



September 20, 2018

MEMO TO: Stanislaus County Planning Commission

FROM: Department of Planning and Community Development

SUBJECT: STANISLAUS COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY REVIEW OF THE STANISLAUS REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY'S REGIONAL SURFACE WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

The Stanislaus Regional Water Authority (SRWA) is proposing to acquire a 48 +/- acre parcel, to accommodate construction of a regional water treatment plant. The subject property (Assessor's Parcel Number 018-006-013) is generally located east of Geer Road and south of the Tuolumne River and specifically located on the west side of Aldrich Road, north of the Turlock Irrigation District (TID) Ceres Main Canal.

As required by State of California Government Code Section 65402(b), this project is being brought to the Planning Commission for a determination of conformity with the County's adopted General Plan, prior to property acquisition by a public agency. (See Exhibit A – *Letter from Robert Granberg, SRWA General Manager.*)

Overview and Background

The SRWA was formed in 2011 as a joint powers authority (JPA) comprised of the Cities of Ceres, Turlock and TID. The SRWA is proposing acquisition of the subject property to enable the development and operation of the Regional Surface Water Supply Project (RSWSP). The proposed project will serve as a water supply diversification source and an in-lieu ground water recharge project under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. It will deliver a long-term, sustainable water source that will allow for integrated use of groundwater and surface water, diversifying the water supply portfolios for both the Cities of Ceres and Turlock. It will also allow surface water delivery into TID canals.

The RSWSP will provide water from the Tuolumne River via an existing set of perforated pipelines installed in gravel about 8-feet below the bottom of the river bed (located just west of the Geer Road Bridge), a new intake structure, and raw water pump station and pipeline. The raw water from the pipelines will be treated at a new water treatment plant to drinking water standards, and delivered to SRWA service areas for municipal and industrial uses. Construction of the local facilities required in each city to integrate this new supply source into their system will be the responsibility of each city. TID will use the raw water facilities to deliver irrigation water to agricultural users. The water treatment plant will include a maintenance building, an operations building, a chemical building, treatment equipment and sludge drying beds.

The project timeline anticipates permitting and design to start this year, with construction starting in 2020. The project would withdraw up to 30,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of water from the Tuolumne River in Phase 1 and up to 50,400 AFY of water per year at build-out in 2040.

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was available for review and comment from January 22, 2018, through March 8, 2018. The DEIR identified significant impacts that can be mitigated and identified significant and unavoidable impacts. The Final EIR was certified on August 6, 2018, by the SRWA. The DEIR is available online at: http://stanrwa.org/admin/upload/SRWA_DEIR_011718.pdf

Immunity from County Zoning

California Government Code Section 53091 grants cities and counties mutual immunity from their respective zoning and building codes. The proposed project is considered by the participating Cities (and the County) to be immune from the County's zoning ordinance. This project will not be required to go through the County's Use Permit process, but the property acquisition and the proposed project is required to be presented to the County for a conformity review with the County's General Plan. The SWRA is responsible for completing environmental review in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

The proposed acquisition site has a General Plan designation of Agriculture and a zoning designation of A-2-40 (General Agriculture), which allows public buildings and facilities when a Use Permit is obtained. The subject property is not under a Williamson Act Contract. The Land Use Element of the General Plan discusses the siting of public facilities and services in Stanislaus County and permits public buildings and grounds in virtually all of the various zoning districts provided specific criteria can be met. Generally, a Use Permit would be required, which allows public review of the request and allows Planning Commission review to ensure suitable locations.

General Plan Conformity Analysis

As stated above, State law requires real property acquisition by a public entity (which includes a JPA consisting of cities) to be brought to the Planning Commission for a determination of General Plan Consistency, prior to acquisition.

The property acquisition site is surrounded by agricultural uses to the west, south and east, and to the north is the Fox Grove Regional Park adjacent to the Tuolumne River. The subject property, presently owned by the Turlock Irrigation District, has been planted in almonds, which will be removed.

The Stanislaus County General Plan contains several Elements (Land Use, Conservation and Agriculture) which identify goals, policy measures and implementation measures that are directly applicable to proposed acquisition site, project and any activities associated with it. Staff suggests that the proposed project will help carry out the following General Plan goals, policies, and implementation measures:

Land Use Element

Goal One. Provide for diverse land use needs by designating patterns which are responsive to the physical characteristics of the land as well as to environmental, economic, and social concerns of the residents of Stanislaus County.

Policy Two. Land designated Agriculture shall be restricted to uses that are compatible with agricultural practices, including natural resources management, open space, outdoor recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty.

Policy Seven. Riparian habitat along the rivers and natural waterways of Stanislaus County shall, to the extent possible, be protected.

Goal Two. Ensure compatibility between land uses.

Policy Fourteen. Uses shall not be permitted to intrude into or be located adjacent to an agricultural area if they are detrimental to continued agricultural usage of the surrounding area.

Policy Sixteen. Outdoor lighting shall be designed to be compatible with other uses.

Goal Five. Complement the general plans of cities within the County.

Policy Twenty-seven. Development which requires discretionary approval and is outside the sphere of influence of cities but located within one mile of a city's adopted sphere of influence, and within a City's adopted general plan area, shall be referred out to the city for consideration. However, the County reserves the right for final discretionary action.

Policy Twenty-nine. Support the development of a built environment that is responsive to decreasing air and water pollution, reducing the consumption of natural resources and energy, increasing the reliability of local water supplies, and reduces vehicle miles traveled by facilitating alternative modes of transportation, and promoting active living (integration of physical activities, such as biking and walking, into everyday routines) opportunities.

Conservation/Open Space Element

Goal One: Encourage the protection and preservation of natural and scenic areas throughout the County.

Policy Two. Assure compatibility between natural areas and development.

Policy Three. Areas of sensitive wildlife habitat and plant life (e.g., vernal pools, riparian habitats, flyways and other waterfowl habitats, etc.) including those habitats and plant species listed by state or federal agencies shall be protected from development and/or disturbance.

Goal Two: Conserve water resources and protect water quality in the County.

Policy Five. Protect groundwater aquifers and recharge areas, particularly those critical for the replenishment of reservoirs and aquifers.

