

**Three Rivers Community Town Center**

A Senior

Project

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City and Regional Planning; Bachelor of Science

by

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## Chapter One: Introduction, Demographics, and Relevant Regulations

### 1.1 Introduction

This project is an extension to the Community Planning courses in the City and Regional Planning Department, CRP 410 and 411. The project began in Fall 2022 and was completed in Winter 2023. The first quarter, the studio team worked with Three Rivers, California, which resulted in a thorough general plan background report for the community. The *Tulare County Mountain Area Plan – Background Report*, will be referenced throughout the project.

The second quarter, the studio team switched directions and completed a five-year review for the Three River's community, based on their community plan and the General Plan for Tulare County. The *Five-Year Review, Three Rivers*, document will also be referenced throughout the project. The studio team did extensive research and public outreach in order to complete the projects.

The Three Rivers Community Town Center pulls all that information together and proposes a development based on Three River's wants and needs. This project uses the information gathered by the studio team and primarily focuses on site design. During public outreach, it was clear and unanimous that a community center was highly desired. It was also clear that there was a need for more affordable housing, and more housing in general. The proposed Three Rivers Community Town Center will not only give the community a place to gather but it will also provide a variety of housing and offer new local employment opportunities.

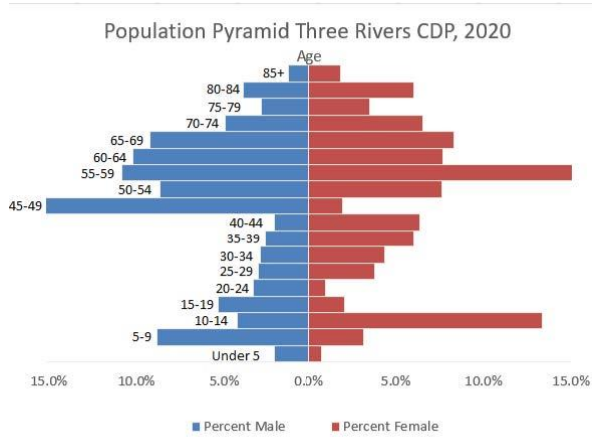
This document encompasses relevant background information, regulations, site conditions, and community feedback. This document also goes through the site design process and shows what a possible community center could look like for Three Rivers.

### 1.2 Relevance to Planning

This project directly relates to Urban Planning and the planning process itself. This project encompasses data collection, community outreach and feedback, general plan elements, site design, and graphic design skills. The studio team in CRP 41/411 gained real life experiences relating to city planning and prepared the team for future careers. The proposed development takes all the information gathered and produces a project that aims to serve the community based on their needs and desires.

### 1.3 Demographics

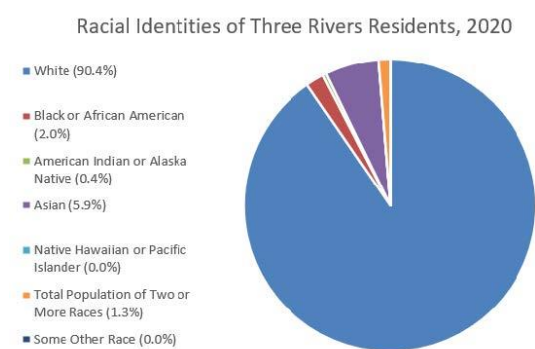
Figure 1: Three Rivers Population Pyramid



According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2020 the total population was 2,699, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Figure 1, shows that the majority of the population is aged over 55.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020

Figure 2: Three Rivers Racial Identity Chart



In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau, found that the largest racial identity in Three Rivers was White, which accounts for 90 percent of its residents. Figure 2, graphically shows that. The next largest racial identity group is Asian at six percent. The remaining racial identities, African American, Pacific Islanders, and two or more races, combined together were at five percent, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020

Figure 3: Three Rivers Educational Attainment Chart

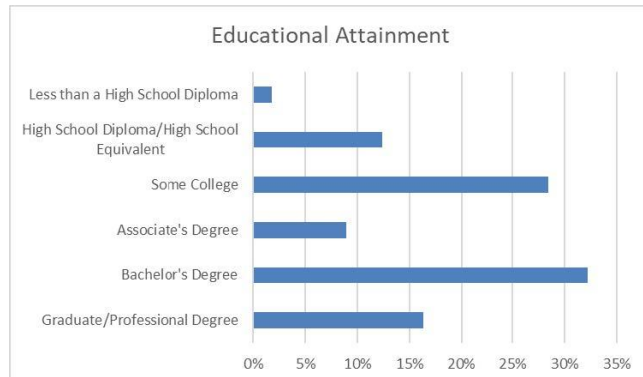


Figure 3, illustrates a well-educated community in Three Rivers. Two percent of the population in Three Rivers have less than a high school diploma, with 98 percent having one. 32 percent have a bachelor's degree and about 30 percent have an associate's degree or have completed some college, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020

