

4.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

This section describes existing land uses and land use plans, identifies associated regulatory requirements, evaluates potential project and cumulative impacts, and identifies mitigation measures for any significant or potentially significant impacts related to 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 analysis is based on review of local and regional plans and land uses and growth patterns in the unincorporated areas of the county.

4.11.1 Environmental Setting

4.11.1.1 Existing Land Uses and Development Patterns

For mapping and planning purposes, the County has divided the unincorporated areas into 15 planning areas, which were created to correspond to geographic regions, as well as to generally follow the boundaries of census tracts in order to facilitate future data analysis. These are shown on Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3, Project Description.

The County has established an Urban Services Line (USL) and a Rural Services Line (RSL) to guide development within the county. The USL is a boundary that defines where urban infrastructure is provided or planned. See Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3 for the locations of the USL and RSL. Urban development is concentrated within areas within the County's designated USL and RSL.

The county's overall development pattern is shaped by the natural setting of hills, the ocean, and creeks. Urban development exists primarily along the coast and in the Live Oak, Soquel, and Aptos planning areas, as well as the area extending north and west from City of Watsonville. There is also concentrated development in historic towns and villages in the San Lorenzo Valley. Low-density rural residential development is scattered throughout the county alongside timberland, agricultural land, and open space.

The communities of Live Oak, Soquel, Aptos, and portions of the Pajaro Valley and Carbonera planning areas are within the USL. In some rural areas, there are existing communities and neighborhoods that are developed at urban densities. These communities are within the RSL. County policy allows the provision of full urban services to serve these communities. Areas within the RSL include (from north to south) the communities of Davenport, Boulder Creek, Boulder Creek Country Club, Bear Creek Estates, Ben Lomond, Felton, Mount Hermon, Paradise Park, La Selva Beach, Place de Mer, Sand Dollar Beach/Canon Del Sol, Sunset Beach, Pajaro Dunes North, and Pajaro Dunes South.

The county's urban coastal development is organized around a network of corridors, districts, and neighborhoods. Soquel Drive is the dominant commercial corridor and changes in character along its seven-mile length. In the Soquel and Aptos planning areas, a series of employment and commercial centers are surrounded by residential neighborhoods. In Live Oak, commercial centers and residential neighborhoods

are shaped by an intersecting pattern of roadways leading to the coast and to destinations in the cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola.

Some neighborhoods are isolated from non-residential land uses, but other neighborhoods include pockets of commercial and community uses such as supermarkets, corner stores, cafes, schools, and libraries, enabling residents to walk or bike for some daily trips. These neighborhoods tend to be located in village centers that were initially developed prior to the advent of the automobile and therefore are more compact and pedestrian-scale. Outside of village centers, block lengths in urban areas tend to be greater than the 200 to 400 feet needed to support walkable neighborhoods. Long block lengths are compounded by numerous cul-de-sacs, dead-end streets, and limited mobility infrastructure, further limiting connectivity and access.

Table 4.11-1 identifies the acreage of existing land uses in the county based on the County Assessor's use codes. As can be seen, most of the existing land uses in the county consist of open space/resource lands (approximately 65%) and residential uses (approximately 25%). Approximately 2.5% of the county consists of commercial and industrial uses, and 9% consists of public and institutional uses. Brief descriptions of developed land uses are provided below

Residential Land Uses

Single-family is the predominant residential land use in both the rural and urban unincorporated county, with detached single-family homes comprising two-thirds of all housing units according to the 2018 American Community Survey. Multifamily developments are located mostly along major corridors in the Live Oak, Soquel, and Aptos planning areas. Most multifamily developments are small-scale, and larger developments tend to be organized in multiple buildings to scale with single-family neighborhoods. Mobile home parks are found throughout the county, consisting of about 60 parks with a total of over 3,200 mobile homes, with the largest concentration in Live Oak.

Retail/Restaurant/Entertainment Land Uses

Most retail, restaurant, and entertainment land use in the unincorporated county is neighborhood-scale and exists along commercial corridors and in historic village cores. "Big box" stores serving a wider community are focused along the Soquel Drive corridor and upper 41st Avenue. Regional shopping and entertainment destinations are primarily located within the incorporated cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola.

Office Land Uses

Office uses are located along major corridors, in village cores, and in transitional areas between more intensive commercial uses and quiet residential neighborhoods. The county's existing office space is small-scale, and larger office complexes tend to be broken up into smaller tenant offices. There is a concentration of medical uses in the western Soquel Drive area in the Live Oak planning area.

Table 4.11-1. Existing Land Use Types and Acreage

Land Use ¹	Parcels	Acreage	Percent of County Land
Residential			
Single-Family Residential (rural) ²	9,710	51,558	19.4%
Single-Family Residential (urban)	26,780	8,048	3.0%
Multi-Family Residential	6,324	1,029	0.4%
Mobile Home Park	256	368	0.1%
Retirement/Convalescent/Rest Homes	31	59	0.02%
Vacant/Misc Residential Improvements	6,488	4,090	1.5%
<i>Residential Subtotal</i>	<i>49,589</i>	<i>65,152</i>	<i>24.5%</i>
Commercial and Industrial			
Retail, Restaurants and Services	513	371	0.1%
Offices	348	188	0.1%
Hotels, Motels, Bed + Breakfasts, RV Parks	99	406	0.2%
Entertainment (theaters, museums, sports clubs)	73	908	0.3%
Light Industrial and Storage	325	2,315	0.9%
Quarry/Mineral Processing	19	2,168	0.8%
Vacant/Misc Non-Residential Improvements	112	76	0.03%
<i>Commercial and Industrial Subtotal</i>	<i>1,489</i>	<i>6,431</i>	<i>2.4%</i>
Public and Institutional			
Government Parcels and Facilities	2,239	19,376	7.3%
Utilities and Public Infrastructure	482	2,815	1.1%
Churches and Cemeteries	113	613	0.2%
Schools	33	1,426	0.5%
Hospitals	2	22	0.01%
<i>Public and Institutional Subtotal</i>	<i>2,869</i>	<i>24,252</i>	<i>9.1%</i>
Open Space/Resource			
County and State Parks + Recreation	560	38,823	14.6%
Campgrounds, Group Camps and Conference Centers	101	1,989	0.7%
Open Space/Conservation Land	302	21,056	7.9%
Agriculture	572	16,040	6.0%
Timberland	747	60,299	22.7%
Vacant/Misc Rural Improvements	4,748	31,386	11.8%
<i>Open Space/Resource Subtotal</i>	<i>7,030</i>	<i>169,594</i>	<i>63.9%</i>
TOTAL	60,977	265,428	100.0%

Notes:

- ¹ Data source: County Assessor's Office land use codes, September 23, 2019. The table indicates all unincorporated parcels from the Assessor's database except 19 parcels for which there is no use code or acreage information.
- ² Urban single-family parcels are generally smaller than one acre. Rural single-family parcels are generally larger than one acre, with the majority between 1 and 20 acres.

Service Commercial and Industrial Land Uses

There are a variety of service commercial and light industrial land uses throughout the county, such as auto services, storage, landscape businesses, research/development, manufacturing, and processing. These land uses are concentrated in the vicinity of 41st Avenue, State Route (SR) 1 and Soquel Drive as well as additional pockets of Live Oak. There is high demand and low vacancy for service commercial and light industrial spaces. However, these businesses often require a large land area to operate and may be associated with negative community impacts such as truck traffic and air and noise pollution. As a result, areas where these businesses are located may be inhospitable to pedestrians and can serve as a barrier between neighborhoods, offices, and shopping areas. The county does not currently have heavy industrial land use aside from quarries.

Visitor Accommodation Land Uses

Santa Cruz County is a popular tourist destination, and there are a variety of commercial visitor accommodation land uses along the coast and along the Highway 9 corridor in the San Lorenzo Valley, ranging from camps and cabins to recreational vehicle (RV) parks, motels, hotels and resorts. Visitor accommodations are more in demand during the summer tourist season and have a higher vacancy rate outside this season. In 2018, the average annual hotel/motel occupancy countywide (including incorporated cities) was 71%, ranging from a low of 53% in January to a high of 86% in July. Tourist activities are focused mostly on the county's natural resources.

Public/Institutional Land Uses

Public/institutional land uses include federal, state, and County government facilities, utilities, churches/cemeteries, hospitals, schools, and libraries. Cabrillo Community College is major public educational facility located within the Soquel planning area.

The Watsonville Municipal Airport is the only public use airport in Santa Cruz County. While the airport is located on the northwest boundary of the City of Watsonville, 3 miles from the city center, most of the area in the vicinity of the airport is located within the unincorporated area of the county. The airport is a general aviation facility occupying 291 acres with two runways serving single and twin-engine aircraft and helicopters, as well as turboprops and turbine-powered business jets. The airport includes an additional 53 non-contiguous acres of land for clear-zone protection. Total airport acreage is approximately 344 acres.

4.11.1.2 Local and Regional Plans

County of Santa Cruz Plans

General Plan/Local Coastal Program

As discussed in Section 4.11.2.1, California state law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan for “the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation

to its planning” The County’s existing General Plan/LCP was adopted in 1994 and has been amended over time to meet state law requirements, address changing policy goals, and provide for development projects that were not anticipated when the plan was first adopted. The County’s 1994 General Plan/LCP includes nine chapters, five of which are being revised and updated as part of the proposed Sustainability Update as described in Chapter 3, Project Description. The General Plan/LCP includes a land use map with land use designations for properties in the unincorporated area of the county, which are described below in Section 4.11.1.3.