Policy Eight. The County shall support efforts to develop and implement water management strategies.

Policy Nine. The County will investigate additional sources of water for domestic use.

Implementation Measure

1. The County will work with irrigation and water districts, community services districts, municipal and private water providers in developing surface water and other potential water sources for domestic use.

Agricultural Element

Goal One: Strengthen the agricultural sector of our economy.

Policy 1.10. The County shall protect agricultural operations from conflicts with non-agricultural uses by requiring buffers between proposed non-agricultural uses and adjacent agricultural operations.

Policy 1.22. The County shall encourage regional coordination of planning and development activities for the entire Central Valley.

Goal Two: Conserve our agricultural lands for agricultural uses.

Policy 2.4. To reduce development pressures on agricultural lands, higher density development and in-filling shall be encouraged.

Policy 2.11. The County recognizes the desire of cities and unincorporated communities to grow and prosper and shall not oppose reasonable requests consistent with city and county agreements to expand, provided the resulting growth minimizes impacts to adjacent agricultural land.

Goal Three: Protect the natural resources that sustain our agricultural industry.

Policy 3.4. The County shall encourage the conservation of water for both agricultural, rural domestic, and urban uses.

Implementation Measures

4. The County shall work with local irrigation districts to preserve water rights and ensure that water saved through conservation may be stored and used locally, rather than "appropriated" and moved to metropolitan areas outside of Stanislaus County.

5. The County shall encourage the development and use of appropriately treated water (reclaimed wastewater and stormwater) for both agricultural and urban irrigation.

Policy 3.6. The County will continue to protect local groundwater for agricultural, rural domestic, and urban use in Stanislaus County.

The proposed project, including the property acquisition, is supported by many of the General Plan goals and policies aimed at helping to conserve water resources and protecting water quality in the County. The size and design of the project are such that conflicts with surrounding agricultural and riparian uses will be minimized and the use will help to protect natural resources through the sustainable water use benefiting agriculture, and urban uses.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find the Regional Surface Water Supply Project to be in conformance with the Stanislaus County General Plan.

Attachments:

- A - Letter from Stanislaus Regional Water Authority General Manager, dated July 16, 2018
- B - Maps



SRWA
STANISLAUS REGIONAL
WATER AUTHORITY

Stanislaus Regional Water Authority
156 S. Broadway, Ste. 270
Turlock, CA 95380
P: 209-668-5540 F: 209-668-5668
www.stanrwa.org

July 16, 2018

Project No.: 693-20-16-01
SENT VIA: EMAIL

Angela Freitas
Director
Stanislaus County Planning and
Community Development Department
1010 10th Street, Suite 3400
Modesto, CA 95354

SUBJECT: Stanislaus Regional Water Authority Regional Surface Water Supply Project
General Plan Conformance Request – Government Code 65402

Dear Ms. Freitas:

The purpose of this letter is to present to the Stanislaus County Planning and Community Development Department, the Stanislaus Regional Water Authority's (SRWA) proposed Regional Surface Water Supply Project (Project) for County General Plan conformity review in accordance with Government Code 65402. This letter describes the project background, objectives, location, and proposed elements.

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The Cities of Ceres and Turlock (Cities), both located in southern Stanislaus County (within the Turlock Irrigation District [TID] service area south of the Tuolumne River), meet their potable water supply needs entirely through the use of groundwater. For more than 30 years, water supply providers in this area have been collaborating to develop a reliable, supplemental source of treated water supply from surface water to meet existing and future community demands and to offset use of local groundwater supplies, particularly during prolonged droughts. These collaboration efforts have resulted in the proposed Project.

The proposed Project is intended to serve as a water supply diversification and an in-lieu groundwater recharge project under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the groundwater resources within the Turlock Subbasin. The surface water that will be provided as part of the proposed Project will assist the Cities in achieving sustainable groundwater pumping levels.

The proposed Project is being developed by SRWA, which was formed in 2011 as a joint powers authority comprised by the Cities of Ceres and Turlock and in partnership with TID. On July 28, 2015, TID and SRWA approved a water sales agreement to provide a raw water supply from the Tuolumne River, utilizing TID's existing water rights, for the proposed Project.

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ATTACHMENT A

PROPOSED PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The proposed Project will be located in Stanislaus County, extending from Fox Grove Regional Park near Hughson on the north, to the Cities of Ceres and Turlock on the west and south, respectively (Figure 1). The raw water pump station will be located adjacent to the existing infiltration gallery on the south bank of the Tuolumne River west of Geer Road. A pipeline will convey water from the infiltration gallery and raw water pump station to a new water treatment plant (WTP) north of TID's Ceres Main Canal and west of Aldrich Road. Treated water will be conveyed from the WTP through pipelines to connect to Ceres' water system in the west and Turlock's water system in the south. Figure 2 shows the locations of these facilities. Most of the Project, and including the WTP and raw water pump station, will be located in the unincorporated area of the County.

Raw Water Pump Station

A raw water pump station will be constructed at the site of the existing infiltration gallery and future wet well and will be designed to be capable of delivering raw surface water to both TID's Ceres Main Canal and SRWA's WTP. The pump station will include pumps, a pump station building, air compressors and compressed air storage tanks, electrical and instrumentation equipment, and site improvements.

Raw Water Transmission Main

A raw water transmission main (pipeline) will convey raw water from the pump station to the WTP and the Ceres Main Canal. The transmission main will be 60 inches in diameter and approximately 3,900 feet long. A flow split vault on the WTP property will split flows between the treatment plant and TID's Ceres Main Canal. A branch pipeline up to 60 inches in diameter will connect the flow split vault to the WTP. After passing through the flow split vault, the transmission main will continue south to the Ceres Main Canal.

Water Treatment Plant

The proposed WTP will be located on an approximately 48-acre site west of Aldrich Road, east of Fox Grove Park, and north of the Ceres Main Canal. This parcel is owned by TID; it has historically been leased to farmers and is currently planted with almond orchards. The Water Sales Agreement between TID and SRWA stipulates that SRWA will purchase this parcel from TID. Initially, the proposed WTP facilities will occupy approximately half, and possibly more, of this site. Following the completion of construction, portions of the site will be landscaped and could potentially be replanted with agricultural products; however, this decision has not yet been made. WTP facilities will be oriented on the site to facilitate future expansions in later years.

