

1 INTRODUCTION

This final environmental impact report (final EIR) has been prepared by the County of Ventura, Resource Management Agency, Planning Division (County), as lead agency, in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15132). This final EIR contains responses to comments received on the draft environmental impact report (draft EIR) for the Ventura County 2040 General Plan Update (hereinafter referred to as the “2040 General Plan”). The final EIR consists of the draft EIR and this document, which includes comments on the draft EIR, responses to those comments, and revisions to the draft EIR.

1.1 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USES OF THIS FINAL EIR

CEQA requires a lead agency that has prepared a draft EIR to consult with and obtain comments from responsible and trustee agencies that have jurisdiction by law with respect to the project, and to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the draft EIR. The final EIR is the mechanism for responding to these comments. This final EIR has been prepared to respond to comments received on the draft EIR, which are reproduced in this document; and to present corrections, revisions, and other clarifications and amplifications to the draft EIR, including project updates, made in response to these comments and as a result of the applicant’s ongoing planning and design efforts. The final EIR will be used to support the County’s decision regarding whether to approve the 2040 General Plan.

This final EIR will also be used by CEQA responsible and trustee agencies to ensure that they have met their requirements under CEQA before deciding whether to approve or permit project elements over which they have jurisdiction. It may also be used by other State, regional, and local agencies that may have an interest in resources that could be affected by the project or that have jurisdiction over portions of the project.

Responsible, trustee, and interested agencies may include:

- ▶ California Department of Transportation,
- ▶ California Department of Conservation,
- ▶ Local Agency Formation Commission of Ventura County,
- ▶ California Department of Fish and Wildlife,
- ▶ California Department of Parks and Recreation, and
- ▶ California State Lands Commission.

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION

Ventura County is one of the six counties that collectively form the Central Coast region of California. It was created on January 1, 1873, when it separated from Santa Barbara County. Ventura County covers 1.2 million acres bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the southwest, Los Angeles County to the southeast and east, Santa Barbara County to the west, and Kern County to the north. The Los Padres National Forest accounts for approximately 574,000 acres, or 47 percent of the county’s total land area. This includes privately owned inholdings

surrounded by Los Padres National Forest which are not a part of the national forest. Outside of the Los Padres National Forest, there are approximately 528,000 acres of land in the unincorporated area (43 percent) and 121,000 acres in the county's 10 incorporated cities (10 percent). In addition to the mainland part of the county, two of the eight Channel Islands off the coast (San Nicolas Island and Anacapa Island) are also part of Ventura County. Anacapa Island is approximately 700 acres and is located within the Channel Islands National Park. San Nicolas Island encompasses approximately 14,000 acres and is located 65 miles south of Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu. Managed by the US Navy, San Nicolas Island serves as a launch platform and observation platform for short- and medium-range missile testing. Anacapa Island covers approximately 3,200 acres and is located 14 miles from the coast of Ventura County; it is one of the most visited islands of Channel Islands National Park because of its proximity to the mainland.¹

The County of Ventura has land use regulatory authority over most unincorporated land in the county, but lacks land use authority within the incorporated cities in the county: Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and Ventura. The County also does not have land use authority over land in the unincorporated area that is owned or managed by the State or federal government (e.g., State parks, State universities, national parks, U.S. Bureau of Land Management areas, and tribal lands), except for portions of State parks and other State land located in the coastal zone. Under State law, the County has land use authority over land owned or managed by special districts in the unincorporated area (e.g., cemetery districts, water districts), subject to limited exceptions.

1.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

For this EIR, the project objectives are defined as being expressed by the Guiding Principles contained in Section 1.2 of the 2040 General Plan. The project objectives are defined as follows:

- ▶ **Land Use and Community Character:** Direct urban growth away from agricultural, rural, and open space lands, in favor of locating it in cities and unincorporated communities where public facilities, services, and infrastructure are available or can be provided.
- ▶ **Housing:** Support the development of affordable and equitable housing opportunities by preserving and enhancing the existing housing supply and supporting diverse new housing types, consistent with the Guidelines for Orderly Development.
- ▶ **Circulation, Transportation, and Mobility:** Support the development of a balanced, efficient, and coordinated multimodal transportation network that meets the mobility and accessibility needs of all residents, businesses, and visitors.
- ▶ **Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure:** Invest in facilities, infrastructure, and services, including renewable energy, to promote efficiency and economic vitality, ensure public safety, and improve quality of life.
- ▶ **Conservation and Open Space:** Conserve and manage the County's open spaces and natural resources, including soils, water, air quality, minerals, biological resources, scenic resources, as well as historic and cultural resources.

¹ Note: the 2040 General Plan and associated mapping focus on the mainland areas of the county. This EIR follows the same convention. San Nicolas is designated State or Federal Facility. Anacapa Island is designated Open Space.