Town and Village Plans

“Area plans” and “community plans” are commonly used in larger geographic areas such as unincorporated counties where there are a variety of smaller distinct communities or regions. Such plans refine the policies of the general plan to focus on a particular region or community within the overall general plan area. The County has adopted town or village plans for the communities of Aptos, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Felton, Seacliff, and Soquel. These plans are included in the 1994 General Plan/LCP Volume II; they are not part of the updated General Plan/LCP but are incorporated in policy requirements within General Plan/LCP Chapter 2: Built Environment. The village/town plans generally establish design and development guidelines that are tailored to each specific area and thus are more site-specific than the General Plan/LCP. Specific topics vary among plans but generally include topics such as land use, design, preservation of key historic structures, circulation, infrastructure, and parking. Per the current General Plan/LCP, development projects within these areas must follow the village/town area plans; in the draft General Plan/LCP, special area plan or guidelines do not have to be followed if a finding can be made that a provision in the special area plan or guidelines has been made obsolete by modern regulations or the passage of time.

Local Coastal Program

The County’s LCP is legally binding on unincorporated county lands located in the coastal zone. The LCP includes a Land Use Plan (LUP) as well as a Local Coastal Implementation Plan (LCIP). The County’s LUP is contained within the General Plan and includes goals, objectives, policies, and implementation strategies, as well as tables and resource maps in each chapter of the General Plan noted by the initials “LCP.” The County’s LCIP implementing ordinances are listed in existing Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC) section 13.03.050 (draft SCCC section 18.60.050 in the proposed Sustainability Update) and include chapters of the SCCC shown in Table 4.11-2. Any specific plan affecting portions of the coastal zone as may be adopted by the County is also part of the LCP.

Once a jurisdiction’s LCP has been certified, the local jurisdiction is responsible for development review in the coastal zone, while the California Coastal Commission maintains regulatory authority over tidelands, submerged lands, and public trust lands, as well as an appealable area. The Coastal Commission certified the County’s LCP in December 1994, and it has approved/certified numerous amendments since then.

Table 4.11-2. LCP Implementation Regulations in Santa Cruz County Code

SCCC Chapter	Title
Chapter 7.38	Sewage Disposal
Chapter 7.70	Water Wells
Chapter 7.73	Individual Water Systems
Chapter 7.78	Preservation of Monterey Bay and Coastal Water Quality: Regulation of Wastewater Discharge
Chapter 12.01	Building Permit Regulations
Chapter 12.06	Demolition or Conversion of Residential Structures
Chapter 13.01	General Plan Administration
Chapter 13.02	Specific Plan Administration
Chapter 13.03	Local Coastal Program Administration
Chapter 13.10	Zoning Regulations
Chapter 13.11	Site, Architectural and Landscape Design Review
Chapter 13.14	Rural Residential Density Determinations
Chapter 13.20	Coastal Zone Regulations
Chapter 13.36	Development Agreements
Chapter 14.02	Condominium and Townhouse Conversion Regulations
Chapter 15.01	Park Land Dedication or Fees in Lieu Thereof
Chapter 15.05	Trail and Coastal Access Dedication, Standards and Review
Chapter 15.10	Roadway and Roadside Improvements
Chapter 16.10	Geologic Hazards
Chapter 16.20	Grading Regulations
Chapter 16.22	Erosion Control
Chapter 16.30	Riparian Corridor and Wetlands Protection
Chapter 16.32	Sensitive Habitat Protection
Chapter 16.34	Significant Trees Protection
Chapter 16.40	Native American Cultural Sites
Chapter 16.44	Paleontological Resource Protection
Chapter 16.50	Agricultural Land Preservation and Protection
Chapter 16.52	Timber Harvesting Regulations
Chapter 16.54	Mining Regulations
Chapter 17.02	Urban Services Line and Rural Services Line
Chapter 17.04	Annual Population Growth Goal for Santa Cruz County
Chapter 18.10	Permit and Approval Procedures

Notes: The Sustainability Update includes consolidation and reorganization of County Code sections, which would result in amendments to chapters in this table.

Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan

The proposed project arises in part from the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan (SSCC), accepted by the Board of Supervisors in October 2014 as a planning and feasibility study. The study focused on sustainable development of the county’s urban areas and identified strategies to meet Assembly Bill (AB) 32, which requires California jurisdictions to reduce and limit the production of greenhouse gases (GHGs). The SSCC was focused on the development of healthy communities based on strong links between land use patterns

and multi-modal transportation with the goal of reducing commute and travel times. The SSCC describes a vision, guiding principles, and strategies to achieve a more sustainable development pattern within the USL with a focus on land use, mobility, housing choice, economic vitality, and urban design. The SSCC resulted in the development of a vision statement and guiding principles consistent with three fundamental sustainability concepts—environmental protection, economic strength, and social equity.

Regional Plans

Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), as a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), is required by state and federal laws to develop and adopt a long-range transportation planning document known as a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). In addition, California’s 2008 Senate Bill (SB) 375 requires each of the state’s 18 metropolitan areas to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)—an integrated transportation, land use, and housing plan that addresses ways to accommodate future population growth and reduce GHG emissions from cars and light trucks; see also Section 4.11.2.1. *Moving Forward Monterey Bay 2040* is the current adopted MTP/SCS for the three-county Monterey Bay Area. AMBAG is currently developing the 2045 MTP/SCS, which is scheduled for adoption in June 2022.

A SCS does not: (i) regulate the use of land; (ii) supersede the land use authority of cities and counties; or (iii) require that a city’s or county’s land use policies and regulations, including those in a general plan, be consistent with it (California Government Code section 65080[b][2][K]). Nonetheless, SB 375 makes regional and local planning agencies responsible for developing those strategies as part of the federally required metropolitan transportation planning process and the state-mandated housing element process.

At the heart of SB 375 is the requirement to coordinate transportation investments with land use patterns such that the region makes informed decisions about where to invest the region’s limited resources and simultaneously reduces GHG emissions by providing more direct access to destinations as well as by providing alternative transportation options (AMBAG 2018). The MTP/SCS is required to analyze where people are going and how they want to get there in order to build a transportation network that addresses the mobility and accessibility needs of the region. One strategy included in the MTP/SCS to achieve this goal is more focused growth in high-quality transit corridors. Another strategy is to provide more travel choices as well as a safe and efficient transportation system with improved access to jobs and education for the region’s residents.

The MTP/SCS identifies Opportunity Areas with the highest chance for successful sustainable growth in the future. Opportunity Areas are generally located where Transit Priority Areas (TPAs) and Economic Development Areas (EDAs) within the AMBAG region overlap. An Opportunity Area is an area within 0.5 mile of an existing or planned “high-quality transit corridor” (as defined in California Public Resources Code section 21064.3) that has the potential for transit-oriented development, including mixed-use development. TPAs are locations that have both supportive land use densities and high-quality transit service/connections for each Opportunity Area. EDAs are locations that support future land use development opportunities, support a major employment center, and/or are areas with populations that

would benefit from new economic opportunities. Opportunity Areas are used to identify a set of potential Transit Priority Projects that support the SCS.

The 2040 MTP/SCS identifies two existing/planned Opportunity Areas within unincorporated Santa Cruz County:

- **SC-UN-1** is located in the Live Oak and Soquel planning areas, between Highway 1 and Soquel Drive on the north and from Dominican Hospital on the east to Capitola Avenue on the west. Key factors considered in Opportunity Area SC-UN-1's boundaries were existing transit service and transit walksheds, and proximity to future high quality transit thresholds, employment, density, percent minority populations (non-white), percent of families below poverty level and median household income, and place types.¹ A series of existing transit stops and proposed high quality transit stops are located along Soquel Drive. This area is not a TPA but could easily become one with some transit service changes. Opportunity Area SC-UN-1 was identified as an EDA due to the percent minority populations (nonwhite), percent of families below poverty level, and median household income social equity factors. Opportunity Area SC-UN-1 encompasses many routes and locations centrally located within the communities of Live Oak and Soquel.
- **SC-UN-2** is located in the Aptos planning area, between SR 1 and Soquel Drive from Cabrillo College perimeter to Aptos Street. This Opportunity Area has characteristics of both a TPA and EDA. Key factors considered in Opportunity Area SC-UN-2's boundaries were existing transit service and transit walksheds, and proximity to future high quality transit thresholds, median household income, employment and activity densities, and place types. A series of existing transit stops and proposed high quality transit stops are located along Soquel Drive, however, the transit walkshed threshold was not met in the entire area. Based on our analysis, the observed gap within Opportunity Area SC-UN-2 and roadways leading towards Cabrillo College, suggesting this area is a TPA that could be further improved with additional transit service. Opportunity Area SC-UN-2 was identified as an EDA, due to the percent of families that are below poverty level and median household income social equity factors.

Watsonville Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

The basic function of airport land use compatibility plan in Santa Cruz County is to promote compatibility between the Watsonville Municipal Airport and existing and future land uses in the unincorporated areas of the county that surround it, to recognize the extent to which these areas may already be developed with incompatible uses, and to comply with State of California statutes, regulations, and other laws governing land uses surrounding the airport. Santa Cruz County does not need to form an airport land use commission provided the County incorporates the height, use, noise, safety, and density criteria that are compatible with airport operations as established by the California

¹ AMBAG created a set of "place types," which established a set of land use designations common to general plans for the three counties and 18 cities in the region during the development of the 2035 MTP/SCS. These place type categories are meant to act as a common "language" so that the diverse general and specific plans across the Monterey Bay Area may be compared in a consistent and standard manner. Metrics and characteristics used to determine place type designations include density, setting, character, and transportation. Place type categories include urban, suburban, town, non-urban, and other.

Airport land Use Planning Handbook (Handbook), and any applicable federal aviation regulations, The County must adopt the Handbook’s criteria and incorporate the criteria as part of the General Plan. Both the County’s existing Land Use Element and the proposed Built Environmental (BE) Element of the General Plan address airport land use compatibility.

