



4 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSES

This chapter provides a program-level analysis of the physical environmental effects of adoption and implementation of the Sustainability Policy and Regulatory Update of the County of Santa Cruz (County) General Plan and Local Coastal Program (LCP) and County Code (Sustainability Update or project). The following sections within this chapter evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed project:

- 4.1 – Aesthetics
- 4.2 – Agriculture, Forestry Resources, and Mineral Resources
- 4.3 – Air Quality
- 4.4 – Biological Resources
- 4.5 – Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources
- 4.6 – Energy
- 4.7 – Geology and Soils
- 4.8 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 4.9 – Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 4.10 – Hydrology and Water Quality
- 4.11 – Land Use and Planning
- 4.12 – Noise
- 4.13 – Population and Housing
- 4.14 – Public Services and Recreation
- 4.15 – Transportation
- 4.16 – Utilities and Service Systems
- 4.17 – Wildfire

Each environmental resource section listed above generally has a similar format as described below.

- **Environmental Setting.** This section provides a general overview of the existing physical environmental conditions related to the topic being addressed based on the conditions present at the time that the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was released (July 2020).
- **Regulatory Framework.** This section describes applicable federal, state, and local, laws and regulations relevant to the environmental resource topic and the proposed project.

- **Impacts and Mitigation Measures.** This section identifies standards of significance used to evaluate whether an impact is considered significant, based on standards identified in Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. In some cases, agency policies and regulations or professional judgment are used to further define CEQA standards of significance.

This section first presents a discussion of the standards of significance for which no impacts have been identified, if any. The section then evaluates and analyzes project impacts, states the level of significance prior to mitigation, and proposes mitigation measures for significant impacts that would reduce such impacts, if feasible. A statement regarding the level of significance of each impact after mitigation precedes the mitigation measures for that impact. Cumulative impacts are discussed in each environmental resource section following the description of the project-specific impacts – see section 4.0.3 for further details. Cited references are listed at the end of each topical section.

4.0.1 Scope of Analyses

4.0.1.1 Significance Determinations

In accordance with CEQA, specifically Public Resources Code Section 21068, a “significant effect on the environment” means a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in the environment. The significance thresholds used for each environmental resource topic are presented in each section of this chapter immediately before the discussion of impacts. For each impact described, one of the following significance determinations is made:

- **No Impact.** This determination is made if there is no potential that the proposed project could affect the resource at issue.
- **Less than Significant.** This determination applies if there is a potential for a limited impact on a resource, but the impact is not significant in accordance with the standard of significance.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation.** This determination applies if there is the potential for a substantial adverse effect in accordance with the standard of significance, but mitigation is available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.
- **Significant and Unavoidable.** This determination applies to impacts that are significant, and for which there appears to be no feasible mitigation available to substantially reduce the impact.

4.0.1.2 Approach to Program-Level Environmental Analyses

The proposed project would guide future physical development of the County through the planning horizon of 2040. Adoption of the proposed project would not constitute a commitment to any specific project, construction schedule, or funding priority. Each project embarked on by the County during the lifespan of the proposed project would be individually reviewed and approved by the Board of Supervisors. This EIR is a program-level environmental assessment, which evaluates the effects of adoption of the project and focuses on future development of the County under the project at a programmatic, rather than project-specific, level. According to Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, a Program EIR may be prepared on a

series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related geographically, as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions, or in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, or plans. The Program EIR allows for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives and ensures consideration of cumulative impacts that might be missed on a case by-case basis.

Study Area

The study area generally includes the unincorporated areas of the County of Santa Cruz, although the extent of the study area varies among the environmental resource areas analyzed in this EIR, depending on the area in which impacts could occur. For example, the evaluation of population and housing impacts considers the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) region, which includes Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties, as this region is the basis for growth forecasts and various regional plans that relate to population and housing impacts. Conversely, geological, soils and paleontological impacts are assessed only for the project area, which is where such impacts could result with the project. (See Chapter 3, Project Description, for further description of the project area.) The study area for each environmental resource area is defined in the pertinent resource sections in this chapter.

