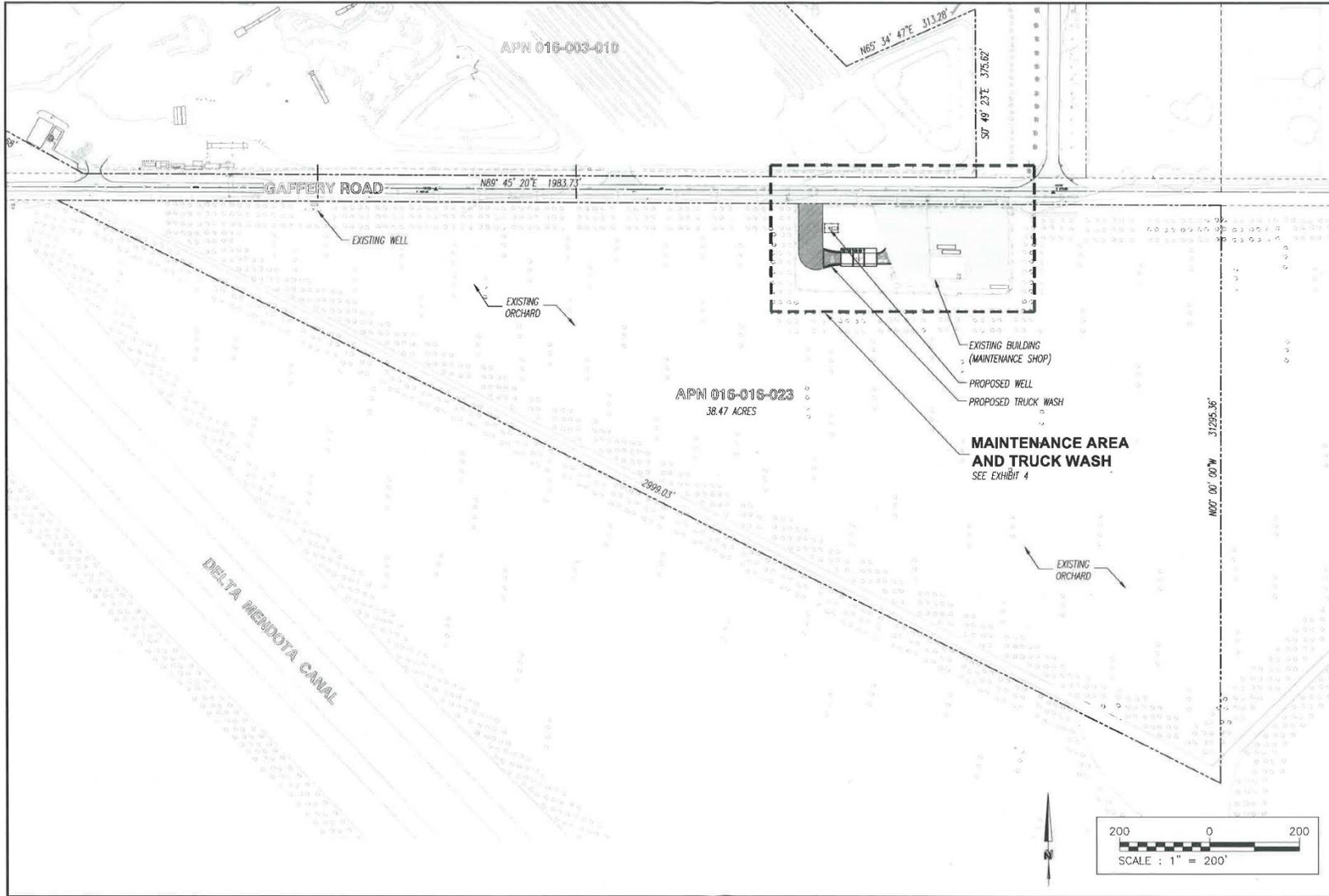
