

## **Chapter 2**

# **LAND USE**

- LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL SITING AND DENSITY
- URBAN RESIDENTIAL SITING AND DENSITY
- COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND PUBLIC FACILITY  
LAND USE
- LAND USE POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC AREAS

## CONTENTS

Language identified with (LCP) is not restricted to the Coastal Zone; language which includes the (LCP) initials is part of the Local Coastal Program and applies countywide unless specifically stated that the policy, etc. is limited to the coastal zone.

	Page
<b>Authority and Purpose</b> _____	2-1
<b>Goals</b> _____	2-4
<b>Land Use and Development Framework</b> _____	2-5
2.1 Urban/Rural Distinction	
2.2 Public Facilities Guidelines	
<b>Rural Residential Siting and Density</b> _____	2-11
2.3 Rural Land Divisions and Density	
2.4 Mountain Residential Designation (R-M)	
2.5 Rural Residential Designation (R-R)	
2.6 Suburban Residential Designation (R-S)	
<b>Urban Residential Siting and Density</b> _____	2-19
2.7 Urban Very Low Density Residential Designation (R-UVL)	
2.8 Urban Low Density Residential Designation (R-UL)	
2.9 Urban Medium Density Residential Designation (R-UM)	
2.10 Urban High Density Residential Designation (R-UH)	
2.11 Residential Density Bonus Incentives for Affordable Housing	
<b>Commercial, Industrial and Public Facility Land Use</b> _____	2-25
2.12 Mixed-Use Development	
2.13 Neighborhood Commercial Designation (C-N)	
2.14 Community Commercial Designation (C-C)	
2.15 Professional and Administrative Office Designation (C-O)	
2.16 Visitor Accommodations Designation (V-A)	
2.17 Service Commercial and Light Industrial Designation (C-S)	
2.18 Non-Conforming Commercial or Light Industrial Development	
2.19a Heavy Industry Designation (I)	
2.19b Quarry Designation (Q)	
2.20 Home Occupations	
2.21 Public Facility/Institutional Designation (P)	
<b>Land Use Policies for Specific Areas</b> _____	2-46
2.22 Coastal Dependent Development	
2.23 Conservation of Coastal Land Resources	
2.24 Village, Town, Community and Specific Plans	



## AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Land Use Element is to guide the future physical development of the County of Santa Cruz and to address the historic, current and future distribution, location, density and intensity of all land uses in the unincorporated portion of the County. The requirements for a Land Use Element are established by State Planning Law [Section 65302(a)]. This legislation requires that a General Plan contain:

“... a Land Use Element which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The Land Use Element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan.”

The Land Use Element has the broadest scope of the seven General Plan elements required by State law and plays a central role in combining land use issues, constraints, and opportunities. Utilizing both text and diagrams, the Land Use Element establishes a pattern of land utilization and sets out standards for both the density of population and the intensity of development for each of the land use classifications described.

Additionally, the Land Use Element:

- Reflects opportunities and constraints affecting land uses that have been identified in other elements;
- Fosters policies and programs to reduce loss of life, injuries, damage to property, and economic or social disruption that can result from physical hazards or natural disasters;
- Guides public and private investment; and
- Promotes a balanced and functional mix of land uses consistent with community needs, desires, and values.

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The Land Use Element is the heart of the General Plan. It can be described as a summary of the issues expressed in other elements, and a translation of those concerns into clear and consistent land use policies. The goals, objectives, policies and programs detailed in other elements are reflected in the distribution of land uses described in the text and diagrams of the Land Use Element. For example, residential uses described in the Land Use Element must be compatible with the physical limitations of the land and potential sources of excessive noise, described in the Public Safety and Noise Element, as well as with natural resources protected by policies of the Conservation and Open Space Element. An adequate amount of land for various housing types is allocated in the Land Use Element to meet, within identified fiscal and environmental constraints, the objectives of the Housing Element; and the types and location of housing will directly influence the need for park and recreation facilities and other public services discussed in the Parks, Recreation, and Public Facilities Element. The distribution and type of land uses will also determine the need for road and transportation system enhancements addressed in the Circulation Element; and the area, village and community plans which are part of the Land Use Element contain design criteria that are referenced in the Community Design Element. In addition, State Planning Law (Government Code Section 65300.5) requires that General Plan elements be consistent with one another:

“... the Legislature intends that the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.”

## SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENT

This chapter is divided into four main sections that describe land use classifications, diagram the distribution of land uses throughout the unincorporated County, and address the policies established in individual village, town, community and specific plans.

The first section addresses general policies that guide the land use "framework" for the County, including the delineation of rural and urban land use, a description of growth management in the County of Santa Cruz and a description of public facilities requirements for new development.

The second section describes residential land use designations, dividing the policies into those which address rural land uses and those which are directed toward urban land uses located within the Urban Services Line (USL) or Rural Services Line (RSL). In addition to listing the requirements applicable to various density categories, this section includes descriptions and policies for the "Rural Density Matrix" and "Residential Density Bonuses."