Approach to Impact Analyses

Baseline Environmental Conditions

According to Section 15125 (Environmental Setting) of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project to provide the “baseline physical conditions” against which project-related changes can be compared. Normally, the baseline conditions are defined as the physical environmental conditions as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The NOP for this EIR was published on July 1, 2020. Therefore, 2020 constitutes the baseline year for analyses in this EIR. Unless otherwise indicated for a specific topic, conditions existing in that year are considered to be the baseline against which changes that would result from the proposed project are evaluated.

Year of Impact Analyses

Impacts are evaluated in terms of changes due to the project as compared to existing conditions (2020). For each resource area, the conditions that could result from project buildout at the end of the planning horizon of the project in 2040 are compared to baseline conditions, to characterize the anticipated change in conditions. For some sections, such as transportation, the analyses also evaluate conditions in the year 2040 without and with the project. Cumulative growth and projects are included in the cumulative scenario as described in Section 4.0.3, Cumulative Impacts. Growth that is assumed in the 2040 Baseline, 2040 with Project, and Cumulative scenarios is summarized in Table 4.0-1.

Basis of Impact Analyses

The analyses of impacts in this EIR are based upon varying factors, depending on the primary cause of the impact. Impacts related to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, biological resources, cultural

resources and tribal cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, mineral resources, and wildfire are analyzed primarily on the basis of the location and acreage of ground disturbance (the footprint of development) that would result from the project. Impacts related to air quality, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, land use and planning, noise and vibration, population and housing, public services and recreation, transportation, and utilities and service systems are analyzed on the basis of the net population increase as well as the location, type and/or size of development contemplated by the project.

Section 15064(d) of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that an evaluation of significant effects “shall consider direct physical changes in the environment which may be caused by the project and reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes in the environment which may be caused by the project.” This section further specifies that an indirect physical change in the environment is a physical change in the environment, which is not immediately related to the project, but which is caused indirectly by the project. An indirect physical change is to be considered only if that change is a reasonably foreseeable impact which may be caused by the project.

As further described in Chapter 3, Project Description, the proposed project consists of the Sustainability Update, which would entail amendments to the General Plan/LCP, County Code, and land use and zoning maps, and adoption of Countywide Design Guidelines, including guidelines for special areas. The Sustainability Update does not include project-specific site plans or development proposals, and the project would not directly result in development. However, implementation of the project would permit and facilitate future development in the County consistent with the Sustainability Update. The project, if adopted, would serve as the blueprint for the future development and enhancement of the County through a series of objectives, policies, and implementation strategies intended to guide development. Potential indirect impacts arising from future growth and development are evaluated in this EIR based on growth assumptions developed by County staff as part of the preparation of this EIR and as explained in Section 4.0.2, Potential Growth Assumptions.

The Sustainability Update includes objectives, policies, and implementation strategies that would avoid or minimize potential environmental impacts. These are measures built into the project that would be implemented and, as a result, would serve in some cases to avoid potential impacts. These are considered and discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter as applicable to each resource topic. Furthermore, future specific projects would be subject to project-level CEQA review.