Figure 4: Three Rivers Household Income

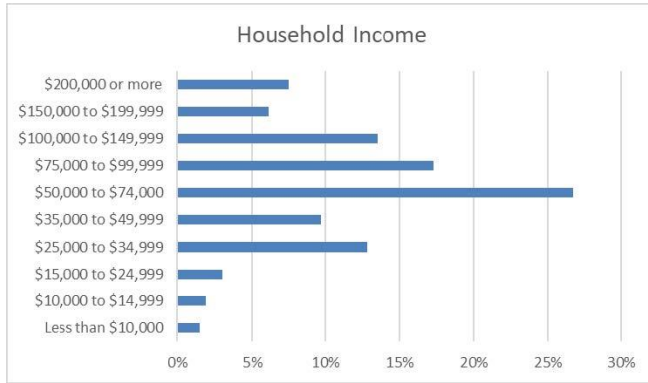
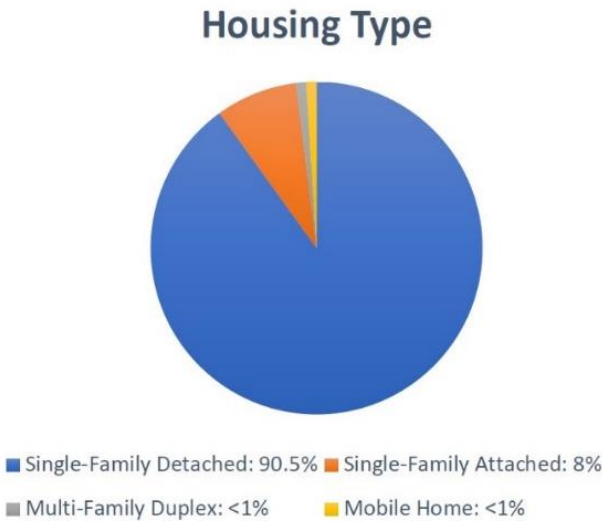


Figure 4, illustrates the data for Three Rivers household income. The largest bracket of households in Three Rivers earn between \$50,000 and \$74,000 annually at 27 percent, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020

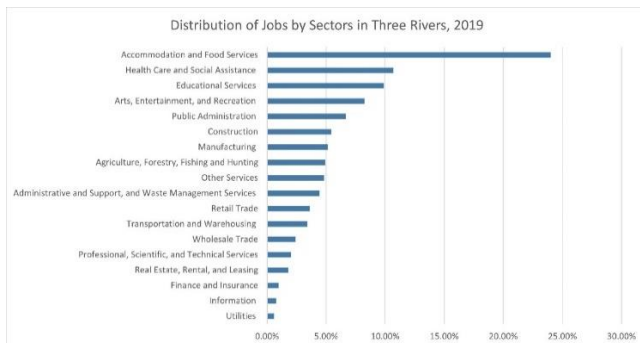
Figure 5: Three Rivers Housing Typologies



According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 90 percent of the housing type in Three Rivers is single-family detached. Eight percent are single-family attached, less than one percent are multi-family duplex, and less than one percent are mobiles homes, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Figure 5, graphically shows the data.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020

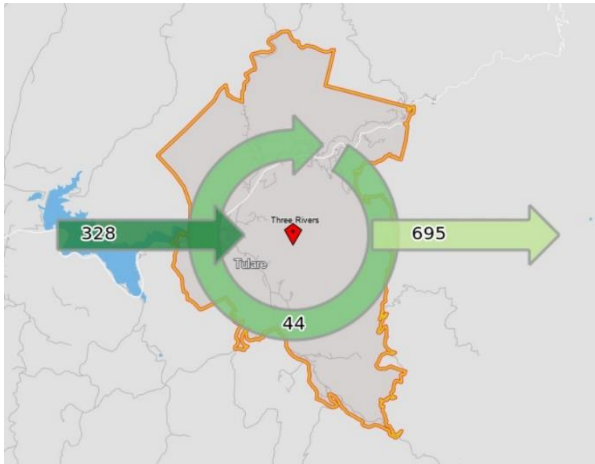
Figure 6: Employment by Industries in Three Rivers



Data USA, reported that the largest employment industry in Three Rivers is accommodation and food services at 24 percent. Followed by health and social assistance at 12 percent. Lastly, educational services are the third largest industry at ten percent. Figure 6, shows the employment industry data in Three Rivers, (Data USA, 2020).

Source: Data USA, 2020

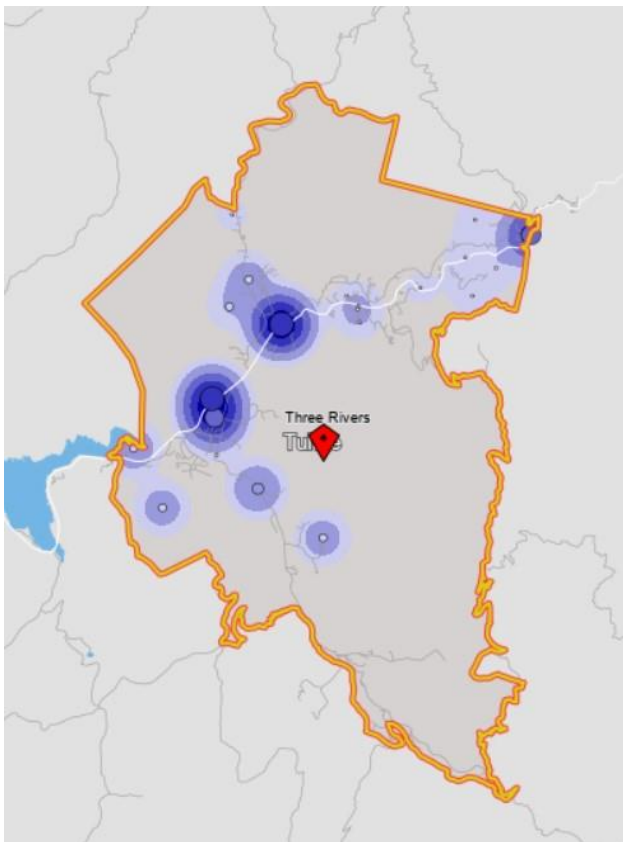
Figure 7: Inflow and Outflow of Jobs in Three Rivers



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

Figure 7, from the U.S. Census Bureau, shows the inflow and outflow of jobs in Three Rivers. In 2019, there were a total of 372 jobs in Three Rivers, residents held just 44 of the jobs, while workers from out of the area held the remaining 328 jobs. Meanwhile, 695 residents held jobs outside of Three Rivers, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

Figure 8: Job Concentrations in Three Rivers



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

Figure 8, from the U.S. Census Bureau, shows a map of job concentrations in Three Rivers. In 2019, the jobs were concentrated along Sierra Drive, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

## 1.4 Relevant Regulations

The *Three Rivers Community Plan Update*, outlines a set of development standards for a Mixed-Use overlay zone. The purpose of this zone is to facilitate a town center for Three Rivers, (*Three Rivers Community Plan Update*, 2018). This will not only increase economic growth, but it will also decrease daily vehicle trips. Daily trips will decrease by placing housing next to employment opportunities. The most relevant regulations to this project have been listed below. A full list of regulations can be found in the *Tulare County Mountain Area Plan – Background Report*.