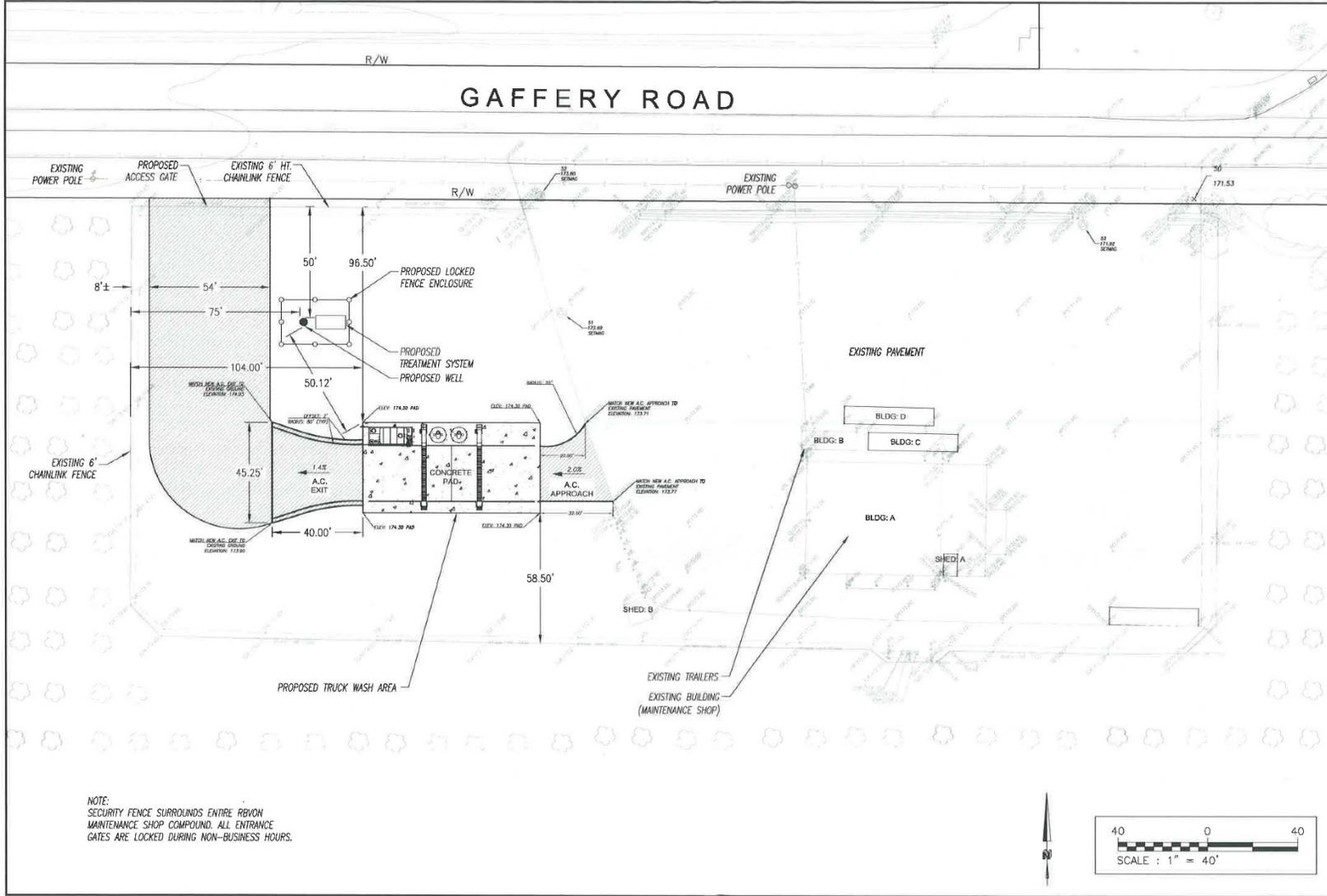