The third section describes commercial, industrial and public facility land use designations, including policies for commercial services, professional and administrative uses, visitor-serving facilities, service commercial and industrial uses, and quarries. Also addressed are policies for home occupations, public facility uses (including churches), existing commercial development, and "mixed-use" development.

The fourth section describes policies that are specific to individual areas, including coastal priority uses, and includes diagrams that illustrate the distribution of land uses throughout the County. Included in this section are general diagrams representing the distribution of land use designations in each planning area.

The village, town, community and specific plans are included in General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan Volume II and are incorporated herein by reference. The issues addressed in these plans are generally more site-specific than those addressed in the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan. This specificity reflects the unique character of each of the areas for which a plan was developed. It also reflects the extensive public participation from the local community that was essential to developing these plans.

The policies in these plans are consistent with, and complementary to, the broader policies in the Land Use Element, and also reflect the concerns and values of the community's residents.

## GENERAL LAND USE POLICIES PLANNING FRAMEWORK

During the decades of the 1960's and 1970's, Santa Cruz County experienced rapid growth in both population and development. As a response to growth pressures and the voter approval of Measure J, the County implemented a series of measures intended to provide high quality development, and ensure adequate public services and protection for the County's natural and agricultural resources. These measures include General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan policies, a voter mandated growth management system, and programs intended to address specific land use, housing, and resource conservation concerns.

The body of land use policies and programs encompassing the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan includes the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan policy text, Land Use and Facilities maps and diagrams, Resources and Constraints Maps, and the ordinances contained in the Santa Cruz County Code. In the broadest perspective, the County has utilized these land use policies and regulations to define precisely when and where urban development should and should not occur, thereby regulating the quality of development, controlling the pace of development consistent with the availability of public services, and protecting the natural resources that maintain and enhance the County's unique environment.

A basic land use policy of the County is to separate urban and rural areas. A distinct boundary between urban and rural areas serves to encourage new development to locate in urban areas and protect agricultural land and natural resources in the rural areas. The County separates urban and rural areas with an Urban/Rural Boundary. The Urban/Rural Boundary is illustrated in Figure 1-2 by two lines; the Urban Services Line (USL) and the Rural Services Line (RSL).

The Urban Services (USL) Line is a boundary, illustrated on General Plan and LCP Land Use and Facilities Maps and diagrams, that defines where urban services may be provided. The USL guides the extension of public services and the subsequent creation of urban densities,

and coordinates new residential development with the provision of public services and facilities. Generally, areas within the Urban Services Line are served by public water systems, sanitary sewer facilities and receive an urban level of fire protection. In addition, roads within the Urban Services Line are designed to standards specified in the County Design Criteria, and are generally wider than those in rural areas.

A more detailed description of the Urban Services Line is found in the County's Urban/Rural Boundary: Urban Services Line and Rural Services Line ordinance and in sections 2.3 (Rural Residential Siting) and 2.7 – 2.11 (Urban Residential Siting) of the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan. In general, the communities of Live Oak, Soquel, Aptos, and portions of the Pajaro Valley and Carbonera are included within the Urban Services Line.

In some rural areas, there are existing enclaves which are developed at urban densities. These unique communities and subdivisions are outlined with a Rural Services Line (RSL). Generally, these enclaves have some urban-level services, and County policy allows the provision of full urban services, including public sanitation facilities, to serve these communities. Infill development within RSL boundaries is allowed at urban densities when community sewage disposal systems become available; but expansion of the Rural Services Line into rural areas is prohibited. Areas within the RSL include the communities of Davenport, Boulder Creek, Boulder Creek Country Club, Bear Creek Estates, Ben Lomond, Felton, Paradise Park, La Selva Beach, Place de Mer, Sand Dollar Beach, Canon Del Sol, Sunset Beach, Pajaro Dunes North, and Pajaro Dunes South. Specific policies addressing the RSL are included in the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan section 2.1 (Land Use and Development Framework) and the County's Urban/Rural Boundary: Urban Services Line and Rural Services Line ordinance. Sections 7.19 through 7.21 of chapter 7 contain urban and rural sewage disposal policies and programs.

In areas outside of the Urban Services Line and Rural Services Line, the "Rural Density Matrix" provides for parcel-specific determination of allowable densities based on the availability of services, environmental and site specific constraints, and resource protection factors required by the Growth Management System and the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan. The application of this system results in densities that are appropriate for the protection of resources in rural areas by assessing nine criteria or factors which, when taken together, determine the development potential for a particular rural site. These factors include: access, water supply, existing, legal, nonconforming structures and uses within defined parameters.

type of groundwater basin, timber resources, sensitive plant or animal habitats, erosion, potential seismic activity, landslide activity, and fire hazards. Assessment of these criteria allows development flexibility that reflects site specific resources and concerns. The "Rural Density Matrix" is described in section 2.3.1 of this Land Use Element, and a detailed description of the matrix is included in the County's Rural Residential Density Determinations ordinance.

