III. BACKGROUND DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN

LOCATION AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ROCKLIN

The City of Rocklin is located in south Placer County, 21 miles northeast of the City of Sacramento and 14 miles west of Auburn. Rocklin was incorporated in 1893, and is one of six incorporated cities in Placer County.

Rocklin is located in rolling foothills, and elevations in the City range from 150 to 525 feet above sea level. The community consists of urban areas, grasslands used for limited grazing and riparian habitat areas, partially covered with native oaks and grasslands. Antelope Creek, Secret Ravine Creek and Sucker Ravine Creek are perennial streams that provide riparian habitat for a variety of animals. Pleasant Grove Creek and Clover Valley Creek are also significant streams in the community. Other ephemeral streams exist during the rainy season.

Hot, dry summers and moderately wet winters characterize Rocklin's climate. Temperatures average approximately 75 degrees in the summer and 45 degrees in the winter, with extremes of 115 degrees in the summer and 20 degrees in the winter. Annual rainfall is approximately 23 inches, with most rainfall occurring between November and March.

Rocklin is served by two major highways, including Interstate 80. Interstate 80 provides access to the City of Sacramento and the Bay Area to the west, and to Auburn, the Placer County seat, Reno and other destinations to the east. The other major highway serving Rocklin is State Highway 65. Highway 65 provides a connection to the City of Lincoln and Highway 70 to the north. Sierra College Boulevard is connected to Highway 193, which provides a link between the City of Lincoln and the town of Newcastle.

Rocklin is located in the Loomis Basin, which is situated in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada Range. The regional geology of the Rocklin area has been influenced by mountain uplift and volcanic activity in the Sierra Nevada Range, and erosion off the crest of the mountains. Soils within the Rocklin planning area are generally of poor quality, and no areas within the planning area have been identified as having prime soils. No substantial commercial agricultural uses exist in the planning area, with the exception of livestock grazing.

Productive mineral resources within the planning area include granite.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Rocklin planning area has not been the subject of intensive archaeological study with regard to prehistoric cultures. Most of the previous efforts have been focused on the Delta, Sierra Nevada or Oroville-area cultures. It appears that the prehistoric cultures in the Rocklin area may have been more closely related to the Sierra Nevada cultures than those of either the Delta or Oroville area.

At the time of the Gold Rush, the Rocklin area was populated by the Nisenan Indians. The Nisenan peoples occupied the drainages of the Yuba, Bear, and the American Rivers from the Sacramento River on the west to the summit of the Sierra in the east. The Foothill and Hill Nisenan peoples, occupying the Rocklin area, were distinctive from the Valley Nisenan and were loosely organized into tribelets or districts with large central villages, surrounded by smaller villages. While the Hill Nisenan to the east in the foothills carried on trade with the valley peoples and shared some of the cultural traits, their culture lacked the complexity and richness of the Valley Nisenan.

The Gold Rush affected the Rocklin area, but no major gold discoveries occurred in the vicinity. Granite quarries developed as the primary mining activity, and at one time over 60 quarries operated in the area.

A more detailed discussion of historical and cultural resources of the Rocklin planning area is included in the Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The City of Rocklin was incorporated in 1893, and had 1,050 residents according to the 1890 Census. The number of residents declined thereafter, and eventually reached a slightly higher level of population in 1950. Growth was slow but steady until the 1980's, when the population increased from 7,344 in 1980 to 19,033 in 1990, a growth of 159%. A significant portion of this increase, however, was due to the annexation of the already populated Sunset-Whitney area.

The City's population for the various Census reporting dates is shown in Table 3-1. The U.S. Census population figure for 2000 is 36,330. The official State estimate of the City's population as of January 1, 2003 was 43,600 residents.

Table 3-1
City of Rocklin Population, 1900-2000

Year	Population	Year	Population
1900	1,050	1960	1,495
1910	1,026	1970	3,039
1920	643	1980	7,344
1930	724	1990	19,033
1940	795	2000	36,330
1950	1,155		

Source: California State Department of Finance

The 2000 Census indicated that the City's population consisted of the following population groups: Hispanic or Latino alone (7.9 %); White alone (83.5 %); Black alone (0.9 %); American Indian or Alaskan Native alone (0.6 %); Asian alone (4.0 %); Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone (0.2 %); other races alone (0.2 %); and multi-racial households (2.8%) (California Department of Finance).

GROWTH TRENDS

As set forth in Table 3-1 above, Rocklin's population remained steady until the 1980's. Population growth has accelerated since that time, and continues through the present day.

Rocklin is located in a region that is generally experiencing steady growth. Table 3-2 sets forth the projections for Placer County's population growth in coming years.

Table 3-2
Placer County Population Projections Through 2020

Year	Population Estimate	Total Change (yrs)	Percent Change (yrs)
2000	251,800		
2005	298,500	46,700 (00-05)	18.5 % (00-05)
2010	339,300	40,800 (05-10)	13.7 % (05-10)
2015	373,400	34,100 (10-15)	10 % (10-15)
2020	406,900	33,500 (15-20)	9 % (15-20)

Source: California State Department of Finance, Interim County Projections, Est. 7/1/2000

The Department of Finance projects that Placer County will increase in population by a total of 155,100 residents between 2000 and 2020. As Table 3-2 indicates, it is projected that the County's growth will be most rapid between 2000 and 2005, and will slow considerably as 2020 approaches.