EXHIBIT
3
16-2300

SITE PLAN - SOUTH
RECOLOGY BLOSSOM VALLEY ORGANICS - NORTH (VERNALIS)
3909 GAFFERY ROAD, VERNALIS, CALIFORNIA

EBA
ENGINEERING
825 SONOMA AVENUE
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404
TEL: (707) 544-0784

GAFFERY ROAD PROPOSED TRUCK WASH SITE PLAN
RECOLOGY BLOSSOM VALLEY ORGANICS - NORTH (VERNALIS)
3909 GAFFERY ROAD, VERNALIS, CALIFORNIA



NOTE:
SECURITY FENCE SURROUNDS ENTIRE RECYCLING
MAINTENANCE SHOP COMPOUND. ALL ENTRANCE
GATES ARE LOCKED DURING NON-BUSINESS HOURS.

DRAFT
Recology Blossom Valley Organics North Facility
Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
Community of Vernalis, Stanislaus County, California
State Clearinghouse Number 000000000

Prepared for:
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Andrew Hill, Project Manager

Report Date: November 2, 2016

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 - Purpose

The purpose of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) is to identify any potential environmental impacts from implementation of the Recology Blossom Valley Organics North Facility Project (project) near Vernalis, California. Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15367, the Stanislaus County Planning and Community Development (County) is the Lead Agency in the preparation of this IS/MND and any additional environmental documentation required for the project. The County has discretionary authority over the proposed project. The intended use of this document is to determine the level of environmental analysis required for the project and to provide the basis for input from public agencies, organizations, and interested members of the public.

The remainder of this section provides a brief description of the project location and the characteristics of the project. Section 2 includes an environmental checklist giving an overview of the potential impacts that may result from project implementation. Section 3 elaborates on the information contained in the environmental checklist, along with justification for the responses provided in the environmental checklist.

1.2 - Project Location

The Recology Blossom Valley Organics North (BVON) Composting Facility (Facility) is located on a 161.78-acre property composed of three parcels at 3909 Gaffery Road in the vicinity of Vernalis, Stanislaus County (see Exhibit 1). Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 016-003-010 (112.45 acres) and APN 016-016-023 (38.47 acres) are located in Stanislaus County, while APN 265-010-21 (10.82 acres) is in San Joaquin County. Composting activities currently take place within an area of approximately 126 acres on APNs 016-003-010 and 265-010-21, while a 2.17-acre portion of APN 016-016-023 is currently in use as a machine shop. Access to the site is taken via Gaffery Road, with regional access via Koster Road or Welty Road and State Route 132 (SR-132).

1.3 - Environmental Setting

The site is located on compacted, well-drained clay loam soil and a paved area that was historically an airport runway. The topography is generally flat, with minor graded slopes to promote drainage and collection of stormwater runoff. Land uses within 1 mile of the facility include agricultural fields to the north and to the south and scattered rural residences and the Delta-Mendota Canal approximately 200 feet to the west. Located to the east is Sun Dry Products, a facility authorized as an industrial hauler and for the reclamation and recycling of agricultural products, and for the processing of commercial feed products and construction debris (see Exhibit 2).

Formerly known as the Grover Environmental Products Composting Facility, the BVON facility has been used for composting operations since 1991. The site and surrounding properties are designated General Agriculture in both the Stanislaus County and San Joaquin County General Plans.

The two parcels of the project site in Stanislaus County are zoned A-2 General Agricultural, which allows agriculture-related commercial and industrial uses, including composting facilities, with a use permit. The parcel in San Joaquin County is zoned General Agriculture, a zone established to preserve agricultural lands for the continuation of commercial agriculture enterprises.

As shown in Exhibit 3, composting windrows are located in the central and northern portions of the site, occupying the majority of the surface of the site. Office and break rooms exist at the southern edge of the site, behind a 22-foot high mesh fence. An earthen berm runs along the southwestern perimeter of the site and chain link fencing along a portion of the eastern and southeastern perimeters of the site. There are two entry and exit points to the site along Gaffery Road. Trucks delivering incoming feedstock material travel on unpaved internal roads to the feedstock receiving and processing area in the central/eastern part of the site. Trucks off-hauling finished compost material travel on unpaved internal roads from the final product area to the weighing station at the southern end of the site, before exiting via Gaffery Road. There are rumble strips in place at the weighing station and exit point to limit the amount of soil carried off-site on truck tires.

Water supply for operation of the facility is from two agricultural wells on-site. The site also has a 5 percent allotment from the Delta-Mendota Canal, which is equivalent to 21 acre-feet. Septic tanks are used on-site, and are emptied three times per week by a private disposal company.

1.4 - Project Description

Recology Blossom Valley Organics—North, the project applicant, is proposing to continue operation of a composting facility on-site, albeit with a reorganized operations plan and on-site improvements. The project would not involve an increase in permitted capacity, the number of employees on-site, or an increase in truck trips over and above existing entitlements. The proposed operations plan and on-site improvements are described below.