In addition to directing where growth will occur in the County, policies have been established to manage the rate of growth as well. The Annual Population Growth Goal is determined as part of the Growth Management System enacted to implement Measure J, which was approved by County voters in 1978. This system requires that a goal be established for population growth in the unincorporated areas of the County, and that this goal represent the County's "fair share" of statewide population growth that can be accommodated given environmental and economic constraints. Further controls allocate the majority of building permits to urban areas to protect rural resources and open space within the County. The growth goal and permit allocations enable the County to plan for long range future population growth while protecting natural resources and allowing the orderly provision of public services that keep pace with development. A complete description of the annual population growth goal for the unincorporated area of the County can be found in the County Code ordinance entitled "Annual Population Growth Goals for Santa Cruz County."

Although Santa Cruz County was formed in 1850, the first Zoning Ordinance was not adopted until the late 1950's, and it has been amended frequently since that time. Consequently, there are legally established uses that do not conform with uses currently allowed by the zone district or General Plan land use designation, and many legally built structures that do not conform to current site standards for the zone district. Although nonconforming, these legal uses and structures often contribute to the community, providing housing, architectural character, a sense of history, and contributing to economic vitality. Allowing legal nonconforming uses and structures to be appropriately maintained and improved contributes to the upkeep and appearance of residential and commercial areas; supports existing businesses and housing; and reducing the pressure to develop outside the Urban Services Line by encouraging the continued use of previously developed sites and existing buildings. Policies in the Housing Element, Land Use Element, as well as regulations the Zoning Ordinance, support the continuation, maintenance, and improvement of existing, legal nonconforming structures and uses within defined parameters. (*Resolution 52-2012*)

## Santa Cruz County General Plan

In 1990, voters adopted an environmental ordinance known as Measure C which addresses future growth and environmental protection. Approved by the voters in 1990, Ballot Measure C proclaimed the 1990's the "Decade of the Environment," and established principles and policies that guide the County to protect and restore the local environment, confronting on a local level those environmental concerns that are global in scope. This ordinance seeks to ensure that future growth and development in Santa Cruz County adheres to the natural limits and carrying capacity of the environment. The subjects addressed by Measure C are broad and varied, and policies and principles established in the ordinance cover a number of issues including offshore oil drilling, global warming and renewable energy sources, protection of the ozone layer, forest and greenbelt protection and restoration, recycling, toxic materials, endangered species and biological diversity, development of a sustainable local economy and future growth and development. These issues are addressed in the following elements of the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan: the Land Use Element discusses policies for future growth and development in detail, the Conservation Element addresses natural resource and open space protection and the effective utilization of resources, and the Circulation Element encourages the prudent use of energy resources and improvement of air quality.

Because commute patterns can have a negative impact on traffic, energy use, and air quality, the relationship between jobs and housing is important. Although the jobs/housing balance is an issue addressed primarily in the Land Use Element, it is a problem that is covered in several other elements of the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan. The jobs/housing balance concerns land use to the degree that sound land use planning can influence the locational decisions of business and industrial developers, government and other job providers. It concerns housing, as adequate housing opportunities for a variety of income groups must exist for potential employees. It concerns circulation, as the effects of increased commuting place a burden on existing transportation systems and reduce air quality. Residential choices are not made on the basis of commute time or distance alone, however. The heart of the jobs/housing balance issue lies in recognizing the different types of commute behavior, providing adequate housing opportunities, and encouraging a job base that supports a diversity of income levels.

### GOALS

The overall goals of the Land Use Element are as follows:

- **Population and Residential Growth Goals:** To provide an organized and functional balance of urban,

rural, and agricultural \* land use that maintains environmental quality; enhances economic vitality; protects the public health, safety and welfare; and preserves the quality of life in the unincorporated areas of the County.

\* Agricultural land use is discussed in chapter 5: Conservation and Open Space.

- **Rural Residential Siting and Density:** To achieve patterns of rural residential development that are compatible with the physical limitations of the land, the natural and cultural resources of the County, the availability of public services, and protection of the natural environment.
- **Urban Residential Siting and Density:** To provide urban residential areas within the Urban Services Line which are protected from noise, traffic congestion, natural hazards, and other objectionable influences of nonresidential land use; and to establish a variety of residential land use categories and dwelling unit densities offering a diverse choice of housing opportunities.
- **Commercial and Industrial Siting and Development:** To provide adequate facilities to meet the shopping, service, and employment needs of County residents and area visitors in a manner compatible with adjacent residential development, availability of public facilities, protection of natural resources, and maintenance of environmental quality and high standards of urban design.
- **Public Facility/Institutional Siting and Development:** To ensure adequate present and future availability of land for both public and quasi-public facility uses including schools, hospitals, cemeteries, sanitary landfills, and water supply and sewage treatment facilities.
- **Jobs/Housing Balance:** To develop an efficient land use pattern which improves the area's jobs/housing balance and thereby reduces the total amount of vehicle miles traveled and reduces polluting emissions.
- **Village, Town, Community and Specific Plans:** To continue using village, town, community and specific plans to provide a planning framework to guide future public and private improvements in town centers and other concentrated urban and rural areas; to provide a higher level of planning detail and public involvement; and promote economic vitality and coherent community design within the unique town center areas which are community focal points for living, working, shopping, and visiting.

# LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## Objective 2.1 Urban/Rural Distinction

- (LCP) To preserve a distinction between urban and rural areas of the County, to encourage new development to locate within urban areas and discourage division of land in rural areas; and to achieve a rate of residential development which can be accommodated by existing public services and their reasonable expansion, while maintaining economic, social, and environmental quality.

### Policies

#### 2.1.1 Delineating Urban Areas

- (LCP) Designate on the General Plan and LCP Land Use and Facilities Maps an Urban Services Line (USL) and a Rural Services Line (RSL) to clearly delineate areas appropriate for future urban density development; and to define the boundary between areas with limited services and full urban services. Program the timing and location of public service extensions to support projected levels of development and to maintain economic, social and environmental quality. Coordinate , public service planning with cities, special districts, and LAFCO. (See chapter 7: Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities.)

#### 2.1.2 Maintaining an Urban Services Line

- (LCP) Require that any proposal to expand the Urban Services Line demonstrate that:
- Full urban services, including water supply, sewage treatment and road capacity, are available or planned to serve the expansion area; and
  - The proposed expansion will not have an adverse impact on service levels for existing development or future development accommodated in the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan; and
  - The proposed expansion will not result in the loss of prime agricultural land or have significant adverse affects either individually or cumulatively on environmental and natural resources, including coastal resources; and
  - No significant adverse impact on regional infrastructure will occur from the proposed expansion; and
  - There are overriding public benefits from the proposed expansion which outweigh the unavoidable adverse effects on regional infrastructure and agricultural lands.

#### 2.1.3 Maintaining a Rural Services Line

- (LCP) Maintain a Rural Services Line to serve as a distinct boundary between rural areas and existing enclaves with urban densities. Prohibit the expansion of the Rural Services Line.

#### 2.1.4 Siting of New Development

- (LCP) Locate new residential, commercial, or industrial development, within, next to , or in close proximity to existing developed areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on environmental and natural resources, including coastal resources.

#### 2.1.5 Urban Development in Watsonville Sphere of Influence

- Support extension of urban services adjacent to the City of Watsonville only in conjunction with annexation by the city. Prohibit subdivision of lands outside the Urban Services Line and in the Watsonville Sphere of Influence until annexation, unless the division would not adversely affect the City's General Plan affordable housing goals, and is determined to be of an overriding public benefit. (See policy 5.13.22.)



**2.1.6 Public Services Adequacy**

(LCP) Consider the adequacy of public service capacity (including without limitation sewer, water, roads), public school capacity, terrain, access, pattern of existing land use in the neighborhood, unique circumstances of public value, location with respect to regional or community shopping and other community facilities; access to transportation facilities including transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and parcel size in the surrounding area in determining the specific density to be permitted for individual projects within each residential density range, as appropriate.

**2.1.7 Coordinating Service District Boundaries With the Urban and Rural Services Lines**

(LCP) Coordinate with special districts that provide urban services to amend existing and planned district service boundaries to correspond with the Urban Services Line (USL) and the Rural Services Line (RSL). Permit exceptions to such boundary adjustments: (1) for existing development currently served by the district; and (2) where such service is necessary for water resource protection and enhancement. In these cases, restrict the activities outside the Urban Services Line and Rural Services Line to those consistent with the General Plan, and LCP Land Use Plan policies on locating and planning new development, natural systems, agriculture, and public works.

**2.1.8 Population Growth Goals**

(LCP) Maintain long range (10 year) and short range (yearly) population growth goals for Santa Cruz County which limit the County's growth rate to a fair share of the state's population growth and ensure that future growth and development adheres to the limits and carrying capacity of the infrastructure and environment.

**2.1.9 Urban and Rural Growth Rates**

(LCP) Maintain growth rates for Urban and Rural portions of the County (as defined by the Urban Services Line). Encourage residential development to locate within existing urban areas where adequate levels of public services exist. Discourage new development and divisions of land in urban and rural areas, where such public services are not available and where the impact on environmental resources cannot be mitigated.

**2.1.10 Annual Limitation of Building Permits**

(LCP) Control the County's rate of growth through an annual limitation on the approval and issuance of building permits. Allow exemptions from the building permit allocation quotas for residential projects specifically operated, restricted, and permanently maintained for affordable housing or temporary visitor accommodations. Affordable housing units, as defined in the County Code ordinance titled "Annual Population Growth Goals for Santa Cruz County" shall also be exempt from permit allocation limitations and shall, to the extent feasible, equal an average of not less than 15% of newly constructed units.