- ▶ **Hazards and Safety:** Minimize health and safety impacts to residents, businesses and visitors from human-caused hazards such as hazardous materials, noise, air, sea level rise, and water pollution, as well as managing lands to reduce the impacts of natural hazards such as flooding, wildland fires, and geologic events.
- ▶ **Agriculture:** Promote the economic vitality and environmental sustainability of Ventura County's agricultural economy by conserving soils/land while supporting a diverse and globally competitive agricultural industry that depends on the availability of water, land, and farmworker housing.
- ▶ **Water Resources:** Develop and manage water resources in a manner that addresses current demand without compromising the ability to meet future demand, while balancing the needs of urban and agricultural uses, and healthy ecosystems.
- ▶ **Economic Vitality:** Foster economic and job growth that is responsive to the evolving needs and opportunities of the County's economy, and preserves land use compatibility with Naval Base Ventura County and the Port of Hueneme, while enhancing quality of life and promoting environmental sustainability.
- ▶ **Climate Change and Resilience:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve all adopted targets, proactively anticipate and mitigate the impacts of climate change, promote employment opportunities in renewable energy and reducing greenhouse gases, and increase resilience to the effects of climate change.
- ▶ **Healthy Communities:** Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by investing in infrastructure that promotes physical activity, access to healthy foods, supporting the arts and integrating Health in All Policies into the built environment.
- ▶ **Environmental Justice:** Commit to the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies, protect disadvantaged communities from a disproportionate burden posed by toxic exposure and risk, and continue to promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process.

1.4 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

1.4.1 Overview of the 2040 General Plan

The 2040 General Plan is a comprehensive effort to update the existing General Plan and respond to current local and regional conditions, as well as changes in State law that may not have been in place when the existing General Plan was last updated in 2005. It clarifies and articulates the County's intentions with respect to the rights and expectations of the various communities, including residents, property owners, and businesses. Through the 2040 General Plan, the County informs these groups of its goals, policies, and standards, thereby communicating expectations of the public and private sectors for meeting community objectives. In addition, the general plan includes Area Plans that specifically address growth and resource concerns within nine of the county's identified communities.

The 2040 General Plan is organized to satisfy the State’s required general plan elements (or chapters). It addresses the State’s mandatory elements (i.e., land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety), plus the new requirements for air quality and environmental justice, and three new optional elements: water, agriculture, and economic development. Each of the general plan elements and Area Plans contain goals, policies, and implementation programs, which constitute the County of Ventura’s policies for land use, development and environmental quality. These terms are defined as follows:

- ▶ **Goal**— A statement that describes in general terms a desired future condition or end state. Goals describe ideal future conditions for a topic and tend to be very general and broad.
- ▶ **Policy**— A clear and unambiguous statement that guides a specific course of action for decision-makers to achieve a desired goal.
- ▶ **Implementation Program**—An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out general plan policy.

The current, comprehensive update process was initiated in 2015. To reach a wide variety of county residents and stakeholders, Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Planning Division staff conducted extensive community outreach to secure initial public, focus group, and advisory body input on the development of the draft 2040 General Plan. The County gathered community input through the following methods:

- ▶ Public Opinion Survey;
- ▶ Workshops, Open Houses, and Informational Sessions;
- ▶ Public Presentations;
- ▶ Project Website – www.VC2040.org;
- ▶ Technical Advisory Committee;
- ▶ Focus Groups;
- ▶ Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee;
- ▶ Municipal Advisory Councils and Piru Neighborhood Council; and
- ▶ Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors Meetings, Working Sessions, and Hearings.

During 2018, the public and the County’s Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors engaged in an alternatives process designed to guide development of the 2040 General Plan. The purpose of the alternatives process was to consider future land use and policy options and help the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors select a Preferred Alternative that provided the framework for preparing the 2040 General Plan. The Alternatives Report was presented to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission during joint work sessions in July and November 2018 (Ventura County 2018). The Alternatives Report established a framework for the 2040 General Plan by providing direction on the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles; Proposed General Plan Organization; Preferred Land Use Alternative; and Policy Choices.

The preliminary public review draft of the 2040 General Plan was released for public review on May 9, 2019. Following public input and work sessions with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, a public review draft 2040 General Plan was released for public review in January 2020.

1.4.2 Relationship to Other Plans and Regulations

A general plan is distinct from a zoning ordinance and other land use planning documents. Although all these documents regulate how land may be used and developed, they do so in different ways. A general plan has a long-term outlook that identifies the types of development that are allowed, the spatial relationships among land uses, and the general pattern of future development. A zoning ordinance implements a general plan by regulating development through specific standards, such as lot size, building setback, setting allowable uses, or through infrastructure improvements and financing. Development must not only meet the specific requirements of the zoning ordinance but also the broader policies set forth in the general plan.

There are also nine Area Plans that are incorporated and made part of the 2040 General Plan. An Area Plan specifies the distribution, location, types, and intensity of land uses, and provides specific policies concerning development in a distinct geographical area. The goals, policies, and programs of an Area Plan are designed to supplement, not duplicate, the General Plan.