The City and County Population Estimates Report (E-1 Report) issued by the California Department of Finance in May 2001 estimated that the City's population grew at a rate of 7.4% between January 1, 2000 and January 1, 2001, making it the state's eighteenth-fastest growing city. The State Department of Finance population estimate for 2002 is 41,250, and for 2003 are 43,600, a 5.7 percent increase over 2002.

The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) discussed the projected regional growth in *Raising the Roof*, its update of the *California Statewide Housing Plan*, issued in May 2000. The Department identified the Sacramento Metropolitan Region, consisting of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yuba, and Yolo counties, as an area that would experience significant growth between 1997 and 2020. The Sacramento Metropolitan Region is currently home to 1.8 million people, or 5.6 percent of the state's population. The Department of Finance projections relied on by HCD suggest that this region will add another 544,000 residents by 2010, and another 923,000 residents by 2020.

PLANNING AREA

The City's 1991 General Plan identified the City's planning area as all of the area within the City boundaries (approximately 12 square miles), plus the additional 9 square miles outside the City boundaries that are included within the City's "Sphere of Influence." The Sphere of Influence is identified by the Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission as the area of probable physical boundaries and service area for the City of Rocklin.

The boundaries of the planning area and the Sphere of Influence remain the same in January 2002 as in 1991. The boundaries are not expected to change, since Rocklin is bounded by the City of Roseville on the south and a portion of its western boundary; by Placer County and Highway 65 on a portion of its western boundary; by the City of Lincoln on the north; and by the Town of Loomis on the east. As of September 2003, approximately 19.8 square miles are within the City limits, with an additional 1.2 square miles outside the City boundaries but within the Rocklin Sphere of Influence/planning area. Sunset Rancho Estates (1,300) acres was annexed to the City in 2003 and is part of what is referred to as the North West Rocklin Annexation Area. That annexation encompassed a total of 1,871 acres.

Figure 3-1 shows the planning area boundary as well as the existing City limits (the incorporated area which makes up the City of Rocklin). Interstate 80 (I-80) and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks bisect the City. State Highway 65 borders the west and southwest boundary of the City and the planning area.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AREAS

The planning area is divided into 16 community areas, listed alphabetically and described below, as shown in Figure 3-2. Most of the undeveloped or recently-developed (within the last 10 years) areas in the City of Rocklin have been master-planned through a series of Planned Unit Developments referred to as "General Development Plans" under the Rocklin Zoning Ordinance. Many areas which appear to be undeveloped or vacant actually have City-approved development plans or "entitlements."

Croftwood: The Croftwood area consists primarily of rural residential uses and undeveloped land. It is located at the eastern end of the planning area, east of I-80. It contains a large area designated for commercial use with access from the Sierra College Boulevard/I-80 Interchange. The Interchange is scheduled to be upgraded in 2005. Both sides of Secret Ravine Creek are bounded by a Low Density Residential designation.

Del Mar: The Del Mar area consists of rural residential uses and undeveloped land, with some commercial development at Pacific Street and Brace Road and the Sierra College Boulevard/I-80 interchange and industrial uses, including the Rocklin Business Complex on the east side of Del Mar Avenue and vacant industrial lands west of Del Mar Avenue.

Fairway Heights: The Fairway Heights area is predominantly developed with single family and multiple family residential developments, some commercial and professional office uses, a park and elementary school.

Granite Drive/Sierra Meadows: The Granite Drive/Sierra Meadows area includes newer commercial and industrial development located along Granite Drive and Sierra Meadows Drive, as well as industrial areas and undeveloped land along the railroad right-of-way at the eastern end of Granite Drive. The area includes some single family residences, churches, a neighborhood park and industrial uses along Pacific Street. This community area contains several vacant parcels designated for commercial and industrial development and is entirely within the Redevelopment Project Area.

Greenbrae Island: This community area is an "island" of unincorporated Placer County territory east of I-80 surrounded by the Secret Ravine-Sierra Bluffs community area in the City of Rocklin. The area contains a number of single family homes, an apartment complex and vacant residential parcels.

Mission Hills/Clover Valley: The Mission Hills and Lower Clover Valley portions of this area are developed with single family residences, a developed neighborhood park and schools, and the Sunset Whitney Country Club (including a golf course and clubhouse). The visually prominent "summit" hillside is also located in the lower half of this community planning area. Upper Clover Valley is located in the most northeasterly portion of the planning area and is largely undeveloped. The area is designated for Low and Medium Density Residential development, two neighborhood parks, a small commercial site and open space. Clover Valley Creek traverses through both Upper and Lower Clover Valley. Limited livestock grazing is presently conducted on a small portion of Upper Clover Valley.