**2.1.11 Annual Review of Public Services**

Annually review the adequacy of public services for existing and anticipated growth when establishing the annual population growth goal and building permit allocations for the unincorporated portion of Santa Cruz County. The annual review shall include an analysis of the number of new residential units and amount of commercial development by planning area and what public services have been provided to address said development. Revised buildout projections by planning area based on General Plan amendments or rezoning approvals in the preceding year and since adoption of this General Plan shall also be provided in this annual review. If the revised buildout projection in any planning area exceeds the buildout projection for that planning area contained in the General Plan Final EIR, the Board of Supervisors shall take action to ensure that development beyond the buildout projection, in that area, will not occur without the preparation of amended Land Use Plans and/or area-wide rezoning, including all CEQA documentation, to address the additional growth.

**2.1.12 Urban/Rural Boundary - San Andreas Planning Area  
(LCP)**

Maintain a stable urban rural boundary and protect rural agricultural land, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive habitat areas by ensuring that there will be no additional urban development outside the western boundary of the City of Watsonville, and by providing for concentrated urban development within City of Watsonville city limits. Any amendments to this policy, including revocation, require a super-majority vote of the Board of Supervisors. *(Resolution No. 342-2003)*

**2.1.13 Prohibition On Utility Extensions - San Andreas Planning Area  
(LCP)**

Prohibit the extension of new wastewater and/or potable water utilities, emanating from within the City of Watsonville into the San Andreas Planning Area, except for one wastewater and one water line to serve permitted high school development on City of Watsonville Coastal Zone Area C, by establishing a Utility Prohibition Strip along and immediately adjacent to the City's boundaries west of Highway One, so as to discourage additional urban development in the Coastal Zone west of the City of Watsonville. Any amendments to this policy, including revocation, require a super-majority vote of the Board of Supervisors. *(Resolution No. 342-2003)*

**2.1.14 Minimize Utility Sizing - San Andreas Planning Area  
(LCP)**

Any new wastewater or potable water supply pipelines emanating from within the City of Watsonville City limits shall be limited in size to the minimum capacity necessary to serve the intended existing and/or proposed development so as to discourage additional urban development in the coastal zone west of the City of Watsonville. Any amendments to this policy, including revocation, require a super-majority vote of the Board of Supervisors. *(Resolution No. 342-2003)*

**2.1.15 Watsonville Utility Pipeline Non-Access Strips - San Andreas Planning Area  
(LCP)**

In the San Andreas Planning Area, designate one-foot wide Pipeline Non-Access Strips along all sides of any existing or new: 1) wastewater or potable water supply pipeline easements granted to the City of Watsonville by the County; and/or 2) wastewater or potable water supply pipelines emanating from the City of Watsonville and crossing County right-of-way or other County land. The one-foot wide Pipeline Non-Access Strips shall completely surround any such pipelines and/or pipeline easements, and will prohibit any future pipeline attachments and/or extensions to the affected pipeline, thus discouraging additional urban development in the Coastal Zone west of the City of Watsonville. Any amendments to this policy, including revocation, require a super-majority vote of the Board of Supervisors. *(Resolution No. 342-2003)*

**2.1.16 Harkins Slough Road Improvements  
(LCP)**

Harkins Slough Road (including any Highway One overpass/interchange improvements) shall be limited to the minimum width/capacity necessary to provide for roadway, bikeway and/or pedestrian access: 1) to serve permitted high school development on City of Watsonville Coastal Zone Area C, and/or 2) as needed to meet minimum County or Caltrans design standards. Any such road improvements shall be designed in tandem with the development to be served by the road improvements in such a way as to minimize the linear extent of any such road improvements; Harkins Slough Road improvements not necessary to serve the permitted development to be served are prohibited. Any such improvements made to Harkins Slough Road pursuant to this policy shall also be consistent with Policy 5.1.16. Any amendments to this policy, including revocation, require a super-majority vote of the Board of Supervisors. *(Resolution No. 342-2003)*

**2.1.17 Nonconforming Uses and Structures**

- a. Nonconforming Uses: Allow existing legal nonconforming uses in use for three or more of the previous five years to continue, and require discretionary review to reestablish a nonconforming use that has lapsed. Require discretionary review for expansion, changes, or intensification of legal nonconforming uses with appropriate conditions to address potential impacts to public health, safety and welfare. Provide a process whereby the Board of Supervisors may terminate any nonconforming use that is significantly detrimental to public health, safety, welfare or the environment. For a structure accommodating a nonconforming use, encourage maintenance, repairs, and improvements. Require appropriate discretionary review for reconstruction, subject to appropriate findings and conditions to ensure that the proposed project will not be detrimental to public health, safety or welfare.
- b. Nonconforming Structures: Encourage legal nonconforming structures to be maintained and improved. Allow reconstruction after a catastrophic event, and require discretionary review for voluntary reconstruction. Require an increased level of review for modifications to nonconforming structures with a greater potential to impact public health, safety or welfare.  
(Resolution No. 52-2012)

