

## 4.15 TRANSPORTATION

This section describes existing transportation conditions, identifies associated regulatory requirements, evaluates potential project and cumulative impacts, and identifies mitigation measures for any significant or potentially significant impact 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 modeling and studies conducted for the Sustainability Update and this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (Kimley-Horn 2021a, 2021b) as well as review of relevant regional plans, studies, and transportation-related reports, and discussions with state and regional transportation agencies. Aviation and airport land use compatibility is addressed in Sections 4.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, 4.11, Land Use, and 4.12, Noise, of this EIR.

### 4.15.1 Environmental Setting

#### 4.15.1.1 Existing Transportation Network

##### Roadway Network

The circulation system within the county consists of nearly 1,135 miles of freeways, arterials, collectors, and local roads with connectivity within and between communities and regions. The County currently does not have reliable data on the mileage of trails, sidewalks and bicycle facilities although an effort currently underway as part of the Active Transportation Plan is developing better data on these facilities. The County maintains a roadway network of over 600 miles including all of the associated bridges, ramps, bicycle facilities, stop signs, signals and other traffic controls. In the urban areas of the county arterial roads and major state highways make up 14% of the roadway miles but carry over 70% of the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (SCCRTC 2018). Major roads within the county are shown on Figure 3-4 in Chapter 3, Project Description.

##### *State Highways*

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has jurisdiction over state highways. The highways in Santa Cruz County include the following State Routes (locally referred to as Highways) 1, 9, 17, 35, 129, 152, and 236.

**Highway 1** is the longest state route in California and accesses many coastal communities. In Santa Cruz Highway 1 is generally a north-south, four-lane divided freeway traversing 60 miles of the county's coastline. Highway 1 is the primary vehicle route through the county, and connects Santa Cruz to other areas within the region. North of downtown Santa Cruz, Highway 1 transitions from a freeway into a four-lane major arterial roadway, before transitioning to a two-lane state highway west of Swift Street. The posted speed limit varies from approximately 65 miles-per-hour (MPH) along the grade separated freeway portions, to lower speeds suitable for signalized intersections at areas where the freeway is integrated with the local roadway network.

**Highway 9** is generally a north-south, two-lane undivided at-grade highway that connects the urban communities in Santa Cruz County and Santa Clara County with the mountain communities in the northwestern portion of the county. Communities along Highway 9 included Felton, Ben Lomond, Brookdale, and Boulder Creek. Along various portions of Highway 9, the highway functions as a rural two-lane roadway with signalized intersections and variable speed limits.

**Highway 17** is a north-south, four-lane divided grade-separated freeway, extending from Highway 1 in the City of Santa Cruz through the City of Scotts Valley and other mountain communities to Santa Clara County. It is the primary corridor between the County of Santa Clara and the County of Santa Cruz and serves as a vital commuter, recreation, and freight connection between Silicon Valley and Santa Cruz County. The posted speed limit along Highway 17 ranges from 50 MPH in the mountains to typical freeway speeds of 65 MPH, with lower speeds in some portions of the freeway.

**Highway 35** is a north-south, two-lane undivided roadway that generally extends from Highway 17, northward through rural mountain communities of the county and into San Mateo County. Along portions of the roadway, Highway 35 is predominantly used to explore the recreational and scenic attributes associated with the county.

**Highway 129** is an east-west, two lane undivided highway that connects the City of Watsonville with US 101 in San Juan Batista. The speed limit varies from 25 mph within the City of Watsonville to 55 mph in more rural sections. Highway 129 is an important economic route for freight in the region, particularly agricultural goods movement.

**Highway 152** is an east-west, generally two-lane state highway that extends over 100 miles from Highway 99 in the City of Merced to the City of Watsonville. In the City of Watsonville, Highway 152 integrates with the local roadway network and in the Downtown area becomes Main Street. Within the unincorporated county, Highway 152 follows the Santa Cruz Mountains toward the City of Gilroy, where it connects to Highway 101.

**Highway 236** is a loop highway that connects to and from Highway 9 in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Highway 236 begins in Boulder Creek and loops through the Big Basin Redwoods State Park, before reconnecting with Highway 9.

### *Existing County Roadway Network*

Chapter 3, Circulation, of the existing County General Plan/LCP classifies roadways into five designations:

- Major arterials, consisting of three to six travel lanes designed for speeds of 35-45 miles per hour (mph) and typically carrying greater than 15,000 average daily traffic (ADT) trips. Roadways are developed with bicycle and transit facilities.
- Minor arterials, consisting of two to four travel lanes designed for speeds of 25-45 mph, typically carrying 10,000 to 15,000 ADT, and developed with bicycle and transit routes.

- Collectors, consisting of two travel lanes designed for speeds of 25 to 35 mph and typically carrying 3,000 to 12,000 ADT. Roadways may include bicycle and transit routes.
- Select roads, consisting of two travel lanes designed for speeds of 25 mph and typically carrying less than 3,000 ADT. Roadways may include bicycle facilities, but transit services are limited.
- Local roads, consisting of two travel lanes designed for speeds of 25 mph and typically carrying less than 2,000 ADT. Roadways may include bicycle facilities, but transit services are limited.

The proposed Access + Mobility (AM) Element provides updated road classifications as shown in Table 4.15-1.

### *Existing Pedestrian Network*

Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, walkways, curb ramps, crosswalks, furnishings, traffic control devices, and other similar infrastructure. Pedestrian amenities, such as wide sidewalks, high-visibility crosswalks, bulb outs, landscaping, buffers, pedestrian-scale lighting, and outdoor furniture create a more pedestrian-friendly environment. However, sidewalks are discontinuous in many places in the county but tend to be more continuous within the urban services line (USL). Figure 4.15-1 shows the existing pedestrian network.

### *Existing Bicycle Network*

Bikeways are facilities that provide primarily for, and promote, bicycle travel. There are four types of bikeway classifications identified by Caltrans:

- **Class I.** Bikeways or shared use paths, separated from roadways, for the exclusive use of bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel
- **Class II.** Designated lanes for bicycles on roadways
- **Class III.** Bikeways, or bike routes designated as a preferred route for bicyclists on streets shared with motor traffic and not served by dedicated bikeways
- **Class IV.** Separated bikeway, cycle track or protected bike lane, for the exclusive use of bicycles, physically separated from motor traffic with a vertical feature (Caltrans 2017).

**Table 4.15-1. Proposed Road Network and Street Types**

Typology	Description	Functional Classification
<b>Multimodal Corridor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of this street type is to provide a safe, continuous route for vehicles, transit users, pedestrians, and cyclists.</li> <li>• Buses, bicycles, pedestrians, and automobiles are prioritized on Multimodal Corridors. Trucks are provided for, but not prioritized.</li> <li>• Includes features like buffered dedicated bicycle facilities (cycle tracks), bus shelters and amenities, wide sidewalks to and from bus stops, and frequent and reliable bus service.</li> <li>• Access to multimodal corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists is key. This street type is complemented by connectors.</li> </ul>	Tend to be principal and minor arterials.
<b>Active Connector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of this street type is to provide high-quality bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide first and last mile connections to transit and major land use destinations.</li> <li>• These streets are moderate and low speed used by vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians to access arterials and multi-modal corridors.</li> <li>• Land uses are primarily residential, neighborhood commercial, office, mixed-use, schools and parks.</li> </ul>	Tend to be major collectors or minor arterials though sometimes can include local roads.
<b>Main Street</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of this street type is to provide walkable and pedestrian oriented access to goods and services.</li> <li>• These are pedestrian-oriented “destination” streets where pedestrians and bicyclists are prioritized and vehicles are provided for, but not prioritized.</li> <li>• These streets facilitate social gathering and placemaking.</li> <li>• Land uses on these streets are mixed-use or commercial/retail with nearby residential communities.</li> </ul>	Varies
<b>Local Residential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of this street is to provide access to housing and residential communities.</li> <li>• These are low-speed and low-traffic streets shared by vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.</li> <li>• Land uses on these streets are primarily residential within the urban and rural services boundaries.</li> </ul>	Tend to be local roads.
<b>Rural Connector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of this street is to provide long-distance automobile and bicycle connectivity and access between lower density, rural neighborhoods and agricultural areas.</li> <li>• Mostly auto-oriented with bicycle facilities for agricultural workers and long-distance cyclists.</li> <li>• Pedestrians are not prioritized on these roadways, though wide shoulders should be provided where possible to allow for pedestrians to walk along the shoulders.</li> </ul>	Tend to be minor arterials or major collectors, but also does include some local roads.
<b>Mountain-Agricultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of this street is to provide access to remote areas.</li> <li>• These streets are often shared amongst all users and therefore may require additional share the road strategies for vulnerable users.</li> <li>• These are mountainous and agricultural roads outside of the rural and urban services boundaries.</li> <li>• These streets are generally significantly constrained by topography and as such have narrow right-of-way with limited capacity.</li> </ul>	Tend to be local, but also includes some minor collectors and minor arterials.

The county has approximately 100 miles of bicycle facilities, which account for 8 percent of the county's roadway system. There are few Class I bikeways (bike paths) in the unincorporated county. The Wilder Ranch Bike Path, which is a Class I bikeway is located just west of the City of Santa Cruz is part of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail. The East Cliff multiuse path in the Live Oak Planning Area provides a recreational and scenic Class I facility for bicyclists in mid-county. The MBSST will provide a continuous Class I facility once complete and there are several sections that are in various phases of design or environmental planning that connect to the unincorporated county or are within the unincorporated area of the county. The Santa Cruz County Active Transportation Plan, expected to be approved in the summer of 2022, will include recommendations and projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the county. See Figure 4.15-2 showing the county's existing network.

### Public Transportation

Public transit in Santa Cruz County is primarily provided by the Santa Cruz Metro Transit District (METRO). The three main types of services provided by METRO are local fixed-route bus service, Highway 17 Express Bus service, and ParaCruz services. METRO operates 26 fixed bus routes on approximately 400 miles of roads. METRO operates four transit centers in the Santa Cruz County area, including the Santa Cruz METRO Center in Downtown Santa Cruz, the Capitola Mall Transit Center, the Watsonville Transit Center, and the Cavallaro Transit Center in Scotts Valley (SCCRTC 2018). Current transit service in the county does not meet the definition of high-quality transit service per the California Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21155, nor does the county have any existing major transit stops as defined per PRC section 21064.3.