Table 4.0-1. Scenario Assumptions for Sustainability Update EIR Analyses

Description	2040 Baseline/No Project	2040 With Project: Sustainability Update	Cumulative/GrowthProjects ¹
Description	Approved General Plans, GP amendments and projects	Sustainability Policy and Regulatory Update, including General Plan and corresponding code amendments, code modernization, Countywide Design Guidelines, and General Plan map/zoning map amendments on specific parcels.	Pending projects or plans that were not approved at the time of the Notice of Preparation
Plans/Zoning Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing County General Plan ▪ Existing Specific/Area Plans ▪ Existing County Code ▪ All cities' existing General Plans ▪ County of Santa Cruz Proposed Safety Element amendments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revised General Plan Elements ▪ Revised County Code ▪ General Plan and zoning map designation amendments on certain parcels ▪ County Design Guidelines, including appendix with Pleasure Point Vision and Design Principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ San Lorenzo Valley/Highway 9 Complete Streets Plan
Land Use Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2340 Harper: 11 dwelling units (DUs) ▪ Workbench (5701 Soquel Drive): 16 DUs ▪ "Erlach" R-combining site: PUD: 102 units ▪ "Atkinson" R-combining site (Pippin Orchards): 200 units ▪ Corner of 41st / Soquel: 12,550 square feet (sq ft) retail and 10,000 sq ft service ▪ 5940 Soquel Avenue: Medical Office Building ▪ MidPen affordable housing at 15th/Capitola: 57 DUs and 29,696 sq ft of medical offices ▪ Paul Minnie: 15 DUs and 2,826 sq ft office ▪ 3911 Portola Dr: 33 DUs and 8,845 sq ft commercial ▪ 3900 Maplethorpe Lane: 10 DUs ▪ 4129 and 4205 Clares St: 10 DUs ▪ Cannabis Industry growth ▪ Cabrillo College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aptos: 14,022 students, 1,374 employees ○ Watsonville: 2,683 students, 143 employees • UCSC: 19,500 students, 2,900 employees • Redwood Elementary – 33 DUs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focused growth within the urban services line ▪ Soquel Dr./Thurber site: development of commercial and high-density • Medical facilities on Soquel Drive: assume 150,000-200,000 sq ft of outpatient surgery, 100,000 sq ft of new hospital, and 150-200,000 sq ft of "senior" living (includes independent, assisted living, and skilled nursing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dominican Hospital: 80,000 sq ft additional surgery center and 400-space parking garage) ▪ Cemex Site (Alternative 5 of Cemex Reuse Plan) ▪ Medical Office Building on Soquel Avenue ▪ East Cliff Village Center Redevelopment: including 7,800 sq ft expanded medical office building; Assisted Living 131 DUs; multifamily 174 DUs; and Restaurant/Retail 10,000 sq ft. ▪ Brommer and 7th: Mix of residential, visitor-serving commercial, and open space ▪ Prather Lane (3071 Prather Lane and 2215 Soquel Drive): 20,000 sq ft and 60 DUs of affordable senior housing ▪ Locatelli Mattison Townhomes (2450 Mattison Lane): 25 DUs total ▪ 3300 Maplethorpe: 11 DUs ▪ 5630 Soquel Dr: 82 assisted care DUs with demolition of church OTHER JURISDICTIONS: ▪ Capitola Mall redevelopment ▪ UCSC: Net increase of 8,500 students and 2,100 staff for total 28,000 students and 5,000 employees ▪ 908 Ocean Street: 408 Small Ownership Units (SOUs) ▪ 1930 Ocean St Ext – 32 DUs ▪ 2035 N Pacific: 26 DUs, 4,300 sq ft commercial ▪ 119 Coral: Supportive/Transitional housing-120 DUs with demolition of existing 6 DUs and support facilities ▪ 418/428/440/504 Front St. Santa Cruz: 170 DUs and 10,338 sq ft retail commercial ▪ Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan: 15,000 sq ft public use buildings and 22,000 commercial (retail) ▪ Oak Creek Park-Glen Canyon Rd/Mt. Hermon Rd, Scotts Valley: 52 DUs and 25,000 sq ft of commercial

Table 4.0-1. Scenario Assumptions for Sustainability Update EIR Analyses

	2040 Baseline/No Project	2040 With Project: Sustainability Update	Cumulative/GrowthProjects ¹
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ La Madrona Hotel: 180 room hotel, 6,600 sq ft restaurant, 184 DUs (110 senior/74 family) ▪ Dunslee Way Planned Development: 25 DUs, 5,000 sq ft commercial ▪ 139-261 Miles Lane, Watsonville: 61 DUs and two inpatient and outpatient treatment facilities ▪ Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan: 2,369 DUs, 613,349 sq ft of cafes/restaurants and bars, 204,450 sq ft of retail, 51,112 sq ft of office, and 153,337 sq ft of industrial ▪ 975 Main St: 20,000 sq ft of commercial
Transportation Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constrained Regional Transportation Plan project list including auxiliary lanes from 41st to Soquel and State Park to Park/Bay. ▪ County Capital Improvement Program ▪ Signal enhancements on Soquel and 41st ▪ Signal at Robertson/Soquel ▪ County General Plan ▪ Active Transportation Plan ▪ Bus on shoulder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Projects from Existing General Plan with some modifications ▪ Projects from Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan (see Table 3.5 in this EIR for list of transportation improvements) ▪ Portola Drive Streetscape Improvements ▪ Local network improvements as identified through traffic analyses (see Table 3.5 for list of transportation improvements)Active Transportation Plan projects 	Projects from Existing General Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High quality transit in rail corridor ▪ Bus rapid transit ▪ Highway 17 Express service (connects to 41st Ave and State Park Dr) ▪ HOV lanes on Highway 1