1.4.1 - Composting Operations

The Facility is currently permitted to receive up to 2,000 tons per day of green, agricultural, and food materials for composting. The proposed project would not increase this overall capacity. Composting activities currently take place within an area of approximately 126 acres on APNs 016-003-010 and 265-010-21, as shown on Exhibit 3. With project implementation, incoming material would continue to be sorted and processed to remove non-compostable residuals within 72 hours of receipt at the Facility.

Generally, composting operations consist of the following processing steps: receiving, sorting, processing, active composting, curing and screening, and testing and shipment. The specific locations of the various operations on the compost pad are dynamic and are subject to change depending on the current processing operation, stockpile fire concerns, incoming feedstock characteristics, product sales, and variable vector, dust, and odor control activities. The current composting process takes approximately 90 to 120 days to complete, from the active composting phase through the curing phase.

The Facility would continue to operate and receive materials 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with up to 65 employees on-site during peak hours. Grinding, shredding and size-reduction operations on incoming feedstock occur from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and on Sundays in the event of an emergency. Activities occurring at night may include fire watch, windrow turning, final screening of finished compost, and processing of incoming feedstock when necessary. Currently, the Facility receives 80 to 120 trucks per day, including shipments via belt trailers, transfer trucks, and pickups. Additionally, during peak sales season, typically in October and April, about 68 compost hauling vehicles per day leave the Facility carrying finished product. At other times of the year, off-hauling of finished product involves an average of approximately 5 truck trips per day. Truck trips to and from the site are generally concentrated during normal business hours. Trucks access the Facility via Gaffery Road, typically taking one of the following routes:

- SR-132 west from Interstate 5 (I-5) to South Koster Road, turning left onto Gaffery Road;
- SR-33 North, turning left onto Gaffery Road;
- SR-33 South to McCracken Road, turning right onto Gaffery Road.

1.4.2 - On-site Improvements

The project applicant is proposing a reorganization of composting operations at the Facility, including the following improvements. The location and phasing of the proposed improvements is shown on Exhibit 4:

- **Wastewater/Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements**—Improvements to the capture, conveyance, and treatment of wastewater and stormwater on-site in order to ensure compliance with General Wastewater Discharge Requirements for Composting Operations, adopted by the California State Water Resources Control Board in 2015. The permeability of the working surfaces would be reduced to prevent infiltration of wastewater or stormwater, primarily through traditional grading and compaction methods. Additionally, the two existing storage ponds would be expanded and lined (west storage pond: approximately 1.4 acres in size and 10.7 acre-feet in capacity; east storage pond: approximately 1.5 acres in size and 6.4 acre-feet in capacity), and a new treatment pond would be constructed (approximately 0.2 acre in size and 0.8 acre-foot in capacity). Wastewater from the Facility would be treated on-site in the aerated treatment pond and stored in the storage ponds until reused as process water for composting. All wastewater would be drained to below grade conveyance pipes and be directed to the lined treatment and storage ponds. In addition to liner systems, each pond would have leakage monitoring equipment and an aeration system to control and prevent odors and mosquito harborage. The treatment pond would utilize three 15-horsepower floating aerators, while the east and west storage ponds would utilize three 15-horsepower brush aerators. Because of the large capital expenditure required to perform these improvements, implementation would occur incrementally over a 6-year period. The first phase of implementation would include construction the stormwater conveyance and storage facilities on-site to be completed by November 30, 2016. Following this, 20 percent of the working surface improvements would be completed during each of the next 5 years, with full buildout completed by November 30, 2021. In total, approximately 30.1 acres of working surface improvements would be completed. The working surface improvements would

consist of traditional grading and compaction methods, soil remediation (addition of approximately 6 percent bentonite admixture), and, potentially, in-place grinding and mixing or removal of existing asphalt.