The airport compatibility requirements are applicable to the Airport Influence Area (AIA), which is the area or areas in which current or future airport-related noise, overflight, safety, and/or airspace protection factors may significantly affect land uses or necessitate restrictions on land use. According to PUC Section 21675.1(b) the AIA must encompass that land within 2 miles of the boundaries of the Watsonville Municipal Airport as shown in Figure 4.9-1 in Section 4.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials.

4.11.1.3 Existing General Plan and Zone District Designations

Existing General Plan Land Use Designations

The existing County General Plan/LCP Land Use Map is shown on Figure 4.11-1. The current General Plan/LCP land use designations within unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County include 19 designations within four categories as summarized below:

- **Residential**
 - Mountain Residential (R-M)
 - Rural Residential (R-R)
 - Suburban Residential (R-S)
 - Urban Very Low Residential (R-UVL)
 - Urban Low Residential (R-UL)
 - Urban Medium Residential (R-UM)
 - Urban High Residential (R-UH)
- **Commercial and industrial**
 - Neighborhood Commercial (C-N)
 - Community Commercial (C-C)
 - Professional and Administrative Offices (C-O)
 - Visitor Accommodations (C-V)
 - Service Commercial and Light Industrial (C-S)
 - Heavy Industrial (I)
- **Open Space/Resource**
 - Urban Open Space (U-O)
 - Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (O-R)
 - Lakes/Reservoirs/Lagoons (O-L)
 - Resource Conservation (O-C)
 - Agricultural (AG)
- **Public Facility/Institutional (P)**

Santa Cruz County Code

The SCCC is a codification of the adopted ordinances of the County of Santa Cruz, which includes 19 titles. The titles most applicable to land use, planning, and development are: 13, Planning and Zoning Regulations; 14, Subdivision Regulations, and 16, Environmental and Resource Protection. Title 12 includes building code regulations. Title 15, Community Facilities, includes regulations regarding park and other dedications, as well as roadway and transportation improvements and impact fees. Title 17, Community Development, includes regulations regarding establishment of annual growth rates, affordable housing requirements, and residential density bonus provisions.

Title 13, Planning and Zoning Regulations, contains the County’s zoning code, which is the set of detailed requirements that implements the General Plan policies at the individual parcel level. The zoning code sets allowable uses, densities, and development standards for the different land use zone districts within the county. Zoning for any property must be consistent with the General Plan land use designation. The SCCC establishes 21 zone districts as summarized on Table 4.11-3. There are also 13 combining districts; combining district designations may be applied to basic zone districts in order to impose particular limitations or exercise some type of planning control. Title 13 establishes development standards and requirements for each zone district.

Table 4.11-3. Existing County Zone Districts

Zone District	Zone District Code
<i>Agricultural Districts</i>	
Commercial Agriculture	CA
Agriculture	A
Agricultural Preserve ¹	AP
<i>Residential Districts</i>	
Residential Agriculture	RA
Rural Residential	RR
Single-Family Residential	R-1
Ocean Beach Residential	RB
Multifamily Residential	RM
<i>Commercial Districts</i>	
Professional and Administrative Office	PA
Visitor Accommodations	VA
Tourist Commercial	CT
Neighborhood Commercial	C-1
Community Commercial	C-2
Commercial Services	C-4
<i>Industrial Districts</i>	
Light Industrial	M-1
Heavy Industrial	M-2
Mineral Extraction	M-3

Table 4.11-3. Existing County Zone Districts

Zone District	Zone District Code
Other Districts	
Parks, Recreation and Open Space	PR
Public and Community Facilities	PF
Timber Production	TP
Special Use	SU
Combining Districts	
Designated Park Site	D
Geologic Hazards	GH
Permanent Room Housing	PRH
Assisted Housing	H
Seascape Beach Estates	SBE
Airport Influence Area	AIA
Statement of Intention	I
Pleasure Point Community Design	PP
Historic Landmark	L
Mobile Home Park	MH
Open Space Easement	O
Agricultural Preserve ²	P
Regional Housing Need	R
Salamander Protection	SP
Watsonville Utility Prohibition	W

Notes:

1. AP District would be removed as part of the proposed project.
2. The name of this combining district would change to “Agricultural Preserve and Farmland Security” as part of the proposed project.

4.11.2 Regulatory Framework

4.11.2.1 State Regulations

California General Plan Requirements

Pursuant to California State law (Government Code section 65040), each city and county in California must prepare a comprehensive, long-term general plan for “the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning” (Government Code section 65300). General plans are required to take a long-term perspective, and most jurisdictions select 15 to 20 years as the long-term horizon for the general plan, except for Housing Elements that are updated every 8 years (Governor’s Office of Planning and Research 2017). California law requires that a general plan address the mandated elements listed in Government Code section 65302. The mandatory elements for all jurisdictions

are: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. Cities and counties that have identified disadvantaged communities must also include an Environmental Justice element or policies addressing environmental justice in all elements of their general plans, and some jurisdictions must also include policies addressing air quality (Governor’s Office of Planning and Research 2017). Other elements, such as Community Design, Parks and Recreation, and Public Facilities are optional.

Government Code Section 65860(a) Zoning Requirements

State law requires that general law city or town zoning ordinances be consistent with the general plan. A zoning ordinance is consistent with an adopted general plan only if the various land uses authorized by the zoning ordinance “are compatible with the objectives, policies, general land uses, and programs specified in such a plan” (Government Code section 65860[a]). State law also provides that in the event a zoning ordinance becomes inconsistent with a general plan by reason of amendment to such a plan, the zoning ordinance must be amended within a reasonable time so that it is consistent with the general plan as amended [Government Code section 65860(a)]. The County of Santa Cruz is a general law county and is, therefore, required to have zoning consistency.

California Coastal Act

California Coastal Act (Public Resources Code Section 30000 et seq) is intended to “protect, maintain, and, where feasible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the coastal zone environment and its natural and artificial resources.” As previously indicated, the Coastal Act requires preparation of a LCP for areas of cities and counties within the coastal zone, which must be certified by the Coastal Commission .. Portions of unincorporated Santa Cruz County along the coast are in the coastal zone. The County’s LCP was certified by the Coastal Commission in December 1994, and has been amended over time.

Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375)

SB 375 supports the state’s climate action goals to reduce GHG emissions through coordinated transportation and land use planning. Under this bill, each of the state’s 18 metropolitan areas are required to develop a SCS that addresses ways to accommodate future population growth and reduce GHG emissions from cars and light trucks. Under SB 375, each region covered by one of the state’s MPOs sets passenger vehicle GHG emissions reduction targets. Each MPO must prepare a “SCS to outline the land use, housing, and transportation strategies that, if implemented, would allow the region to meet its GHG emission reduction targets. AMBAG is the MPO that covers Santa Cruz County and developed a SCS, entitled *Moving Forward Monterey Bay 2040*, which is discussed above in Section 4.11.1.2.

State Aeronautics Act

The California State Aeronautics Act (Public Utilities Code sections 21670 et seq.) addresses establishment of an airport land use commission. Santa Cruz County qualifies for an exception in the State Aeronautics Act (section 21670.1(e)) because the County “has only one public use airport that is owned by a (single)

city.” Santa Cruz County need not form an airport land use commission provided the County incorporates the height, use, noise, safety, and density criteria that are compatible with airport operations as established by the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook (Handbook), and any applicable federal aviation regulations, including, but not limited to, Part 77 (commencing with Section 77.1) of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as part of the general and specific plans of the County. The County must adopt the Handbook’s criteria and incorporate the criteria as part of the General Plan. This has been interpreted to mean that the County has no discretion as to which of the Handbook’s criteria should be incorporated into the General Plan (Watsonville Pilots Association et al. v. City of Watsonville (2010) 183 Cal.App.4th 1059). Therefore, wherever the Handbook provides a range of criteria the most restrictive criteria is adopted.

Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 establishes procedures related to city incorporations, annexations, consolidations, and other local government changes of organization. This act grants numerous powers to local agency formation commissions (LAFCOs), which are independent commissions with countywide jurisdiction over the boundaries and organization of cities and special districts. The Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (Santa Cruz LAFCO) has jurisdiction over the boundaries of the cities, special districts, and county service areas within Santa Cruz County.

4.11.2.2 Regional Regulations

Regional plans are described above in Section 4.11.1.2.

4.11.2.3 Local Regulations

Governing plans and regulations, including the General Plan/LCP and SCCC are identified and described in Sections 4.11.1.2 and 4.11.1.3.

4.11.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

4.11.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance used to evaluate the impacts of the proposed project related to land use and planning are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and, if applicable, other agency standards, as listed below. A significant impact would occur if the project would:

- LU-1 Physically divide an established community.
- LU-2 Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

4.11.3.2 Analytical Methods

Potential Growth Assumptions

Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update would not directly result in impacts related to land use. However, the proposed General Plan/LCP amendments could lead to future development, indirectly resulting in potential impacts related to land use or conflicts with state, regional, and local plans. The proposed project includes the following components:

- Amendments to the General Plan/LCP, including new residential urban high-flex (R-UHF) land use designation and other policies that support new development, mixed-use development, and potential intensified redevelopment, primarily focused along transportation corridors within the USL, as described in Section 4.0.2 of this EIR.
- Amendments to the SCCC, including changes to permitted/allowed uses in some zone districts; a new Residential Flexible (RF) zone district to implement the R-UHF land use designation and allow for increased residential density in urban areas near transit and services; a new workplace flex (C3) zone district to allow for mixed light industrial and commercial uses; as well as increased density and residential square footage in mixed-use projects, as described in Section 3.5.2 of this EIR.
- Amendments to General Plan land use designations and/or zone districts for 23 specified parcels.
- County Design Guidelines, which includes guidelines related to multifamily, commercial, mixed-use and workplace flex land uses.