### Development Codes

- Height max is 35'
- Any “R” zone must have a side yard no less than 5 ft.
- Back yards are required if the lot is against another R lot. At least 15 ft.
- Lot area minimum of 10000 sq. ft.
- FAR max is 2
- Distance between structures: 10 ft
- Off-street parking and loading are required
- Fences at least 6 ft.
- Sidewalks Minimum of 5 ft wide
- First floor commercial ceiling height of 12 ft.
- Mansard roofs are prohibited
- Flat Roofs should be covered in solar panels 90%
- Sloped roofs 50%
- Block lengths should be between 200 to 300 ft. max 500 ft.
- Front yard fence setback 2-3 ft. from sidewalk
- Landscaping 3-5 ft. wide between sidewalk and curb of street
- New trees planted on curb of sidewalk for all new development

### Design Standards

- Follow natural contours of the landscape
- Structures can't obstruct views
- Lights facing down and shielded
- Shield trash bins from view within an enclosure to keep the bears out



- Clear and individualized building entries
- Access retail directly from sidewalk
- Entrances to upper story uses should not be as prominent as first floor entrances
- No blank walls
- Design for human scale
- Big emphasis on corner buildings
- Keep private spaces private from public space
- Landscaping is required
- Deciduous tree species are encouraged to shade in all directions
- Parking should not be prominent, and hedging should be used when necessary
- Include vehicle drop off areas

### Zoning

- MU (Mixed Use): This zone allows these various land uses C-2, C-1, R-1, R-2, and R-3. All uses in those zones are allowed and listed in their section. (Three Rivers Community Plan Update, 2018).
- C-2 General Commercial Zone:
  - Intended for retail stores and businesses that don't include manufacturing or distribution.
- C-1 or CC Community Commercial Zone:
  - Full range of retail commercial establishments that serve multiple neighborhoods or an entire community
  - Typically clustered together
  - Big box retail
  - Eating and drinking
  - Food and beverage sales
  - Hardware stores
  - Gasoline service
  - Public buildings
  - General merchandise
  - Offices
- R-1 Low Density Residential:

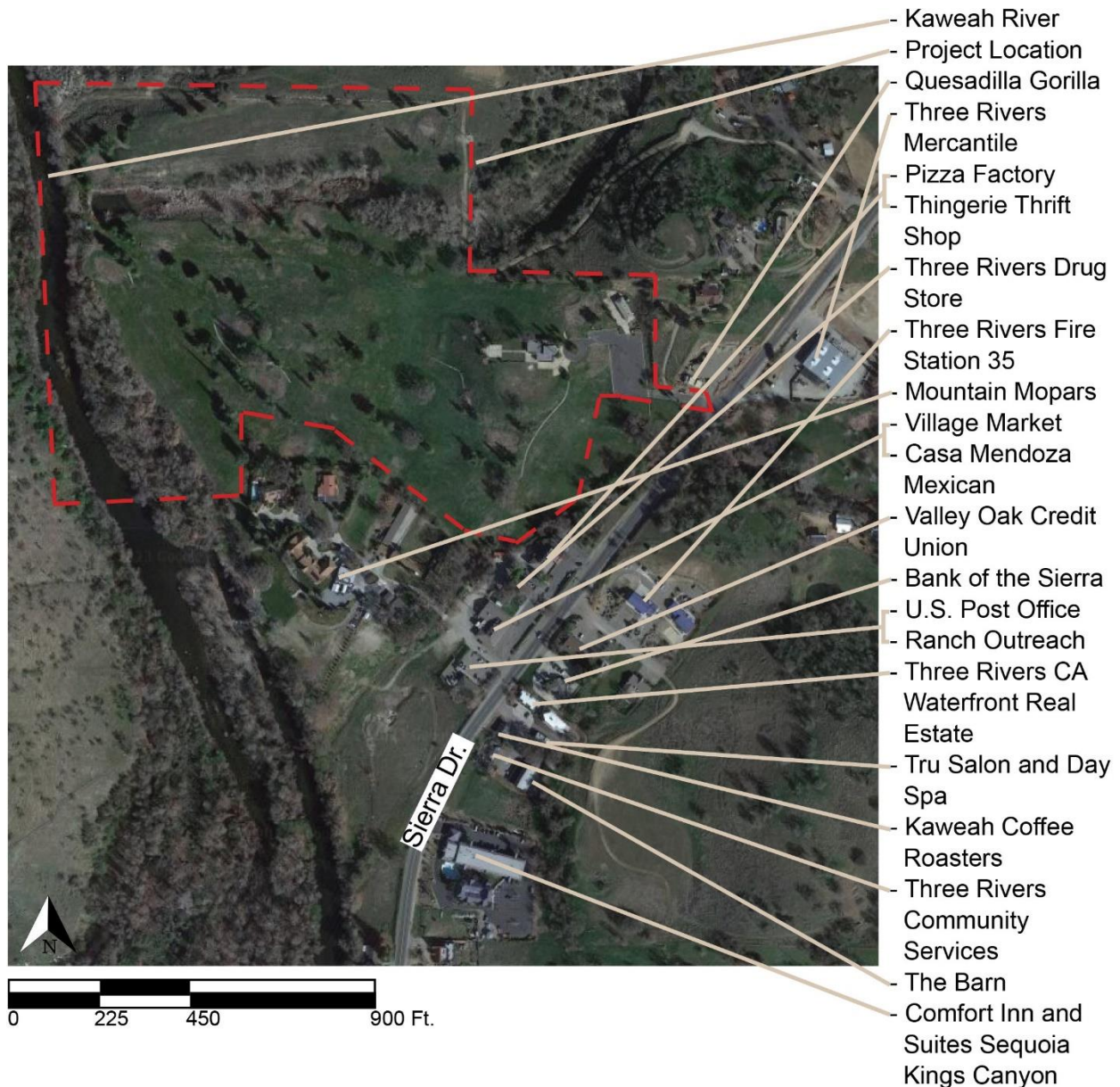
- One family dwelling unit
- Private garages, no more than 3
- Not more than one family per 5 acres
- No mobile home parks
- R-2 Medium Density Residential:
  - No more than 12 families per acre
  - Require community water system and on-site septic system or an alternative waste disposal system
- R-3 Medium High Density Residential:
  - Allows any uses permitted in R-2 zone
  - Approval is needed if more than 4 dwelling units are proposed