**Programs**

- a. Maintain a 10-year population growth goal for Santa Cruz County that reflects regional growth. Base this 10-year population growth goal on regional and state population projections and the carrying capacity and natural limits of the County's infrastructure and environment. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Planning Department).
- b. Establish an annual population growth goal and building permit allocations for the unincorporated portion of Santa Cruz County to implement the 10-year population growth goal. Establish separate rates for urban and rural areas and a limitation on the number of rural land divisions, based on consideration of the growth rates of the cities, patterns of urban annexations the 10-year County population goal, the available levels of public services, and the 5-year Capital Improvement Program. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Planning Department)
- c. Maintain and update the ordinances and procedures which regulate the allocation of building permit approval. Base this update on the adopted growth goals and factors such as urban/rural allocations, type and size of project, location in the County, cumulative impact on infrastructure, amount of very low, lower and moderate income housing provided, and other adopted criteria and policies. Consult with the various special districts and agencies providing public services when establishing permit allocations to coordinate infrastructure projected development. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Planning Department)
- d. Add requirements to the Annual Population Growth Goal ordinance to annually review the adequacy of public services when establishing the annual population growth goal and building permit allocations. (Responsibility: Planning Department, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)
- e. Establish and maintain, upon County-owned lands in the San Andreas Planning Area (including County rights-of-way), a one-foot wide Pipeline Non-Access Strip along all sides of any existing or future: 1) wastewater or potable water supply pipeline easements granted to the City of Watsonville by the County; and/or 2) wastewater or potable water supply pipelines emanating from the City of Watsonville and crossing County right-of-way or other County land. The one-foot wide Pipeline Non-Access Strips shall completely surround any such pipelines and/or pipeline easements. New pipeline connections to the existing wastewater or potable water pipeline will be prohibited through, over, or under the Pipeline Non-Access Strips. (Resolution No. 342-2003)

- f. Create a Utility Prohibition Combining Zone overlay district that establishes and maintains a one-foot wide wastewater and potable water supply Utility Prohibition Strip, across, over, or under which wastewater and/or potable water utility pipelines or pipeline extensions will not be permitted. The Utility Prohibition Combining Zone overlay district will be applied to parcels located to the west of and abutting the western edge of the Highway One right-of-way. Where the Watsonville City limits encompass parcels west of Highway One, the combining zone overlay district shall apply to all parcels directly abutting the Watsonville City limits (and to parcels abutting any County right-of-way that is contiguous with the Watsonville City limits west of Highway One). The Utility Prohibition Strip will be located along the parcel boundaries that directly abut either the Highway One right-of-way or the Watsonville City limits, as applicable. The Utility Prohibition Strip shall extend north of Watsonville to Buena Vista Drive and south to the Monterey County line, to the points where Buena Vista Drive and the County line each intersect the western edge of the Highway One right-of-way. If additional County land is annexed into the City of Watsonville, extend the Utility Prohibition district to abut and surround the new City area as necessary to maintain a continuous utility prohibition zone along the western edge of all new City lands and/or Highway One so as to discourage urban development in the farmlands, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive habitat areas in the Coastal Zone west of the City.

The Utility Prohibition Combining Zone District shall initially be applied to the parcels with the following Assessor Parcel Numbers:

052-011-46, 052-011-57, 052-011-66, 052-011-67, 052-011-77, 052-511-01, 052-511-05, 052-511-06, 052-511-08, 052-511-10, 052-511-11, 052-511-12, 052-511-13, 052-021-15, 052-021-21, 052-021-30, 052-021-31, 052-081-37, 052-081-38, 052-081-39, 052-091-41, 052-091-42, 052-103-13, 052-103-14, 052-221-14, 052-221-15, 052-221-17, 052-222-10, 052-222-22, 052-581-09, 052-581-10, 052-581-11, 052-271-03, 052-271-04, 052-272-01, and 052-272-02.

New wastewater and potable water supply utility pipelines/easements from the City of Watsonville shall also be prohibited from crossing or otherwise occupying any and all County rights-of-way (including those on Harkins Slough Road, Lee Road, and Ranport Road) where they border or contact the Watsonville City limits west of Highway One. Wastewater and/or potable water utility pipeline extensions will not be permitted through or across the one-foot wide Utility Prohibition Strip, except for one wastewater and one water line to serve the permitted high school development on City of Watsonville Coastal Zone Area C.

- g. Endeavor to acquire, or to encourage other appropriate third parties (e.g., land trusts or other non-profit organizations) to acquire, the one-foot wide Utility Prohibition Strip, as described above in Program f, as permanently held easements on each affected parcel.

(Also see programs in sections 2.2 and 7.28.)