As described in Section 4.0, Introduction to Analyses, this EIR estimates that the proposed project has the potential to accommodate approximately 4,500 housing units throughout the county over existing conditions as shown on Table 4.0-2, with approximately 75% projected to occur within urban areas. This EIR also estimates an increase in approximately 6,210,000 square feet of non-residential uses as shown on 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 Sustainability Update for the purpose of evaluation in this EIR. This estimate of 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, Population and Housing. Additionally, some of this projected development and growth would occur under the existing General Plan/LCP without the proposed project.

EIR Notice of Preparation Comments

Public and agency comments were received during the public scoping period in response to the NOP, which is included in Appendix A. A summary of the comments received during the scoping period for this EIR, as well as written comments received, are included in Appendix B. No comments were received related to land use.

4.11.3.3 Project Impact Analysis

Impact LU-1: Divide Established Community (Significance Threshold LU-1). Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update could indirectly lead to additional development and growth, which would not physically divide an established community. **(No Impact)**

As discussed above in Section 4.11.1.1, Existing Land Uses and Development Patterns, existing communities, neighborhoods, and village centers that are developed at urban densities are located along the coast in the Live Oak, Soquel, and Aptos planning areas, as well as in the vicinity of the City of Watsonville and in towns and villages in the San Lorenzo Valley. Much of the county's urban coastal development is organized around existing corridors. If adopted, the Sustainability Update would continue to guide the location, form, and intensity of all development within unincorporated Santa Cruz County for the next 20 years. While adoption and implementation of the Sustainability Update would not directly lead to new development, the project would indirectly accommodate new development in the future, which would have the potential to divide an established community if infrastructure (e.g., roadways, utilities) or other incompatible land uses were developed within an established community.

The proposed Sustainability Update emphasizes infill development, primarily concentrated in the USL and RSL, as well as neighborhood connectivity. The proposed project would primarily promote future development within established communities where public infrastructure and services already exist. Numerous policies in the Sustainability Update, summarized in Table 4.11-4, would provide for land use compatibility to ensure that established communities remain intact while accommodating future development, and encourage new development that is compact infill development and focused on efficient use of urban lands in existing areas within the USL. Individual parcels within these areas are generally not large enough that their development could result in a physical division of an established community. As such, the proposed project would result in *no impact* related to physical division of an established community.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified.

Table 4.11-4. Proposed and Retained General Plan/LCP Policies that Avoid/Minimize Impacts Related to Physical Division of an Established Community

Potential Impact	Policies
Physical division of an established community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage new development to locate within the USL/RSL. (BE-1.1.3) • Encourage new residential, commercial, or industrial development to locate within, next to, or near existing developed areas with adequate public services. (BE-1.1.4) • In SCS opportunity areas located within 0.5 mile of high-quality transit corridors, encourage new development to include compact housing, infill development, mixed use commercial development, and commercial activity centers, with associated public facilities and services land uses as needed. (BE-1.2.2) • Encourage high building intensity residential and commercial land use designations with compact housing options, mixed use development, and diverse employment opportunities along multi-modal corridors. (BE-1.2.3) • Strengthen the role of historic villages and towns as activity centers by encouraging infill development and land use changes that foster active day and evening land uses while retaining and enhancing the unique historic character and charm of these places. (BE-1.3.5) • Promote local activity centers by encouraging neighborhood-appropriate infill and mixed-use development at major intersections, especially within the Live Oak Planning Area. (BE-1.3.7) • Adhere to special district and city spheres of influence set by LAFCO, and support expansion of spheres of influence and orderly annexation of urban areas to adjacent cities or districts only where consistent with the County’s General Plan/LCP land use policies related to urban uses and annexations. (BE-1.5.4) • Prioritize infill development near high-quality transit, including near the Santa Cruz Branch Line rail corridor, and near job centers that reduce urban sprawl. (AM-1.1.2)

Impact LU-2: Conflict with Plans, Policies and Regulations (Significance Threshold LU-2). Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. *(Less than Significant)*

In accordance with Appendix G of the state CEQA Guidelines, the project was reviewed to identify potential conflicts with policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact. There are no apparent conflicts between the proposed project and land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, as reviewed and described below.

General Plan

The County of Santa Cruz General Plan/LCP is a policy document intended to guide land use decisions within the unincorporated area of the county through the year 2040. As discussed in Chapter 3, Project Description, the proposed project would include updates to the introduction and four elements of the General Plan/LCP, while no changes are proposed to the other three General Plan/LCP elements: Chapter 4, Housing (updated 2016); Chapter 6, Public Safety (updated adopted 2020 and pending Coastal Commission certification); and Chapter 9, Noise (updated 2019). Adoption of the proposed project would introduce a comprehensive revision to the County's long-range land use plan, and the Sustainability Update would serve as the County's new blueprint to guide future decisions on land use, transportation, resource management, infrastructure, parks and open space, and public facilities.

The proposed project does not include any revisions or provisions that would be internally inconsistent or conflict with the other General Plan elements that are not proposed to be changed. Rather, the proposed project is intended to complement these existing elements, which aim to ensure adequate housing in the county and protect public health and safety by preventing inappropriate uses and incompatible development in areas that could present public safety hazards or pose excessive noise exposure. The Sustainability Update would encourage development focused on land use compatibility and providing a diversity of housing choices primarily within existing developed areas within the USL, which would not conflict with existing elements. Furthermore, as noted throughout this EIR, the Sustainability Update includes numerous policies intended to protect and enhance existing environmental resources and avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects in the county (see the impact discussions throughout Chapter 4 of this EIR for examples). Therefore, the project would not result in conflicts with any General Plan/LCP policy adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

As described above, the county also has several special area plans that are included in the General Plan, consisting of town/village plans for unique town centers and other focal points in the county. The Sustainability Update includes Policy BE-5.2.2 to ensure consistency between special area plans and the General Plan; this policy specifies that, where there is a conflict between policies or implementation measures in the General Plan/LCP Chapters 2 – 8 and a provision of a special area plan or guidelines, the special area plan or guidelines take precedence unless a finding can be made that a provision in the special area plan or guidelines has been made obsolete by modern regulations or the passage of time. Therefore, the proposed Sustainability Update would not conflict with adopted area and town plans.

As discussed in Section 3.5.4, 23 parcels are proposed for General Plan Land Use and/or Zoning Map changes, of which 20 are proposed for General Plan Land Use map redesignations; see Table 3-11 in Chapter 3, Project Description. Ten of these parcels are located in the USL (along Portola Drive and the Thurber Lane/Soquel Drive parcel) and are proposed for intensified land uses in support of the Sustainability Update's new and revised policies that encourage and support development intensification in urban areas and along major transportation corridors. The other 13 parcels include

General Plan amendments to create one unified designation on a property or to correct inconsistencies and reflect existing and historical uses on the parcel.

Local Coastal Program/Coastal Act

The proposed project includes amendments to General Plan/LCP elements and some sections of the SCCC that are part of the County’s certified LCP. Therefore, the portions of the proposed project that amend the County’s certified LCP will require approval by the Coastal Commission as an LCP amendment. Specifically, the LCP amendment consists of the following components; see Chapter 3, Project Description, of this EIR for a full description:

- Revision of General Plan/LCP introduction and four elements as explained in Chapter 3, Project Description
- Revision of the following SCCC chapters or sections that are part of the County’s certified LCP:
 - Chapter 12.01, Building Permit Regulations
 - Chapters 13.01, 13.02, and 13.03, General Plan, Specific Plan, LCP Administration, respectively (Moved to chapters 18.50, 18.70, and 18.60 respectively with some revisions)
 - Chapter 13.10, Zoning Regulations
 - Chapter 13.11, Site, Architectural and Landscape Design Review (renamed “Site Development and Design Review”)
 - Chapter 13.16, Parking and Circulation (new chapter)
 - Chapter 13.20, Coastal Zone Regulations
 - Chapter 13.36, Development Agreements (Moved to Chapter 18.80 with some revisions)
 - Chapter 15.10, Roadway and Roadside Improvements
 - Chapter 16.20, Grading Regulations (Moved section 16.20.180 to 13.16.092)Chapter 16.50, Agricultural Land Preservation and Protection
 - Chapter 18.10, Permit and Approval Procedures (renamed “Discretionary Permit Approval Procedures”)
 - Chapter 18.20, Reasonable Accommodation Procedure (new chapter moved from section 18.10.128)
 - Chapter 18.30 Planned Unit Developments (new chapter moved from sections 18.10.332 and 18.10.180-185)
 - Chapter 18.40 Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance Text Administration (new chapter moved from sections 13.10.150-170 and 13.10.215)
 - Chapter 18.50 (new chapter moved from chapter 13.01)
 - Chapter 18.60 (new chapter moved from chapter 13.03)
 - Chapter 18.70 (new chapter moved from chapter 13.02)
 - Chapter 18.80 (new chapter moved from chapter 13.36)
- Land use designation changes for 11 parcels located in the coastal zone, all of which are located along Portola except for one parcel in Davenport and one parcel in La Selva Beach.

Generally, the proposed project retains and/or strengthens existing LCP policies and implementing ordinances and would not present internal conflicts with the portions of the LCP not affected by the project or resulting LCP amendments. The LCP amendment would not include previously adopted Housing, Public Safety, and Noise Elements of the General Plan/LCP, which are not being amended as part of the project, or other LCIP chapters of the SCCC not listed above. The proposed project includes some policy revisions and/or combination of policies for clarity, and in some instances new policies have been added. Several existing LCP policies are being deleted, but content is being retained in other policies and in sections of the SCCC.

Similarly, the revisions to the LCIP portions of the SCCC are mostly related to zoning code provisions and would not result in conflicts with the Coastal Act or with portions of the LCP not affected by the project or resulting LCP amendments. Provisions regarding coastal zone principal permitted uses would be deleted from the zone district code sections in Chapter 13.10, but these provisions would be moved to Chapter 13.20 and would be retained. There would be no change to coastal development permit procedures as part of the propose project.