LAND USE PLANNING CONTEXT AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

One of Ventura County's distinguishing characteristics is its open space and scenic character. The County is dedicated to directing urban development to cities and existing unincorporated communities to preserve its working and rural landscapes, agricultural lands, scenic vistas, natural resources, and recreational opportunities. The County has a direct role in maintaining agricultural, rural, and open space areas and shaping the character of urban development. At the same time, the County seeks to support and encourage the cities in their land use planning efforts to ensure that a quality living environment is provided for all existing and future county residents.

Ventura County is unique in California because of the successful countywide land use planning efforts that have preserved the county's open space and scenic character, including the Guidelines for Orderly Development, greenbelt agreements, and the Save Open Space & Agricultural Resources (SOAR) initiative measure.

1.4.3 Structure and Content of the General Plan

The 2040 General Plan sets forth the goals and policies based on the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles that will guide future land use and resource decisions within the unincorporated areas of the county and identifies the implementation programs required to carry out the goals and policies of the 2040 General Plan. The 2040 General Plan also includes land use designations and a Land Use Diagram that specifies the allowable uses of land (e.g., residential, commercial) throughout the unincorporated area.

The 2040 General Plan addresses topics and issues pursuant to State requirements adopted since the existing general plan was approved in 2005. These include environmental justice, transportation issues such as assessing vehicle miles traveled and analyzing transportation systems more holistically (e.g., "Complete Streets"), and wildfire hazards. It is designed to

maintain consistency with the Guidelines for Orderly Development, greenbelt agreements, and SOAR measures for Ventura County's unincorporated areas and ten incorporated cities. The 2040 General Plan also includes a Climate Action Plan which, among other things, will include a vulnerability analysis and describe how the County plans to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

As part of the General Plan update process, the County assessed the goals, policies, and programs in the existing General Plan and the County Area Plans. Seven of the Area Plans (El Rio/Del Norte, Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley, North Ventura Avenue, Oak Park, Ojai Valley, Piru, and Thousand Oaks) would be refined as part of the 2040 General Plan. These seven area plans were reviewed and assessed to compare the Area Plan goals, policies, and programs with 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and programs to ensure internal consistency. The proposed refinements typically take the form of applying a common writing style and order of presentation to each Area Plan while maintaining the original intent. A few policies are proposed for removal from individual Area Plans and incorporation into one of the 2040 General Plan elements. This change would maintain the policy and broaden its coverage from a single Area Plan to the entire unincorporated county. All Area Plan changes proposed in the 2040 General Plan are presented in a legislative format that tracks the changes made.

The remaining two Area Plans (Coastal and Saticoy) were not updated as part of the 2040 General Plan process.

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The 2040 General Plan elements are organized as follows: Land Use and Community Character Element; Housing Element; Circulation, Transportation, and Mobility Element; Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element; Conservation and Open Space Element; Hazards and Safety Element; Agriculture Element; Water Resources Element; and Economic Vitality Element. Each element contains goals and policies that the County will use to guide future land use, development, resource management, and environmental protection decisions. The 2040 General Plan is intended to provide a more concise and clear policy statement for the County, compared to the existing General Plan, by reducing redundant policies (similar policies that are presented in several elements and/or area plans), and by removing items that are simply restatements of requirements specified in State or federal regulations.

LAND USE DIAGRAM

The purpose of the 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram is to guide the general distribution, location, and extent of the various land use designations throughout the county. The land use designations established in the 2040 General Plan are listed in Tables 1-1 and 1-2.

The existing General Plan contains a simplified set of six land use designations and one overlay land use designation, which describe the purpose of the designation and allowed uses. While a few land use designations prescribe density, intensity, and lot size, the key designations of Existing Community and Urban do not. The existing General Plan land use designations are broad categories that lack clear details to distinguish between separate land uses, such as residential, commercial, and industrial.

To address this, the 2040 General Plan would establish 15 land use designations that provide more detailed information on the types of land uses (e.g., commercial, industrial, residential) that would be allowable within areas currently designated as Existing Community and Urban land use designations. The 2040 General Plan land use designations would be consistent with land uses and densities/intensities allowed under the current (2018) zoning designations for each affected parcel. The proposed 2040 General Plan land use designations replace the Existing Community and Urban land use designations of the existing General Plan with a new set of designations that clearly distinguish the land uses allowed and set forth maximum development density and intensity standards.

Where the existing General Plan contained minimum lot size requirements, these are maintained in the 2040 General Plan. Proposed new land use designations that do not have a comparable minimum lot size in the existing General Plan would incorporate the smallest minimum lot size of the compatible zoning designation.