- **Aerated Static Pile System**—Installation of an aerated static pile (ASP) system to provide a constant flow of oxygen for the composting process in order to improve efficiency. With the ASP, the composting process would be completed in approximately 45 days, compared with the 90- to 120-day period required with windrow composting. The ASP system would also reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and reduce anaerobic conditions for improved odor control. ASP systems typically consist of one or more aeration fans, aeration piping, electrical control panels, and improved concrete or asphalt or concrete surfaces. A pilot-scale ASP system will be operational by late 2016. The implementing the full-scale ASP system will require construction of an approximately 40-acre concrete pad located to the southeast of the feedstock receiving and processing area. Construction of the pad, and simultaneous transition from the current windrow composting process to the ASP system, will be phased in over 5 years beginning in summer 2017. With installation of the ASP system, Facility operations would remain within the 2,000-ton-per-day permit limit.
- **Public Water Supply System**—Construction of a public water supply system for the site compliant with requirements of the California Health and Safety Code. A new potable water supply well has been drilled south of Gaffery Road and west of the existing maintenance shop on-site. A proposed service line extension from the new well would run approximately 250 feet south and then approximately 175 feet east to connect with the existing service line that connects to the bathroom in the maintenance shop. An additional service line extension would run from the new well approximately 1,250 feet west along the north side of Gaffery Road to the existing service line that connects the administrative office and visitor parking area. A drinking water treatment system connected to the proposed well would also be installed. The drinking well and treatment system would be enclosed by a locked fence. Installation of the public water system would be completed by the end of 2016.
- **Relocation of Receiving and Processing Area for Incoming Feedstock**—In order to improve the ability to contain any litter from migrating off-site along both Gaffery Road and the Delta Mendota Canal, the materials processing and receiving area has been relocated from the previous location near the Facility entrance to a more central area of the site, located along the eastern property line as shown in Exhibit 4. As part of this relocation, the employee breakrooms have also been relocated from the entrance area to the central receiving area.
- **Additional Feedstock Pre-Processing Line**—A second pre-processing line identical to the existing pre-processing line would be installed adjacent to the first to aid in removing non-compostable residuals from the incoming feedstock material. As with the existing pre-processing line, feedstock materials would be initially reduced in size with a slow-speed shredder and then further reduced through a 4-inch screen before manual picking/sorting with suction fans. Installation of the second processing line should be completed by early 2017.
- **Expansion of Existing Litter and Dust Fence**—The 22-foot-tall mesh litter and dust fence that runs along the southern perimeter of the Facility is proposed to be extended approximately 300 feet north along the western property line and a cantilevered top will be added to further improve the ability to contain any litter from migrating off-site. Additionally, a similar 22-foot-

tall mesh fence with a cantilevered top is proposed internally at the site exit (approximately 850 feet in length) and entrance (approximately 150 feet in length) and in an L-shape around the southwestern corner of the finished screen area. Pending approval of the applicant's Use Permit, extension of the fencing could begin in spring 2017 and last approximately 1 month.