The Coastal Commission's standard of review for an LCP amendment would be the Coastal Act. Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act includes coastal resources planning and management policies that would serve as the basis of review for the County's LCP amendments. The following section reviews consistency of the proposed Sustainability Update with the Coastal Act, and no significant conflicts with Coastal Act policies have been identified. It is noted, however, CCC staff will provide a full review as part of their review of the County's future LCP amendment request for the proposed project.

Coastal Public Access

Article 2 of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act addresses public access to the coast to provide maximum access and recreational opportunities. Article 2 addresses provision of the public's right to access to the coast, provision of public access as part of coastal developments, and distribution of public facilities. The article also indicates that lower cost visitor and recreational facilities are to be protected and encouraged, where feasible, which is addressed in the following subsection. Coastal Act policies regarding coastal public access include:

- Provide maximum public access (conspicuously posted) (30210)
- Provision of coastal access
 - Development shall not interfere with public's right to access to sea (30211)
 - Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development except where: (1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources, (2) adequate access exists nearby, or (3) agriculture would be adversely affected (30212)
 - Distribute public facilities (including parking) throughout area to mitigate impacts of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area (30212.5)

- Regulate time, place, manner of public access taking into account topography, sensitive resources and private property rights (30214)
- Maintain and enhance public access to coast-transit service and non-auto alternatives (30252)

Overall, the proposed project retains and expands upon existing LCP policies and implementation strategies to provide maximum coastal access, consistent with Coastal Act policies and would not result in conflicts with Coastal Act policies as explained herein. LCP policies and implementation strategies addressing coastal access are primarily included in the proposed Access + Mobility (AM) Element. Objective AM-4.1 provides policies to protect existing coastal access and create new or expanded access to the shoreline and other recreational opportunities, including new access to beaches and coastal recreational areas in South County that are included in the proposed Parks + Public Facilities (PPF) Element. Supporting policies seek to expand and enhance public access to and along the shoreline and to beaches, coastal waters, tidelands, coastal parks, and trails (AM-4.1.2, 4.1.4, 4.1.5, 4.1.6, and 4.1.7) and to continue to protect the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through historic use, legislative authorization, or prescriptive rights (AM-4.1.8 and 4.1.9). New figures are included in the AM Element showing existing coastal access points throughout the county.

The proposed revisions prohibit the implementation of restrictions on public parking along public streets that impede or restrict public access to beaches, trails or parklands, (AM-6.3.5). A number of other policies are included in the proposed AM Element regarding pedestrian and bicycle access that would be applicable throughout the county, including the coastal zone. Other policies address parking costs and availability in the coastal zone (AM-6.3.6). Additionally, a former objective has been revised to a new policy in the PPF Element to provide a system of shoreline access to the coast with adequate improvements to serve the general public and the coastal neighborhoods, which is consistent with the Coastal Act, meets public safety needs, protects natural resource areas from overuse, protects public rights and the rights of private property owners, minimizes conflicts with adjacent land uses, and does not adversely affect agriculture (PPF-2.6.1).

The proposed project includes policies to ensure that new development protects the public's right to coastal access and minimizes impacts to access (BE-5.1.8 and AM-4.1.10, 4.1.11 and 4.1.12), consistent with Coastal Act sections 30211 and 30212). Policy BE-5.1.8 also would allow owners to mitigate public access impacts through joint funding and provision of new or improved public coastal access facilities. The Sustainability Update also adds a new implementation strategy to assess proposed development projects in the coastal zone for impacts to public coastal access and recreation (BE-5.1e), consistent with CCC LCP Guidelines. The proposed PPF element also includes a new implementation strategy to address standards for public beach closures/curfews and to ensure that these do not apply to an area of Coastal Commission original jurisdiction (PPF-2.2e).

The Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation (ARC) Element retains existing policies to require adequate provision for lateral beach access as a condition of approval for aquaculture facilities consistent with the provisions of Government Code Sections 65909(a) and 66475.4(b) (ARC-2.2.6 and 2.2.7). Existing policies to limit access on agricultural lands and sensitive habitat areas remain in place

in order to protect coastal priority and sensitive habitat areas. Additionally, the proposed PPF Element retains existing policies that call for provision of physical access to all recreational facilities through provision of public transportation, trail system development, protection of prescriptive rights to beach and coastal access trails, and recreation programs (PPF-2.1.2) and provision of clean, safe coastal accessways (PPF-2.1.3).

Consistent with Coastal Act policy to maintain and enhance public access to coast via transit service and non-auto alternatives (30252), numerous policies support maintenance and development of bicycle and pedestrian paths throughout the county and along the coast, including coastal trails. A new implementation strategy is proposed in which the County would work with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission to build a countywide trail consistent with the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail Master Plan, which would act as the county's portion of the California Coastal Trail (AM-4.1a). New implementation strategies also call for maintenance of a public access signage program in coordination with other agencies (AM-4.1f). Additionally, the proposed project includes a new policy that would require new recreation and visitor-serving development to support alternative transportation, including measures such as the provision of shuttles, promotion of bicycling and walking to nearby attractions, construction of bus turnouts, bus shelters, and parking spaces for bus and shuttle service (AM-1.2.1).

Recreation and Visitor-Serving Uses

Article 3 of the Coastal Act addresses recreation and visitor-serving uses with policies to protect coastal areas suited for water-oriented activities and oceanfront land suitable for recreational use, as well as upland areas necessary to support coastal recreational uses. Priority is given to the visitor-serving commercial recreational facilities uses designed to enhance public opportunities for coastal recreation over all other land uses except agriculture and coastal-dependent industry. Increased recreational boating use of coastal waters is encouraged by developing support facilities, such as dry storage areas, public launch facilities, and additional boat berths. Article 2 (Access) seeks to provide maximum recreational opportunities. Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities are to be protected, encouraged, and where feasible, provided; developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred. Coastal Act policies regarding coastal recreational and visitor-serving uses include:

- Provide maximum recreational opportunities (30210)
- Recreational Uses
 - Protect coastal areas suited for water-oriented recreational activities (30220)
 - Protect oceanfront land suitable for recreational use (30221)
 - Reserve upland areas necessary to support coastal recreational uses (30223)
 - Encourage increased recreational boating uses (30224)
- Visitor-Serving Uses (30222)
 - Priority To Visitor-Serving Commercial Recreational Facilities (30222)
 - Protect, encourage and where feasible provide lower cost visitor and recreational facilities

(30213)

- Location of Visitor-Serving Developments in Existing Developed Areas (30250c)

Overall, the proposed project retains and expands on existing LCP policies and implementation strategies to provide maximum coastal access, consistent with Coastal Act policies and would not result in conflicts with Coastal Act policies as explained herein. The proposed project retains objectives and policies to maximize public use and enjoyment of coastal recreation resources for all people, including those with disabilities, while protecting those resources from the adverse impacts of overuse (Objective PPF-2.6), consistent with the Coastal Act (30210) (see also coastal access discussion above). There are no proposed General Plan/LCP or SCCC amendments that would change land use designations related to oceanfront land or water areas suitable for recreational activities and use.

The proposed LCP amendments retain policies and regulations that encourage a range of recreational uses in the coastal zone. The existing O-R General Plan/LCP land use designation is retained, which is intended for outdoor recreation and the provision of open space for the purpose of facilitating healthy communities and the community's enjoyment of the natural setting of the county, including commercial recreation, parks, campgrounds, recreational vehicle parks, and preserves (PPF-1.2.1). Both active and passive recreational uses continue to be supported in the proposed Sustainability update. A new policy supports provision of a regulatory framework to encourage special events such as art programs, festivals, parades, and races, while minimizing negative impacts to neighborhoods and communities throughout the county, including the coastal zone (BE-3.4.4). Objective AM-1.2 and supporting policies encourage sustainable tourist travel options, including shuttle, transit, and active transportation. Additionally, proposed revisions to SCCC section 13.10.633 create new regulations for "agri-tourism and education" to allow special temporary events, as further described below.

With regard to visitor-serving uses, the proposed project continues to recognize visitor-serving and recreational uses as a second priority use in the coastal zone after agriculture and coastal-dependent uses (BE-5.1.2), consistent with Coastal Act section 3022, which indicates that the use of private lands for visitor-serving commercial recreational facilities designed to enhance public opportunities for coastal recreation shall have priority over private residential, general industrial, or general commercial development, but not over agriculture or coastal-dependent industry. The proposed Sustainability Update continues to encourage provision of visitor-serving commercial services within specified "Coastal Special Communities" in specified areas: Davenport; Seacliff Beach; Rio Del Mar Flats/Esplanade Area; East Cliff Drive Village area between 12th Avenue and 17th Avenue; and Lower 7th Avenue in the Harbor area (BE-3.4.7).

The proposed project retains policies that support a range of visitor accommodations and lodging options to meet demand for modern visitor accommodations and enable visitors of all income levels to enjoy Santa Cruz County (Objective BE-3.5). A new policy supports provision of a variety of accommodation types including hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, hostels, and organized camps and RV parks with a mix of accommodations serving visitors of all income levels; in particular, lower-cost visitor accommodations within the coastal zone continues to be encouraged (BE-3.5.1). The proposed project continues to support small-scale visitor accommodations in neighborhoods and rural areas,

such as bed and breakfast inns and boutique hotels where the use is compatible with neighborhood character, available infrastructure capacity, resource protection, and adjacent land uses (BE-3.5.5). Existing time-share condominium beach development continues to be recognized as an additional resource for visitor accommodations (BE-3.5.6).