## Chapter Two: Site Assessment

### 2.1 Location Maps

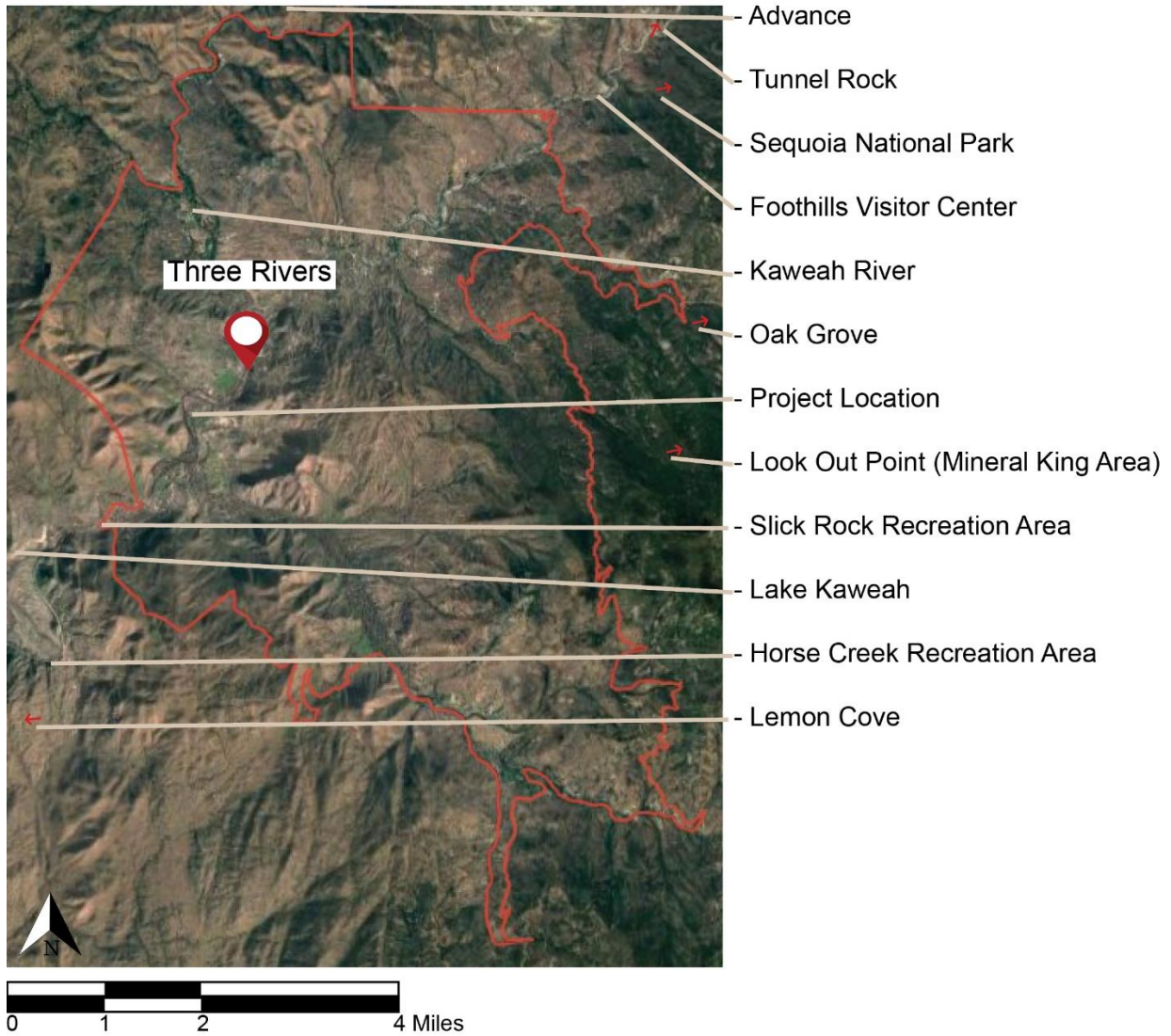
The project location is 45 acres in Three Rivers, California. It is off of Highway 198, Sierra Drive. It is in the southwestern area of Three Rivers with the Kaweah River running through the western boundary of the site. There is a fire station across the road from the project area, along with many local businesses, services, and a few hotels. The project location used to be a golf course, but it is no longer in use. The land is privately owned.