Many seniors and people living with disabilities need specialized transportation services to get around. This might include lifts or ramps for wheelchairs in vehicles, drivers with special training, or vehicles that kneel or are equipped with other accessible features. Over 30 transportation providers or agencies provide paratransit services in Santa Cruz County (SCCRTC 2018).

### Rail Service

There is currently no year-round passenger rail service in Santa Cruz County. The Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, which was acquired by the SCCRTC in 2012, formerly provided freight rail service. This 135+-year old rail transportation corridor parallels Highway 1, extending almost 32 miles from just south of the county line near Watsonville to Davenport in north Santa Cruz County. The right-of-way (ROW) is generally 50 to 60 feet wide with 37 bridges and trestles, including major crossings of the Pajaro River, Highway 1, Soquel Creek, the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor and the San Lorenzo River. The corridor links major activity centers as it traverses downtown Watsonville, Aptos Village, Capitola Village and the Santa Cruz Beach area near downtown Santa Cruz. The Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line was most recently used for freight and recreational passenger service.

The SCCRTC purchased the rail corridor to preserve the corridor for existing and future transportation uses, including freight rail, passenger rail service/transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities (SCCRTC 2018). In 2015 the SCCRTC completed the Santa Cruz Rail Transit Feasibility Study, which evaluated the feasibility of adding rail transit service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line between Santa Cruz and

Watsonville. The passage of Measure D required an analysis to determine the future potential use of the corridor that would best serve Santa Cruz County residents and visitors. The SCCRTC's Unified Corridor Investment Study, completed in January 2019, contains an analysis of the options for transportation uses of the rail ROW. One of the outcomes of this study was to reserve the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line for high-capacity public transit adjacent to a bicycle and pedestrian trail. SCCRTC, in partnership with METRO, initiated the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis in 2019, which is evaluating public transit investment options that provide an integrated transit network for Santa Cruz County utilizing all or part of the length of the rail ROW as a dedicated transit facility (SCCRTC 2022).

The Felton Branch Rail Line, owned by Roaring Camp Railroads, connects to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line near the Santa Cruz Wharf and extends up the San Lorenzo Valley to Felton. Roaring Camp Railroads operates excursion and seasonal passenger rail service between Felton and Santa Cruz during the summer and end of the year holidays, and also provides freight rail service to the San Lorenzo Valley area when needed.

#### 4.15.1.2 Existing Traffic Operations

The predominant circulation pattern in the USL is in the east-west direction, following Highway 1 and Soquel Drive. However, topographical constraints such as creeks, gulches, and mountainous terrain disrupt the east-west roadway connectivity. Highway 1 and Soquel Drive are the only continuous east-west oriented roadways. In the USL, East Cliff Drive, Portola Drive, Capitola Road, and Brommer Street provide east-west connectivity south of Highway 1. There are only six connections across the 8-mile span of Highway 1 in the USL, which are often spaced more than a mile apart. This creates connectivity difficulties for people, particularly pedestrians and bicyclists trying to access key destinations. The railroad ROW also limits north-south connectivity with only seven crossings in the USL (County of Santa Cruz 2014).

Prior to passage of Senate Bill 743 and subsequent changes to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), impacts related to transportation were measured based on impacts to vehicle operations and traffic. Traffic operations are measured by average daily traffic (ADT), peak hour traffic volumes, level of service (LOS), average delay, and volume to capacity (V/C) ratio. Traffic operation, particularly LOS, is no longer the measure of an impact for CEQA, and the County now uses vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which is explained below in Section 4.15.1.3. However, for the purposes of maintaining an operational roadway system and identifying necessary long-term improvements for the General Plan/LCP, studies were completed analyzing vehicle operations. For a discussion of vehicle operations based on LOS, see Appendix G-3, which is provided for informational purposes only.

#### Transit Priority Areas

CEQA defines a transit priority area as an area within 0.5 mile of a major transit stop (PRC section 21090). PRC section 21054.3 defines a major transit stop as a site containing any of the following:

- (a) An existing rail or bus rapid transit station.
- (b) A ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service.

- (c) The intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.

A “high-quality transit corridor” is a corridor that contains transit service with 15-minute frequencies during peak period or a corridor that contains a rail stop. Currently, 12% of jobs in the AMBAG region are within 0.5 mile of a high-quality transit stop. According to AMBAG’s Regional Travel Demand Model, baseline conditions show that the percent of work trips that are 30 minutes or less ranges from approximately 58% to 85%, depending on transportation mode (AMBAG 2021). Regional transportation plans consider public transit transportation performance measures that address performance goals include:

- Percent of work trips that are 30 minutes or less by transit during peak period; and
- Percent of jobs within 0.5 mile of a high-quality transit stop. A high-quality transit corridor is defined as a corridor that contains transit service with 15-minute frequencies during peak period or a corridor that contains a rail stop (AMBAG 2021).

In the unincorporated county, there are currently no transit stops that meet the definition of a major stop. There are no rail or BRT stations and there are no ferry terminals. Additionally, in 2019, the baseline year for the traffic analysis for this EIR<sup>1</sup>, there were no stops that met the headways of 15 minutes or less in both morning and afternoon peak periods. While there are sometimes short periods of overlapping transit service at some stops along Soquel or at the Capitola Mall they do not continue throughout the peak period in both the morning and afternoon. Bus service at well served bus stops tended have 20-minutes intervals followed by a 10-minute interval over a duration of one to two hours (not the entire peak period in both the morning and afternoon). While there are currently no high-quality transit corridors long-range transportation plans, discussed in Section 4.15.2.3, call for more frequent transit service along major corridors in the county. It is a long-term goal of the county and the project to improve transit service and develop near future high-quality transit corridors.

### 14.15.1.3 Vehicle Miles Traveled

One vehicle (regardless of the number of passengers) traveling one mile constitutes one “vehicle mile.” VMT can be estimated in a number of ways. However, the most common measures are on a daily per capita basis or daily for the whole region. VMT is typically measured only for passenger vehicles for the purposes of transportation analysis and excludes truck miles. Additionally, in environmental analysis VMT is not capped at the boundaries of the study area but extends beyond the study area to include VMT generated due to residents or jobs located in the study area. VMT data may not reflect deficient traffic operations, although VMT does have a strong correlation with congestion as the more people that drive the more vehicles will be on county roadways.

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed in Section 4.0, existing conditions are defined as the physical environmental conditions as they exist at the time the EIR Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The NOP for this EIR was published on July 1, 2020. However, because transportation-related activities were substantially altered in 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, traffic conditions for 2019 are used (Kimley-Horn 2020).

An area's per capita (or per person) VMT as applied in this EIR is the total VMT divided by the population of the study area and is a measure of the average vehicle miles each person travels on a typical weekday. Per capita VMT tends to increase as a result of greater overall economic activity in the region, higher levels of per-household automobile ownership, and/or a jobs/housing imbalance that contributes to longer average commute distances.

The existing regional per capita VMT in the AMBAG region is 22.4 (AMBAG 2021). In 2019 the county's the residential per capita VMT within the unincorporated portion of Santa Cruz County was 12.6. The per capita VMT per employee within the unincorporated county was 11.9. (Kimley-Horn 2021b). Common measures to reduce VMT include increasing transit service and availability near development and defining transit priority areas.

#### 4.15.1.4 Funding Transportation Improvements

A number of state, regional, county and local agencies are involved with transportation planning and implementation of transportation programs and improvements within Santa Cruz County. Caltrans manages the state highway system and implements highway maintenance and safety projects. However, SCCRTC often implements highway improvements and is critical to helping fund state highway improvements within the county. The SCCRTC is the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Authority (RTPA) for transportation planning activities in Santa Cruz County. SCCRTC oversees planning and funding programs for local and countywide projects within Santa Cruz County using state and federal transportation funds. The 12-member SCCRTC board include representatives from local cities and agencies within the county.

AMBAG is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning activities in the tri-county Monterey Bay region (Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties). It is the lead agency responsible for developing and administering plans and programs to maintain eligibility and receive federal funds for the transportation systems in the region. AMBAG conducts regional transportation planning activities through its Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), maintenance of a regional travel demand model and demographic forecasts. AMBAG works with local governments, regional transportation planning agencies, transit providers, the Monterey Bay Air Resources District, state and federal governments, and organizations having interest in or responsibility for transportation planning and programming.

In 2016, residents in Santa Cruz County passed Measure D, a 30-year ½-cent sales tax measure that provides funding to highway projects, local streets and roads projects, and alternative transportation infrastructure projects. The Measure D sales tax allocates a portion of the funds to three sets of auxiliary lane projects on Highway 1 between Soquel Ave and State Park Drive. Measure D funds provide a local source of funds that helps leverage additional funds from state and federal sources.

Local projects are often partially funded with regional, state, and/or federal grants and resources. The FHWA requires projects with federal funding to be programmed in the MTIP, which is updated regularly

by AMBAG. State-funded projects are programmed in the MTIP as well, but some of the state funding resources are distributed through discretion by the SCCRTC. Projects that receive state funding through the SCCRTC are programmed in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and are then filtered up to AMBAG's MTIP. Both documents show “constrained” and “unconstrained” project lists. A financially constrained project list includes projects that have reasonably foreseeable funding resources available over the timeline of the long-range planning document. The funding identified for these projects are based on known funding resources and long-term revenue projections of local, state and federal resources. The projections and project lists are subject to change as the economy fluctuates and state and federal funding policies change. A financially unconstrained list of projects includes projects that the region is not able to fully fund based on revenue projections.

Funding for the County's capital and maintenance projects is outlined in the County Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which lists planned capital improvements, including roadway and roadside improvements. It includes programmed improvements that have been cost-estimated and scheduled as well as un-programmed improvements, similar to “unconstrained” projects. The County collects transportation impact fees (TIFs), which are assessed on new development, to help to fund transportation improvements, though these are often insufficient to fund substantial new improvements to the roadway system due to the limited amount of development in the county. According to the California Mitigation Fee Act, these fees cannot be used to address existing system deficiencies unrelated to new development. The County will be updating its Transportation Impact Fee program to incorporate multimodal improvements for all users. Outside of the TIF, program funding for the CIP projects can come from SCCRTC's Measure D sales tax revenue, state funding resources, grant programs, or federal resources as outlined above. In addition, development projects are generally responsible for street frontage improvements, including sidewalks, curb and gutters, transit shelters, etc.

## 4.15.2 Regulatory Framework

### 4.15.2.1 Federal Regulations

There are no federal regulations related to transportation that are directly applicable to the proposed project.