As part of the 2040 General Plan, several key designations are maintained as presented in the existing General Plan. All lands in the existing General Plan with a land use designation of Agricultural, Open Space, or Rural located outside of Existing Community and Urban designated areas are maintained unchanged. This ensures the 2040 General Plan remains consistent with the SOAR initiative. Relative to the Guidelines for Orderly Development, the boundaries of the current Existing Community and Urban designations were protected as new area designations in the 2040 General Plan. Also maintained are the lands designated as State and Federal Facility, which is applied to parcels owned by the State or federal government and are outside of the County's land use jurisdiction. The only change to this designation is its name, which in the 2040 General Plan is under the term "State, Federal, and Other Public Lands."

Two changes are also proposed for lands within or adjacent to the incorporated cities in the county. As the County does not have land use authority over lands within the cities, these areas are noted as "City" on the 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram and not given a land use designation. The final land use designation change is the proposed removal of the Urban Reserve Overlay. This overlay is replaced by a policy that references the use of adopted spheres of influence to provide the same geographic boundary.

Table 1-1 provides the land use designations that would be established and used by the 2040 General Plan.

Table 1-1 Land Use Designation General Development Standards

| Acronym | Land Use Designation | Maximum Density / Intensity | Minimum Lot Size | Maximum Lot Coverage ¹ |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Rural, Agricultural, and Open Space Designations | | | | |
| RUR | Rural ² | 1 du/2 ac | 2 acres, or zone suffix equal to or more restrictive than 2 acres | 25% |
| ECU-R ³ | ECU-Rural | 1 du/2 ac | 2 acres | 25% |
| AG | Agricultural ² | 1 du/40 ac | 40 acres | 5% |
| ECU-A ³ | ECU-Agricultural | 1 du/40 ac | 40 acres | 5% |
| OS | Open Space ² | 1 du/parcel | 10 acres, or 20 acres if contiguous w/Agricultural | 5% |
| ECU-OS ³ | ECU-Open Space | 1 du/parcel | 10 acres, or 20 acres if contiguous w/Agricultural | 5% |
| Residential Designations | | | | |
| VLDR | Very Low Density Residential | 4 du/ac | 10,000 SF | n/a |
| LDR | Low-Density Residential | 6 du/ac | 6,000 SF | n/a |
| MDR | Medium-Density Residential | 14 du/ac | 3,000 SF | n/a |
| RHD | Residential High-Density | 20 du/ac | No minimum | n/a |
| RPD | Residential Planned Development | 20 du/ac | No minimum | n/a |
| CRPD | Coastal Residential Planned Development | 36 du/ac | No minimum | n/a |
| RB | Residential Beach | 36 du/ac | 1,500 SF | n/a |
| Mixed Use, Commercial, and Industrial Designations | | | | |
| MU | Mixed Use | 20 du/ac; 60% lot coverage | No minimum | 60% |
| C | Commercial | 60% lot coverage | No minimum | 60% |
| CPD | Commercial Planned Development | 60% lot coverage | No minimum | 60% |
| I | Industrial | 50% lot coverage | 10,000 SF | 50% |
| Other Designations | | | | |
| PR | Parks & Recreation | n/a | None | 5% |
| P | State, Federal, Other Public Lands ² | n/a | None | n/a |

Notes: ac = acre; du = dwelling unit; n/a = not applicable; SF = square foot.

¹ Maximum lot coverage is per applicable County zoning classification.

² Existing General Plan land use designations that would be retained.

³ The acronym "ECU-" preceding a designation name refers to land use designations that apply only within the boundaries of an Existing Community or Urban area designation (boundary) as defined in 2040 General Plan Policies LU-1.2 and LU-2.1.

The approximate acreage and percent of total acreage in the unincorporated portions of the county for each land use designation is also provided in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2 Land Use Designation Descriptions and Acreage in the Plan Area