Figure 9: Neighborhood Map



Three Rivers is often looked at as the gateway to the Sequoia National Park and is surrounded by several small mountain towns. There are many nearby recreational opportunities and water activities.

Figure 10: City View

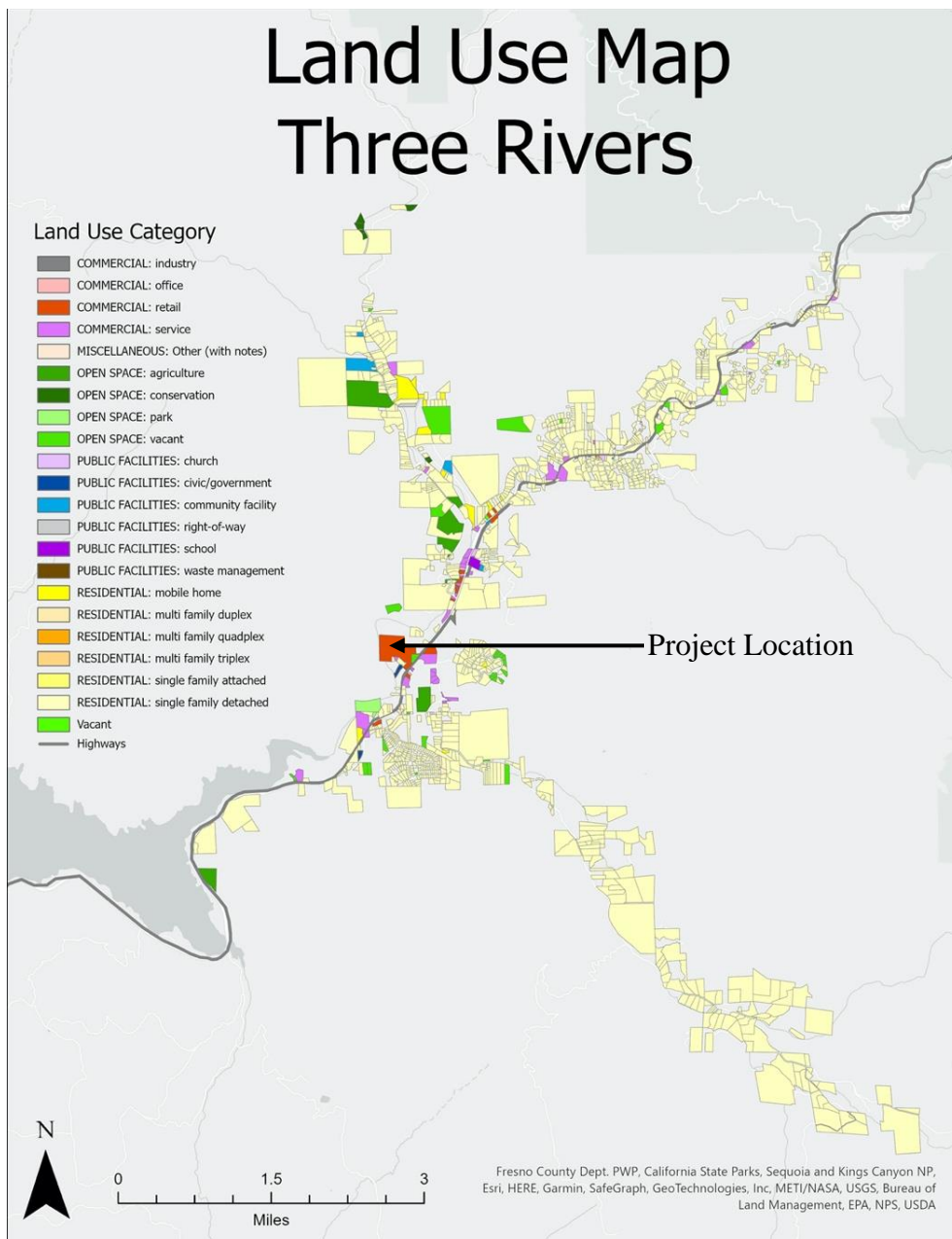




## 2.2 Land Use Map

The project location is currently in a Commercial-Retail zone. The *Three Rivers Community Plan Update*, included land use updates. One of them being a Mixed-Use Overlay Combining Zone for a community town center. This land use change will allow for not only commercial zones, but also residential zones. This will make the project location suitable for the proposed development. The surrounding land uses include Open Space, Low Density Residential, church, and civic Public Facilities.

