



Notice of Preparation Environmental Impact Report City of Hollister

Date: April 9, 2021

To: State Clearinghouse
State Responsible Agencies
State Trustee Agencies
Other Public Agencies
Interested Organizations

From: Abraham Prado, Interim Development Services Director
City of Hollister
Development Services Department
339 Fifth Street
Hollister, CA 95023

Subject: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Hollister General Plan Update 2040, Climate Action Plan and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Amendments and Annexations

Lead Agency: City of Hollister Development Services Department

Project Title: Hollister General Plan Update 2040 and Climate Action Plan

Project Area: City of Hollister and the Planning Area

Notice is hereby given that the City of Hollister (City) will prepare an EIR for the Hollister General Plan Update 2040, Climate Action Plan, and Sphere of Influence Amendments and Annexations (proposed project) and will hold a public meeting to receive comments on the scope of the EIR, as detailed below. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15206, the proposed project is considered a project of statewide, regional, or areawide significance. The City, acting as the Lead Agency, determined that the proposed project could result in potentially significant environmental impacts and that an EIR is required.

The City will prepare an EIR to address the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project at a programmatic level consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. The program-level EIR will evaluate the proposed project for potential impacts on the environment and analyze the proposed policies to determine the potential environmental consequences of future change. An evaluation of project alternatives that could reduce significant impacts will be included in the EIR. The proposed project, its location, and potential environmental effects are described below.

The City is requesting comments and guidance on the scope and content of the EIR from interested public agencies, organizations, and individuals. With respect to the views of Responsible and Trustee Agencies as to significant environmental issues, the City needs to know the reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that are germane to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than the close of the 32-day NOP review period at **5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 10, 2021**. If you submit comments on the scope of the EIR, you will automatically be added to the City's distribution list for future notices and information about the environmental review process for the proposed project. If you do not wish to submit comments on the scope of the EIR, but would like to be added to the City's mailing list, you can submit your contact information, including email address with a request to be added to the mailing list.

Please send your written comments to **Abraham Prado**, at the address shown above or email to abraham.prado@hollister.ca.gov with "*Hollister GPU 2040, CAP, and SOI EIR*" as the subject line. Public agencies providing comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

A Scoping Meeting to accept verbal comments will be held before the Hollister Planning Commission on **Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 6:00 pm** via the Zoom platform.

PROJECT LOCATION, DESCRIPTION, AND OBJECTIVES

This section describes the location, project description, and overall objective of the proposed project. A copy of this NOP, information about the project, including relevant documents, information on upcoming meetings, and ways you can provide feedback can be viewed online at <https://hollister2040.org/>.

Project Location

The project encompasses the Hollister City Limits, Sphere of Influence (SOI), Urban Service Area, and Planning Area located in San Benito County, also referred to as the EIR Study Area. See Figures 1 and 2 for regional and study area maps.

Project Description and Objectives

The project to be reviewed in the Draft EIR consists of three related yet distinct components:

- Adoption of the Hollister 2040 General Plan by the City of Hollister.
- Adoption of the Hollister Climate Action Plan by the City of Hollister.
- Potential amendment of the City of Hollister’s Sphere of Influence and/or annexation of lands to the City of Hollister by the San Benito County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