Conceptual Site Plan

A conceptual site plan for the WTP is shown in Figure 3. The treatment plant facilities are assumed to be positioned in the center of the proposed 48-acre site, however, this conceptual plan is expected to evolve during detailed design.

The plant will have a circulation roadway system for operations and maintenance access, chemical deliveries, sludge removal, emergency vehicle access, and future improvements.

Ms. Angela Freitas
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Visitors generally will be restricted to the Operations Building. Perimeter fencing and vehicle gates will restrict access to the main treatment plant area.

Site Access and Parking

Access to the site will be on Aldrich Road and across a bridge over the Ceres Main Canal. A primary entrance for normal traffic will be provided. Access to the treatment plant site will also be available along a wide gravel service road on the north side of the Ceres Main Canal. Access along Aldrich Road will be shared with existing agricultural and residential users.

Uncovered parking spaces will be provided throughout the treatment plant site. Parking for visitors and SRWA Member Agency staff will be provided at the operations building. In general, parking for plant staff vehicles will be located next to the Control Building, within the interior security fencing, and away from plant process areas.

Landscaping

A portion of the treatment plant property may be replanted with agricultural products, but this decision will not be made until the final design and layout of the WTP site has been determined. The existing mature orchard may be completely removed prior to the treatment plant construction as it has reached the end of its productive life, and topography changes will likely occur due to site grading.

Operations

The WTP will be initially operated and staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. However, after a period of time, if permitted by the Division of Drinking Water, the possibility of transitioning to an unmanned operation of the WTP during the overnight hours will be contemplated.

Staff will primarily work out of the Operations and Maintenance Buildings. During shift changes, meetings, training sessions, and maintenance activities, there could be 2-17 staff members present in the Operations and/or Maintenance Buildings.

Vehicle Traffic and Parking

The perimeter gate at the main treatment plant will normally be closed and be operated remotely by identification cards to allow vehicle traffic into the fenced interior area. After being screened, vehicles may be allowed to enter and leave the main treatment plant area (providing access to other process structures and areas).

Finished Water Transmission Mains

Treated water from the WTP will be delivered to terminal storage tanks owned and operated by the Cities through separate finished water transmission mains. Road ROW and/or pipeline alignments on TID property will be required; easements will also be needed from TID and private property owners to construct and maintain the transmission mains.

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For further information about the Project, see the SRWA website at <http://stanrwa.org>.

SECTION 65402

Government Code section 65402(b) (part of the State Planning and Zoning Law) provides that a city (which includes a JPA consisting of cities) shall not acquire real property for or construct a public building or structure in the unincorporated territory until the location, purpose and extent of the project have been submitted to and reported upon by the county planning agency as to conformity with the adopted county general plan. Pursuant to this authority, SRWA requests the County Planning and Community Development Department to review the Project and report upon the conformity of the Project location, purpose and extent with the current Stanislaus County General Plan.

Section 65402(b) provides a 40-day period for the County to review the Project for General Plan conformity. Failure to report within 40 days after the matter has been submitted to the County shall be deemed a finding that the proposed Project conforms with the General Plan.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions regarding this Project. I can be reached by e-mail at granbergassociates@gmail.com or by phone at (209) 401-0439.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Granberg, PE
General Manager

Attachments: Figure 1 - Regional Project Location
Figure 2 – Proposed Project Location
Figure 3 – Water Treatment Plant Preliminary Site Plan