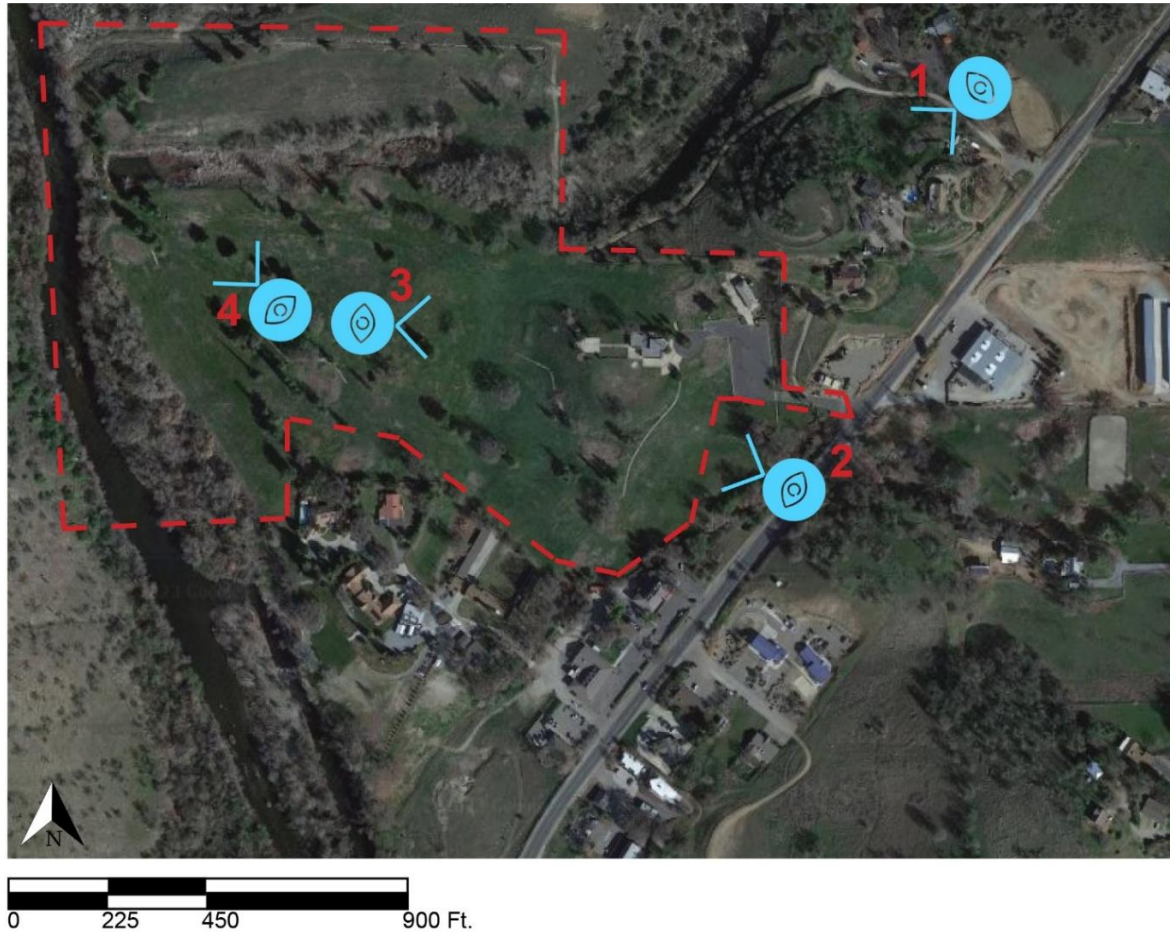
Figure 11: Three Rivers Land Use Map



### 2.3 Views

The project location has great views inside and outside of the site. The site is surrounded by rural development and many untouched hills. The Kaweah River flows along the western boundary of the site, also providing nice views.

Figure 12: Site Viewsheds



#### Viewsheds into Site

1. Birds eye view, facing southwest into the site.





2. Perspective view facing west from Sierra Drive.

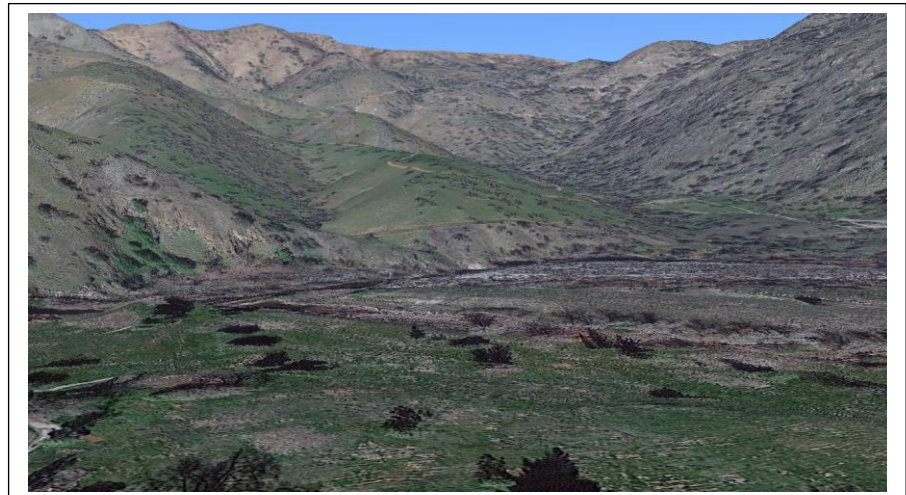


#### Viewsheds out of Site

3. Aerial view facing east out of the project area.



4. Aerial view facing northwest out of the project area.



## 2.4 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis identifies the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of a project before and after development. It is a common tool planners use to identify the a project’s potential and fit with the community.

Figure 13: SWOT Analysis

	Economic Development	Urban Form, Existing Built Environment, Activities, or Stakeholders	Natural Environment	Circulation and Transportation	Regulations, Land Use, and Zoning
Strengths	Three Rivers serves as a destination center for the valley floor. The TOT generates large revenues for the economy.	The site is open and only has one existing building.	The site is primarily flat with access to the riverfront.	The project location is off of the main road in Three Rivers, Sierra Drive. The site can accommodate vehicles easily.	A special mixed-use zone, and set of standards, specifically supporting a community town center.
Weaknesses	There are limited locations for new local businesses.	Low number of public gathering spaces in Three Rivers. The area also lacks strong internet and cell service.	The site is mostly grass and dirt. Air pollution could be increased during construction.	There are no bike lanes or sidewalks in Three Rivers.	None.
Opportunities	The project will increase local employment and locations for new businesses.	The community expressed a strong desire for a community town center and more housing.	The Kaweah river and the surrounding natural aesthetics will be pleasing to the visitors and surrounding neighborhoods.	There is an opportunity to make the community town center walkable and bike friendly.	The zoning allows a new type of development within Three Rivers.
Threats	While many of these improvements are necessary, they could gentrify the area.	Open space would be decreased in the area.	There are existing trees on the site that would have to be removed. The site would not be treeless, the regulations require that new trees are to be planted with new development.	A turning lane off Sierra Drive might be necessary for safety and in order to not back up traffic.	None.



