

Notice of Preparation

Date: May 1, 2024

To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Interested Parties

Subject: **Notice of Preparation and Public Scoping Meeting for the City of Ventura General Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Report.**

Location: City of Ventura Planning Area (Citywide, sphere of influence) – see Figure 2 (attached)

Public Comment

Period: Public comment period is from May 1, 2024 to May 31, 2024. Written comments must be submitted to the City’s Community Development Department no later than **May 31, 2024 by 5:00 p.m.**

Scoping Meeting: A hybrid in-person and virtual public scoping meeting will be conducted on May 20, 2024 beginning at 6:00pm, at City Hall at 501 Poli Street and via webex, which may be accessed via **Link:** <https://cityofventura.webex.com/cityofventura/j.php?MTID=mdca1923528fc1f02bdf9257914802de>; **Code: 2552 881 5938**

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Rachel Dimond, AICP
Community Development Director
City of Ventura
501 Poli Street
Ventura, CA 93001
Email: rdimond@cityofventura.ca.gov
Office: (805) 677-3964

The City of Ventura (City), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is commencing its preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for its General Plan Update (GPU). The Draft EIR (DEIR) will evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with the GPU and the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP).

This NOP has been issued to provide an opportunity for the general public, responsible and trustee agencies, and other interested entities to submit comments on the scope of the EIR relative to the GPU. For agencies, comments should focus on topics that relate to the agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The City requests your input regarding the scope and content of environmental analysis that is relevant to your respective agency's statutory/regulatory responsibilities in order to ascertain potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

Introduction

The DEIR is intended to be a program-level document that will analyze the effects of the City's proposed GPU. The purpose of a Program EIR is to allow the lead agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures early in the process when the agency has greater flexibility to address environmental issues. Since no specific development projects are being proposed as part of the update to the City's existing GP, the EIR analysis will focus on the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect physical environmental effects that could result from the update to the GP. The analysis will compare the net change of impacts as a result of the GPU compared to existing conditions.

The 2005 General Plan was adopted August 8, 2005 and evolved from the 2000 Ventura Vision strategies reflecting the planning objectives and smart growth principles of the community. The Vision strategies set the framework for the General Plan. Over the next nearly 20 years, the city implemented the General Plan, including creating specific plans and development codes for various areas of the city (e.g., Downtown, the Midtown Corridors, and Victoria Boulevard), approving development projects consistent with the plan, and creating new ordinances and regulations. Despite its utility, the General Plan is now nearly 20 years old and changes are needed to be consistent with new State laws and an evolving community vision.

The City of Ventura began the GPU in 2020. Over a 4-year period, the City conducted a community engagement process that included an advisory committee, workshops, pop-up workshops, online surveys, educational forums, and meetings with interested parties. The process also included the preparation of multiple existing conditions reports and a vision and guiding principles document. The research and engagement activities provided context for the GPU and ideas to support the vision, goals, policies, and implementation actions. The detailed content of the GPU is currently under development.

The GPU will ensure that all sections of the GP remain consistent with one another and form a cohesive vision for the city, while addressing the community's evolving needs, challenges, and opportunities for growth. The GPU will provide the context to effectively plan for the city's future based on an updated set of goals, policies, and implementation actions that reflect the current values and aspirations expressed by the community. Additionally, the update will provide the City with a policy framework to manage future projects and provide for capacity to accommodate the growth and development anticipated to occur in the city by 2050.

In conjunction with the GPU, the City is also preparing the CARP that will guide the City's efforts in adapting to climate change and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through 2030 and 2045.

Project Location

The City of Ventura is located at the northwestern edge of Ventura County, bordering Santa Barbara County (see Figure 1). The city is approximately 50 miles northwest of the city of Los Angeles and 25 miles southeast of the city of Santa Barbara on the southern coast of California. Figure 1 depicts the location of the city within the region and Figure 2 depicts the location of the city and its sphere of influence. Primary regional east-west access is provided by U.S. Route 101 (US 101), which provides access to the city of Ventura and greater Ventura to the east, and the city of Santa Barbara to the west. State Route 126 (SR126) provides northwest access to the city, to the city of Santa Clarita to the east. State Route 33 (SR 33) connects the City of Ventura with Ojai and other communities to the north.