### 4.15.2.2 State Regulations

#### California Transportation Plan

The California Transportation Plan is prepared by the California State Transportation Agency every five years to provide a long-range policy framework to meet the state's future mobility needs and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to meet goals set by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill [AB] 32) and implementing legislation SB 375 (discussed below). The most recent California Transportation Plan was adopted in 2021 (Caltrans 2021). The California Transportation Plan defines goals, performance-based policies, and strategies to achieve the State's collective vision

for California’s future statewide, integrated, multimodal transportation system by envisioning a sustainable system that improves mobility and enhances quality of life. It is the umbrella plan that informs and pulls together the state’s long-range modal plans: Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan, California Freight Mobility Plan, California State Rail Plan, California State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, California High-Speed Rail Business Plan, Statewide Transit Strategic Plan and the California Aviation System Plan. The California Transportation Plan is developed in collaboration with transportation stakeholders such as AMBAG. Through ongoing engagement, the California Transportation Plan is intended to provide goals and visions to support a fully integrated, multimodal, sustainable transportation system that supports the quality of life, prosperous economy, human and environmental health and social equity (AMBAG 2021).

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

Senate Bill 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) (SB 375) requires MPOs to prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that demonstrates how the region will meet its GHG reduction targets through integrated land use, housing and transportation planning. The SCS must identify a transportation network that, when integrated with the forecasted development pattern for the AMBAG region, will reduce GHG emissions from automobiles and light trucks in accordance with targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) (AMBAG 2021).

### California Senate Bill 743

On September 27, 2013, Senate Bill (SB) 743 was signed into law. The bill covered a range of topics including streamlining CEQA review for infill projects and changing the way that transportation impacts are analyzed under CEQA. While SB 743 did not specify VMT as the required new metric, it directed the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to amend the CEQA Guidelines to provide an alternative to LOS for evaluating transportation impacts. Under the new transportation guidelines, LOS, or vehicle delay, is no longer be considered an environmental impact under CEQA. The updates to the CEQA Guidelines required under SB 743 were approved on December 28, 2018. These guidelines identify VMT as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts under CEQA and are currently being implemented as of July 1, 2020. The OPR Technical Advisory (OPR 2018) provides guidance on how to evaluate transportation impacts in CEQA under SB 743. The County adopted VMT thresholds consistent with the OPR Technical Advisory in June 2020, which were most recently updated in March of 2021.

To comply with SB 743 implementation, the Caltrans Transportation Impact Study Guide (May 2020), replaced the Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies (Caltrans 2002). Per the 2020 Transportation Impact Study Guide, Caltrans’ primary review focus is VMT, replacing LOS as the metric used in CEQA transportation analyses. In addition to VMT, the 2020 Transportation Impact Study Guide states that Caltrans may request a targeted operational and safety analysis to address a specific geometric or operational issue related to the State Highway System and connections with the State Highway System (Caltrans 2020).

## Complete Streets Act of 2008

AB 1358, also known as the Complete Streets Act of 2008, amended the California Government Code section 65302 to require that any substantive revisions to a city or county's Circulation Element include provisions for accommodations of all roadway users, including bicyclists and pedestrians (AMBAG 2021).

## California Bicycle Transportation Act

The California Bicycle Transportation Act of 1994 requires all cities and counties to have an adopted bicycle master plan to apply for Bicycle Transportation Account funding source (AMBAG 2021). See Section 4.15.2.3 below for a description of the County's new Active Transportation Plan.

### 4.15.2.3 Regional Regulations

#### Caltrans District 5 Active Transportation Plan

The District 5 Active Transportation Plan advances the Vision Statement and Goals in Toward an Active California, the statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan, and is part of a comprehensive planning process to identify locations with walking and bicycling needs in each Caltrans district across California. This plan includes a prioritized list of bicycle and pedestrian needs along and across the state highway system to help identify opportunities to incorporate bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvements into projects. The plan is not intended to be a comprehensive list of specific bicycle and pedestrian construction projects and improvements, but to inform the project development process, during which specific improvement concepts and related priorities will be evaluated. It is also not static; data and information in this plan will be periodically updated in coordination with partners and communities.

#### Metropolitan Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy

As the MPO for the Monterey Bay Area, AMBAG is required to produce certain documents that maintain the region's eligibility for federal transportation assistance, which include the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). AMBAG coordinates the development of the MTP with regional transportation planning agencies (San Benito County Council of Governments, SCCRTC, and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County), transit providers (San Benito County Local Transit Authority, Monterey Salinas Transit, and METRO), the Monterey Bay Air Resources District, state and federal governments, and organizations having interest in or responsibility for transportation planning and programming. The Sustainable Communities Strategy is part of the MTP and demonstrates land use and transportation measures that will be used to meet the regions' GHG emission reduction targets as established by CARB. (See description above of SB 375.)

#### Regional Transportation Plan

As the regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) for Santa Cruz County, the SCCRTC is responsible for developing, implementing and regularly updating the Regional Transportation Plan

(RTP) for Santa Cruz County. The RTP is a state-mandated plan that identifies transportation needs in Santa Cruz County over the next 20 or more years. It estimates the amount of funding that will be available over this time frame and identifies a financially constrained priority list of projects. Projects identified in the 2040 RTP include maintenance of and improvements to local roadways, highways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit service, rail, specialized transportation for seniors and people with disabilities, and transportation demand management programs (SCCRTC 2022a).

The Santa Cruz County RTP is also incorporated into AMBAG’s tri-county MTP/SCS, which covers the counties of Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito. The Santa Cruz County RTP must be consistent with and plan for a transportation system that supports the SB 375-mandated SCS for reducing GHG emissions, which is included in the AMBAG MTP/SCS.

### 4.15.2.3 Local Regulations

#### County of Santa Cruz General Plan / Local Coastal Program

The County of Santa Cruz General Plan/LCP is a comprehensive, long-term planning document for the unincorporated areas of the county and includes the County’s LCP, which was certified by the California Coastal Commission in 1994. The Circulation Element of the County’s existing General Plan/LCP, adopted in 1994 and revised periodically through 2020, includes objectives and policies that address VMT, vehicle occupancy, the bikeway system, pedestrian travel, and roadway capacity/LOS (Santa Cruz County 1994 as amended). However, the proposed project includes a new AM Element to replace the existing Circulation Element, with amendments to existing goals, policies and implementation strategies as described in Chapter 3 of this EIR and further reviewed in Section 4.15.3.3 below.

#### Santa Cruz County Active Transportation Plan

The proposed AM Element is supplemented by the Santa Cruz County Active Transportation Plan, which is concurrently under development and is expected to be complete in Summer 2022. The vision of the Active Transportation Plan is to create a network of biking and walking routes that connect key destinations within the county and are safe, comfortable, and accessible for community members of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. It identifies new bicycle and pedestrian projects throughout the county at both a corridor and intersection level as well as creates a project ranking system to aid County planners and engineers in prioritizing projects for grant funding and implementation. Although developed separately from the General Plan/LCP, the Active Transportation Plan is consistent with policies and implementation strategies in the AM Element. Once adopted, the Active Transportation Plan is incorporated by reference into the General Plan/LCP.

There are a variety of local plans developed by other agencies that have also been considered within the General Plan/LCP, including but not limited to the Highway 9/San Lorenzo Valley Complete Streets Corridor Plan, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Master Plan, and the General Plan circulation elements as well as bicycle and pedestrian plans that have been prepared and adopted by cities within the county.

## Santa Cruz County Code

### *Chapter 5.52, Trip Reduction*

The purpose of this chapter is to establish transportation demand management (TDM) requirements for certain new and existing employers, certain nonresidential developers, certain residential developers, certain owners of multi-tenant complexes, and certain commercial/school/recreational sites in the county, which will help to reduce traffic congestion and to improve air quality. The stated purpose also is to obtain the best possible use from existing and future local and regional transportation facilities; to comply with former state law; to serve as the locally adopted ordinance which the Monterey Bay Air Resources District relied upon for its former employer trip reduction program; to assist employers in identifying and utilizing cost-effective programs and methods to reduce vehicle trips made by employees; and to achieve an average vehicle ridership of 1.35 by the end of the year 1998 for all uses encompassed by this chapter. This chapter applies to all employers, residential and non-residential developers, multi-tenant worksite owners and commercial/school/recreational site owners as defined in SCCC 5.52.030. All county projects also are subject to the requirements of applicable provisions under this chapter. Public organizations, including federal (civilian and military) and state facilities are encouraged to comply with the requirements of this chapter.

A number of amendments are proposed as part of the Sustainability Update to trip reduction requirements in Chapter 5.52, including moving this chapter to new section 13.16.200, as described in Section 3.5.2.5 of this EIR and further reviewed below in Section 4.15.3.3, Project Impact Analysis.

### *Title 9, Roads, Vehicles and Traffic*

This title sets forth rules and regulations regarding the use and specific designations for the county's roadway system as well as sets forth controls for encroachments on county-maintained roads and establishes the administrative procedure for issuance of permits. It also provides for review and approval of plans, inspection procedures, and bonding procedures to guarantee quality and completion of work on the county's roadway system.

### *Chapter 13.10, Zoning Regulations*

The purpose of this chapter is related to implementation of land use requirements. However, several sections related to transportation, including 13.10.521 Site Access; 13.10.550-555, 13.10.560-578 Off-Street Parking, Bicycle Parking, Off-Street Loading, and 13.10.591-592 Trip Reduction Requirements. A number of amendments are proposed as part of the Sustainability Update to parking- and transportation-related requirements in Chapter 13.10, as described in Section 3.5.2.5 of this EIR and further reviewed below in Section 4.15.3.3, Project Impact Analysis.

### *Section 13.11.074, Access, Circulation and Parking*

The purpose of this section is to provide standards for lot access, parking design, circulation standards, parking lot design. A number of amendments are proposed as part of the Sustainability Update to the

access, circulation, and parking requirements in Chapter 13.11 as summarized in Chapter 3, Project Description, and further discussion below in Section 4.15.3.3, Project Impact Analysis.