**Objective 2.2 Public Facilities Guidelines**

(LCP) To achieve patterns of development compatible with the availability of required public facilities and services. (See chapter 7: Parks, Recreation & Public Facilities)

**Policies**

**2.2.1 Public Facility Standards for New Development**

(LCP) Maintain minimum standards for public facilities and services availability for development projects. Proposed General Plan and Local Coastal Program amendments shall comply with these standards without exception. (See Figure 2-1.)

**Figure 2-1  
Facility Standards for New Development and  
General Plan and Local Coastal Program Amendments**

Residential Designation	Maximum Response Time from Fire Station	Rural Road Standards	Urban Road Standards	Public Water	Public Sewer ④	Within the Urban Rural Boundary		Near Neighborhood, Community or Regional Commercial	Near Mass Transit	Access onto Collector or Arterial Streets
						USL	RSL			
Mountain	20 min. ①	✓								
Rural	20 min. ①	✓								
Suburban	20 min. ①	✓		✓ ③						
Urban Very Low	②		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Urban Low	②		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Urban Medium	②		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Urban High	②		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

① If response time exceeds 20 minutes, development may only take place at lowest General Plan and LCP density. See Public Safety & Noise, Section 6.5.4

② See Public Safety & Noise, Section 6.5.3 for fire standards inside USL

③ Public water is desirable; parcel size without public water shall be a minimum of 2.5 gross acres.

④ Areas inside the Rural Services Line shall have the potential for some type of public sanitation system.

Note: These standards shall apply fully to General Plan and LCP Amendments. This Figure is to be used for general facilities guidelines for development projects.

47

**2.2.2 Public Infrastructure (Facility and Service) Standards for General Plan and Local Coastal Program Amendments and Rezonings**

(LCP) For all General Plan and LCP amendments and rezonings that would result in an intensification of residential, commercial, or industrial land use, consider the adequacy of the following services, in addition to those services required by policy 2.2.1, when making findings for approval. Allow intensification of land use only in those areas where all service levels are adequate, or where adequate services will be provided concurrent with development.

- Schools
- Police Protection
- Utilities, including electricity, gas, telephone and cable
- Garbage service and recycling facilities
- Parks
- Drainage
- Fire Protection

In connection with any General Plan and/or LCP amendment or rezoning, the following services shall also be considered in terms of adequacy and availability: library facilities, street lighting, child care.

**2.2.3 Reservation of Public Works Capacity for Coastal Priority Uses**

(LCP) In the Coastal Zone, reserve capacity in existing or planned public works facilities for Coastal Priority Uses. For a description of those uses, see sections 2.22 and 2.23.

**Program**

- a. Manage the allocation of building permit approvals in areas where an adequate water supply for domestic use and for fire protection cannot be made available, as indicated by, or at the request of, a water district or fire district. (Responsibility: Planning Department, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, Water Districts, Fire Districts)

## RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The General Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan goals relevant to residential land use reflect the commitment of the County to define where development should and should not occur: to encourage high quality development, to match the pace and type of development to the availability of public infrastructure, and to protect natural and agricultural resources. The policies and programs explained in the Planning Framework section in the introduction to this element help to define the location and intensity of new development, while the goals and objectives of the Housing Element describe the types and amount of new housing that may be needed for current and future County residents, and the constraints involved in attaining those goals.

The residential land use policies and programs were developed, in part, from the goals and objectives of the Housing Element, County policies outlined in the "Planning Framework" section, and ideas gathered from hundreds of County residents during the General Plan Update and Community Plan public participation process. These policies are divided into two different categories that reflect the different types of public infrastructure available and the location of development in the County. First, residential land use designations include rural areas outside the Urban Services Line (USL) and Rural Services Line (RSL). Second, residential land use designations include designations for communities with urban densities defined by the Rural Services Line, and areas within the Urban Services Line boundary. Designations indicate overall densities, and are not intended to call for a particular building type. Attached housing types may be allowed in lower density residential areas in response to a variety of terrain, topography, and natural resources. Non-residential uses such as churches, schools, day care centers and recreation uses may also be accommodated in the residential designations in accordance with the Public Facility land use criteria set forth in section 2.21.

In the lowest rural density range, "Mountain Residential," minimal public services are usually available. This category includes various open space and natural resource conservation areas unsuitable for more intense development. The next highest density range, "Rural Residential," requires access from roads maintained to rural road standards. The "Suburban Residential" category requires service from a public water system to develop at the highest allowed density.

Urban residential densities, for new development, require service from a public sewer or sanitation district as well as public water and fire protection. The lowest density, "Urban Very Low," is used in areas within the Urban Services Line and Rural Services Line where environmental constraints prevent development at higher urban densities or in areas where a transition is needed to adjacent rural densities. The next designation, "Urban Low," consists of those areas suited to larger-lot, predominately detached residential units. "Urban Medium" Density offers a broad range of housing types; including small-lot detached units and lower density attached housing. This category calls for access from a collector street and proximity to community shopping facilities. The "Urban High" Density designation allows those housing types found in the Urban Medium Density designation, as well as garden apartments and congregate senior housing. A full range of urban services is usually required, including access from an arterial or collector street and proximity to public transit and shopping facilities. All urban residential categories include density bonus incentives for the provision of affordable housing.