Note:

¹ Cumulative projects are shown in this table based on the best available information at the time of the Notice of Preparation.

4.0.2 Potential Growth Assumptions

A number of proposed policies support new and/or intensified development, particularly within the Urban Services Line (USL), that could result in development beyond what could currently be allowed under the existing General Plan. These include policies that support higher residential density and/or building intensity along transit and multi-modal corridors as well as mixed-use developments in new activity centers and flexible work spaces. Key policies are summarized below.

4.0.2.1 General Policies and Implementation Strategies Related to Development

Policies and Implementation Strategies That Support Intensified and New Land Uses

Infill, Intensification, and Mixed-Use

General

- Growth rate – encourage new development and growth within the USL/RSL (BE-1.1.3)
- Minimum density – Within USL/RSL, do not approve development below minimum density and encourage development at high end of allowed density range (BE-2.1.9 & BE-2.1b)

Mixed-Use Projects and Projects Along Transit and Multi-Modal Corridors

- Sustainable Communities Strategy – encourage development in opportunity areas along transit corridors and do not support amendments with less intensive land use designations (BE-1.2.2 & BE-1.5.1)
- Multi-modal corridors - high building intensity residential and commercial (BE-1.2.3)
- Main Streets - infill mixed-use development with active commercial ground floor uses (BE-1.2.5)
- Mobility hubs - higher building intensity to facilitate active hub area (BE-1.2.7)
- Activity centers – include mixed uses in village and town, employment, shopping and neighborhood activity centers (BE-1.3)
- Mixed-use developments – allow up to 75% residential square footage in community, neighborhood, and office commercial designations, prioritizing street-facing ground floor commercial land use (BE-2.3.7, 3.2.1, 3.2.4)
- Consider potential live/work units in mixed-use commercial developments (BE-3.2b)
- Mixed-use in the coastal zone – Prioritize visitor-serving commercial uses in mixed-use commercial developments in the coastal zone (BE-5.1.10)

Infill and Intensification

- Potential parcel redesignation/rezoning to higher densities in activity centers (BE-1.3a)
- Potential incentives/revisions to development standards for higher density/intensity (BE-1.3b, c)

- Support infill in village and town centers and potential amendment to village and town plans to allow for intensified development (BE-1.3d)
- New “Urban High Flex” designation allowing 22-45 dwelling units/acre; identify opportunity sites for re-designation/rezoning (BE-2.1.1 – 2.1.6, BE-2.1d)
- Small-scale infill housing – allow small lot subdivisions and duplexes in single family zone districts and encourage “missing middle” infill housing (BE-2.3.2 – 2.3.5)
- Explore potential “density unit” calculation to adjust the number of units allowed on a parcel based on unit size (BE-2.3g)
- Workplace Flex District – create and maintain zone district allowing for office, service commercial and light industrial land use as well as complementary consumer commercial land use (BE-3.3c)

New and/or Expanded Uses

Potential New Uses

- Urban agriculture – allow food cultivation as part of park, public, and commercial developments where feasible and appropriate (BE-1.4.8 & BE-1.4f)
- Opportunity sites for medical mixed uses in USL (see also specific areas below) (BE-3.2c)
- Explore potential zoning updates to allow accessory commercial uses on residential parcels (BE-1.4b)
- Consider potential arts district to preserve and promote integrated retail, studio, performance and event spaces (BE-3.4f)
- Identify appropriate site options for regional destinations such as conference centers, sports complexes, and performance venues. Consider locations within walking distance to current or future planned visitor accommodations, transit service, and activity centers with restaurants and entertainment (BE-3.4h)
- Visitors in commercial areas – encourage visitor accommodations in walkable areas with visitor-serving commercial uses (BE-3.5.3)
- Identify park opportunity sites (PPF-1.2c)