| Land Use Designation | Description | Acreage | Percent of County Total |
|---|--|---------|-------------------------|
| Rural | Identifies areas suitable for low-density and low-intensity land uses such as residential estates and other rural uses which are maintained in conjunction with agricultural and horticultural uses or in conjunction with the keeping of farm animals for recreational purposes. The areas considered for inclusion in the Rural designation are existing clusters of rural development and areas deemed appropriate for future rural residential development. | 8,764 | <1% |
| ECU-Rural | Provides a physical transition between the outer edges of an Existing Community or Urban Area and nearby agricultural and open space areas and uses. Typical building types include large-lot, single-family homes in a rural setting. | 1,114 | <1% |
| Agricultural | Applies to irrigated lands suitable for the cultivation of crops and the raising of livestock. | 91,485 | 9% |
| ECU-Agricultural | Applies to irrigated lands suitable for the cultivation of crops and the raising of livestock within the boundaries of an Existing Community designated area. | 102 | <1% |
| Open Space | Applies to any parcel or area of land or water which is largely unimproved and devoted to an open-space use, as defined under Section 65560 of the Government Code. | 917,716 | 88% |
| ECU-Open Space | Provides for areas with significant natural resources that should remain in open space, used for recreation, or preserved and used for resource production (e.g., mining) and are located within the boundaries of an Existing Community designated area. | 233 | <1% |
| Very Low Density Residential | Provides a physical transition between the outer edges of an Existing Community or Urban Area and nearby agricultural and open space areas and uses. Typical building types include large-lot, single-family homes in a rural setting. | 7,572 | <1% |
| Low-Density Residential | Provides for a variety of single-family homes and neighborhoods. Typical building types include small-lot, single-family homes, and other similar housing types, such as second units. | 1,050 | <1% |
| Medium-Density Residential | Provides a transition from lower density, single-family areas and more intensely developed residential and commercial areas; generally, applies to residential neighborhoods and central areas within Existing Communities and Urban Areas. Development at the higher end of the density allowed should occur along major transportation routes or adjacent to commercial centers. Typical building types include one- to three-story attached single-family dwellings and lower density multifamily developments. | 25 | <1% |
| Residential High-Density | Provides for residential development in more intensely developed residential and commercial areas. Development at the higher end of the density allowed should occur along major transportation routes and within major commercial centers. Generally, applies to central areas within Existing Communities and Urban Areas. Typical building types include one- to three-story multifamily developments. | 13 | <1% |
| Residential Planned Development | Provides areas for residential communities which would be developed using modern land planning and unified design techniques that can be adjusted to better fit the unique needs of the project site. | 1,732 | <1% |
| Coastal Residential Planned Development | Provides areas for residential communities which would be developed using innovative site planning techniques. Generally, applies to areas appropriate for modern residential development within the boundaries of an Existing Community designated area in the coastal zone. | 23 | <1% |
| Residential Beach | Provides for small-lot, beach-oriented residential communities. Generally, applies to areas appropriate for high-density residential development within the boundaries of an Existing Community designated area in the coastal zone. | 185 | <1% |
| Mixed Use | Provides for the development of activity centers that contain a mix of compatible and integrated commercial, office, residential, civic, and/or recreational uses. Developments should be located on an arterial or higher roadway classification and include appropriate pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Typical building types include one- to three-story horizontal or vertical mixed-use structures. | 20 | <1% |

| Land Use Designation | Description | Acreage | Percent of County Total |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------|-------------------------|
| Commercial | Provides for a mix of retail and service uses that are typically needed by residents in rural communities and surrounding agricultural operations. Developments may include a mix of uses and should be located on a County-defined Minor Collector or higher classification roadway and include pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Typical building types include one- to two-story commercial structures. | 161 | <1% |
| Commercial Planned Development | Provides areas for vibrant commercial centers which would be developed utilizing modern land planning and unified design techniques that can be adjusted to better fit the unique needs of the project site. Areas with this designation provide a flexible regulatory procedure in order to encourage the development of coordinated, innovative, and efficient commercial sites and to provide areas for a wide range of commercial retail and business uses, including stores, shops, and offices supplying commodities or performing services for the surrounding community. | 158 | <1% |
| Industrial | Provides for a range of industrial employment-generating uses, including production, assembly, warehousing, and distribution, that are conducted within enclosed buildings or in appropriately sited and screened outdoor work spaces that are designed for compatibility with surrounding land uses. Limited to areas served by, or planned to be served by, public water, wastewater, and drainage systems. Developments must be located on a County-defined Minor Arterial or higher classification roadway. | 1,408 | <1% |
| Parks & Recreation | Provides for parks and recreation facilities and associated recreation uses. Typically, these areas are characterized by a high degree of open space, and a limited number of buildings. Recreational facilities frequently include sports fields, playground equipment, picnic areas, sitting areas, concession businesses, open turf and natural areas, trails, and golf courses. Connectivity to surrounding areas via pedestrian and bicycle facilities is desired. | 0 ¹ | 0% |
| State, Federal, Other Public Lands | This designation applies to State- and federally-owned parks, forests, rangelands, coastal resources, and/or recreation areas. For State land within the coastal zone, the County has land use authority except for land under the California Coastal Commission's original jurisdiction (i.e., beaches and tidelands). For all other areas within this designation the County has no land use authority. Areas so designated include land under federal or State ownership on which governmental facilities are located. Principal uses of these areas include: continued provision of public recreational facilities and access; multi-use management where applicable; support for rangeland activities, and interconnection or coordination of State, federal, and local facilities and programs when possible. | 8,085 | <1% |
| Total | | 1,039,847 | 100% |

¹ There is no land currently in the Parks & Recreation designation. This is a new designation that can be applied to parcels within Existing Community, Area Plans, and Urban Centers within Areas of Interest that provide for parks and recreation facilities and associated recreation uses.

As shown in Table 1-2, the land use diagram of the 2040 General Plan would concentrate future development of relatively higher intensity residential, commercial, mixed use, and industrial land uses within the Existing Community area designation (boundary) and the Urban area designation (boundary). The Existing Community area designation includes existing land uses that have been developed with urban building intensities and urban land uses. The Urban area designation refers to areas with commercial and industrial uses and residential uses where the building intensity is greater than one principal dwelling unit per two acres. These areas are generally located adjacent to the boundaries of incorporated cities or along highway corridors such as SR 33, SR 118, SR 126, and Highway 101.