#### *Chapter 15.10, Roadway and Roadside Improvements*

The County General Plan/LCP requires certain transportation and roadside improvements to be constructed in conjunction with development projects. The purpose of this chapter is to implement these plans by specifying the method for either constructing such improvements concurrently with new development or collecting equivalent in lieu fees to construct such improvements at a later, more appropriate time. The requirements of this chapter apply as a condition of approval of any permit to build or place a structure or mobile home, or to divide land, on an arterial, or collector or local street, within a transportation improvement area or within the urban services line, where street width and roadside improvements meeting current County design criteria do not already exist. The chapter provides definitions of these roadway types and improvement area. A number of amendments are proposed as part of the Sustainability Update to roadway and roadside requirements in Chapter 15.10 as summarized in Chapter 3, Project Description, and further discussion below in Section 4.15.3.3, Project Impact Analysis.

#### *Chapter 15.12, Transportation Improvement Fees*

The purpose of this chapter of the SCC is to:

- (1) Implement the General Plan/LCP and the growth management system policies to maintain a balanced, safe, efficient, and healthful transportation system.
- (2) Mitigate the traffic impact caused by new development by constructing transportation and roadside improvements identified in the County's General Plan/LCP and CIP.
- (3) Establish transportation and roadside improvement fees to provide for the financing of transportation and roadside improvement projects identified in the County's General Plan/LCP and CIP.

This chapter establishes transportation and roadside improvement fees to fund the construction of transportation and roadside improvements through assessments on new developments and expansion of uses authorized through the approval of minor land divisions, subdivisions, building permits, and commercial and residential development permits in the unincorporated portion of the county. This chapter further provides for the establishment of trust funds to receive the revenues collected in those General Plan planning areas where fees are created and authorizes the Board of Supervisors to establish by resolution the inventory of capital improvement facilities for which funds may be expanded and the amount of the fees to be assessed, subject to periodic review.

### 4.15.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

#### 4.15.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance used to evaluate the impacts of the proposed project related to transportation 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:

- TRA-1 Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b) or cause an increase in VMT which is greater than 15% below the regional average VMT for residential and employment and no net change for retail and customer-based land uses.<sup>2</sup>
- TRA-2 Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- TRA-3 Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).
- TRA-4 Result in inadequate emergency access.

With regard to the TRA-1 significance threshold, CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b) sets forth the criteria for analyzing transportation impacts related to VMT. The County adopted a VMT threshold in 2020 pursuant to state law and consistent with the criteria in section 15064.3(b). Therefore, the analyses contained herein are consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b). The County's adopted VMT thresholds follow the guidance provided by the state (OPR 2018), which generally recommend a threshold that is 15% below the existing county-wide average VMT per capita for residential uses and 15% below the county-wide average VMT per employee, except for retail uses, which would be measured by a net increase in total VMT. The County's adopted VMT thresholds are shown in Table 4.15-2.

**Table 4.15-2. County VMT Thresholds of Significance**

Land Use	VMT Threshold	Basis
Residential	8.9 VMT/per capita	15% below existing county-wide average VMT per capita
Office or Service	7.4 Work VMT/Employee	15% below existing county-wide average work VMT per employee
Retail	Net regional change	Using the county as the basis (instead of the tri-county region)
Other Employment	Work VMT/Employee	15% below existing county-wide average work VMT per employee for similar land uses
Other Customer	Net regional change	Using the county as the basis

<sup>2</sup> As indicated in Section 4.15.2.2, pursuant to state law changes in 2013 and CEQA amendments in 2018, changes to LOS or vehicle delay, can no longer be considered an environmental impact under CEQA, and use of locally adopted VMT thresholds is the new metric for analyzing traffic impacts.

### 4.15.3.2 Analytical Methods

#### Approach to Transportation Impact Analysis

The Santa Cruz County Travel Demand Model (SCCTDM) was updated by Kimley-Horn (2021a) as part of the preparation of the Sustainability Update and for the purposes of performing transportation impact analyses for this EIR as explained in Appendix G-1. The updated model was used to develop five scenarios for the transportation analyses as follows:

- **Existing:** Conditions that existed at the time the transportation analysis began in 2019. As discussed in Section 4.0, existing conditions are defined as the physical environmental conditions as they exist at the time the EIR Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The NOP for this EIR was published on July 1, 2020. However, because transportation-related activities were substantially altered in 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, traffic conditions for 2019 are used (Kimley-Horn 2020).
- **Existing With Project:** Existing conditions with potential development accommodated by the proposed Sustainability Update. Methods used to estimate growth for the project are summarized in Section 4.0.2 and described further in Appendix C.
- **2040 Baseline:** The 2040 Baseline scenario reflects known development projects and transportation improvements that are expected to be completed by the year 2040 and existing adopted plans and forecasts to the year 2040 in the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county without the addition of the proposed project as summarized in Table 4.0.1 in Section 4.0.
- **2040 with Project:** This scenario reflects the 2040 baseline scenario described above with the addition of estimated potential growth accommodated by the proposed project and proposed transportation improvements as further explained below.
- **Cumulative:** Year 2040 with Project conditions and other known and reasonably foreseeable growth, development projects, and transportation improvements, which are not currently approved.

The VMT analysis was completed for the five scenarios identified above, and the technical analysis is included in Appendix G-2. The methodologies used to perform the analyses are consistent with the updated CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b) as updated by SB 743, which shifted the focus of transportation analysis from vehicle delay as measured by LOS to a focus on reduction of GHG emissions as measured by VMT. Local agencies were required to begin using VMT for CEQA analyses by July 1, 2020. The County of Santa Cruz adopted thresholds in June 2020, which were revised in May 2021. The VMT analysis included below is based on the most current thresholds and the updated SCCTDM.

Although no longer required by CEQA, an LOS analysis was conducted for informational purposes; see Appendix G-3,

## Potential Growth Assumptions

Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update would not directly result in new development or growth. However, the proposed General Plan/LCP amendments could lead to future development, indirectly resulting in potential impacts related to transportation. The proposed project includes the following components that could lead to development:

- Amendments to the General Plan/LCP include policies that support new development, redevelopment, and potential intensified development, primarily within the Urban Services Line (USL).
- Amendments to the SCCC that include changes to permitted/allowed uses in some zone districts, including encouraging opportunities for higher density residential development and allowing new agricultural tourism, education, and homestay uses in agricultural zones.
- Amendments to General Plan/LCP land use and/or zone district maps for 23 specified parcels.
- The County Design Guidelines include guidelines take into consideration development along different types of streets, and provide overarching guidelines regarding access, circulation, and parking for new developments. The Guidelines also include street standards for vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian, and parking zones.

As described in the Section 4.0, Introduction to Analyses, Table 4.0-2 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 in Table 4.0-2, with approximately 75% projected to occur within urban areas. This EIR also estimates the potential to accommodate approximately 6,210,000 square feet of non-residential uses as shown in Table 4.0-3, with approximately 60% expected to occur within urban areas. It is estimated that new non-residential development would support approximately 7,050 employees. 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 of this EIR, Population and Housing. Additionally, some of this projected development and growth would occur under the existing General Plan/LCP without the proposed project.

## Proposed Transportation Improvements

As indicated in Chapter 3, Project Description, the proposed AM Element carries over some of the planned roadway improvements that are in the existing General Plan/LCP, but removes others that have been completed or are no longer being considered, and includes new roadway/intersection improvements to improve access, operations, and safety for all modes. Table 3-5 and Figure 3-4 in Chapter 3 summarize proposed improvements that are considered part of the proposed project and are included in the travel modeling for the Year 2040 with Project scenario impact analysis. The proposed transportation improvements include roadways and intersection improvements that have

been identified as needing operational improvements to maintain the function of the overall roadway system and accommodate growth over the life of the General Plan/LCP. The proposed improvements include several new streets to improve connectivity and walkability, primarily in the Live Oak and Aptos areas. The proposed project also recommends conducting studies to consider operational improvements for roundabouts, signalization, and/or other geometric improvements for planned improvements.

The design of transportation improvements would be completed by the County Department of Public Works as projects are programmed for funding or identified as part of a larger development project. The General Plan/LCP has incorporated by reference the County Active Transportation Plan as well as other adopted complete streets and corridor plans such as the Highway 9, San Lorenzo Valley Complete Streets Plan and the Portola Drive Streetscape Concepts.

Transportation improvements planned by Caltrans and SCCRTC also are considered in the travel model. Specifically, these improvements include: the constrained Regional Transportation Plan project list, including Highway 1 auxiliary lanes from 41<sup>st</sup> to Soquel and State Park to Park/Bay. Improvements that cannot be modeled but that are assumed to occur include multimodal projects such as the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, bicycle/pedestrian bridges over Highway 1, and some transit improvements. These are summarized in Table 4.0-1 in Section 4.0.1.2.

### EIR Notice of Preparation Comments

Public and agency comments were received during the public scoping period in response to the Notice of Preparation (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. Comments related to transportation included the following:

- Caltrans supports local development that is consistent with state policies to promote smart growth principles, such as pedestrian, bicycle and transit infrastructure or other Transportation Demand strategies.
- Regarding potential overcrossings on State Route 1, any encroachment in the State's ROW will require a permit from Caltrans. Caltrans oversight for project review and approval may be more appropriate.
- Effective July 2020, Caltrans will replace vehicle LOS with VMT as the primary metric for identifying transportation impacts under CEQA.
- The EIR should establish significance thresholds for later projects especially related to GHG emissions and transportation.
- The EIR should be independent of prior studies, such as Regional Transportation Commission studies regarding east-west transportation and prepare independent research and analysis.
- The EIR should not evaluate traffic impacts until after the COVID-19 crisis is resolved to capture and analyze meaningful data.

- Event centers, wineries and breweries in rural areas should not be allowed; impacts to roads and from noise should be analyzed.
- CEQA analysis should address fire impacts on rural roads from allowing increased commercial uses in rural residential areas.
- Traffic is congested along Porter/Old San Jose Road and Soquel Avenue.
- One comment asked if a new traffic study will be provided with reference to the Nissan traffic study.
- Transportation infrastructure should be reviewed.
- One comment asked about the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue/Soquel Drive intersection and how to make it more walkable.
- The EIR should include a robust system of protected or separate bike lanes or paths throughout the county.
- There are no bike lanes with barriers along Soquel Drive and comment questions the number of users if protected bike lanes were provided.
- One comment asked how many people in the Soquel mountains would use a train and benefit from more buses and questions the impact on traffic if smaller buses were added to mountain roads.
- The EIR should prioritize connecting the Watsonville area with the rest of the county by using a rapid and inexpensive mode of mass transit.

To the extent that issues identified in public comments involve potentially significant effects on the environment according to CEQA and/or are raised by responsible agencies, they are identified and addressed within this EIR.