## Chapter Three: Community Outreach

### 3.1 Land Use Inventory

The CRP 410/411 studio team traveled to Three Rivers on October 7, 2022, to gather land use information for each parcel. The land use inventory provided important data that the team used throughout the quarter. This trip also allowed the studio team to gain familiarity with Three Rivers.

### 3.2 Meeting One

On October 24, 2022, the studio team traveled to Three Rivers for the first community meeting. The studio team was introduced to the community and recorded information on the current state of Three Rivers. The team asked the community members three questions: What do you like about your community? What does your community lack? What would make your community better? The respondent's answers were used to determine the future of Three Rivers.

Detailed feedback reports can be found in the *Tulare County Mountain Area Plan – Background Report*. For this project, only feedback relating to a town center development will be discussed. A common response was that no town center was a weakness and expressed a town center as a need for the community. There was also a desire for more housing in general and more affordable housing.

### 3.3 Meeting Two

The second meeting was held on November 14, 2022, to include the community on what opportunities the plan should focus on. Participants were asked to place stickers by preference on the presented opportunities that they would like to see implemented. The feedback collected was used to better plan the future of the community.

Again, detailed feedback reports can be found in the *Tulare County Mountain Area Plan – Background Report*. For this project, only feedback relating to a town center development will be discussed. Many respondents supported the presented opportunities relating to economic development. More local businesses like restaurants and recreational businesses were desired.

## Chapter Four: Project Description

Chapter Four outlines the vision, goals, objectives, and design principles for the proposed project development. This section pulls all the information together to create a community town center that fits the area's unique characteristics.

### 4.1 Visioning, Goals, Objectives, & Design Principles

#### Vision Statement

The Three Rivers Community Town Center will serve as the epicenter of public gatherings, shopping, eateries, leisure, and work opportunities. A mix of residential, commercial, and public components will prioritize affordable housing, pedestrian walkability, and open space for gatherings. The site design will follow the natural contours of the landscape and preserve the small town feeling that residents value.

**Goal One:** Create a community town center that reflects Three Rivers small town character.

**Objective One:** Match the building scales and the buildings style in Three Rivers.

**Design Ideas:**

- Match Rustic building style.
- No more than three story buildings to match existing building scales in the area. This will also help preserve views.
- Don't build structures on the hillsides in order to preserve views.
- Use earthy colors that match the surrounding landscape.

**Goal Two:** In order to achieve an inclusive and lively environment, a variety of compatible uses, activities, and housing types must be combined.

**Objective One:** Provide business and employment opportunities.

**Design Ideas:**

- Incorporate building space for new local businesses that will also increase local employment opportunities.
- Outdoor spaces can be used for craft shows or farmers markets.
- Provide an incubator hub for entrepreneurs and start up companies.

**Objective Two:** Foster an environment that serves as a residential neighborhood and as a commercial district, while still prioritizing different types of housing opportunities.

Design Ideas:

- Provide housing options for people with different incomes.
- Residential spaces will have privacy, along with opportunities for social interaction.
- The residential and commercial areas will be integrated through connectivity.

**Goal Three:** Create a pedestrian friendly environment that prioritizes walkability and bicyclists.

**Objective One:** Enhance walkability and safety by creating barriers between vehicles and pedestrian circulation within the site.

Design Ideas:

- Separate traffic from the sidewalk by using parklets, trees, and bike lanes.
- Provide pedestrian/bicycle areas within the site that have little contact with vehicles.
- Create a cohesive and legible space specifically designed for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Objective Two:** Increase mobility for pedestrians and cyclists within the site to move more freely throughout the layout.

Design Ideas:

- Create multiple entrances and exits into the site for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Utilize open spaces or paths between buildings to offer fluid pedestrian circulation.
- Incorporate bike paths that are separate from walking paths in the site.

**Goal Four:** Incorporate smart city techniques to increase efficiency and the quality of life.

**Objective One:** Increase Wi-Fi and cell service connections.

Design Ideas:

- Install appropriate infrastructure to support reliable cell service.
- Install fiber optic wires for strong and efficient Wi-Fi.

**Objective Two:** Increase sustainability and safety by using technology.

Design Ideas:

- Provide electric vehicle charging stations for residents and visitors.
- Install solar panels in a visually appealing manner, throughout entire site.
- Implement sensor pedestrian crosswalks within site.

## 4.2 Conceptual Development

The Concept Development Map for the Three Rivers Community Town Center offers many housing types, tiny homes, townhomes, apartments, and duplexes. Within the residential area there is a private park and pool for its residents. There are clear pedestrian and bike connections in and out of the residential area. There are also landscape barriers between the housing and public areas to preserve residents' privacy.