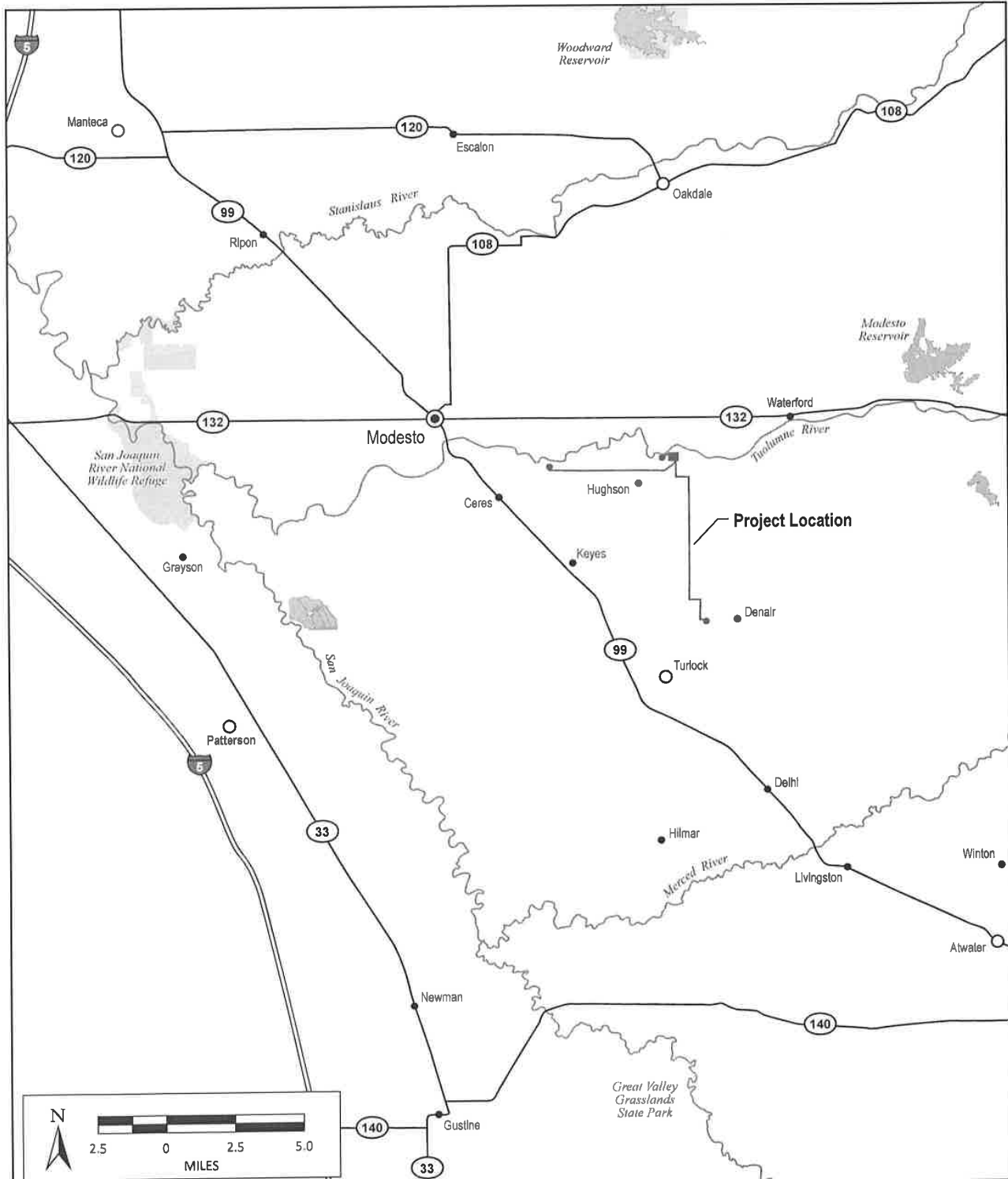
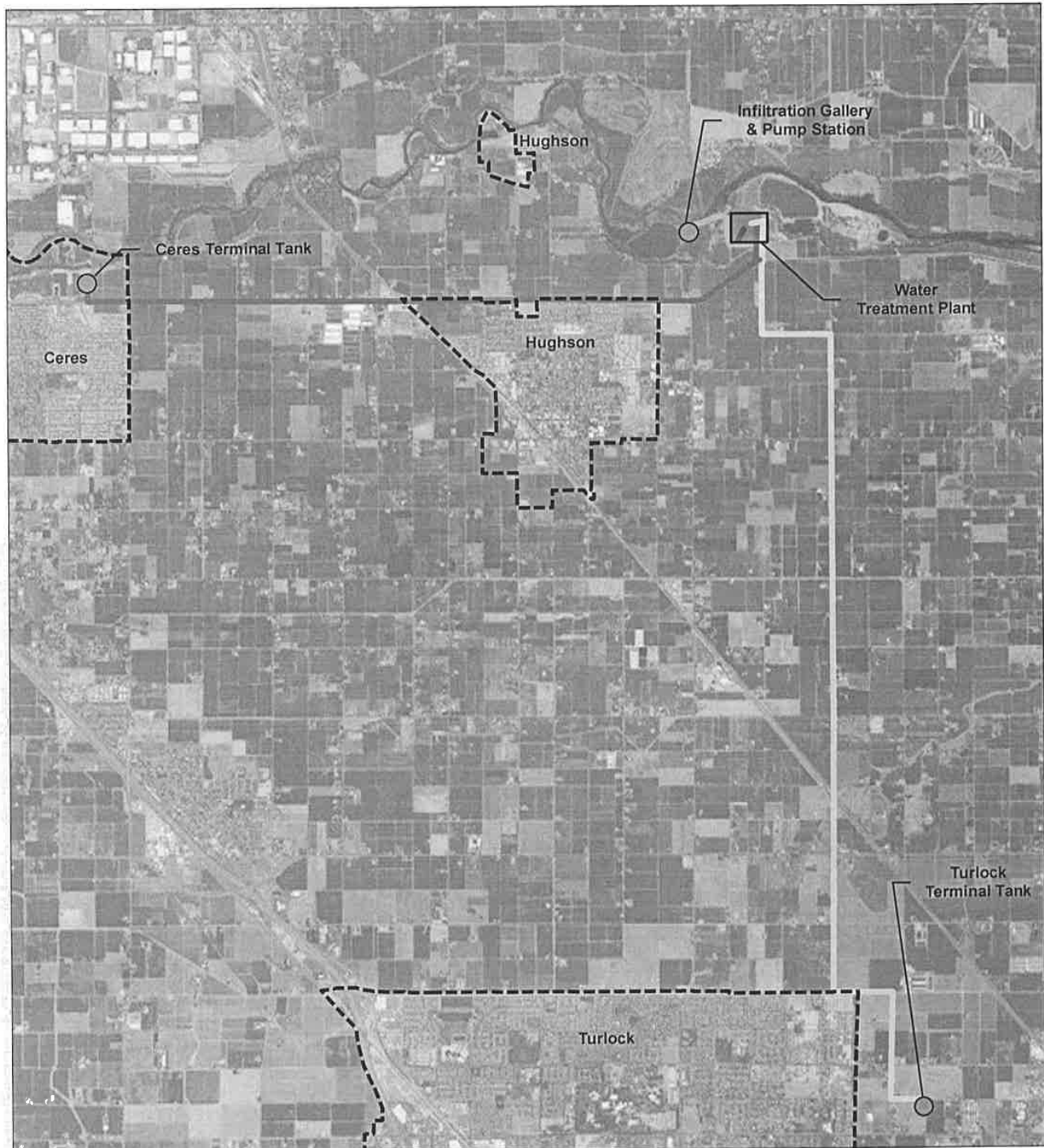
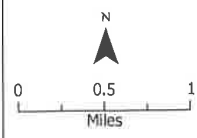