### 4.15.3.3 Project Impact Analysis

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**Impact TRA-1: Conflict with County VMT Threshold (Significance Threshold TRA-2 and TRA-3).** Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update would indirectly generate new development that could exceed the County’s adopted VMT threshold. ***(Significant and Unavoidable)***.

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#### VMT Analysis Methods and Assumptions

As previously indicated, the proposed project’s VMT analysis was conducted using the SCCTDM for residential, non-residential/employment-based and retail uses as further explained in Appendix G-2. The land use inputs were provided by the County staff for the unincorporated areas and staff from respective cities in the region. The proposed project land use for the county was forecasted based on the potential changes in intensities in the USL as proposed in the Built Environment (BE) Element, taking into account vacant and underutilized land and proximity to corridors that will support transit and active transportation facilities, as well as known and proposed transportation improvements. All roadway network assumptions for year 2040 Baseline were included in Year 2040 Project, plus the scenario-specific assumptions.

The VMT analysis for residential land uses was estimated for all home-based trip purposes, and VMT for non-residential or employment land uses was computed from the home-based work VMT. The external VMT for residential land uses was determined by multiplying the calibrated external trip distance for each transportation analysis zone (TAZ) two to calculate the total internal-external home-based trips for that TAZ. The external VMT for non-residential land uses was determined by multiplying the calibrated external trip distance by TAZ determined previously by the total internal-external home-based work trips for that TAZ. The non-residential land uses in the SCCTDM included: agriculture, construction, industrial, service, and public sectors.

### VMT Results

#### *Residential Land Uses*

Table 4.15-3 summarizes the residential VMT per capita (as well as VMT per office/service employee) for the unincorporated portion of the county for each analyzed scenario. The existing residential per capita VMT is 12.6, and the County’s VMT threshold for residential use is 8.9 VMT per capita. The residential VMT under Existing with Project scenario is 12.1, which is less than the existing VMT, but 36% more than the County’s adopted threshold. The residential VMT per capita is higher than the County’s threshold under all other scenarios analyzed for the proposed project, but less than the existing VMT. The proposed project would result in a VMT that is 33.4% higher than the threshold in the year 2040 Project scenario.

**Table 4.15-3. Vehicle Miles Traveled for Residential and Office/Service Land Uses in Unincorporated Santa Cruz County**

Scenario	Residential VMT/capita	Office/Service VMT/Employee
<b>Adopted VMT Threshold</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>7.4</b>
Existing	12.6	9.9
Existing + Project	12.1	9.8
2040 Baseline	12.0	9.3
2040 Project	11.9	9.2
2040 Cumulative	12.0	9.3
Existing + Project Scenario Compared to Threshold (%)	36.0%	31.6%
2040 Baseline Scenario Compared to Threshold (%)	34.4%	25.1%
2040 Project Scenario Compared to Threshold (%)	33.4%	23.9%
2040 Cumulative Scenario Compared to Threshold (%)	34.3%	24.8%

**Source:** Kimley-Horn 2021b.

### Office/Service Land Uses

Table 4.15-3 also summarizes the office/service land use VMT per employee for the unincorporated portion of the county for each analyzed scenario. The existing office/service VMT per employee is 9.9, and VMT threshold per employee for service/office uses is 7.4. The VMT per employee under Existing with Project scenario is 9.8, which is 31.6% above the threshold. The VMT per employee for service/office uses in 2040 with the project is 9.2, which is less than the existing VMT, but approximately 24% above the threshold. The VMT per employee is higher than the VMT threshold under all other scenarios analyzed; however, it is less than the existing VMT of 9.9 per employee.

### Retail Uses

Consistent with County’s VMT guidelines, retail land uses were analyzed. Local-serving retail primarily serves pre-existing needs (i.e., these uses do not generate new trips because they meet existing demand). Because of this, local-serving retail uses can be presumed to reduce trip lengths when a new store is proposed. Essentially, the assumption is that someone will travel to a newly constructed local-serving store because of its proximity, rather than the proposed retail store fulfilling an unmet need (i.e., the person had an existing need that was met by the retail located further away and is now traveling to the new retail use because it is closer to the person’s origin location). This results in a trip on the roadway network becoming shorter, rather than a new trip being added to the roadway network, which would result in an impact to the overall transportation system. Conversely, residential and office land uses often drive new trips given that they introduce new participants to the transportation system. The County’s guidelines provides for a general threshold of 50,000 square feet as an indicator as to whether a retail store can be considered local serving or not.

VMT for retail land uses was computed from the home-based work VMT (i.e., attractions). Table 4.15-4 summarizes the total retail VMT by scenario in the unincorporated portion of the county. As shown, all four analysis scenarios result in a total VMT that is lower than the Existing scenario, and thus, the project would result in no impact related to VMT for retail uses.

**Table 4.15-4. Retail Vehicle Miles Traveled for Unincorporated Santa Cruz County**

Scenario	Retail VMT
Existing Scenario	87,047
Existing + Project Scenario	86,427
2040 Baseline Scenario	78,927
2040 Project Scenario	81,175
2040 Cumulative Scenario	83,657
Existing + Project Scenario Compared to Existing (%)	-0.7%
2040 Baseline Scenario Compared to Existing (%)	-9.3%
2040 Project Scenario Compared to Existing (%)	-6.7%
2040 Cumulative Scenario Compared to Existing (%)	-3.9%

Source: Kimley-Horn 2021b.

### Other Employment

Table 4.15-5 summarizes the VMT per employee for other employment in the unincorporated portion of the county for each analyzed scenario. VMT per employee were calculated for other non-residential uses: industrial and public. Most land use applications for employment categories other than service and retail fall into either the industrial or public categories. The County VMT threshold for other employment uses is 15% below the existing county-wide average work VMT per employee for similar land uses. As shown in Table 4.15-5, estimated VMT shows that neither of these uses would meet the County’s VMT threshold, although VMT/employee for these uses in 2040 is less than under existing conditions.

**Table 4.15-5. Vehicle Miles Traveled by for Other Employment Land Uses in Unincorporated Santa Cruz County**

Scenario	Industrial VMT/Employee	Public VMT/Employee
<b>Adopted VMT Threshold</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>
Existing	17.1	10.0
Existing + Project	16.8	9.8
2040 Baseline	15.3	9.1
2040 Project	15.7	9.3
2040 Cumulative	17.6	9.3
Existing + Project Scenario Compared to Threshold (%)	52.7%	40.2%
2040 Baseline Scenario Compared to Threshold (%)	39.0%	30.0%
2040 Project Scenario Compared to Threshold (%)	42.2%	32.3%
2040 Cumulative Scenario Compared to Threshold (%)	60.1%	31.9%

Source: Kimley-Horn 2021b.

### Project VMT Conclusion

Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update would not directly result in new development but could indirectly lead to future development and redevelopment primarily within urban areas within the County’s USL, This new development could result in residential and employee VMT that does not meet the County’s VMT threshold. The proposed project would result in VMT that is below the existing VMT. However, the project VMT would not meet the County’s VMT threshold (15% below existing countywide average) for residential per capita and employee VMT (except for retail employee VMT), resulting in a significant impact.

There are a number of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements that are planned or proposed (both in the proposed project and those associated with other transportation agencies) that could help reduce VMT by providing enhanced alternative modes of transportation other than automobile travel. However, because many of these projects are not funded, they are not accounted for as a component

of the 2040 Baseline or Project. As described above, the 2040 Project scenario included only projects that are reasonably foreseeable, including regional transit and highway projects. This was defined based on what was included on the SCCRTC's constrained RTP list. Large transit projects such as rail, or bus rapid transit are not included on the RTP constrained list; and, therefore, while the project includes many policies to support transit projects, they are not considered an element of the proposed Sustainability Update. Furthermore, the traffic model also cannot forecast reductions due to new and improved active transportation facilities, which is an important component of the proposed project and the proposed AM Element. Nor does it account for employer-required TDM programs. Therefore, reductions related to increases in bicycle and pedestrian mode share, carpooling, and new TDM programs are also not accounted for in the Project VMT results, and therefore the results are considered conservative.

The proposed project includes policies that support transportation improvements and other measures that would serve to reduce VMT as summarized in Table 4.15-6. These include policies that support multiple transportation modes (AM-2.1.1, AM-2.1.2, AM-2.1.3), coordinated land use and transportation planning (BE-1.2.1), and multi-modal improvements as part of future development projects (AM-6.2.2). Policies support the implementation of high-quality transit facilities in the county, as well as bicycle and pedestrian improvements, as summarized in Table 4.15-6, the implementation of which would serve to help reduce total VMT by providing additional and/or enhanced opportunities for alternative transportation modes. In addition, the proposed Sustainability Update encourages infill, mixed-use, and intensified development within the USL, which would serve to locate higher density development in proximity to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities that would encourage and promote use of transportation modes other than automobiles.

The County's VMT Guidelines also include TDM strategies that can be implemented as project design features and/or mitigation measures to offset a project's VMT. TDM measures are required for certain types of development pursuant to the SCCC, and future development projects could include the following types of measures:

- **Parking Strategies:** Reducing parking supply, unbundle parking, parking cash-out, residential area parking permits, and parking management strategies.
- **Transit Strategies:** Transit stops, Safe and Well-Lit Access to Transit, Implement Neighborhood Shuttle, Transit Subsidies.
- **Communication and Information Strategies:** Travel Behavior Change Program with Promotions and Marketing.
- **Commuting Strategies:** Employer sponsored vanpool or shuttle, preferential carpool/vanpool parking spaces, passenger loading zones for carpool/vanpool, on-site carts, shuttles or bikes, emergency ride home program, alternative work schedule, telecommuting, on-site childcare
- **Shared Mobility Strategies:** Mandatory Cruz 511, Ride Amigos or comparable program, car-share, on-site employer car share, school carpool program
- **Bicycle Infrastructure Strategies:** Bike share, implement/improve bicycle facility, include bike parking in excess of SCCC requirements, implement end of trip facilities, bicycle repair station/facilities

- Neighborhood Strategies: Traffic-calming improvements, pedestrian-calming improvements
- Miscellaneous Strategies such as Virtual Care for Hospitals/Healthcare Providers/Medical Office Building/Clinics and On-site Affordable Housing.