Potential Expanded Uses

- Explore potential zoning updates to allow accessory commercial uses on residential parcels (BE-1.4b)
- Adaptive reuse – consider conversion of nonresidential buildings and sites to residential uses (BE-2.3.9)
- Service Commercial – explore allowing service commercial uses without urban services needs to locate in rural areas (BE-3.3.9, 3.3h)
- Hand-made product fabrication with retail sales – allow this use in neighborhood, and service commercial land use designations (in addition to community commercial designation) (BE-3.3f)

- Outdoor seating/mobile businesses – encourage outdoor seating and mobile/pop-up businesses to activate and complement temporary events and permanent land uses (BE-3.4.3, 3.4b, 3.4c)

Temporary Uses and Special Events

- Temporary conversion of underutilized neighborhood commercial spaces for community events, parks, farmers markets (BE-1.4c)
- Retail experience – Incorporate special events and local services into shopping centers (BE-3.4.2, 3.4a)
- Temporary Special Events – provide a regulatory framework to encourage special events such as art programs, festivals, parades, races, weddings, and filming, while minimizing negative impacts to neighborhoods and communities (BE-3.4.4, 3.4g)
- Allow agri-tourism events (ARC-1.1.6)

Policies and Implementation Strategies that Support Intensified and/or New Land Uses in Specific Locations

The proposed General Plan/LCP amendments also include some policies and implementation strategies that identify specific locations for types of new uses and/or intensified uses:

Live Oak Planning Area

- Portola Drive/Lower 41st Ave – Encourage development per the Pleasure Point Commercial Corridor Vision and Guiding Principles (BE-4.1c)
- 7th Ave/Brommer Street – Neighborhood activity center and coastal priority use site; facilitate and coordinate development of publicly owned parcels (BE-1.3h, BE-5.1.4, 5.1c, 5.1d)
- 17th Avenue/Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Workplace flex – Facilitate employment-focused activity centers with “workplace flex” (C-3) zoning at 17th Avenue/MBSST. Consider preparation of specific or master plans to coordinate future development of light industrial, office and consumer commercial land uses with supportive infrastructure in these areas (BE-1.3f)
- Soquel Drive Corridor
 - Medical mixed use – On Soquel Drive between Mattison and Soquel Ave, encourage a mix of medical uses, including coordinated development of hospitals, medical offices, and clinics along with workforce housing, supportive housing, assisted living facilities, offices, retail and restaurants (BE-1.3e, 3.2,3, 3.2c, PPF-1.1b)
 - Opportunity sites along Soquel Drive - transition from low-intensity auto services to active employment and mixed uses (BE-3.3g)
 - Evaluate commercial sites visible and/or accessible from State Route 1 for hotel and motel development, especially along the Soquel Drive corridor in Live Oak where medical uses are concentrated. Redesignate and rezone sites as appropriate (BE-3.5.4, 3.5d)

Soquel Planning Area

- 41st Ave/Soquel Drive Workplace flex – Facilitate employment-focused activity centers with “workplace flex” (C-3) zoning at 41st Ave/Soquel Drive. Consider preparation of specific or master plans to coordinate future development of light industrial, office and consumer commercial land uses with supportive infrastructure in these areas (BE-1.3f)
- Cabrillo College – Support development of Cabrillo College area as an activity center with higher-density housing, limited “walkable” college-serving retail and services within and near the college, as well as improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Explore land use opportunities associated with a connection over Highway 1 from the college to the MBSST (BE-1.3g)
- Soquel Drive and other major corridors – encourage development with high employment density (BE-3.3.2)
- Research Park – consider options to increase building intensity and employment density in and around Research Park, south of Soquel Drive between Rodeo Gulch Road and 41st Avenue (BE-3.3e)