Under the 2040 General Plan relatively higher intensity residential (Very Low Density, Low-Density, Medium-Density, Residential Planned Development, Coastal Planned Development, Residential Beach), commercial (Commercial and Commercial Planned Development), mixed use, and industrial land use designations would apply to approximately 1.2 percent of land in the unincorporated county. The types of future development that could occur in these land use designations include but are not limited to small- and large-lot detached single-family homes,

one- to three-story attached single-family dwellings and lower density multifamily developments, mixes of commercial, office, residential, civic, and/or recreational uses, one- to two-story structures for retail and commercial services, and industrial employment-generating uses, such as production, assembly, warehousing, and distribution.

The Rural land use designation would remain unchanged from the existing General Plan and allow for low-density and low-intensity land uses such as residential estates and other rural uses which are maintained in conjunction with agricultural and horticultural uses or in conjunction with the keeping of farm animals for recreational purposes, such as composting operations, greenhouses, principal and accessory structures related to agriculture, and oil and gas wells. The areas considered for inclusion in the Rural designation are existing clusters of rural development and areas deemed appropriate for future rural residential development up to a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 2 acres. The Rural land use designation would apply to approximately 0.9 percent of land in the unincorporated county.

Approximately 97.1 percent of the unincorporated county is designated as either Open Space or Agriculture. The Open Space land use designation would be unchanged from the existing General Plan (covering 88 percent of the unincorporated county), allowing a minimum parcel size of 10 acres and one dwelling unit per parcel (see Table 1-1). The Open Space land use designation would also allow for development of other uses such as composting operations, greenhouses, correctional institutions, fire stations, and oil and gas wells.

An additional nine percent of the plan area is, and would remain, designated as Agriculture. The Agriculture land use designation would also remain unchanged from the existing General Plan, allowing for development of one dwelling unit per parcel and a minimum parcel size of 40 acres. This designation is applied to irrigated lands suitable for the cultivation of crops and the raising of livestock and would also allow for other uses such as greenhouses, principal and accessory structures related to agriculture, and composting operations.

The remaining approximately 0.8 percent of land in the unincorporated county would be designated as State, Federal, Other Public Lands, which applies to land under federal or State ownership on which governmental facilities are located. Proposed policies of the 2040 General Plan addressing flaring and trucking associated with new discretionary oil and gas wells could result in the construction and operation of new pipelines for the conveyance of oil, gas, or produced water.

GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Growth projections employed in the preparation of the 2040 General Plan were estimated for 2020, 2030, and 2040 using county-specific demographic projections prepared by Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) for the 2020 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCAG 2017). As indicated in the SCAG population growth forecasts presented in Table 1-3, below, from 2015 to 2040 the growth in population and households (i.e., occupied housing units) is anticipated to be approximately four percent and employment growth is expected to be approximately nine percent.

Table 1-3 Growth Forecast for Unincorporated Ventura County, 2015–2040

| Demographic | 2015 | 2020 | | 2030 | | 2040 | |
|-------------|--------|--------|----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| | Number | Number | Percent Increase from 2015 | Number | Percent Increase from 2015 | Number | Percent Increase from 2015 |
| Population | 97,733 | 99,755 | 2.1 | 100,918 | 3.3 | 101,832 | 4.2 |
| Employment | 32,889 | 32,988 | 0.3 | 34,556 | 5.1 | 35,875 | 9.1 |
| Households | 32,191 | 32,446 | 0.08 | 32,959 | 2.4 | 33,472 | 4.0 |

Notes: Employment and housing growth rates for 2040 interpolated from reported years 2035 and 2045

Source: Calculated by Ascent Environmental using data provided by the SCAG (2017)

Historically, most development has occurred within areas designated as Existing Community and Urban in the existing General Plan land use diagram. For example, between 2006 and 2018, an estimated 44 percent of new residential development occurred within areas designated as Existing Community or Urban. These are areas where higher-intensity residential development, a mixture of commercial and industrial uses, and additional infrastructure and services are most readily available to accommodate such growth. The remainder of the residential development during this period occurred in areas designated Rural (9 percent), Agricultural (23 percent), and Open Space (24 percent). Lower development trends in areas designated Rural, Agriculture, and Open Space are presumed to be based on numerous factors that vary from site to site, but include larger minimum lot sizes; lot coverage restrictions; limited access to water, utilities and infrastructure; fire code issues such as lack of secondary access; or a combination of these and other factors which can effectively prohibit or significantly increase the cost of new development in these areas.