The combined effect of the lack of funded transit projects and the inability to model the impacts of TDM programs and active transportation projects, which are also largely unfunded, result in VMT reductions that realizes the benefit of infill development, but would not meet the County's VMT threshold, despite implementation of improved multimodal transportation policies. Furthermore, implementation of TDM measures as part of future developments also would serve to reduce VMT.

While certain methodologies exist and are available for estimating VMT reductions due to active transportation projects and TDM, the degree to which these programs will come online over the life of the General Plan/LCP and the degree to which these measures can reduce VMT to meet the County's threshold, is unknown. It is noted that past studies have indicated that generally, implementation of TDM programs and other trip reduction measures, could achieve a maximum 15% reduction of VMT in urban and suburban settings (CAPCOA 2010). As shown in Tables 4.15-4 and 4.15-5, the proposed project would result in VMT that is higher than the County's threshold (by more than 15%) for residential and non-residential uses (except retail uses), and thus, even with full implementation of TDM measures, there likely would not be a sufficient reduction to meet the County's VMT threshold. Therefore, while the proposed project reduces VMT from existing conditions and contains policies as shown in Table 4.15-6 that focus new development in the USL and seek to coordinate land use and transportation improvements, encourage the development and use of non-motorized transportation facilities, as well as several transportation improvements to facilitate an efficient circulation system, the project would result in a significant impact related to VMT,

It is noted that future development projects would be subject to review under the County's VMT Guidelines, which identify projects that require VMT analysis and others that would be automatically considered within significance thresholds due to size, proximity to high quality transit, and other screening criteria. The County's significance thresholds are based on land use type, broadly categorized as efficiency and net change metrics. Efficiency metrics include VMT per capita and VMT per employee and are used for residential and non-residential uses, respectively. Therefore, some types of future projects, such as small projects, projects near high quality transit, local-serving retail projects, and affordable housing projects could be found to meet the County's VMT threshold, while others will require mitigation to meet the threshold.

**Table 4.15-6. Proposed and Retained General Plan/LCP Policies that Avoid/Minimize VMT Impacts**

Potential Impact	Policies and Implementation Strategies
<p><b>Meet County VMT threshold</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require new development to prioritize bike and pedestrian connections to activity centers. (AM-1.1.4)</li> <li>• Require transit supportive design and improvements from development in high-quality transit areas. (AM-1.1c)</li> <li>• Design for and accommodate multiple transportation modes. (AM-2. 1.2)</li> <li>• Encourage developers to provide multimodal improvements that shift travelers from vehicles to alternative modes to improve LOS and reduce VMT. (AM-6.2.2)</li> <li>• Layered Network approach to streets for priority uses. (AM-2.1.1)</li> <li>• Work with Caltrans to widen shoulders on rural highways where possible where there is bike and pedestrian usage. (AM-2.1.5)</li> <li>• Allow reduction of trip generation rates where demonstrated that TDM and other measures will reduce trips for the purposes of calculating VMT. (AM-6.2.3)</li> <li>• Coordinate land use and transportation planning such that high intensity building is coordinated with transportation improvements. (BE-1.2.1)</li> <li>• In SCS opportunity areas located within 0.5 mile of high-quality transit corridors, encourage new infill development with compact housing and commercial activity centers, with associated public facilities. (BE-1.2.2)</li> <li>• Along multimodal corridors, encourage high building intensity land use designations with compact housing options, mixed-use development, and diverse employment opportunities to support more frequent and convenient transit service. (BE-1.2.3)</li> <li>• Along Active Connectors where pedestrians and bicycles are prioritized, encourage land uses to facilitate neighborhood trips. (BE-1.2.4)</li> <li>• Along Main Streets where pedestrians are prioritized, encourage infill mixed-use development. (BE-1.2.5)</li> <li>• Facilitate employment-focused activity centers along the Soquel Drive corridor, with high-quality transit, pedestrian, and bicycle amenities, as well as multifamily housing, retail, and restaurants. (BE-1.3.4)</li> <li>• Encourage redevelopment of existing commercial shopping centers as activity centers, through higher-intensity development, mixed uses, to improve walkability and connection to transit. (BE-1.3.6)</li> <li>• Encourage sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus routes that support a variety of transportation options within and between neighborhoods. (BE-1.4.2)</li> <li>• In residential and commercial development areas, consider pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connecting development to nearby public trails and parks. (BE-1.4.6)</li> <li>• Implement the Urban High Density Flex Residential land use designation, served by a full range of urban services and easy access to activity centers, multimodal corridors, and mobility hubs. (BE-2.1.6)</li> <li>• Locate facilities of any type to minimize distances to major transportation services. (Public Safety Policy 6.7.12/6.10.12*)</li> </ul>

**Note:** \* In September 2020, the County Board of Supervisors adopted revisions to the General Plan Public Safety Element. The revisions (all except sections related to coastal bluffs and beaches) were approved by the California Coastal Commission in February 2022 subject to County acceptance of modifications.

## Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would require development and implementation of a funding mechanism to support regional VMT-reducing projects, and Mitigation Measure TRA-2 recommends a General Plan/LCP implementing strategy to further review parking requirements as another means to reduce vehicle travel and VMT. However, because of the uncertainty as to whether such VMT program could fully fund VMT-reduction measures to the level needed to meet the County's VMT threshold, the impact may not be fully mitigated to a less-than-significant level, resulting in a *significant and unavoidable impact*.

**MM TRA-1: VMT Mitigation Program:** Develop and implement a mechanism to create funding for transit, active transportation, and multimodal improvements throughout the county by allowing development projects to offset VMT impacts by contributing to a bank and/or support a VMT exchange that reduces VMT at the regional scale and allows development projects to proceed with mitigation.

VMT mitigation programs are being developed throughout California in order to address development projects that cannot self-mitigate in order to allow continued economic development and housing growth while still achieving the overall goal of GHG reductions. Many of the programs are funded through the Caltrans grants. The County received a grant through the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program Sustainable Communities Competitive funding pool. The Sustainable Communities Competitive grant funds local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region's RTP and SCS (where applicable), contribute to the state's GHG reduction targets, and assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives. Currently Caltrans is also conducting its own research to help localities implement a VMT mitigation program as there has been a widespread demonstrated need for such a program.

**MM TRA-2: TDM Program:** Add an implementation strategy to evaluate other parking-related measures that, if feasible, could become part of the County's TDM requirements: reduced parking requirements for commercial and residential uses and implementation of paid parking, and potential use of fees to help fund transit.

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**Impact TRA-2: Conflict with Program, Policy or Regulation Addressing Circulation System (Significance Threshold TRA-2).** Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. *(Less than Significant)*.

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## Consistency with Local and Regional Plans

The proposed project would amend the County's existing General Plan/LCP, including replacement of the existing Circulation Element with the proposed AM Element, as well as minor revisions to transportation-related sections in the SCCC. The proposed AM Element generally provides a greater focus on an enhanced multi-modal transportation system, and includes policies that support transit,

bicycle, and pedestrian travel modes, as well as policies for operations. The proposed element continues support for use of the Santa Cruz Branch Line and the Santa Cruz Big Trees rail corridors for recreational travel, freight and high-quality transit service, as determined by the SCCRTC and other rail corridor owners. The new AM Element includes a new objective and supporting policies and implementing strategies to increase shuttle, transit, and active transportation travel within the tourism sector to the county’s beaches, parks, and other recreational areas. The proposed element includes policies that support development of facilities addressing the overall circulation system, including roads, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities as summarized in Table 4.15-7. In addition, several new connector road segments are proposed in the USL, primarily in Live Oak and Soquel, including pedestrian and bicycle connections, which would improve circulation.

**Table 4.15-7. Proposed and Retained General Plan/LCP Policies that Avoid/Minimize Impacts Related to Conflicts with Transportation Plans, Programs, and Policies**

Potential Impact	Policies and Implementation Strategies
<p>Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities</p>	<p><b>Alternative Transportation Modes and Multi-modal Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a layered network approach to complete streets with priority uses. (AM-2.1.1)</li> <li>• Work toward making Complete Streets practices a routine part of the County approach to the transportation network for all categories of users. (AM-2.1.2)</li> <li>• Use performance measures that capture all modes when evaluating project prioritization for plans and programs. (AM-2.1.4)</li> <li>• Work with Caltrans to incorporate “Main Street” principles into improvements on SR 9 and other state routes that act as main streets for communities. (AM-2.1g)</li> <li>• Require new recreation and visitor-serving development to support alternative transportation, including provision of shuttles, promotion of bicycling and walking to nearby attractions, construction of bus turnouts, bus shelters, and parking for busses and shuttles. (AM-1.2.1)</li> <li>• Encourage and allow developers to provide multimodal improvements that shift travelers from vehicles to alternative modes to improve LOS and reduce VMT. (AM-6.2.2)</li> <li>• Work with Caltrans to widen shoulders on rural highways where possible where there is bike and pedestrian usage. (AM-2.1.5)</li> <li>• Provide access to recreation facilities through provision of public transportation and/or active transportation (e.g., trails). ( PPF-2.1.2)</li> <li>• Locate facilities to minimize distances to major transportation services. (Public Safety Policy 6.7.12 /6.10.12*)</li> </ul> <p><b>Roadways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop complete streets plans. (AM-2.1.3, AM-2.1.4)</li> <li>• Establish plan lines for future road improvements. (AM-5.1.4)</li> <li>• Focus capital improvements in existing high traffic corridors or projects that improve system efficiency. (AM-5.1b)Require development to dedicate frontage property and construction of improvements or pay fair-share fees. (AM-5.1d)</li> <li>• Require development projects to provide multimodal road improvements to achieve LOS of D except where lesser LOS has been accepted by County and require improvements or fees where LOS is E or F. (AM-6.2.1)</li> </ul>

**Table 4.15-7. Proposed and Retained General Plan/LCP Policies that Avoid/Minimize Impacts Related to Conflicts with Transportation Plans, Programs, and Policies**