According to 1992 Department of Finance (DOF) data, there were an average of 2.65 persons per household in the unincorporated area of the County. To determine the approximate density in residents per acre, the dwelling unit density ranges can be multiplied by the average number of persons per household (2.65).

## RURAL RESIDENTIAL SITING AND DENSITY

### Objective 2.3 Rural Land Divisions and Density

- (LCP) To establish a clear set of land use suitability criteria for determining rural residential density within the General Plan density ranges, giving consideration to site resources, environmental constraints and the availability of public services and facilities.

### Policies

#### 2.3.1 Rural Density Matrix

- (LCP) Maintain a "matrix system" to determine the allowable residential density on lands designated Mountain, Rural, or Suburban Residential. The specific numerical values and the maps used in this evaluation system should be refined periodically as new information becomes available, but the matrix system shall generate an actual distribution of parcel densities over the full range of the appropriate land use designation. Specific requirements for updating maps are described in chapter 1: Introduction. The system includes mitigation measures to be included in development proposals to alleviate adverse conditions. Factors included in the point/matrix system are described below. Generally, higher point scores generated for a particular parcel would result in higher density development, within the allowed density range for the General Plan designation. A full description of the Matrix criteria and allowable parcels sizes in each land use category can be found in The Rural Residential Density Determination ordinance of the Santa Cruz County Code. The specific standards contained in that ordinance are incorporated into this element by reference, and shall not be amended without a General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan amendment.
- (a) **Road Access:** Access is one of the most important factors after water availability in assessing density in rural areas, and shall be weighted higher than most other factors. Matrix ratings reflect the ability of the road system to meet the service requirements of the proposed development. Type of access is dependent upon the existing County road network and the level of improvements that will be supplied by the development.
  - (b) **Water Supply:** Water supply determination involves the adequacy of a project's source of water including the type of supply system, availability and quality of the water. Matrix ratings reflect both the adequacy of the water supply and the general availability of water sources in the area.
  - (c) **Water Resource:** The type of sanitation system utilized by developments can have great effects on overall water quality in water supply watersheds and this factor is reflected in matrix ratings for this category.
  - (d) **Timber Resources:** The evaluation of timber resources involves assessment of the opportunities for long-term sustained timber yield and disturbance to existing residential development. Matrix ratings reflect the viability of timber harvest based on parcel size and distance to urban areas. The development potential of a parcel is related to its potential for timbering, with those parcels not designated as a timber resource receiving a higher rating for development than those parcels which are designated as a Timber Resource.



- (e) **Sensitive Habitat:** Matrix ratings are based on the ability to avoid critical or important biotic resource areas. The matrix is designed so that a developer may improve the initial "score" by relocating development activities away from designated habitat areas. While population growth in general inevitably impacts an area's vegetation and wildlife resources, only the most important or unique County habitats are incorporated into this analysis and designated on the County Resources and Constraints maps. See policy 5.1.2 of the Conservation and Open Space Element for a definition of Sensitive Habitats.
- (f) **Erosion:** The evaluation of erosion potential is based on the degree of erodability associated with various surface and bedrock formations and slope criteria. Erosion hazard may increase dramatically with increases in slope, and also varies according to rock type. By limiting the degree of land disturbance in highly erodable areas, erosion related adverse impacts can be controlled.
- (g) **Seismic Activity:** Evaluation of seismic hazards weighs the relative risks from actual surface rupture, ground shaking and liquefaction during seismic events. A major seismic event in Santa Cruz County (Loma Prieta Earthquake, 1989) resulted in extensive damage to structures and loss of life. The density of development in areas of high seismic activity can be correlated to the amount of damage to property and personal injury. Matrix values are derived from data gathered by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) based on past activity, and depend on the activity of the fault zone and the mapped potential for liquefaction and ground shaking.
- (h) **Landslides:** The matrix ratings regarding landslides are developed from detailed research done by the United States Geological Survey, and from a statistical analysis of known slope failures in the Santa Cruz mountains. Ratings reflect a combination of geologic bedrock types and slope.
- (i) **Fire Hazards:** Due to the relative importance of fire safety considerations, this factor shall be weighted more heavily than other concerns. Criteria for response times, secondary access roads, dead-end roads and road design standards are presented as part of the County's Fire Safety policies, and are included in this rating along with the location of the project relative to Critical Fire Hazard Areas. Critical Fire Hazard Areas are those locations in which a fire could, under certain conditions, spread uncontrollably.

**2.3.2 Special Land Division and Density Requirements**

- (LCP) Maintain special land division and density requirements based on resources and constraints shown in Figure 2-2. Utilize these criteria in conjunction with the Rural Density Matrix system outlined in policy 2.3.1.