The proposed amendments would allow appurtenant overnight visitor accommodations at appropriate commercial recreation facilities where such use is consistent with maintaining the recreation use and with other General Plan/LCP policies (PPF-1.2.4 and BE-3.5.8). New policies encourage integration of visitor accommodations into commercial areas and employment centers (BE-3.5.3 and BE-3.5.4), and prioritize visitor-serving commercial uses in mixed-use commercial development in the coastal zone (BE-5.1.10). The proposed amendments also support working with the hospitality industry to promote recreational bicycle routes as "eco-tourism" (AM-1.2.2). Additionally, proposed amendments to SCCC section 13.10.641 would allow for overnight "farmstays" in agricultural areas, including the coastal zone, under specified conditions.

The proposed Sustainability Update includes a new objective (BE-2.5) and supporting policies to regulate short-term residential home rentals that protect and preserve neighborhood character and available long-term rental housing stock, while offering accommodations to visitors. The amendments reflect existing SCCC regulations that allow a limited number of vacation rental homes and "hosted rental" rooms within homes to be rented on a short-term (less than 30 day) basis. However, short-term rentals are not allowed in accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or on properties where ADUs are located, recognizing the importance of ADUs in addressing housing needs as small units that are affordable by design (BE-2.5.2).

Marine Resources

Article 4 of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act regulates activities that could affect the marine environment and also requires the protection and enhancement of marine and coastal water resources, including water quality. This section of the Coastal Act also addresses filling and dredging coastal waters and wetlands; alteration of the shoreline, and protection of facilities that serve commercial fishing and recreational boating. Coastal Act policies regarding marine resources include:

- Maintain and enhance marine resources and sustain biological productivity of coastal waters (30230)
 - Maintain and restore water quality and biological productivity (30231)
 - Protect against oil spills (30232)
- Fishing and Boating
 - Protect facilities serving commercial fishing and recreational boating (30234)
 - Importance of fishing activities (30234.5)
- Alterations
 - Diking, filling or dredging of coastal waters and wetlands shall be permitted when there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative and where feasible mitigation

- measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects (30233)
- Shoreline protection regulations (30235)
 - Channelization or substantial stream alterations for water supply or flood control project regulations (30236)

The proposed project does not include amendments to the General Plan/LCP or SCCC that would affect marine water quality, fishing and boating, or alterations related to diking, dredging, shoreline protection or stream alterations. The General Plan Safety Element, which is not proposed for amendment as part of the Sustainability Update, addresses some of these issues.

The proposed amendments also retain and expand policies related to stormwater drainage that could affect marine water quality as discussed in Section 4.10, Hydrology and Water Quality. Requirements related to water quality have been updated and strengthened, and policy language has been moved to the PPF Element. Under Objective ARC-4.4 (existing Conservation and Open Space Element Objective 5.7), Existing Conservation and Open Space Element Policy 5.7.4, is being removed as updated and more protective design standards for surface runoff are provided in the PPF Element. Policy 5.7.7 is being removed from the ARC Element as permit discharge requirements are now being addressed in Policy PPF-4.4.1. Similarly, Policy 5.7.8 is moved from ARC and would be addressed in Implementation Strategy PPF-4.4f. Policy 5.8.4 has been updated and combined with Policy PPF-4.4.1. Additionally, the following policies regarding minimum lot sizes for septic systems and other detailed septic systems requirements in the Conservation and Open Space Element are proposed to be deleted: 5.5.16, 5.5.17, 5.5.18, and 5.5.19. The detailed requirements in these policies are fully addressed and are more appropriately provided in SCCC Chapter 7.38, Sewage Disposal.

The proposed ARC Element retains the existing objective (ARC-3.4) and supporting policies to identify, preserve, and restore aquatic and marine habitats; to maximize scientific research and education that emphasizes comprehensive and coordinated management consistent with the mission of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; and to facilitate multiple-use and recreation opportunities compatible with resource protection. Objective ARC-4.1 and supporting policies address the protection of water quality in coastal waters and in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

The proposed project also retains existing policies that support working with federal agencies to permit open water moorings off suitable locations along the county's coastline taking into consideration the following factors: public safety concerns; disturbance to the marine environment; individual and cumulative visual impacts; other communities' experiences with open water moorings; and interference with other water-related uses (PPF-2.6.4).

Therefore, the proposed Sustainability Update would not result in conflicts with provisions of Article 4 of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, which regulates activities that could affect the marine environment and also requires the protection and enhancement of marine and coastal water resources, including water quality.

Land Resources

Article 5 of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act addresses land resources, including environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA), prime agricultural lands, timber lands, and archaeological and paleontological resources. Coastal Act policies addressing these resources include:

- Protect ESHAs from significant disruption of habitat values (30240)
- Agricultural Lands (30341.5, 30242)
 - Protect maximum amount of prime agricultural land in production (30241)
 - Do not convert other lands suitable for agricultural use to nonagricultural uses unless continued or renewed agricultural use is not feasible or such conversion would preserve prime agricultural land or concentrate development consistent with section (30250, 30242)
 - Protect the long-term productivity of soils and timberlands (30243)
- Archaeological & Paleontological Resources (30244)

Overall, the proposed project retains and expands upon existing LCP policies and implementation strategies related to land resources, consistent with Coastal Act policies and would not result in conflicts with Coastal Act policies as explained herein.

ESHA. The General Plan/LCP and Chapter 16.32 of the SCCC define a “sensitive habitat” as explained in Section 4.4.1.4 of this EIR. No changes are proposed to SCCC Chapter 16.32, Sensitive Habitat Protection, or Chapter 16.30, Riparian Corridor and Wetlands Protection, which regulate development adjacent to sensitive habitat and riparian areas. Existing General Plan/LCP policies to protect sensitive habitats are generally retained (Objective ARC-3.1 and supporting policies) as explained in the Impact BIO-2 discussion in Section 4.4.3.3 and summarized in Table 4.4-4. Therefore, the proposed Sustainability Update would not result in amended policies or regulations that would conflict with Coastal Act policies governing ESHAs as few revisions to existing policies are proposed.

Prime Agricultural Lands and Production. Agriculture is a Coastal Act land use that has priority over all other uses. As discussed in Section 4.2, Agriculture, Forest, and Mineral Resources, the Sustainability Update retains agricultural land policies and SCCC regulations. Generally, these include provisions for protection of County-classified Type 1 and Type 3 agricultural lands that include prime agricultural soils. Type 3 lands are those located within the coastal zone. County policies and regulations limit conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, and SCCC regulations stipulate required buffers between new development and commercial agricultural lands to minimize conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. The proposed project would update SCCC Chapter 16.50 to add buffer requirements for farmworker housing, as well as new processing requirements for Agricultural Buffer Reduction Permits. Agricultural policies that limit land divisions and development density and allow only agricultural uses and uses compatible with agriculture on commercial agricultural land, with a limited exception for public facility uses, ensure that important farmland remains largely undeveloped. The County’s establishment of the USL and RSL has created stable boundaries,

separating urban and rural areas, consistent with Coastal Act section 30241, and the County’s land use policies and regulations have preserved agricultural land by limiting development on these lands and focusing development in urbanized areas where services are available.

Amendments to the SCCC allow new ancillary agricultural support uses in agricultural zones, including agricultural tourism and education, farmstays, agricultural research and development, and allow agricultural services establishments as a new use on CA land. Amendments also recognize the need for flexibility in the siting of essential public/quasi-public facilities and would allow this use in agricultural zones under limited circumstances, which could indirectly lead to conversion of agricultural lands. The proposed amendments add “interim or permanent public/quasi-public uses that the County has determined to be of significant benefit to the public health, safety and welfare and for which mitigation will be provided,” and amendments to facilitate the location of such essential facilities, while addressing the protection of agricultural resources, are included in several policies. This is in addition to other public facility uses that are currently allowed on CA land, including structures associated with recycled wastewater facilities, flood control works, reservoirs, and publicly owned landfills as an interim use.

As discussed in Section 4.2, Agriculture, Forest, and Mineral Resources, the proposed project includes amendments to the General Plan/LCP and SCCC that could lead to future structural development related to construction of residential uses, although the existing limit of one single-family dwelling unit with associated ADUs and accessory structures on commercial agricultural land is being retained, limiting the impact of residential development. The project also allows new potential ancillary uses, including, breweries and distilleries, agricultural support services, and public/quasi-public facilities. It is possible that some future development, though limited, could result in conversion of prime agricultural lands, although the project retains existing policies to limit conversion, as well as other controls that would serve to avoid or minimize impacts related to conversion of agricultural land as summarized in Table 4.2-4. Additionally, allowing new agricultural support uses on agricultural land which are necessary to sustain commercial agriculture could reduce pressure to convert agricultural land to residential uses and thereby provide for the long-term protection of commercial agriculture. In the case of public/quasi-public facilities, such uses would only be permitted based on compelling public health and safety considerations.

The proposed Sustainability Update also amends portions of the zoning ordinance related to allow uses, development standards, and permit requirements in agricultural zones to align with General Plan/LCP policies. The proposed SCCC amendments include new provisions for temporary uses and events on agriculturally zoned land, including agri-tourism, educational uses, and homestays, other agricultural support uses consistent with the proposed General Plan/LCP policy amendments, including breweries distilleries, agricultural research and development establishments, essential public/ quasi-public uses, and agricultural service establishments as a new use on CA. Criteria and findings have been updated with new guidance for siting and designing projects to protect commercial agricultural land and agricultural operations. However, as discussed in Section 4.2.3.3, these uses and temporary events generally would support the primary commercial agricultural use on a property, would be sited to prevent impacts to agricultural lands in production, and to minimize the overall

development area. An analysis of alternative sites for locating development would be required for larger projects. Additionally, for any proposed residential or agricultural support project that would result in a total development footprint on agricultural resource soils exceeding 35,000 square feet, the SCCC would require the applicant to place farmable land equal or greater in size to the total development area of the subject parcel in a permanent agricultural easement, to mitigate or partially mitigate for the loss of farmland. The proposed project also makes minor edits to SCCC Chapter 16.50 to update and clarify agricultural land preservation standards.