Coastal Locations

- Coastal priority sites – Reserve specific sites for coastal priority uses as indicated in Appendix G of the General Plan/LCP and facilitate priority land use development of these sites, with priority allocations of any limited public services (BE-5.1.3, 5.1.4, 5.1c, 5.1d)
- Maintain certain areas as Coastal Special Communities or Special Scenic Areas. Encourage the provision of visitor-serving commercial services within certain Coastal Special Communities, as follows: (BE-3.4.7, 5.1.5)
 - Davenport: State Route 1 frontage
 - Seacliff Beach Area: Entire Special Community
 - Rio Del Mar Flats/Esplanade Area: Esplanade frontage to Stephen Road
 - East Cliff Village Tourist Area: East Cliff Drive (front portion of properties) between 12th Avenue and 17th Avenue
 - Harbor Area: Lower 7th Avenue between Brommer Street and Eaton Street
- “Poor Clare’s” site – coastal priority use site for Type A visitor accommodations (BE-5.1.4, 5.1c, 5.1d)
- Davenport CEMEX Plant reuse – redevelop the CEMEX site in a manner that recognizes the natural resources and attributes of the area, is compatible with Davenport community character, and welcomes visitors (BE-5.1.12)

Various Locations

- Special area plans – Review existing special area plans, and initiate new plans as needed to support coordinated land use and transportation improvements in locations where the County is planning for concentrated population and job growth (BE-5.2a, b, c)

4.0.2.2 Development Potential with Proposed Project

To aid the environmental analysis related to potential impacts of new development accommodated by the draft General Plan/LCP, the Santa Cruz County Planning Department developed a methodology to forecast residential and non-residential growth that could occur as a result of the proposed project, taking into account policies summarized above in Section 4.0.2.1. The methodology and resulting forecasts are explained in Appendix C, and estimated residential and employment growth is summarized in Tables 4.0-2 and 4.0-3, respectively. These estimates are provided for the year 2040 and by County planning area (see Figure 3-2 for location of planning areas). The net increase in potential new development that could be accommodated as a result of the proposed project is presented in Table 4.0-4.

Table 4.0-2. Potential Residential Growth (Dwelling Units) By Planning Area

Planning Area	Occupied Housing Units Base Year	Occupied Housing Units Project	Net Increase Over Base Year
Aptos Hills	2,338	2,415	77
Aptos	8,261	8,936	675
Bonny Doon	1,422	1,472	50
Carbonera	4,174	4,346	172
Eureka Canyon	1,361	1,400	39
Live Oak	11,536	13,538	2,002
La Selva	744	775	31
North Coast	397	410	13
Pajaro Valley	3,431	3,684	253
San Andreas	620	680	60
Skyline	1,182	1,218	36
San Lorenzo Valley	9,684	10,027	343
Summit	2,318	2,447	129
Soquel	3,854	4,457	603
Salsipuedes	419	434	15
Total	51,741	56,241	4,498

Source: County of Santa Cruz, October 2020

Note: The projections in this table are intended to show potential net increases in housing units as a result of implementation of the Sustainability Update. The total number of housing units in the base year were derived from the traffic model based on occupied units. This information was provided for the year 2019 and was extrapolated from the 2010 Census, the most recent data available at the time the traffic model was developed. The existing number of units 51,741 in this table correlates to the California Department of Finance estimate of occupied housing units in the year 2019 of 51,467 units (California Department of Finance 2021). Section 4.13 provides the total number of housing units (occupied and unoccupied) based on the 2020 Census, which represents the baseline for analyses in this EIR. See Appendix C for further description of the potential growth assumptions developed for this EIR.

Table 4.0-2 shows an estimated potential increase of approximately 4,500 housing units over existing conditions, with approximately 75% projected to occur within urban areas and an increase in approximately 6,210,000 square feet of non-residential uses as shown in Table 4.0-3, with approximately 60% expected to occur within urban areas. These forecasts provide an estimate of potential growth that could occur as a

result of adoption and implementation of the proposed project for the purpose of evaluation in this EIR. This estimated growth may or may not occur, and this estimate does not establish a limit to development. Annual limits for residential units are set annually by the County pursuant to Measure J and SCCC provisions as explained in Section 4.13 of this EIR, Population and Housing. Additionally, some of this projected development and growth would occur under the existing General Plan/LCP without the proposed project.