Based on the similarities between the land use diagrams of the existing General Plan and 2040 General Plan and other factors influencing development, the County anticipates that allocation of future residential development would substantially follow historical trends with implementation of the 2040 General Plan. For example, to the extent historical residential development trends continue into the future, approximately 564 of the 1,281 additional households forecast in the unincorporated county between 2015 and 2040 (see Table 1-3) would be developed within areas of the county designated for residential, industrial, and mixed land uses. These areas account for approximately 1 percent of the total acreage of the unincorporated county area. In this example the remainder of the forecast residential development would be spread throughout the approximately 98 percent of the County’s unincorporated areas in agriculture, open space, and rural land use designations (see Table 1-2).

1.5 MAJOR CONCLUSIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Chapter 4, “Environmental Impact Analysis,” of the draft EIR addresses the environmental impacts of implementation of the 2040 General Plan. Potentially feasible alternatives were developed with consideration of avoiding or lessening the significant, and potentially significant, adverse impacts of the project (see Chapter 6, “Alternatives,” of the draft EIR). If an environmental issue area analyzed in the draft EIR is not listed below, it is because no significant impacts were identified for that issue area.

1.5.1 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts of the 2040 General Plan

Significant and unavoidable environmental impacts resulting from the 2040 General Plan were identified, as follows.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources:

- ▶ Impact 4.2-1: Loss of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance

Air Quality:

- ▶ Impact 4.3-2: Cause Construction-Generated Criteria Air Pollutant or Precursor Emissions to Exceed VCAPCD-Recommended Thresholds
- ▶ Impact 4.3-3: Result in a Net Increase in Long-Term Operational Criteria Air Pollutant and Precursor Emissions That Exceed VCAPCD-Recommended Thresholds

Biological Resources:

- ▶ Impact 4.4-1: Disturb or Result in Loss of Special-Status Species and Habitat
- ▶ Impact 4.4-2: Disturb or Result in Loss of Riparian Habitat, Sensitive Plant Communities, ESHA, Coastal Beaches, Sand Dunes, and Other Sensitive Natural Communities
- ▶ Impact 4.4-3: Disturb or Result in Loss of Wetlands and other Waters
- ▶ Impact 4.4-4: Interfere with Resident or Migratory Wildlife Corridors or Native Wildlife Nursery Sites

Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources:

- ▶ Impact 4.5-1: Substantial Adverse Change in the Significance of an Archaeological Resource Pursuant to PRC 5024.1 and CEQA
- ▶ Impact 4.5-2: Substantial Adverse Change in the Significance of a Historic Resource Pursuant to PRC 5024.1 and CEQA
- ▶ Impact 4.5-3: Substantial Adverse Change in the Significance of a Tribal Cultural Resources
- ▶ Impact 4.5-4: Result in Grading and Excavation of Fossiliferous Rock or Increase Access Opportunities and Unauthorized Collection of Fossil Materials from Valuable Sites

Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

- ▶ Impact 4.8-1: Generate GHG Emissions, Either Directly or Indirectly, That May Have a Significant Impact on the Environment.
- ▶ Impact 4.8-2: Conflict with an Applicable Plan, Policy, or Regulation for the Purpose of Reducing the Emissions of GHGs

Hazards, Hazardous Materials, and Wildfire:

- ▶ Impact 4.9-6: Expose People to Risk of Wildfire by Locating Development in a High Fire Hazard Area/Fire Hazard Severity Zone or Substantially Impairing an Adopted Emergency Response Plan or Evacuation Plan or Exacerbate Wildfire Risk

Mineral and Petroleum Resources

- ▶ Impact 4.12-3: Result in Development on or Adjacent to Existing Petroleum Resources Extraction Sites or Areas Where Petroleum Resources Are Zoned, Mapped, or Permitted for Extraction, Which Could Hamper or Preclude Access to the Resources

Noise and Vibration

- ▶ Impact 4.13-3: Expose Existing Sensitive Receptors to Traffic-Noise Increases
- ▶ Impact 4.13-6: Expose Sensitive Receptors to Construction Vibration Levels That Exceed Applicable Standards

Public Services and Recreation:

- ▶ Impact 4.15-2: Require Expansion or Construction of New Facilities to Support Law Enforcement and Emergency Services
- ▶ Impact 4.15-3: Require Expansion or Construction of New Fire Protection Facilities and Services as a Result of Excessive Response Times, Project Magnitude, or Distance from Existing Facilities
- ▶ Impact 4.15-4: Require Expansion or Construction of New Public Libraries or Other Facilities to Meet New Demand or Address Overcrowding and Accessibility
- ▶ Impact 4.15-5: Require Expansion or Construction of New Parks and Recreation Facilities and Services or Cause Substantial Physical Deterioration of Parks and Recreation Facilities Because of Overuse

Transportation and Traffic:

- ▶ Impact 4.16-1: Exceed VMT Thresholds
- ▶ Impact 4.16-2: Transportation Infrastructure Needed to Accommodate Growth Would Result in Adverse Effects Related to County Road Standards and Safety
- ▶ Impact 4.16-3: Result in Inadequate Emergency Access

Utilities:

- ▶ Impact 4.17-2: Increase Demand on a Utility That Results in the Relocation or Construction of New, or Expansion of Existing Water, Wastewater, Electric Power, Natural Gas, or Telecommunications Infrastructure, Resulting in the Potential for Significant Environmental Impacts
- ▶ Impact 4.17-4: Result in Development That Would Adversely Affect Water Supply Quantities during Normal, Single-Dry, and Multiple-Dry Years

1.5.2 Impacts That Can Be Reduced to a Less-than-Significant Level Through Mitigation Measures

Impacts resulting from the 2040 General Plan that can be reduced to a less-than-significant level through mitigation measures were identified as follows.