The EIR recommends a mitigation measure to modify the proposed SCCC amendments that would add public/quasi-public uses to those required to have special findings and provided permanent agricultural easements for potential conversion of agricultural lands. This mitigation in combination with proposed and retained policies and SCCC amendments, would be consistent with Coastal Act policy to ensure maintenance a maximum of prime agricultural land in production.

Timberlands. The proposed Sustainability Update would not lead to development that would conflict with timber production zoning or result in conditions that could lead to conversion of forest or timber lands. The proposed amendments retain existing policies and regulations that seek to maintain and protect timberlands and limit residential development as summarized in Table 4.2-6 in Section 4.2, Agriculture, Forest, and Mineral Resources, which would serve to avoid or minimize potential impacts to forest and timber lands.

Archaeological and Paleontological Resources. As discussed in Section 4.5, Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources, the proposed Sustainability Update would not directly result in new development, but new development accommodated by the plan would result in construction that may result in impacts to archaeological resources and/or human burials. However, the proposed amendments generally retain and expand upon existing policies to regarding protection of archaeological resources. Policy ARC-8.1.4 provides updated best practices for evaluating and protecting sites with archaeological resources. There are no proposed changes to SCCC Chapter 16.40, Native American Cultural Sites, which identifies provisions for review of archaeological resources and accidental discovery of archaeological resources and human remains during construction. Similar conclusions have been identified in Section 4.7, Geology and Soils, regarding paleontological resources. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in conflicts with Coastal Act policies regarding archaeological and paleontological resources.

Development

Article 6 of the Coastal Act addresses locating new development in the coastal zone and states that new residential, commercial or industrial development shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to existing developed areas with adequate public services. Coastal-dependent development has priority over other developments on or near the shoreline, and oceanfront land suitable for aquaculture shall be protected for that use and given priority, except over other coastal dependent development or uses. New or expanded public works facilities must be designed and limited to accommodate needs generated by development. New development also is required to minimize

adverse effects related to exposure to high geologic, flood and fire hazards. Article 6 also addresses scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas and indicates that scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be “considered and protected as a resource of public importance.” Article 7 addresses industrial development, for which there are few such uses in the county. Coastal Act policies related to development include:

- Location of new development (30250)
- Priority uses
 - Coastal-dependent uses (30255)
 - Oceanfront land for aquaculture (30222.5)
- Scenic resources (30251)
- Minimize adverse effects of development (30253)
 - Hazards - geologic, flood, fire [30253(a)]
 - Stability, erosion, coastal bluff [30253(2)]
 - Consistency with Air Pollution Control District Plan [30253(c)]
 - Minimize energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) [30253(d)]
 - Protect special neighborhoods [30253(e)]
- Public works facilities (30254; 30254.5)
- Location of industrial development (30260)

Overall, the proposed project retains and expands upon existing LCP policies and implementation strategies related to development, consistent with Coastal Act policies and would not result in conflicts with Coastal Act policies as explained herein.

Location of Development. Coastal Act section 30250 indicates that new residential, commercial, or industrial development shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources. The proposed Sustainability Update does not change existing LCP land use map or zoning designations, except for 23 parcels, 11 of which are in the coastal zone. However, nine of these parcels are located in developed areas within the USL in the Live Oak planning area and future redevelopment would be consistent with Coastal Act policies. The other two coastal sites include changes to redesignate/rezone properties to be consistent with existing residential uses on these two sites. The proposed project also does not change the County’s designed USL and RSL in which urban development is focused. Existing LCP policies are retained and expanded upon to guide coastal development to existing developed areas with urban services. See discussion Impact LU-1 above and Section 4.14, Public Services.

Coastal Priority Uses. The proposed Sustainability Update retains objectives and policies to ensure that coastal-dependent and coastal-related development have priority over other development on the coast (BE-

5.1), and discourages the conversion of any existing priority use to another use or designation of lower priority (BE-5.1.3), consistent with Coastal Act policies. Specifically, Policy BE-5.1.2 requires maintaining a hierarchy of land use priorities within the coastal zone as follows:

- First Priority: Agriculture and coastal-dependent industry.
- Second Priority: Recreation including public parks, visitor-serving commercial uses, and coastal recreation facilities.
- Third Priority: Private residential, general industrial, and general commercial uses.

Policy BE-5.1.4 retains reservation of specific sites for first and second coastal priority uses. These coastal priority sites are identified with a table in Chapter 2 of the existing General Plan/LCP, and the table has been moved to Appendix G in the proposed General Plan/LCP, with references to the table from multiple elements. Sites that have been developed or redeveloped since 1994 have been removed from the table.

A proposed update to LCP Policy BE-5.1.3 (Policy 2.22.2 in the existing LCP) would allow for the conversion of an existing priority use or use designation to another use or designation of lower priority, but only when: the proposed conversion will not adversely affect the ability of the County to provide appropriate locations for adequate amounts and/or types of the higher priority use or use designation; or when market analysis or land use analysis demonstrates that the existing priority use or use designation is no longer feasible or appropriate. The revised policy also particularly discourages conversions of existing developed visitor accommodation uses to other uses; and prohibits conversion of existing coastal-dependent industry unless three years have passed since cessation of industrial use. With these provisions, the revised policy does not conflict with the Coastal Act or with portions of the LCP not affected by the project or resulting LCP amendments.

Scenic Resources. Coastal Act section 30251 requires that the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. As discussed in Section 4.1, Aesthetics, the proposed project retains, and in some cases, expands upon existing General Plan/LCP policies and regulations in the SCCC that protect scenic views and vistas, including policies to designate and define visual resource areas having regional public importance; see Table 4.1-1. Therefore, the project is consistent with Coastal Act policies regarding scenic resources.

Minimize Adverse Effects of Development. The Coastal Act requires that new development minimize adverse effects related to exposure to high geologic, flood and fire hazards; assure coastal bluff stability; be consistent with air quality plans; and minimize energy consumption.

Chapter 6 of the County's General Plan/LCP addresses hazards, including geologic, flood and fire hazards; erosion; coastal bluff issues; and air quality. This element was updated and adopted by the

County Board of Supervisors in 2020 and is currently pending certification by the CCC. The proposed project does not make any changes to these policies or any regulations in the SCCC.

With regard to energy conservation, the existing Objective 5.17 in the Conservation and Open Space Element regarding energy conservation, is proposed for deletion, as well as associated policies 5.17.2, 5.17.3, 5.17.5, 5.17.8, and 5.17.9. Energy conservation would be addressed through policies in the Built Environment Element, including BE-4.2.7, BE-4.1.5, and BE-4.2.6. Energy reclamation would now be addressed in the Parks, Recreation & Public Facilities (PPF) Element in Objective PPF-4.3 and implementing policies. Many of the existing energy conservation issues previously addressed in the General Plan/LCP are now obsolete due to new state law requirements in the California Building Code. No significant impacts have been identified related to energy consumption. See discussions in Section 4.6 (Energy)

The Sustainability Update includes new and updated policies to reduce VMT, and intensified infill development would be located along transit corridors (Objective BE-1.2 and Policy AM-1.1.2). However, a significant and unavoidable impact is identified as the modeled VMT does not meet the County's significance threshold developed as required by amendments to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), due to the difficulties of modeling transit, active transportation, and transportation demand management strategies that are proposed by other agencies or included in the project. However, the proposed project would result in a reduction in VMT over what currently exists and what is projected to occur in the year 2040 without the project. Thus, while a significant impact is identified under required CEQA thresholds, the project would indirectly lead to development that would minimize VMT as required by Coastal Act policy 30253(d) as VMT would be reduced with the project.

A new LCP policy is included in the proposed Sustainability Update to designate and maintain certain areas as Coastal Special Communities or Special Scenic Areas based on the presence of unique scenic, historic, and natural resources, and/or coastal tourism focus (BE-5.1.5), consistent with Coastal Act section 30253(e).

Public Works and Industrial Development. Coastal Act Section 30254 indicates that new or expanded public works facilities shall be designed and limited to accommodate needs generated by development or uses permitted. Section 30260 addresses location of industrial development. The proposed Sustainability Update does not include General Plan/LCP or zone map changes for public facilities or industrial development in the coastal zone, except for a parcel in La Selva beach which is proposed for a map amendment from public facility to residential to recognize existing the residential use. Public/quasi-public facilities may be permitted on agricultural lands in limited circumstances related to public health and safety as discussed above. The proposed project retains existing policies regarding industrial development in the coastal zone, and indicates that on sites designated for industrial land use in the coastal zone, prioritize coastal-dependent and coastal-related² industrial development over other industrial development (BE-5.1.11). The policy further provides guidance for designation of new

² "Coastal-dependent industries" require a site on or adjacent to the ocean to function. Examples include aquaculture, ports, fishing, and some energy facilities. In comparison, "coastal-related industries" rely on a coastal-dependent development to function and may or may not require a coastal location.

sites for coastal-dependent or light industrial use in the coastal zone. Thus, the project would not result in conflicts with Coastal Act policies related to public works facilities or industrial development.

Policy 5.10.23 regarding transmission lines and facilities is proposed to be removed from the existing Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities Element as requirements for transmission lines would be addressed in policies PPF-4.6.2 and PPF-4.6.4. These policies also clarify that the California Public Utilities Commission or the California Energy Commission has permitting authority over new transmission facilities.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

As discussed above in Section 4.11.1.2, Regional and Local Plans, AMBAG developed and adopted the 2040 MTP/SCS in 2018. The MTP/SCS identifies the following goals and policies:

- **Access and Mobility.** Provide convenient, accessible, and reliable travel options while maximizing productivity for all people and goods in the region.
- **Economic Vitality.** Raise the region's standard of living by enhancing the performance of the transportation system.
- **Environment.** Promote environmental sustainability and protect the natural environment.
- **Healthy Communities.** Protect the health of our residents; foster efficient development patterns that optimize travel, housing, and employment choices and encourage active transportation.
- **Social Equity.** Provide an equitable level of transportation services to all segments of the population.
- **System Preservation and Safety.** Preserve and ensure a sustainable and safe regional transportation system.