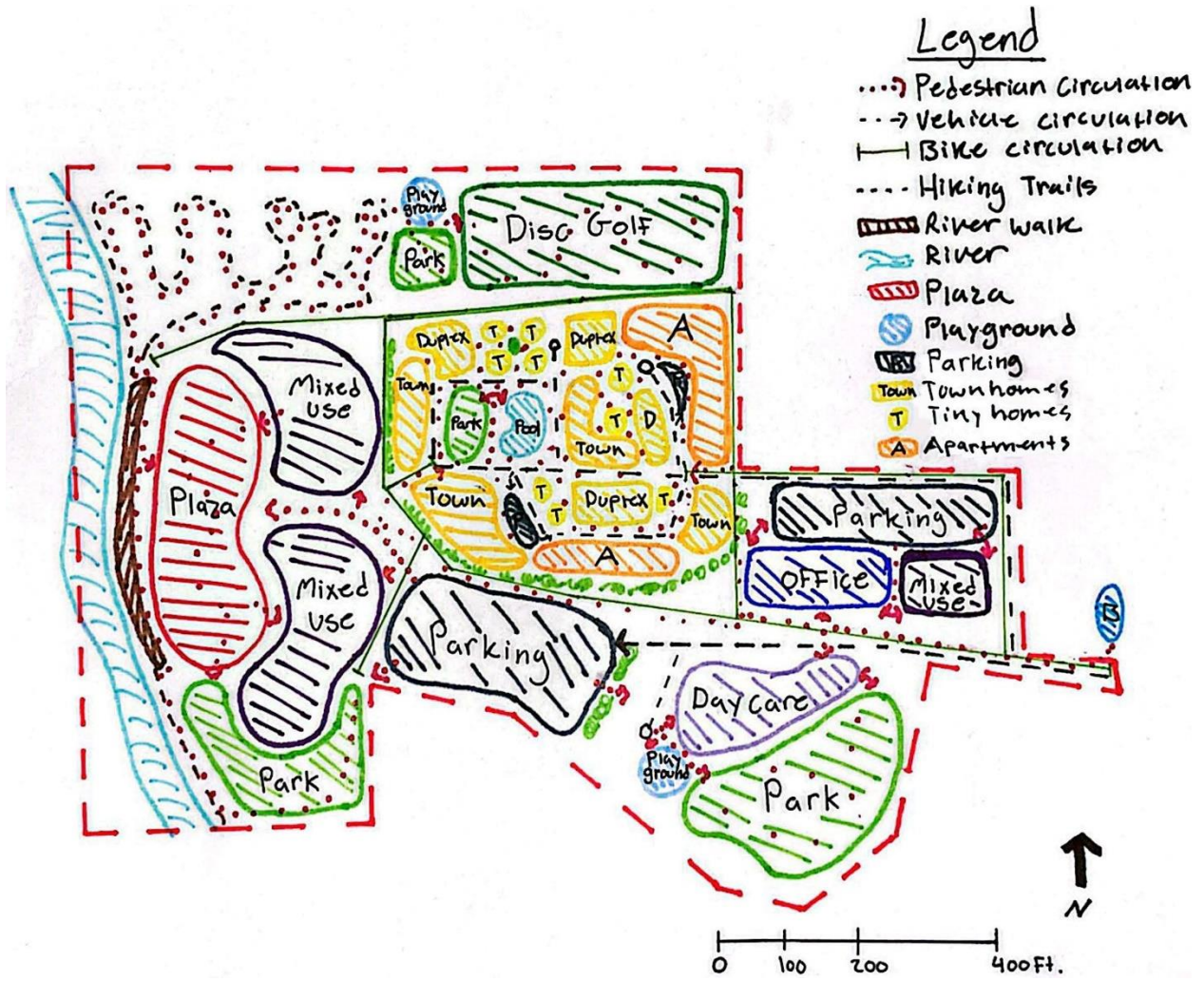
There are two roads within the site, one leads to a parking lot with various uses and then leads to the residential area. The other road leads to a large parking lot that serves commercial and public uses. The paths and edges in the site are meant to draw people towards the river where there is a large plaza and riverwalk path, with retail and eateries surrounding the plaza. There is also a park in the southwest corner of the site that serves as a barrier between the Mixed-Use building and the existing single-family home outside the project area.

The Mixed-Use buildings surrounding the plaza will have apartments on the second floor and retail and eateries on the bottom level. The plaza will serve as a public gathering space for the community. Events such as farmers' markets or craft shows will be able to be held there. The northwest portion of the site has a higher elevation than the rest of the site and is dedicated to open space and outdoor recreational uses. The riverwalk path turns into a hiking trail the father pedestrians go up. On top of the hill is a park, playground, and disc golf course. The hiking trail loops back down the hill, connecting back to the rest of the site.

A bus stop has been added just outside the site along Sierra Drive for public transportation opportunities. The northeast area of the site has a mixed-use building with apartments on the second floor and eateries on the bottom level. This building serves the business hub next door, that includes private offices for rent, an incubator floor, and a conference room that the community is able to reserve for indoor public gatherings. There is a parking lot that serves these uses located behind the buildings.

The southeastern corner of the site includes a park, playground, and day care. The park serves the day care and other uses in the area. It also acts as a barrier between the new development and the existing single-family home outside the project area. The day care will provide childcare for residents and people who work within the site.

Figure 14: Concept Development Map





Chapter Five: Preliminary Design

5.1 Site Plan

Figure 15: Site Plan



## 5.2 Program

The Land Use Table correlates to figure 17 and 18. The table describes the land uses, number of units, and floor square footage of the development.

Figure 16: Land Use Table

Building #	Land Use	Level	Units	Square Feet	Building #	Land Use	Level	Units	Square Feet
1	C-1	1	1	4500	10	R-1	1	1	480
2	C-1	2	4	4608	10	R-1	2	1	480
3	C-1	1	1	2500	11	R-1	1	3	6,563
4	C-2	1	2	1520	11	R-1	2	3	6,563
4	R-1	2	2	1520	12	R-1	1	4	14,400
5	C-2	1	3	2280	12	R-1	2	4	14,400
5	R-1	2	3	2280	13	R-1	1	2	4,375
6	OS	-	-	20000	13	R-1	2	2	4,375
7	R-1	1	4	2187	14	PF	1	1	360
7	R-1	2	4	2187	15	P	1	-	28,000
8	R-1	1	3	17160	16	P	1	-	61,600
8	R-1	2	3	17160	17	P	1	-	22,950
9	R-1	1	2	7200	18	OS	1	-	60,000
9	R-1	2	2	7200	19	OS	1	-	2,500

5.3 SketchUp Development with Land Uses

Figure 17: Northwest View



Figure 18: Southeast View





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