Figure 1.
Regional Project Location

Surface Water Supply Project



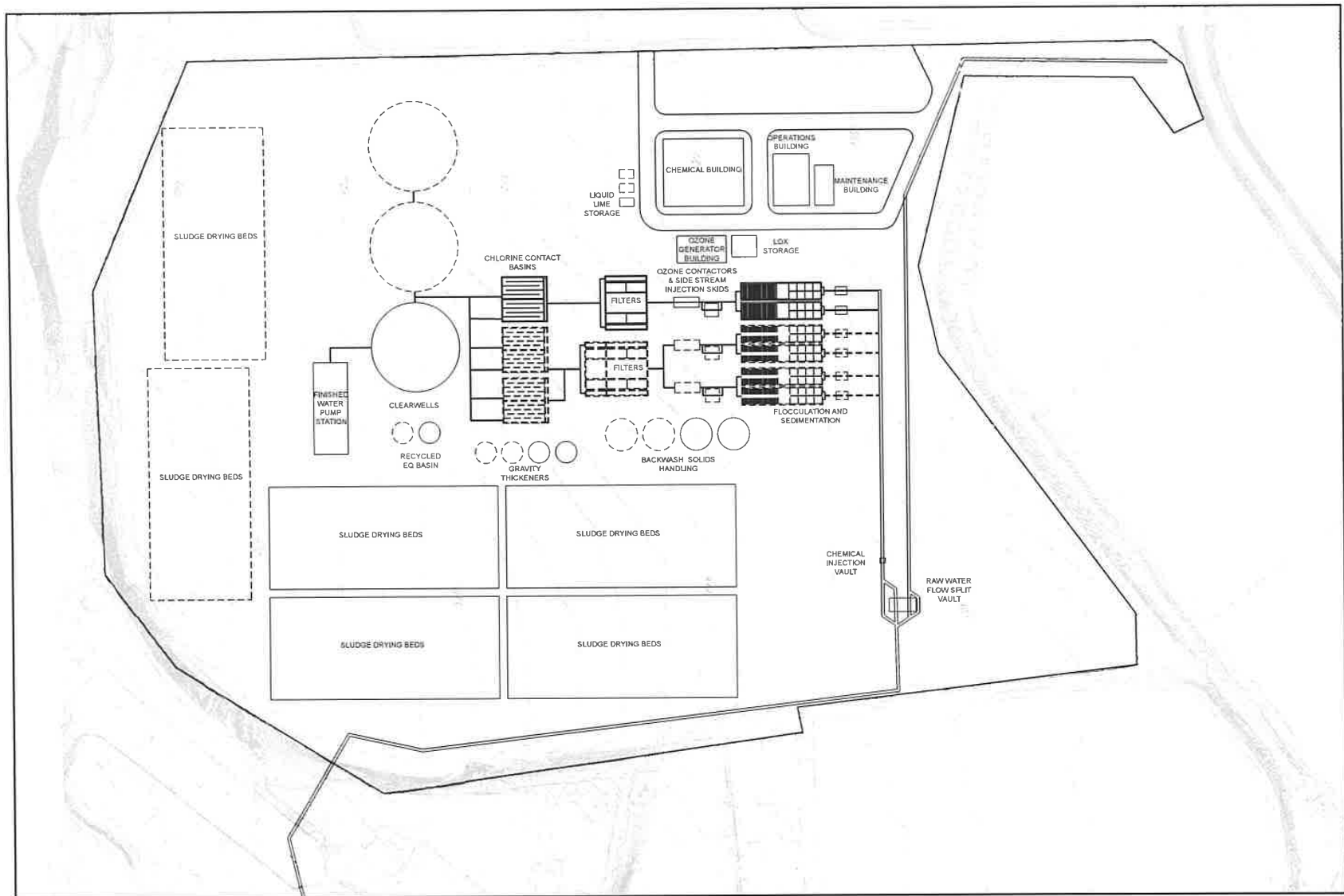
Baseline Services, Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar



-  City Boundaries
-  Ceres Finished Water Transmission Main
-  Raw Water Transmission Main
-  Turlock Finished Water Transmission Main
-  WTP pipeline

**Figure 2 .
Proposed Project Location**

Surface Water
Supply Project



Source: Trussell Technologies 2017

Prepared by:

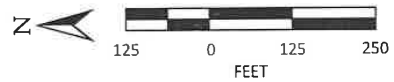
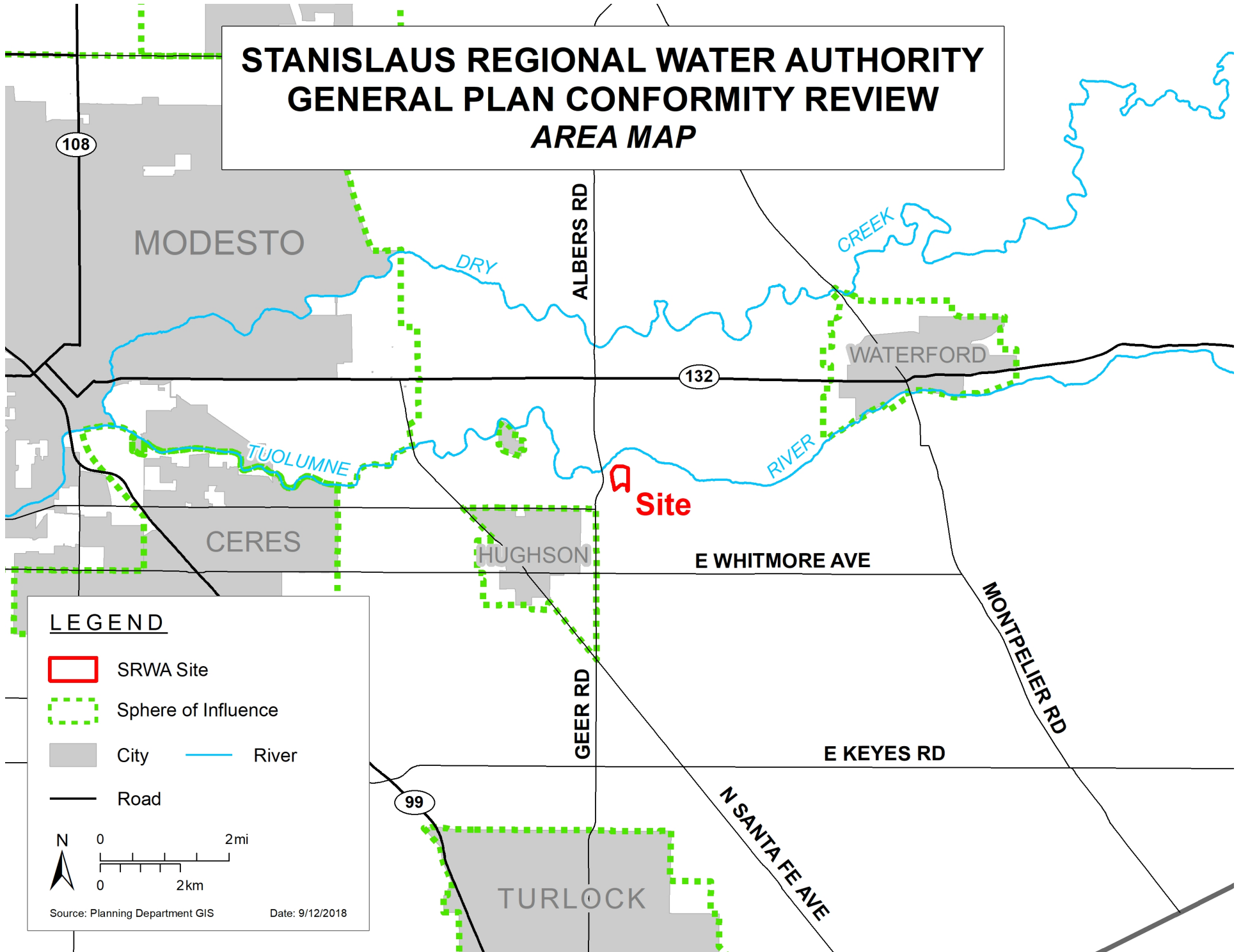