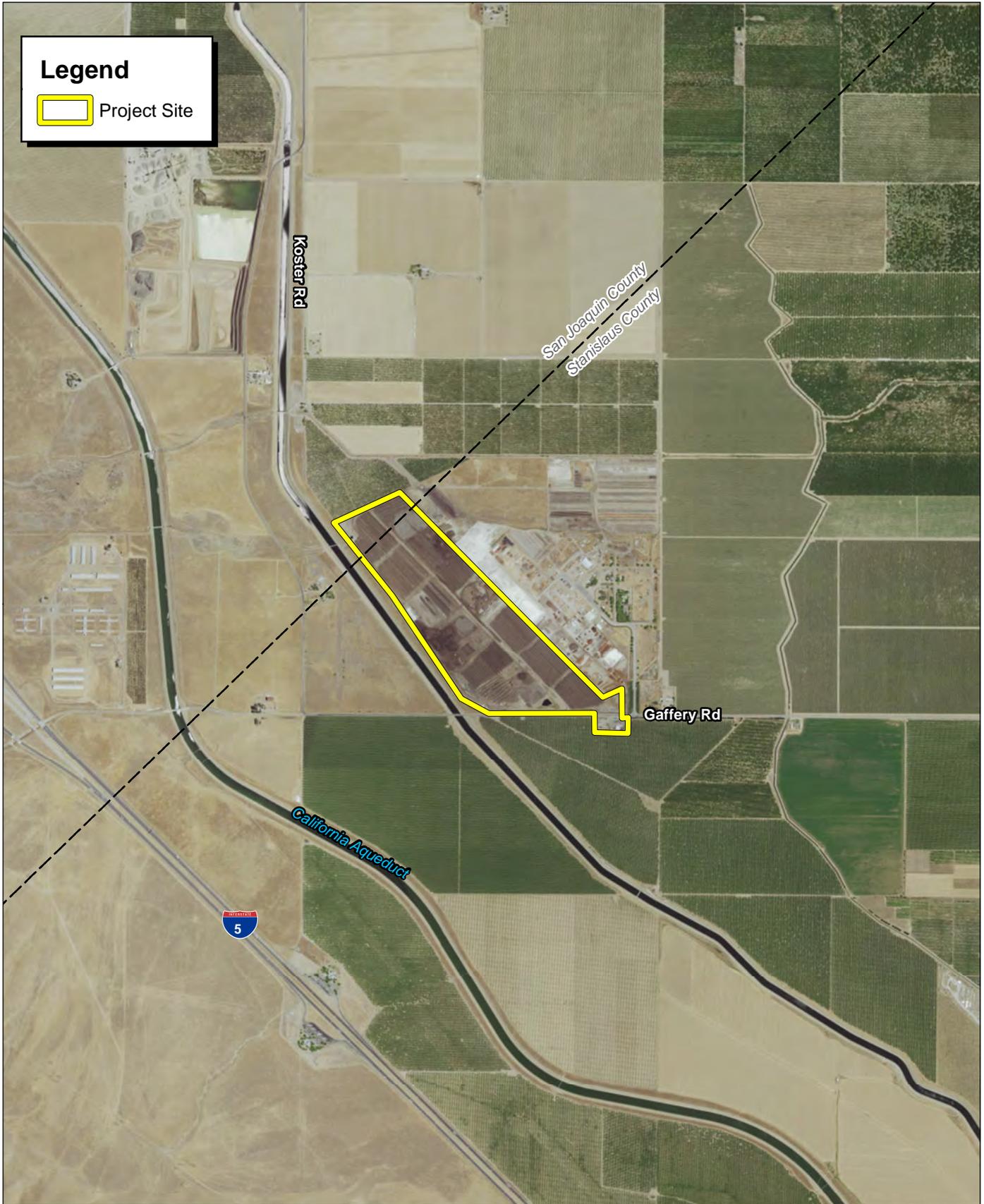
- **Installation of Dual Fence**—Two fences, each approximately 22 feet high with a cantilevered top, will be constructed inside the project site set back from the main truck access points to the site along the Gaffery Road frontage. The fence would be approximately 850 feet in length at the site exit and 150 feet in length at the site entrance. Improvements will include extensions of the existing combination wood slat/fabric fence, additional fencing and landscaping. The improvements will be designed to catch wind-blown debris from the site before it can be blown off-site and onto adjoining properties. The new landscaping will help to establish a more cohesive corporate appearance along the property's edge, while additionally providing screening of site operations from view. Additionally, an internal 22-foot-high cantilevered fence with an L-shape will be constructed at the interior of the site around the southwestern corner of the finished screen area to capture airborne debris near the source.
- **Installation of a Fully Contained Equipment Wash**—A new truck wash area would be constructed on a concrete pad between the proposed water treatment system and the existing maintenance building. This 2.17-acre portion of APN 016-016-023 is currently in use as a machine shop. The equipment wash would be fully enclosed, and equipment contained in the structure would collect, filter, and re-use wash water. Installation would take place in summer 2017.

The project also involves implementation of a Litter Management Plan as well as an Odor Control Plan. In addition to the physical modifications described above, the Litter Management Plan stipulates operation measures and best practices to contain litter and airborne debris within the site. These measures include regular, daily litter patrol on-site and along the perimeter of the property; temporarily discontinuing the sorting of incoming feedstock material during times of high winds; use of a vacuum truck to collect litter; and use of portable skid-mounted litter fences in the interior of the site to capture airborne debris near the source.

1.5 - Required Discretionary Approvals

The proposed project would require the following discretionary approvals:

- Stanislaus County: Use Permit; Building Permit; Grading Permit; Encroachment Permit
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD): Air Permit for ASP System
- State of California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) for Solid Waste Regulatory Oversight; Solid Waste Facility Permit
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board for compliance with General Waste Discharge Requirements for Composting Operations