Potential Impact	Policies and Implementation Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow reduction of standard trip generation rates for the purposes of VMT analyses where demonstrated that TDM and other measures/considerations will reduce trips. (AM-6.2.3)</li> <li>• Require payment of transportation Impact fees. (AM-6.2a)</li> </ul> <p><b>Transit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider transit signal pre-emption and other improvements to improve transit travel time as streets are improved. (AM-1.1h)</li> <li>• Preserve the Santa Cruz Branch Line and the Santa Cruz Big Trees rail corridors for recreational travel, freight and high-quality transit service, as determined by the SCCRTC. Support a rail station at Pajaro junction for inter-regional rail service and connectivity to future High Speed Passenger Rail. (AM-1.1.6)<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Require transit supportive design and improvements from development in high-quality transit areas. (AM-1.1c)</li> <li>• Ensure new development does not encroach on rail corridors and improve access to corridor where possible. (AM-1.1f)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Develop coordinated transit marketing efforts with METRO, hotels, motels, restaurants, convention facilities, the University of California at Santa Cruz, and local merchants. (AM-1.2a)</li> </ul> <p><b>Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require new development to prioritize bike and pedestrian connections to activity centers. (AM-1.1.4)</li> <li>• Connect neighborhoods to nearby commercial land uses by filling gaps in active transportation infrastructure, with a goal of accommodating 15-minute walks or bicycle rides between residential areas and destinations. (AM-1.1.5)</li> <li>• Locate recreational bike routes on scenic roads (AM-1.2b) and plan bike routes to facilitate access to recreational areas. (AM-4.1.1)</li> <li>• Consider limiting through traffic on select local roads and open streets to bike and pedestrian travel. (AM-2.1.6)</li> <li>• Work with the hospitality industry to promote recreational bicycle routes as "eco-tourism." (AM-1.2.2.)</li> <li>• Develop and maintain coastal vista points, overlooks, benches, amenities for pedestrians. (AM-4.1.2)</li> <li>• Support regional trail plan efforts. (AM-4.1.3)</li> <li>• Prioritize roadway safety projects in CIP and include new active transportation improvements. (AM-6.1b)</li> </ul>

**Note:** \* In September 2020, the County Board of Supervisors adopted revisions to the General Plan Public Safety Element. The revisions (all except sections related to coastal bluffs and beaches) were approved by the California Coastal Commission in February 2022 subject to County acceptance of modifications.

<sup>3</sup> The Greenway Initiative petition was filed in December 2021 with the County Clerk and will be placed on the June 7, 2022 general election ballot. If passed, the initiative would restore and amend existing General Plan/LCP policies and proposed AM policies that support rail-trail development on the Santa Cruz Branch Line rail corridor.

The new roadway typology systems identifies multimodal corridors that correspond to AMBAG’s future high quality transit corridors. While there is currently no high-quality transit in the County, the corresponding policies in both the BE Element and the AM Element, which encourage development clustered and focused near these corridors are a long-term strategy to support high quality transit.

With regards to road operations, the proposed project continues to seek to maintain LOS D or better at signalized intersections, but also accepts a lower LOS and higher congestion at major regional intersections if necessary improvements would be prohibitively costly or result in significant, unacceptable environmental impacts (AM-6.2.1). As previously indicated, LOS is no longer a measure of transportation impacts under CEQA, but a LOS analysis was conducted and provided in Appendix G-3 for informational purposes. The results indicate that development and growth indirectly resulting from the proposed Sustainability Update could lead to LOS operations at three intersections in addition to four intersections in the 2040 Baseline scenario that would not achieve the County’s LOS standard of D. However, proposed General Plan/LCP policy AM-6.2.1 allows a lesser LOS to be accepted by the County pursuant to the criteria specifically identified in the proposed AM Element, including locations where there are only marginal deficiencies on a portion of the road, where ROW requirements for additional travel lanes would adversely affect existing development, where impacts require a regional solution, and/or where improvements to a LOS of D would result in adverse biological or cultural impacts. When development is proposed on roads where a LOS E or F standard has been accepted, the policy further requires that development provide feasible mitigation in the form of road improvements, a fair share contribution to a road improvement program, or other in-lieu mitigation for the transportation system. Thus, a lower LOS could be accepted and/or intersection improvements, such as signalization, could be implemented. Therefore, implementation of this proposed policy in conjunction with improvements and payment of transportation improvement fees that would be required of future development projects, would ensure that future development resulting from the proposed project does not result in conflicts with County policies regarding LOS.

In addition, the proposed project includes several changes to the SCCC that promote reduction in vehicle trips and use of non-vehicular modes of travel. A new Chapter 13.16 is proposed in the SCCC that revises vehicle and bicycle parking standards that were formerly included in SCCC sections 13.10.550-578. The revisions generally consolidate sections related to provision of site access, off-street vehicle parking, bicycle parking, driveway standards, and transportation-related site design standards. Key changes include a complete update to bicycle parking and shower facility requirements (at work places to encourage bicycling); and provision of electric vehicle infrastructure requirements. The chapter also includes a TDM section that was formerly included in SCCC Chapter 5.52. TDM requirements are revised and expanded such that TDM programs would be required for new development or at the time of a major alteration or enlargement for projects that meet one of the following criteria: 1) residential developments of 25 or more units; 2) non-residential development with employers or multitenant sites with 50 or more employees that arrive or leave work during peak periods; and 3) mixed use developments that meet either criteria (1) or (2). Proposed revisions to zone district development standards also note that sidewalks and other amenities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders are required based on street typology and roadway classification included

in the proposed AM Element. Space for these amenities may lead to larger front and street side setback requirements per SCCC 15.10.050 and the County of Santa Cruz Design Criteria.

Taken together, the proposed General Plan/LCP and SCCC amendments would not result in conflicts with existing local or regional programs, plans, ordinances or policies addressing the county's circulation system. The proposed project in part implements the vision established for the county's urban area in the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan (SSCC), which establishes a community-based vision for a more sustainable way-of-life in Live Oak, Soquel, and Aptos; however the proposed AM Element also addresses transportation and circulation needs throughout the unincorporated areas of the county. As indicated in Chapter 3, Project Description, the proposed AM Element has been revised to address the transportation system needed for sustainable development. This includes a street typology system to reflect the SSCC vision of a layered network approach to achieve multi-modal transportation on a circulation system with limited ROW and a constrained topography. The proposed AM Element seeks to strengthen the connection with multi-modal transportation planning to develop sustainable urban neighborhoods and supports travel modes other than automobiles.

The proposed policies address the key performance standards outlined in the SSCC Plan. Performance measures are used to evaluate how well the transportation network is functioning, to evaluate individual improvement projects, and to characterize the potential impacts of new development on the existing transportation network (County of Santa Cruz 2014). While vehicle LOS has been the traditional performance measure for traffic, it focuses solely on automobile delay and does not address pedestrian, bicyclist or transit performance. LOS is now replaced with VMT as the metric for analyzing automobile transportation impacts in CEQA, and performance metrics for other travel modes have been identified by the County to include whether an improvement would:

- Improve overall street connectivity
- Improve pedestrian safety and access to activity centers (including schools, workplaces, commercial areas and public facilities)
- Improve bike safety and access
- Create safe routes to transit and increases opportunities to ride transit
- Improve management of parking supply and access to park-and-ride lots
- Create livable public spaces around activity centers
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Be consistent with other plans and projects (County of Santa Cruz 2014).

The proposed Sustainability Update also is consistent with regional plans: AMBAG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) and SCCRTC's RTP. Specifically, the proposed project's policies summarized in Table 4.15-7 are consistent with the 2040 MTP/SCS goal and policy objectives to "Provide convenient, accessible, and reliable travel options while maximizing productivity for all people and goods in the region." The proposed project addresses all travel modes as described above and is consistent with transportation implementation strategies set

forth in the MTP/SCS. Similarly, the proposed project is consistent with the 2040 RTP's policies related to transportation and sustainability, which include goals and policies that seek to improve multimodal access to key destinations, ensure network connectivity by closing gaps in the bicycle, pedestrian and transit networks, support land use decisions that locate new facilities close to exiting services, and to expand TDM and transportation system management programs. The proposed AM Element and other policies of the proposed Sustainability Update support these goals and policies, and do not result in conflicts with the 2040 RTP.

### Impact Conclusion

Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update would not result in conflicts with existing plans, programs, policies or ordinances that address the circulation system in the unincorporated area of the county, including road, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Therefore, the proposed Sustainability would result in a *less-than-significant impact*.

### Mitigation Measures

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

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**Impact TRA-3: Increase Hazards Due to Design Feature (Significance Threshold TRA-3).** Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. (*Less than Significant*).

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The project includes several proposed new roadways in the USL as shown in Figure 3-4 and Table 3-5 in Chapter 3, Project Description, but roadway geometrics have yet to be designed. Future roadways would be designed to meet all applicable road design and sight distance standards that would avoid creation of hazardous conditions including fire department requirements. In addition, new roadways, as well as new access driveways would be required to meet the County of Santa Cruz Design Criteria, which provides standards for safe roadway design. Furthermore, the proposed project includes several policies and goals in the proposed AM Element to avoid or minimize impacts related to hazardous conditions within road and transportation system designs that are summarized in Table 4.15-8. These proposed policies provide for safe access and improvements to the county roadway system, as well as prevent incompatible land uses to avoid transportation conflict and potential roadway safety hazards. For each improvement, roadway conditions would be further studied. County staff would continue to monitor changes to the roadway system that require geometric design features or incompatible uses and would analyze and identify strategies to reduce these impacts. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses, and the impact would be *less than significant*.

**Table 4.15-8. Proposed and Retained General Plan/LCP Policies that Avoid/Minimize Impacts Related to Hazardous Designs**

Potential Impact	Policies and Implementation Strategies
<p>Increase road hazards due to design feature or incompatible uses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Address system design, vehicle technology and enforcement to reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities. (AM-2.2.1)</li> <li>♦ Plan and program infrastructure that promotes safe means of travel. (AM-2.2.3)</li> <li>♦ Design streets to meet target speeds. (AM-2.2d)</li> <li>♦ Design new intersections, roads to reduce conflict points between vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists. (AM-2.2e)</li> <li>♦ Stripe roads, particularly coastal roads to discourage parked cars from creating hazards for bicyclists. (AM-2.2f)</li> <li>♦ Plan for safety in new developments adjacent to rail corridors. (AM-2.2g)</li> <li>♦ Design adequate roadway infrastructure for fire and emergency response safety. (AM-6.1.1)</li> </ul>

**Mitigation Measures**

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

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**Impact TRA-4: Result in Inadequate Emergency Access (Significance Threshold TRA-4).** Adoption and implementation of the proposed Sustainability Update would result in inadequate emergency access. *(Less than Significant).*

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The proposed project consists of policy and regulatory updates to the County’s General Plan/LCP and SCC, and would not directly result in new development that would result in inadequate emergency access. Additionally, the proposed AM Element includes policies that would minimize the impacts related to provision of inadequate emergency access. Specifically, proposed Policy AM-6.1.1 calls for adequate roads for fire and emergency response access, which would be reviewed as part of future development project applications. In addition, County staff would work in conjunction with the Fire Department, and other emergency access providers to continue to coordinate development review and review of new roads with Fire District and Sheriff’s Department staff (AM-6-1a). Therefore, the proposed project would not directly result in inadequate emergency access, and the project would result in a *less-than-significant impact*.