Table 4.0-3. Potential Non-Residential Growth By Planning Area (in square feet)

Planning Area	Industrial	Retail	Service	Public	Total
Aptos Hills - Existing	47,918	144,188	313,698	141,267	647,071
2040 With Project	114,266	144,188	367,048	165,354	790,856
Aptos - Existing	57,133	872,586	4,670,259	1,650,936	7,250,914
2040 With Project	84,778	876,315	5,488,648	1,990,107	8,439,848
Bonny Doon -Existing	14,744	120,571	362,780	72,912	571,007
2040 With Project	25,802	120,571	426,800	90,489	663,662
Carbonera - Existing	33,174	120,571	817,322	203,112	1,174,179
2040 With Project	60,819	120,571	995,511	240,219	1,417,120
Eureka Canyon - Existing	14,744	113,113	348,909	122,388	599,154
2040 With Project	103,208	113,113	411,862	128,898	757,081
Live Oak - Existing	307,781	2,032,305	6,345,449	2,068,878	10,754,413
2040 With Project	503,139	2,069,595	7,323,888	2,770,005	12,666,627
La Selva - Existing	1,843	45,991	96,030	20,181	164,045
2040 With Project	3,686	45,991	112,035	22,785	184,497
North Coast	410,989	72,094	396,924	35,154	915,161
2040 With Project	632,149	72,094	469,480	42,966	1,216,689
Pajaro Valley - Existing	11,058	108,141	363,847	157,542	640,588
2040 With Project	151,126	108,141	459,877	187,488	906,632
San Andreas - Existing	757,473	73,337	672,210	51,429	1,554,449
2040 With Project	1,166,619	73,337	750,101	60,543	2,050,600
Skyline - Existing	-	8,701	14,938	1,953	25,592
2040 With Project	3,686	8,701	17,072	1,953	31,412
San Lorenzo Valley - Existing	289,351	974,512	2,338,864	908,796	4,511,523
2040 With Project	442,320	980,727	2,747,525	1,083,264	5,253,836
Summit - Existing	14,744	73,337	113,102	26,691	227,874
2040 With Project	25,802	73,337	128,040	29,946	257,125
Soquel - Existing	344,641	1,680,536	2,355,936	657,510	5,038,623
2040 With Project	385,187	1,700,424	2,731,520	742,791	5,559,922
Salsipuedes - Existing	20,273	33,561	105,633	16,275	175,742
2040 With Project	81,092	33,561	129,107	20,181	263,941
Total - Existing	2,325,866	6,473,544	19,315,901	6,135,024	34,250,335
2040 With Project	3,783,679	6,540,666	22,558,514	7,576,989	40,459,848

Source: County of Santa Cruz, October 2020

Table 4.0-4. Summary of Net Increase in Potential Development By Planning Area

Planning Area	Residential (Dwelling Units)	Non-Residential Total (Square Feet Rounded)
Aptos Hills	77	143,800
Aptos	675	1,188,950
Bonny Doon	50	92,650
Carbonera	172	242,950
Eureka Canyon	39	157,950
Live Oak	2002	1,912,200
La Selva	31	20,450
North Coast	13	301,550
Pajaro Valley	253	266,050
San Andreas	60	496,150
Skyline	36	5,800
San Lorenzo Valley	343	742,300
Summit	129	29,250
Soquel	603	521,300
Salsipuedes	15	88,200
Total	4,498	6,209,550

Note: Shaded areas are planning areas, which are partially located within the USL.