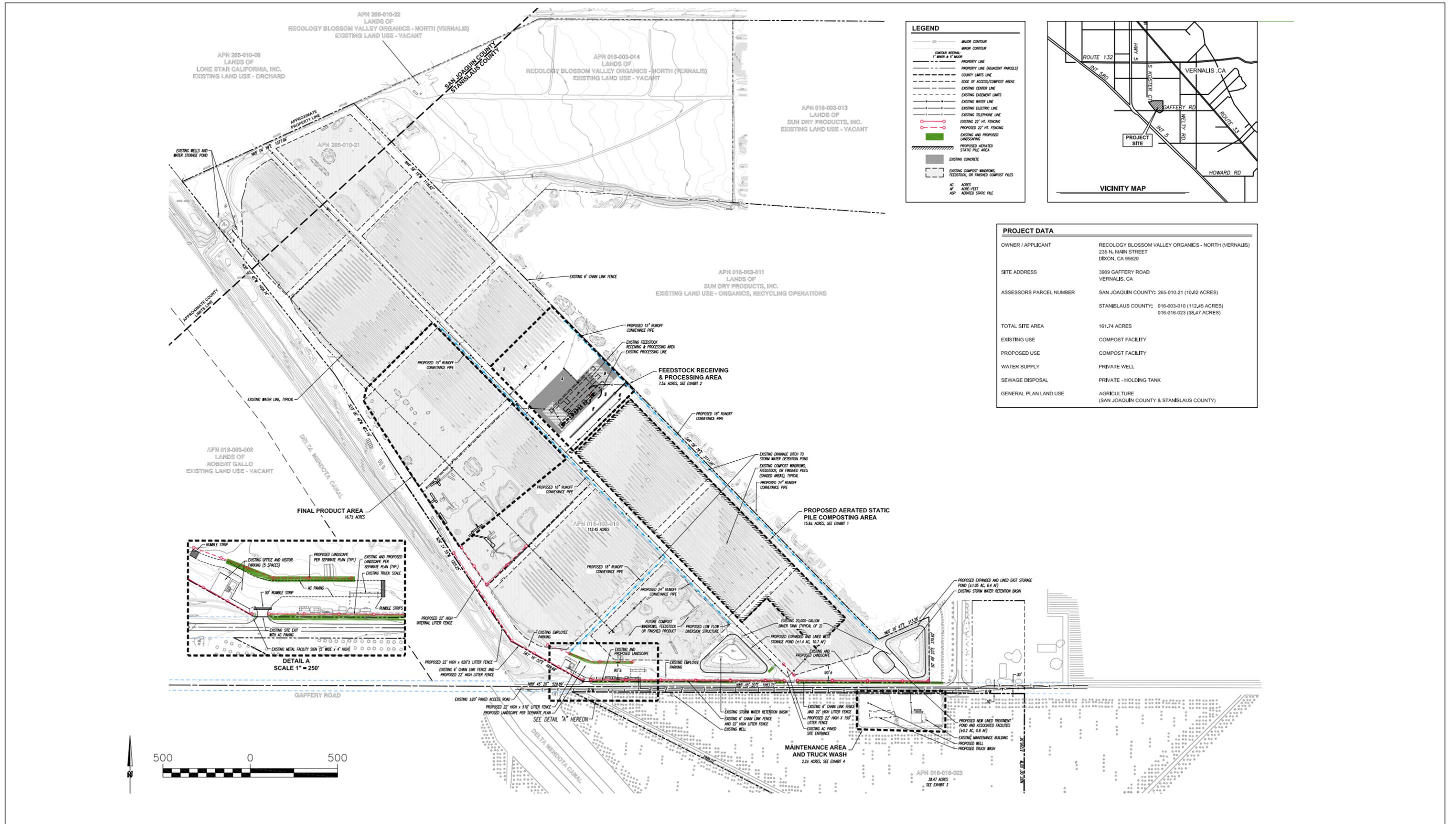


Source: ESRI Imagery, 2015

FIRSTCARBON
SOLUTIONS™



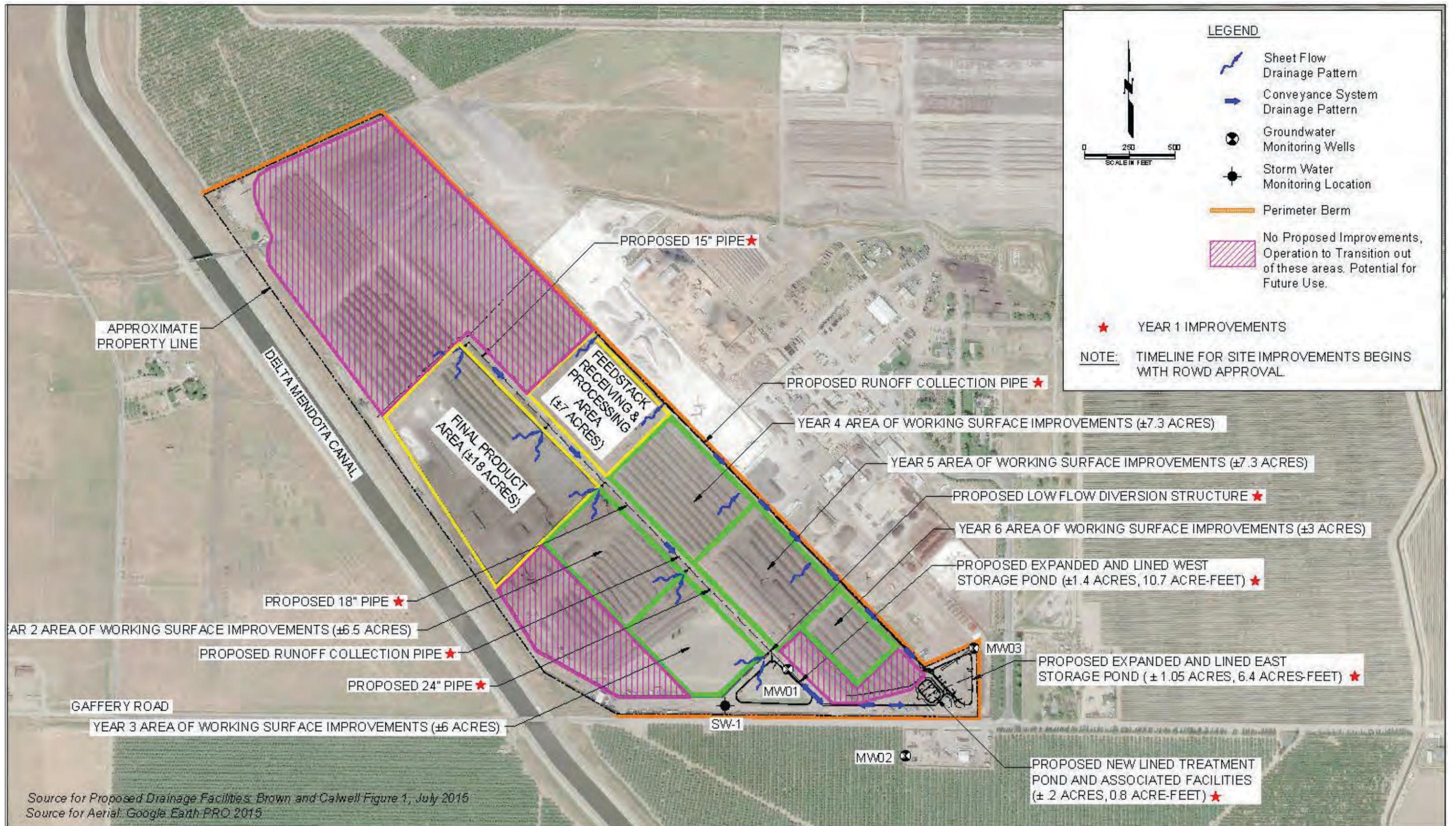
Exhibit 2 Site and Surrounding Uses



| PROJECT DATA | |
|-------------------------|--|
| OWNER / APPLICANT | RECOLOGY BLOSSOM VALLEY ORGANICS - NORTH (VERNALIS) 235 N. MAIN STREET DIXON, CA 95620 |
| SITE ADDRESS | 3909 GAFFERY ROAD VERNALIS, CA |
| ASSESSORS PARCEL NUMBER | SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY: 265-010-21 (10.82 ACRES) STANISLAUS COUNTY: 016-003-010 (112.45 ACRES) 016-016-023 (38.47 ACRES) |
| TOTAL SITE AREA | 161.74 ACRES |
| EXISTING USE | COMPOST FACILITY |
| PROPOSED USE | COMPOST FACILITY |
| WATER SUPPLY | PRIVATE WELL |
| SEWAGE DISPOSAL | PRIVATE - HOLDING TANK |
| GENERAL PLAN LAND USE | AGRICULTURE (SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY & STANISLAUS COUNTY) |

Source: EBA Engineering, 2016





Source: Google, Recology, July 2016