Central Rocklin/Downtown Area: The oldest commercial area of the City is located along Pacific Street in the Central Rocklin/Downtown area. Undeveloped commercial land exists along Pacific Street, Rocklin Road and Sunset Boulevard. Most of this area is within the Redevelopment Project Area, and it encompasses the Civic Center Master Plan Area. Many public facilities are located in this area, including City Hall and the City Administrative Offices, the Public Safety building, a County branch library, the Post Office, the Johnson-Springview Community Center, Johnson-Springview Park, Memorial Park, Oldtimers Park, the Finnish Temperance Hall (Finn Hall), and the Rocklin Elementary School. The oldest homes in the City are also located within this community area. Most of them are single family residences; however, there are a few vacant lots in the residential area. The Central Rocklin/Downtown area also includes abandoned quarry pits, and service commercial and industrial uses along Pacific Street in the vicinity of the railroad tracks. The City's last active quarry, Big Gun Quarry, is located on Pacific Street. Rocklin's historical area, located along Front Street next to the railroad tracks between Farron Street and Rocklin Road, is within the Central Rocklin/Downtown area. The City has adopted the Front Street Historical Master Plan, and the Front Street Historic Committee advises the City Council on plans for the historical area. The City also adopted a Downtown Revitalization Plan in 1988 to guide and set standards for development along Pacific Street. These plans are discussed further in Chapter IV, Land Use Element.

Secret Ravine/Sierra Bluffs: This area, which is located east of I-80 and south of Sierra College, is a combination of traditional single family residential, rural residential, and multiple family residential areas, with limited commercial development near the College. There are also neighborhood parks located within this area. The area includes several pending and approved but not yet developed developments, consisting of residential and open space uses and access to Secret Ravine Creek. The area contains the prominent "Sierra Bluffs" ridgeline.

Sierra College: The Sierra College area, located along Sierra College Boulevard east of I-80, and north of Rocklin Road, consists of Sierra Community College, with a current student population of approximately 16,500, and surrounding property with rural residences, a church and vacant properties predominating. This area was annexed to the City in 2003.

Stanford Ranch: Comprising 3,445 acres, Stanford Ranch is the largest community area. Stanford Ranch encompasses a large valley surrounded by steep, wooded ridges on three sides. The valley floor descends gradually from the northeast to the west and is enclosed on the west and northwest by a low bluff. Pleasant Grove Creek, the primary drainageway through Stanford Ranch, flows generally toward the west. Three distinct land use patterns are encompassed in the area: a suburban residential pattern focused on a community or neighborhood core area; the industrial and business parks; and the intensive commercial core area, which includes a variety of commercial and office uses. This large, multiple-phase development includes various densities of single and multiple family residential development, commercial, business professional, and light industrial uses, as well as open space, parks and schools.

Whitney Oaks: The Whitney Oaks community contains suburban residential development, the Whitney Oaks Golf Course, two parks, an elementary school, and several senior citizens housing complexes.

Sunset East: The Sunset East community consists of four specific plan areas for single family residential, rural residential, duplexes and multiple family developments. Antelope Creek runs through the community area. The area also includes bicycle paths, equestrian trails, parks, a school, offices, a South Placer Municipal Utility District corporation yard and a petroleum tank facility.

Sunset Rancho Estates: Comprising 1,300 acres, Sunset Rancho Estates was annexed to the City of Rocklin in 2003 as part of what is referred to as the North West Rocklin Annexation Area. It consists primarily of undeveloped land. The City has approved a general development plan for the Sunset Ranchos area that would accommodate up to 3,139 single family dwellings, 1,156 multi-family dwellings, 33.9 acres of commercial development, 9.6 acres of business professional uses, 55.6 acres of parks, including a community park, 194.4 acres of open space, 3 elementary school sites and one high school site.

Sunset West: The Sunset West area was master planned in 16 phases, and includes single family residences and multiple family developments. A community park, several neighborhood parks and an elementary school are located in this community area. The area contains several commercial properties, the largest being the proposed Blue Oaks Town Center at the west end of the community.

Sunset Whitney: The Sunset Whitney area is predominantly single family residential in nature, with some duplexes located along South Whitney Boulevard. The Parker-Whitney School is located in this area, which is part of the old Sunset City town plan. Other uses include the western portion of Sunset Whitney Golf Course, and commercial uses at the intersection of Sunset and Whitney. The area is also characterized by some undeveloped land and bluffs.

Woodside: The Woodside area, located between I-80 and Pacific Street, includes single family residences, duplexes, a senior apartment complex, a neighborhood park, as well as a shopping center and office buildings located at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Pacific Street. Some service commercial uses are also located within this area.

Highway 65 Corridor: The Highway 65 corridor is a portion of the North West Rocklin Annexation Area that is designated for non-residential uses. Development existing at the time of annexation included the former Herman Miller manufacturing facility that has subsequently been converted into William Jessup University, and the Atherton Center. The Atherton Tech Center is also almost fully developed. Land use designations and zoning in the area would accommodate 187.9 acres of Light Industrial land uses, 92.8 acres of commercial, 134.3 acres of Business Professional/Commercial, 22.9 acres of Business Professional and 66.2 acres of Open Space.