Because the proposed project consists of two long-term policy and regulatory documents that are intended to guide future development activities, and because no specific development projects are proposed as part of the project, it is reasonable to assume that future development would occur incrementally or gradually over the 20-year buildout horizon (e.g., 2020 to 2040). However, while this assumption describes the long-range nature of the proposed project, it does not prohibit or restrict when development can occur over the horizon period. Furthermore, development could continue to occur under the existing General Plan/LCP without the proposed Sustainability Update. Based on the potential growth assumptions developed for this EIR, of the total estimated potential development accommodated by the project (4,500 housing units and 6,210,000 square feet of non-residential uses), it is estimated that approximately 1,590 housing units (all within the USL) and 3,263,000 square feet of non-residential uses could be developed over what could potentially occur under the existing General Plan/LCP.

4.0.3 Cumulative Impacts Analysis

The section below presents the CEQA requirements pertaining to the cumulative impacts analysis and the cumulative projects that have been considered in the cumulative impacts analysis presented for each environmental resource topic, at the end of each section in this chapter.

4.0.3.1 CEQA Guidelines Requirements

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a) requires that an EIR discuss cumulative impacts of a project “when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.” As defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15355, a cumulative impact consists of an impact that is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)(3), “cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects. Where a lead agency is examining a project with an incremental effect that is not “cumulatively considerable,” the lead agency need not consider the effect significant.

CEQA requires an evaluation of cumulative impacts when they are significant. When the combined cumulative impact associated with the project’s incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, the EIR shall briefly indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail in the EIR. Furthermore, according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 (a)(1), there is no need to evaluate cumulative impacts to which the project does not contribute.

An EIR may determine that a project’s contribution to a significant cumulative impact will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable and thus not significant when, for example, a project funds its fair share of a mitigation measure designed to alleviate the cumulative impact. An EIR shall examine reasonable, feasible options for mitigating or avoiding the project’s contribution to any significant cumulative effects.

The discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide detail as great as that provided for the impacts that are attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified project contributes.

CEQA Section 21094(e)(1) states that if a lead agency determines that a cumulative effect has been adequately addressed in a prior EIR, that cumulative effect is not required to be examined in a later EIR. The section further indicates that cumulative effects are adequately addressed if the cumulative effect has been mitigated or avoided as a result of the prior EIR and adopted findings or can be mitigated or avoided by site-specific revisions, imposition of conditions or other means in connection with the approval of the later project (CEQA Section 21094[e][4]).

4.0.3.2 Cumulative Projects and Scope of Analysis

The analysis of cumulative impacts may consider either 1) a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing cumulative impacts or 2) a summary of growth projections contained in an adopted plan that evaluates conditions contributing to cumulative impacts, such as those contained in a General Plan. Projects that are relevant to the cumulative analysis include projects that could:

- Contribute incremental environmental effects on the same resources as, and would have similar impacts to, those discussed in the EIR applicable to the proposed project.
- Be located within the defined geographic scope for the cumulative effect. The defined geographic scope is dependent on the environmental resource affected.
- Contribute impacts that coincide with the proposed project's impacts during either construction (short-term) or operation (long-term).

To evaluate the cumulative impacts of the proposed project development program, the cumulative impact analysis in this EIR uses both of the above methods as appropriate for the resource topic being evaluated. For example, this EIR uses AMBAG and County forecasts of population and housing for 2040 in Section 4.13, Population and Housing, whereas a list of reasonably foreseeable future projects in the project vicinity is used in Section 4.1, Aesthetics. The cumulative analysis for each topic is included at the end of the Impact Section in each topical section of this EIR, and the geographic area and analytical approach used in the analysis for the topic is described.

Table 4.0-1 identifies cumulative growth and projects identified for the cumulative analyses and provides a list of pending and approved reasonably foreseeable future projects in proximity to the study area or whose impacts would otherwise combine with the impacts of the proposed project. The list of projects was obtained in consultation with nearby jurisdictions. This list includes projects that have been approved, but not yet constructed, or projects for which an application is pending. This list is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of projects in the region, but rather an identification of projects constructed, approved, or under review in the vicinity of the project area that have some relation to the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update.

4.0.4 References

California Department of Finance (DOF). 2021. "E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2011-2021 with 2010 Census Benchmark." May 2021. Accessed March 24, 2022 at <http://www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Estimates/e-5/>.

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