Figure 3. Water Treatment Plant Preliminary Site Plan

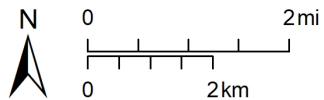
Surface Water Supply Project

STANISLAUS REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY REVIEW AREA MAP



LEGEND

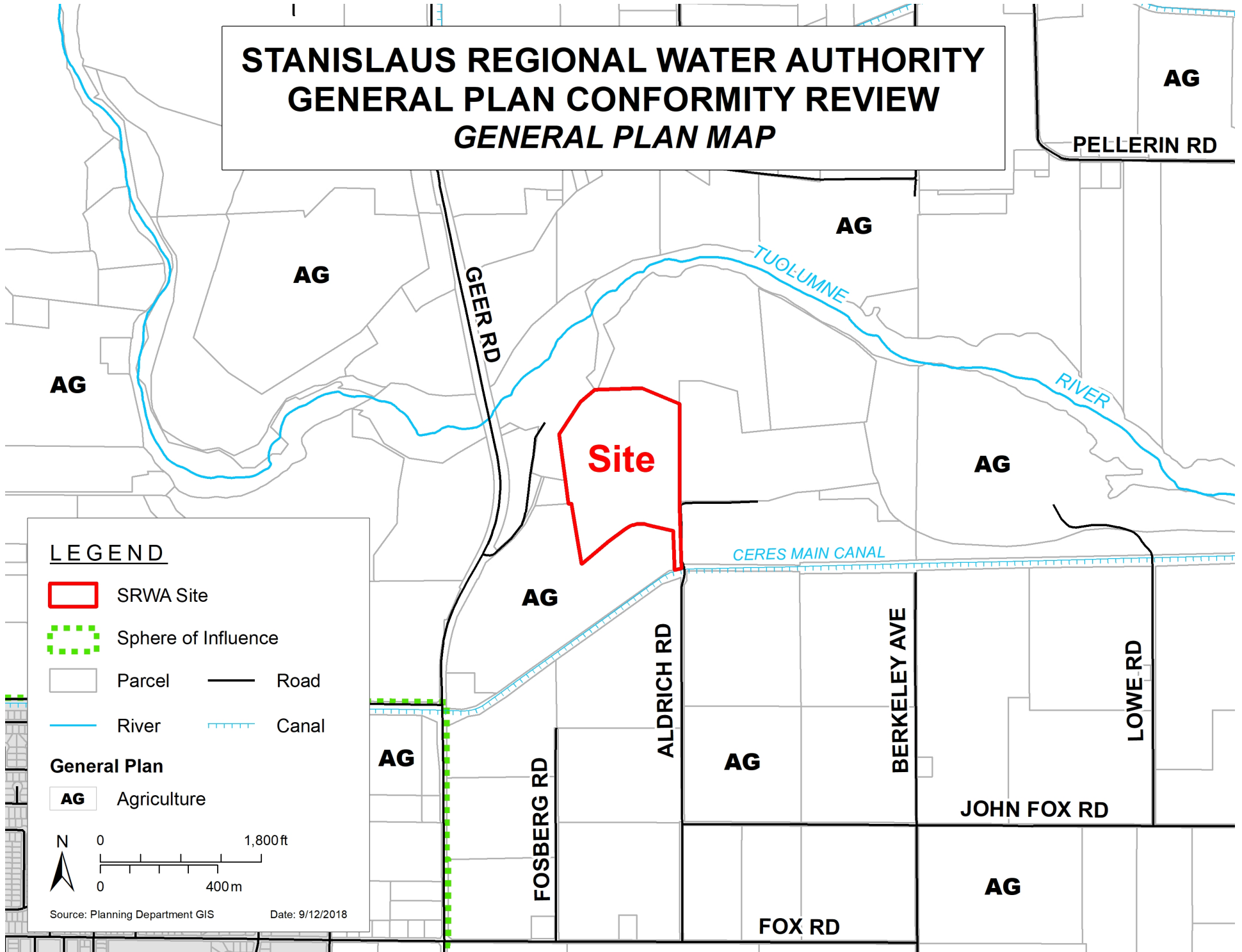
- SRWA Site
- Sphere of Influence
- City
- River
- Road