Aesthetics, Scenic Resources, and Light Pollution:

- ▶ Impact 4.1-3: Create a New Source of Disability Glare or Discomfort Glare for Motorists Traveling along Any Road of the County Regional Road Network

Air Quality:

- ▶ Impact 4.3-5: Expose Sensitive Receptors to Substantial Increases in Toxic Air Contaminant Emissions

Mineral and Petroleum Resources:

- ▶ Impact 4.12-4: Result in the Loss of Availability of a Known Petroleum Resource That Would Be of Value to the Region and the Residents of the State

Public Services and Recreation:

- ▶ Impact 4.15-1: Increase Demand for Law Enforcement and Emergency Services as a Result of Inadequate Security Measures

Transportation and Traffic:

- ▶ Impact 4.16-5: Substantially Interfere With Railroad Facility Integrity and/or Operations

1.6 CEQA PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

1.6.1 Public Review of the Draft EIR

The County filed a notice of completion (NOC) with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to begin the 45-day public review period (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21161), which began on January 13, 2020 and ended on February 27, 2020. Concurrent with the NOC, the draft EIR was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding counties, cities within the county, and interested parties, as well as to all parties requesting a copy of the draft EIR, in accordance with PRC Section 21092(b)(3). Additionally, the draft EIR was made available on the County's 2040 General Plan Update website (<https://vc2040.org/>); the Planning Division website (<http://vcrma.org/divisions/planning>); the County of Ventura, Resource Management Agency, Planning Division Public Counter; and twelve local libraries. A notice of availability (NOA) of the draft EIR was published on January 9, 2020 in the *Vida Newspaper* and on January 10, 2020 in the *Mountain Enterprise*, *VC Star*, and *Ojai Valley News*.

As a result of these notification efforts, written and verbal comments were received from 17 State and local agencies, 40 organizations, and 216 individuals on the content of the draft EIR. Chapter 3, "Comments and Responses to Comments," identifies these commenting parties, their respective comments, and responses to these comments. None of the comments received, or the responses provided, constitute "significant new information" by CEQA standards (State CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15088.5).

1.6.2 Next Steps in the CEQA Process

Before adopting the 2040 General Plan, the lead agency is required to certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the lead agency.

Upon certification of an EIR, the lead agency makes a decision on the project analyzed in the EIR. A lead agency may: (a) disapprove a project because of its significant environmental effects; (b) require changes to a project to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects; or (c) approve a project despite its significant environmental effects, if the proper findings and statement of overriding considerations are adopted (State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15042 and 15043).

In approving a project, for each significant impact of the project identified in the EIR, the lead or responsible agency must find, based on substantial evidence, that either: (a) the project has been changed to avoid or substantially reduce the magnitude of the impact; (b) changes to the project are within another agency's jurisdiction and such changes have or should be adopted; or (c) specific economic, social, or other considerations make the mitigation measures or project alternatives infeasible (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091). Per PRC Section 21061.1, feasible means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account, economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.

If an agency approves a project with unavoidable significant environmental effects, it must prepare a written Statement of Overriding Considerations that sets forth the specific social, economic, or other reasons supporting the agency's decision and explains why the project's benefits outweigh the significant environmental effects (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15093).

When an agency makes findings on significant effects identified in the EIR, it must adopt a reporting or monitoring program for mitigation measures that were adopted or made conditions of project approval to mitigate significant effects (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091[d]).

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL EIR

This final EIR is organized as follows:

Chapter 1, "Introduction," describes the purpose of the final EIR, summarizes the 2040 General Plan and the major conclusions of the draft EIR, provides an overview of the CEQA public review process, and describes the content of the final EIR.

Chapter 2, "Comments and Responses to Comments," contains a list of all parties who submitted comments on the draft EIR during the public review period, copies of the comment letters received and responses to the comments. The chapter begins with a set of master responses that were prepared to respond comprehensively to multiple comments that raised similar issues. A reference to the master response is provided, where relevant, in responses to individual comments.

Chapter 3, "Revisions to the Draft EIR," presents revisions to the draft EIR text made in response to comments, or to amplify, clarify or make minor modifications or corrections. Changes in the text are signified by double ~~strikeouts~~ where text is removed and by double underline where text is added.

Chapter 4, "References," identifies the documents used as sources for the analysis.

Chapter 5, "Report Preparers," identifies the lead agency contacts as well as the preparers of this final EIR.