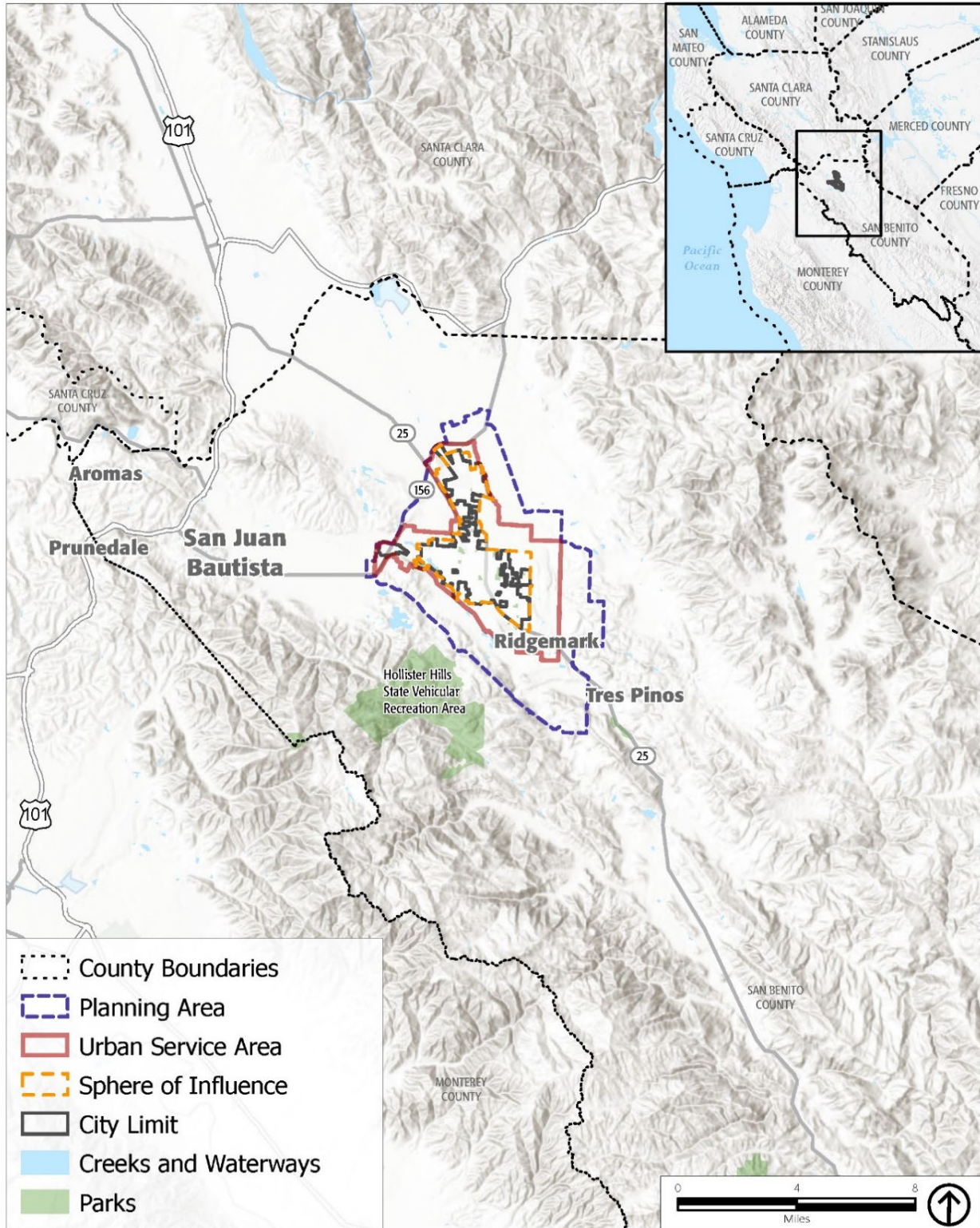
Often described as each jurisdiction’s “constitution”, general plans are required by State law to guide land use and development, typically within a 20-year horizon. General plans must be periodically updated to respond to new State laws, changing conditions, and emerging issues and opportunities. Hollister’s existing General Plan was adopted in 2005, with a horizon year of 2023. Since the horizon year is approaching, the City is now updating its plan to extend the planning period to 2040. The Hollister General Plan Update will build off the current General Plan and provide a framework for land use, transportation, and conservation decisions through the year 2040. The proposed General Plan will direct future growth within the EIR Study Area and address the city’s vulnerability to environmental challenges such as earthquakes, wildland fires, and other hazards identified in the proposed Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and Climate Action Plan to be completed concurrently with the General Plan Update. The General Plan is intended to respond to local and regional housing needs, foster economic growth and local job creation, enhance civic identity and placemaking, and protect sensitive natural resources. The proposed Climate Action Plan (CAP) will identify strategies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by existing and future uses in Hollister. The General Plan Update could potentially lead to Sphere of Influence amendments and annexations that would accommodate future housing sites and limited commercial development.

Environmental Review and Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The Draft EIR will determine whether implementation of the proposed project may result in environmental impacts that require mitigation measures to offset potential impacts. By incorporating implementation provisions (goals and policies) that focus on reducing environmental impacts, the proposed project can be made largely “self-mitigating”, which reduces the need for separate EIR mitigation measures, improves the efficiency of implementation, and increases the likelihood that development within the study area will be environmentally sustainable. In accordance with CEQA, the cumulative impacts discussion will be based on review of other plans shaping development outside of the study area. CEQA requires that an EIR evaluate alternatives to a project that could reasonably attain the project objectives while reducing any significant impact of the project, as well as considering the “No Project” Alternative (i.e., what could happen if the project were not approved). The EIR will address the proposed project’s potential impacts in the following environmental topics:

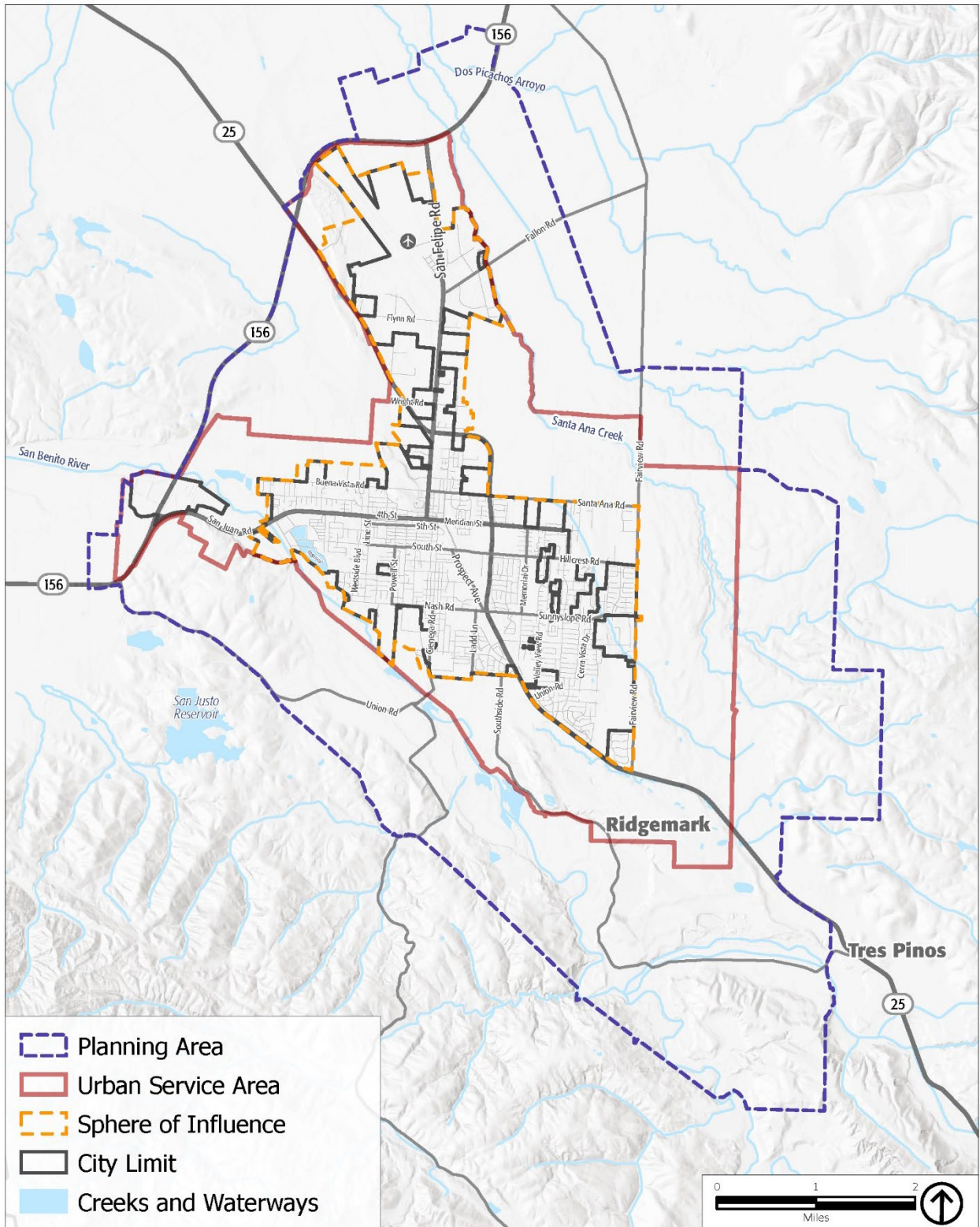
- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Aesthetics | ▪ Geology and Soils | ▪ Population and Housing |
| ▪ Agricultural and Forestry Resources | ▪ Greenhouse Gas Emissions | ▪ Public Services |
| ▪ Air Quality | ▪ Hazards and Hazardous Materials | ▪ Parks and Recreation |
| ▪ Biological Resources | ▪ Hydrology and Water Quality | ▪ Transportation |
| ▪ Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources | ▪ Land Use and Planning | ▪ Utilities and Service Systems |
| ▪ Energy | ▪ Noise | ▪ Wildfire |

Figure 1 Regional and Vicinity Map



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2020; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

Figure 2 General Plan Planning Area



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2020; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019