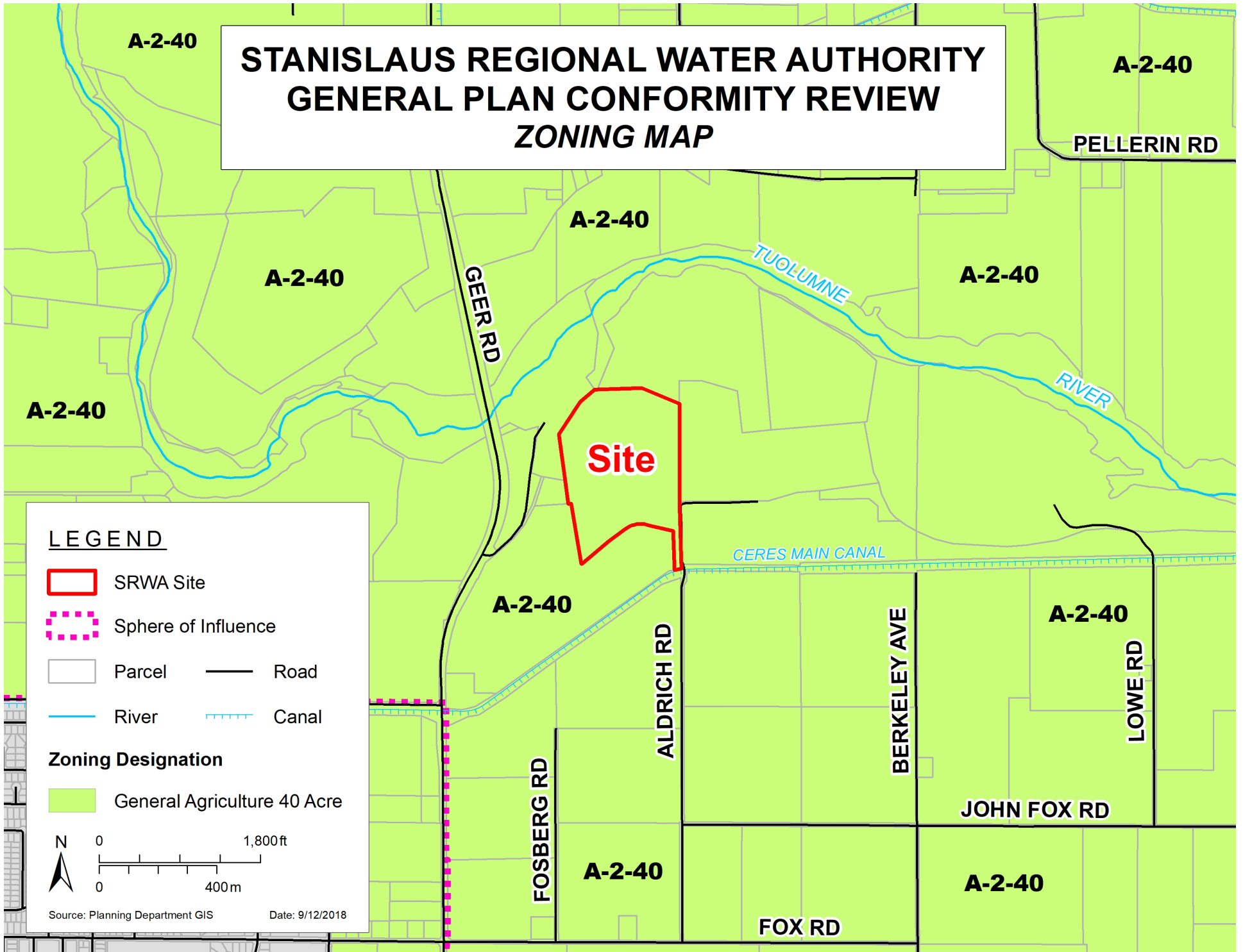
Source: Planning Department GIS

Date: 9/12/2018

STANISLAUS REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY REVIEW GENERAL PLAN MAP



STANISLAUS REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY REVIEW ZONING MAP