**Mitigation Measures**

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

#### 4.15.3.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The cumulative analysis includes the proposed project and other approved projects and planned growth in other jurisdictions as summarized in Table 4.0-1 in Section 4.0.3. Each jurisdiction within the county has its own adopted VMT thresholds that follow the state guidance of 15% below the countywide VMT. As shown in Table 4.15-3, the cumulative analysis shows a VMT of 12.0 per capita for residential land uses and 9.3 per employee for office/service uses. Other employee uses show a VMT of 17.6 and 9.3 for industrial and public employees, respectively, under cumulative conditions (see Table 4.15-5). While VMT is less than the existing VMT for all sectors except industrial employment, the cumulative VMT exceeds the County and other local thresholds as shown in Table 4.15-3 and Table 4-15-5. Therefore, cumulative development and growth, both within the unincorporated county and in the incorporated cities, would result in a *significant cumulative impact* related to conflicts with VMT requirements and thresholds.

As previously discussed, typical measures to reduce VMT related to transit and active transportation projects typically can result in reduction in VMT. However, under cumulative conditions, the proposed project would be approximately 34% above the threshold for residential VMT and 24.8% higher than the threshold for office/service and other employment VMT, and thus, likely would not achieve the VMT reductions needed to meet the County's threshold. Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would set up a VMT mitigation program that would create another mechanism for funding transit, active transportation, and multimodal improvements within the county, but the exact reductions of such a program are not known. Mitigation Measure TRA-2 would add a new implementation strategy to further study parking management strategies that could help reduce vehicle travel and VMT, as well as fund transit, but the extent of reduction if determined to be feasible is not known. There are no other feasible mitigation measures to reduce VMT in addition to the policies and regulations in place and modified as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, the project's contribution to cumulative transportation impacts would be a cumulatively considerable contribution, resulting in a *significant and unavoidable cumulative impact* related to VMT.

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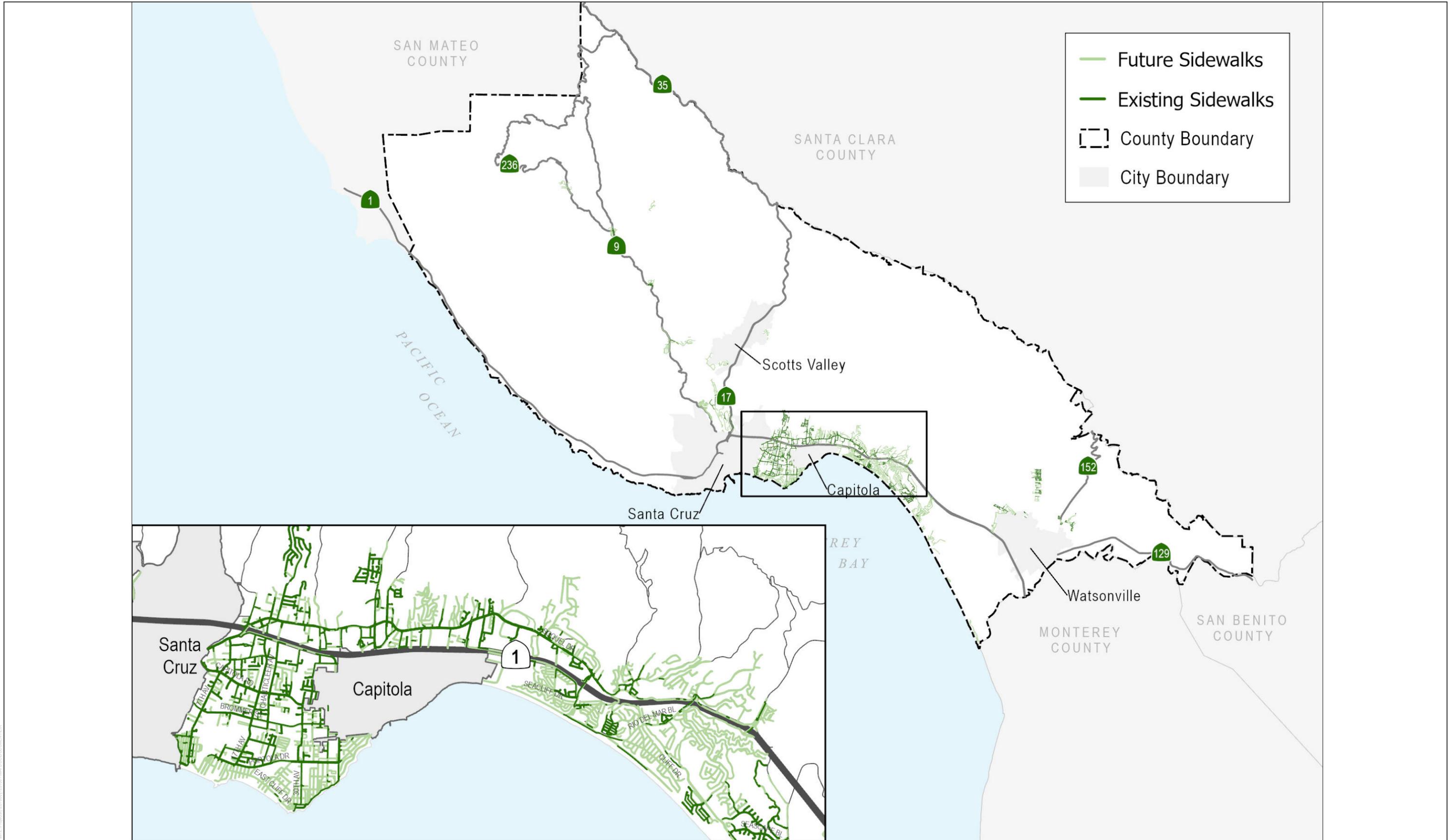
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#### 4.15.5 Figures

Figure 4.15-1. Existing and Proposed Pedestrian Transportation Network

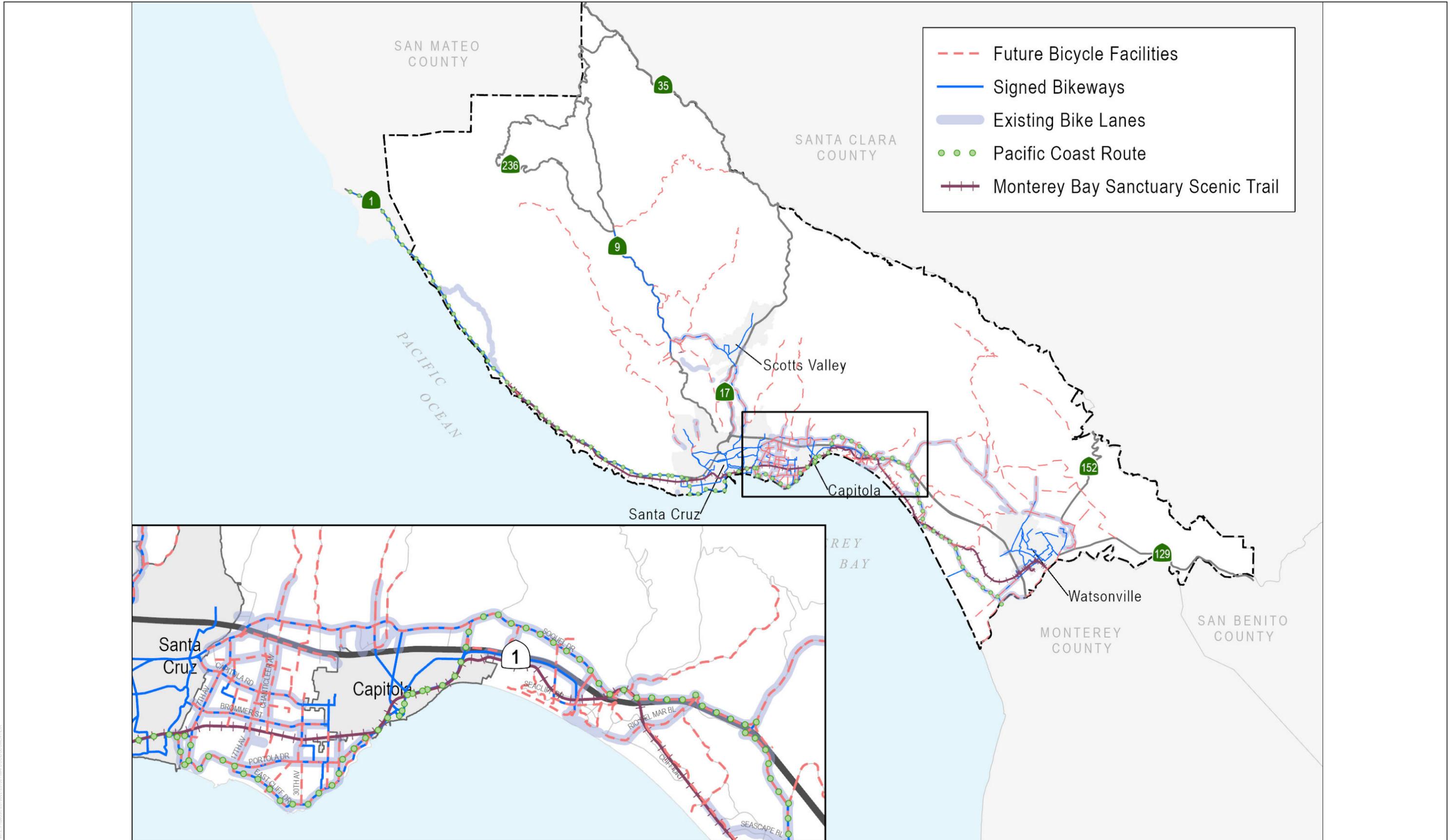
Figure 4.15-2. Existing and Proposed Bicycle Transportation Network

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SOURCE: County of Santa Cruz 2021

FIGURE 4.15-1



SOURCE: County of Santa Cruz 2021

FIGURE 4.15-2

Existing and Proposed Bicycle Transportation Network  
 County of Santa Cruz Sustainability Policy and Regulatory Update