The Sustainability Update contains goals and policies that are aligned with the goals of the MTP/SCS. The proposed AM and BE Elements include goals and policies to support plans for a multimodal transportation network throughout the county that enhances connectivity and equitable access from residential areas to goods, services, jobs and other destinations for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels. The Sustainability Update would facilitate a development pattern that is focused on compact, infill development, efficient use of urban lands, and walkable neighborhoods that would be correlated with lower VMT. The proposed project includes Policy BE-1.5.1 under which the County would coordinate with AMBAG and SCCRTC to maintain consistency between local land use and regional transportation planning objectives so that development occurs in transportation-efficient locations as identified in the regional MTP/SCS. See also Section 4.15, Transportation, for further review of project consistency with transportation goals and policies of the MTP/SCS.

The MTP/SCS identifies two Opportunity Areas in Santa Cruz County that have the potential for mixed-use, transit-oriented development. The Sustainability Update includes a number of proposed policies that support new and/or intensified development in specific areas, locations or sites. Policies that address development potential in specific areas are further described in Section 4.0.2. Additionally, the proposed project includes a new high density residential General Plan land use designation (R-UHF) and

corresponding zone district (RF) to promote higher density, infill development with the County’s USL, which would be consistent with general goals and policies of the MTP/SCS. In addition, proposed Policy AM-1.1.7 would require coordination with AMBAG to maintain consistency between local land use and transportation planning and the regional MTP/SCS to meet regional GHG emissions reductions, as well as coordination on the definition of Opportunity Areas as well as determination of project consistency with the SCS. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the MTP/SCS.

Watsonville Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

The Watsonville Municipal Airport Master Plan was adopted to avoid or minimize environmental effects associated with airport operations by delineating airport safety zones, as well as to protect the airport from encroaching incompatible uses. The Sustainability Update contains Objective BE-5.4, and policies therein, to require compatibility between the Watsonville Municipal Airport and future surrounding land uses, including land use limitations in accordance with airport safety zones.

Land use compatibility concerns to be addressed within the AIA fall under two broad headings identified in state law: noise and safety. Noise impacts are defined by the exposure to noise attributable to aircraft operations. Policies and maps related to noise exposure in the vicinity of the Watsonville Municipal Airport are included in Chapter 8 (existing Chapter 9): Noise, of the County General Plan/LCP, which is reviewed in Section 4.12.3.3 of this EIR. Safety concerns include protecting people on the ground and in the air from accidents as discussed in Section 4.9.3.3 of this EIR. There are two components to safety compatibility policies: identification of the locations where the risk of aircraft accidents is a concern, according to the *California Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics Airport Land Use Planning Handbook* (Handbook), and identifying Handbook-required land use measures to address that risk.

The proposed Sustainability Update retains, and in some cases, slightly modifies existing policies pertaining to airport land-use compatibility issues. In compliance with state law, the BE Element defines the required AIA (BE-5.4.1) and indicates that all land uses and development activity within the AIA must comply with the height, use, noise, safety, and density criteria that are compatible with airport operations as established by the latest version of the Handbook, and any applicable federal aviation regulations, including, but not limited to, Part 77 (commencing with section 77.1) of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (BE-5.4.2). The BE Element also retains policies to establish density standards in identified safety zones (BE-5.4.3) and requires new development within airport safety zones to comply with the uses, densities, and intensities as established by the Handbook and federal law (BE-5.4.4). Therefore, the Sustainability Update would not conflict with land use compatibility requirements set forth by state and federal laws and in the Watsonville Municipal Airport Master Plan.

Conclusion

Because the Sustainability Update includes objectives and policies consistent with the adopted plans discussed above, and requires coordination with regional plans and programs, adoption and

implementation of the Sustainability Update would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with a regional plan, policy, or program, and the impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified.

4.11.3.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic scope of the cumulative impact analysis for land use and planning is the AMBAG region, which encompasses Santa Cruz County (including its four incorporated cities) and the neighboring counties of Monterey and San Benito. Cumulative development in the AMBAG region would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact if it would, in combination, directly or indirectly physically divide established communities or conflict with land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Physical barriers within the AMBAG region primarily consist of existing transportation infrastructure, such as SR 1. Typically, linear transportation or infrastructure projects could have the potential to physically divide established communities by presenting physical barriers or otherwise restricting movement (e.g., a new freeway or a fenced buried pipeline). Cumulative transportation projects (see Table 4.0-1 in Section 4.0, Introduction to Analyses) in the county largely consist of improvements to existing infrastructure and would not create new physical barriers within established communities. Cumulative land use projects are, like the Sustainability Update, also primarily focused on development in existing urbanized areas of the region. Thus, cumulative development would not combine to have a significant cumulative effect related to physical division of established communities. Furthermore, because the objectives and policies of the Sustainability Update focus largely on strategic infill development in existing urbanized areas with existing infrastructure, as well as enhancing neighborhood connectivity, development facilitated by the Sustainability Update would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to physical divisions of established communities.

Impacts related to conflicts with land use plans, policies, and regulations would generally not combine to result in cumulative impacts. The determination of significance related to these issues is based on site-specific conflicts within each jurisdiction and is addressed on a project-by-project basis. As discussed above, the Sustainability Update would not conflict with adopted plans, and therefore would not contribute to a cumulative impact due to a conflict with such plans.

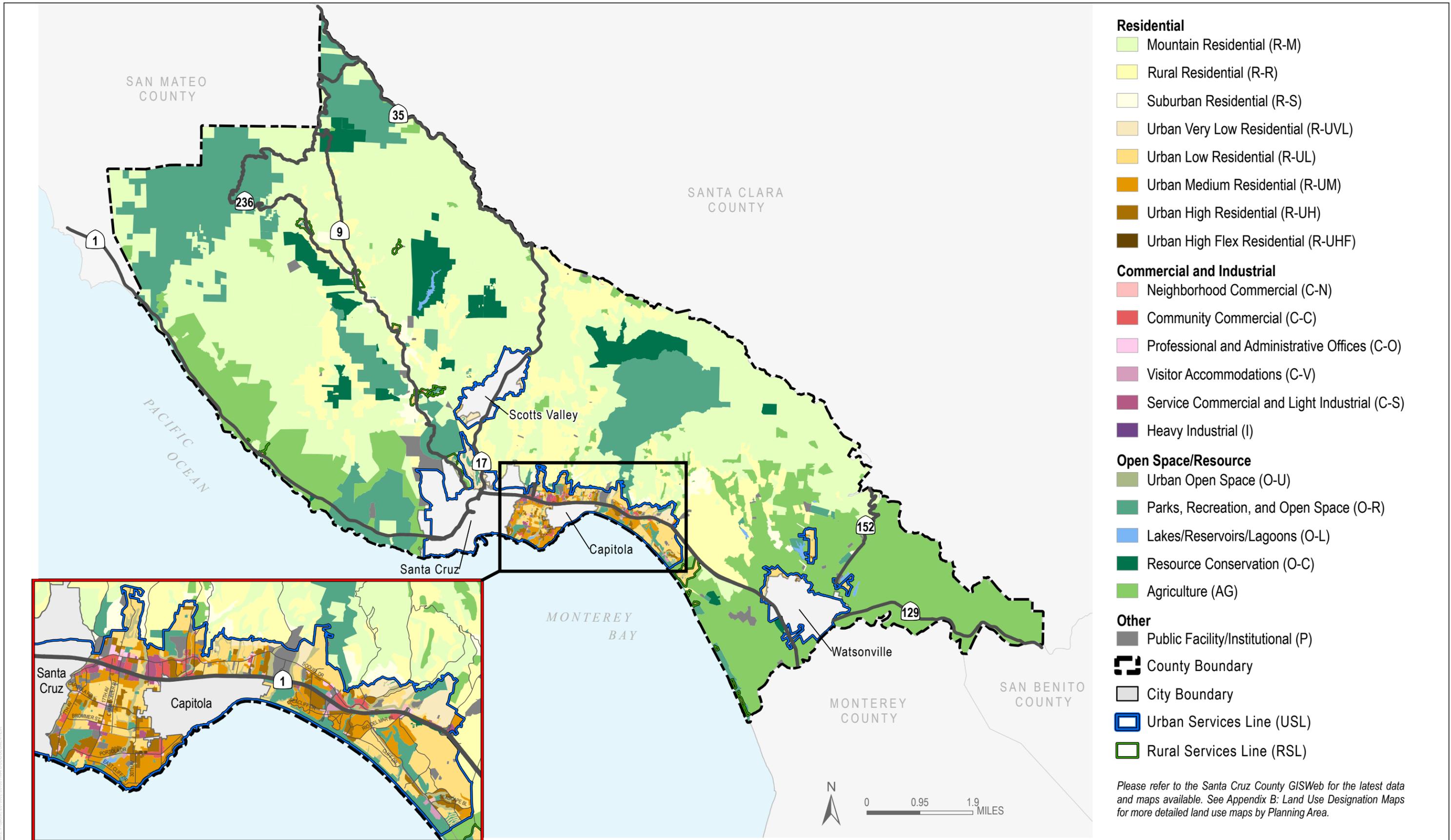
4.11.4 References

Governor's Office of Planning and Research. 2017. State of California General Plan Guidelines.

4.11.5 Figures

Figure 4.11-1 General Plan Land Use Designations Map

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SOURCE: County of Santa Cruz 2021

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