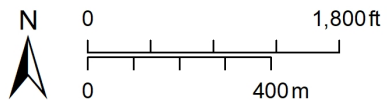


LEGEND

- SRWA Site
- Sphere of Influence
- Parcel
- Road
- River
- Canal

Zoning Designation

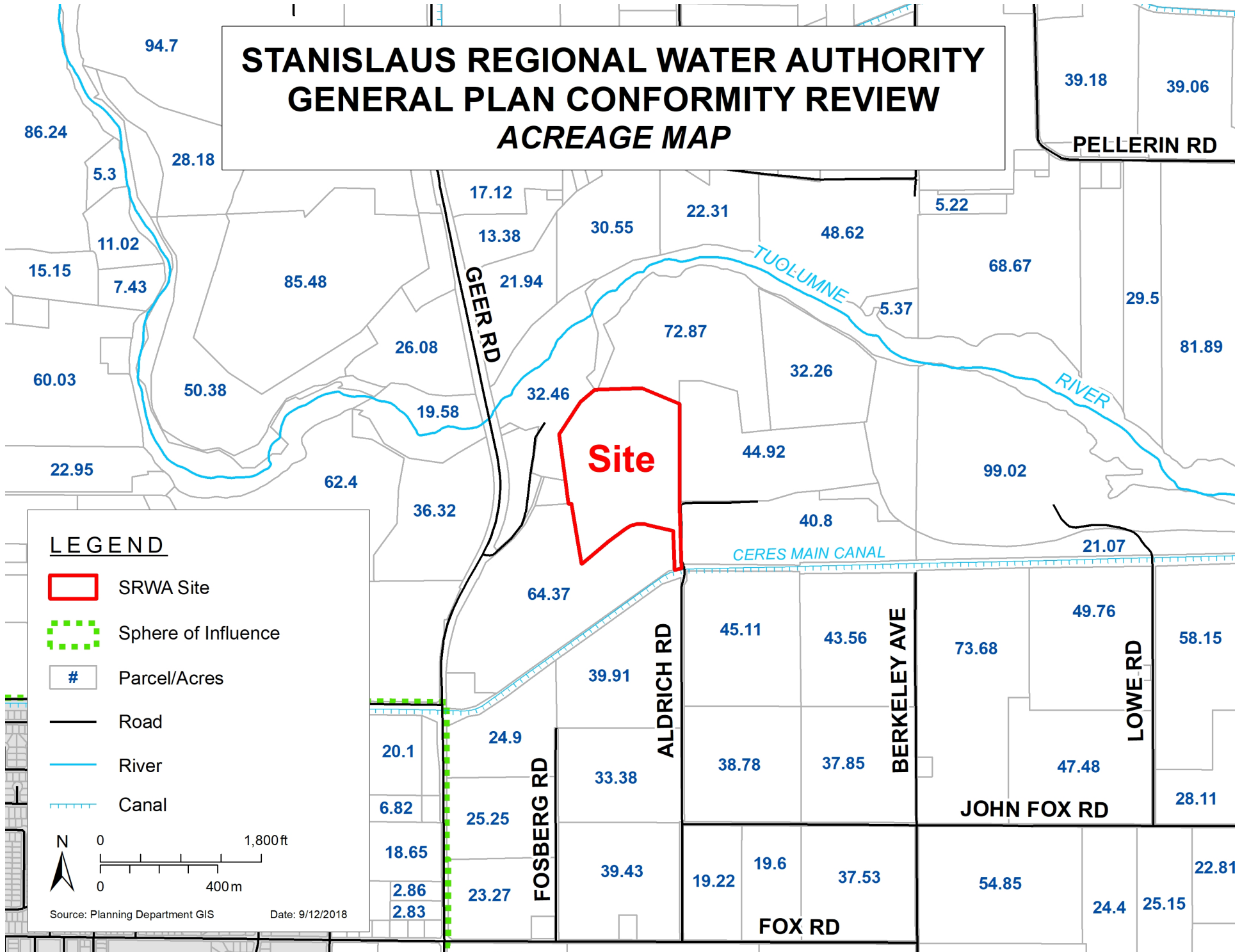
- General Agriculture 40 Acre









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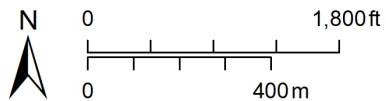
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STANISLAUS REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY REVIEW ACREAGE MAP



LEGEND

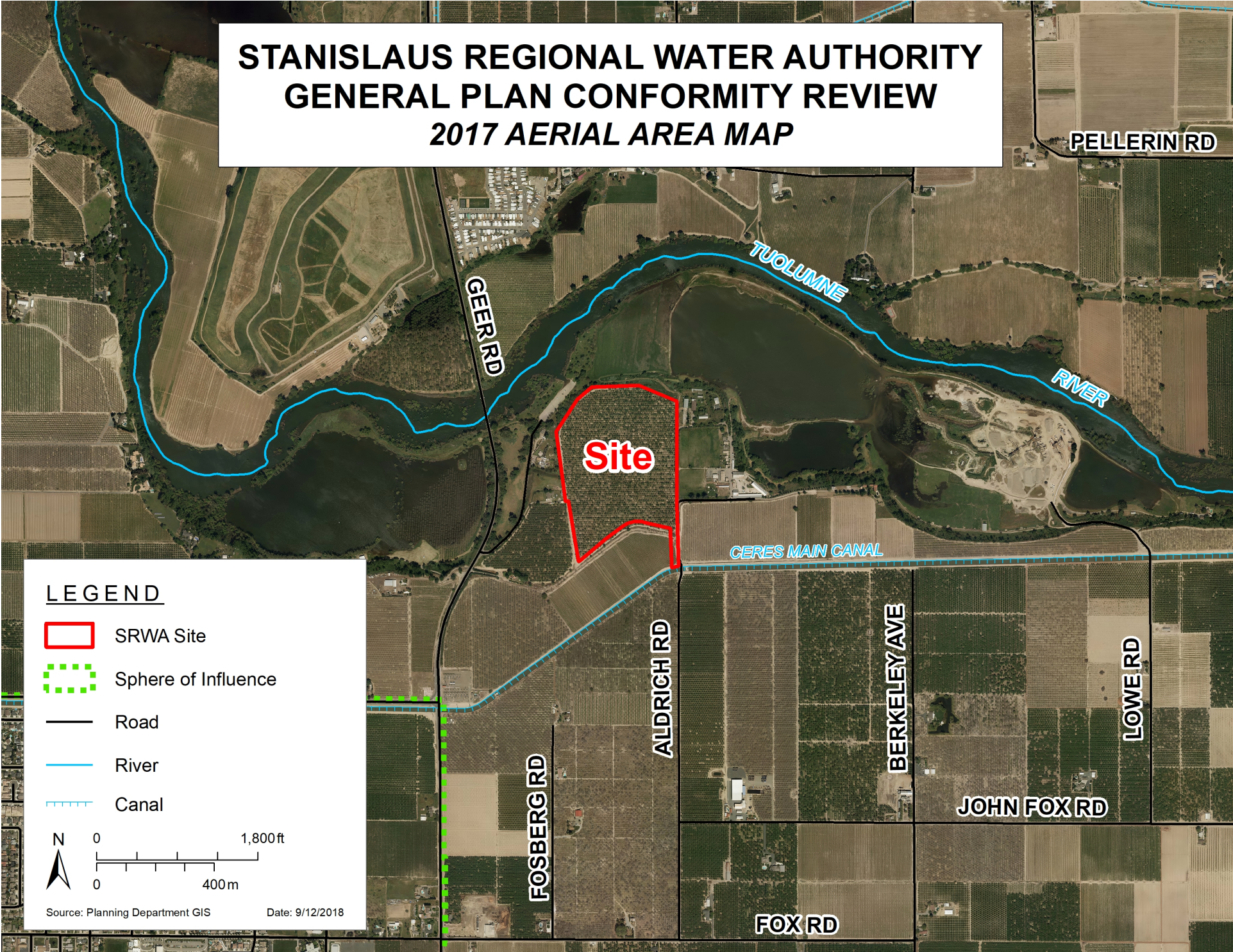
-  SRWA Site
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Parcel/Acres
-  Road
-  River
-  Canal








Source: Planning Department GIS

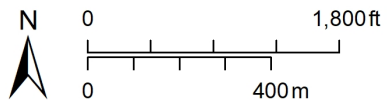
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STANISLAUS REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY REVIEW 2017 AERIAL AREA MAP



LEGEND

-  SRWA Site
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Road
-  River
-  Canal







Source: Planning Department GIS

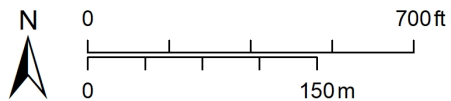
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STANISLAUS REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY REVIEW 2017 AERIAL SITE MAP

Site

LEGEND

-  SRWA Site
-  Road
-  River
-  Canal



Source: Planning Department GIS Date: 9/12/2018

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