The city limits is approximately 22 square miles and the city's Sphere of Influence (SOI) contains approximately 13 acres within unincorporated Ventura County. According to the California Department of Finance, the city grew from 100,916 people in 2000 to 107,341 people by 2023.

Project Description

The City of Ventura GPU articulates the long-term shared community vision for the preservation, enhancement and improvement of the city. It is a long-range plan that directs decision-making and establishes rules and standards for city improvements and new development. The Plan reflects the community's vision for the future and is intended to provide direction through the year 2050. The housing element was updated and adopted in 2023 and will be included in the GPU. The GPU will provide the context to effectively plan and manage the city's growth based on an updated set of goals, policies, and implementation actions that reflect the values and aspirations for the future expressed by the community. Additionally, the update will equip the City with a policy framework to responsibly manage development that will occur to accommodate growth in the city for the next 25 years.

As required by California Government Code Section 65302, the GPU will cover the eight mandated elements. The GPU includes all required topics in the following elements: Land Use; Mobility; Parks and Open Space; Public Facilities and Services; Arts and Culture; Safety; Noise; Climate Change and Sustainability; Environmental Justice; and Housing. The GPU also includes chapters on the update process and the vision and guiding principles.

These elements will establish policy direction for the City for a range of topics, including but not limited to:

- The use of land in the City
- The location and type of new housing
- Job creation and the provision of commercial services
- Mobility of people, goods, and services
- Preservation of open spaces
- Parks for active and passive recreation
- Public safety and protection from potential hazards as wildfire, flooding, landslides and seismicity
- Conservation of natural and cultural resources
- Adaptation to climate change and reduction of GHG emissions
- Protection against exposure to excessive noise
- Infrastructure needs such as water supply, sewer and wastewater treatment
- Public services and facilities, such as police and fire service

Central to the General Plan is an updated land use designation map, which defines the allowed uses and development intensity on every parcel in the city. The land use designation map for the City preliminarily endorsed by the City Council is shown on Figure 3.

Potential Environmental Impacts to be Considered

The DEIR for the proposed project will focus on the resource areas/issues applicable to this project. The DEIR will evaluate the potentially significant environmental impacts of the GPU and will propose feasible mitigation measures that may lessen or avoid such impacts. As the proposed project does not include any specific construction or development, but rather the potential for land use changes or development to be constructed in the future, the impact analysis will be programmatic and cumulative in nature. The DEIR will evaluate potentially significant environmental effects related to the following environmental issues:

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

Significant environmental effects concerning the following environmental issues are not anticipated:

- Mineral Resources

The DEIR will also identify and evaluate alternatives to the proposed project that have the potential to alleviate identified impacts.

Review and Response Period

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, this NOP is being circulated for a 30-day comment period. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15082(b), responses to this NOP must be provided during this comment period. **The City of Ventura requests that written comments be provided at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days from receipt of this notice.**

Submittal of Written Comments

Please send written/typed comments (including a name, email, telephone number, and/or other contact information) electronically or by mail to the following:

City of Ventura, Community Development Department
RE: Ventura General Plan Update EIR
ATTN: Rachel Dimond, AICP Community Development Director
501 Poli Street
Ventura, CA 93001
Email: rdimond@cityofventura.ca.gov

Scoping Meeting

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21083.9 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the City as the Lead Agency for the project, will conduct a scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting oral and written comments from interested parties requesting notice, responsible agencies, agencies with jurisdiction by law, trustee agencies, and involved federal agencies, as to the appropriate scope and content of the DEIR. The Scoping Meeting is for information-gathering and is not a public hearing. No decisions about the project will be made at the Scoping Meeting.

Rather than conducting an in-person only meeting, the Governor's Executive Order N-25-20 allows local governments to hold meetings via teleconferencing while still meeting State transparency requirements. Therefore, the project's Scoping Meeting will be held in-person and online, through a webinar type format (Webex). The date, time, and website of the project's Scoping Meeting are as follows:

Date and Time: Monday, May 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

In-person: City Hall at 501 Poli Street

Virtually:

<https://cityofventura.webex.com/cityofventura/j.php?MTID=mdca1923528fc1f02bfdf9257914802de>; Code: 2552 881 5938

The City will consider all written comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the project received during the NOP public review period. All written comments received will be reviewed and considered by the City as part of the environmental analysis of the proposed project and will become a part of the public record for the EIR.

Accommodations

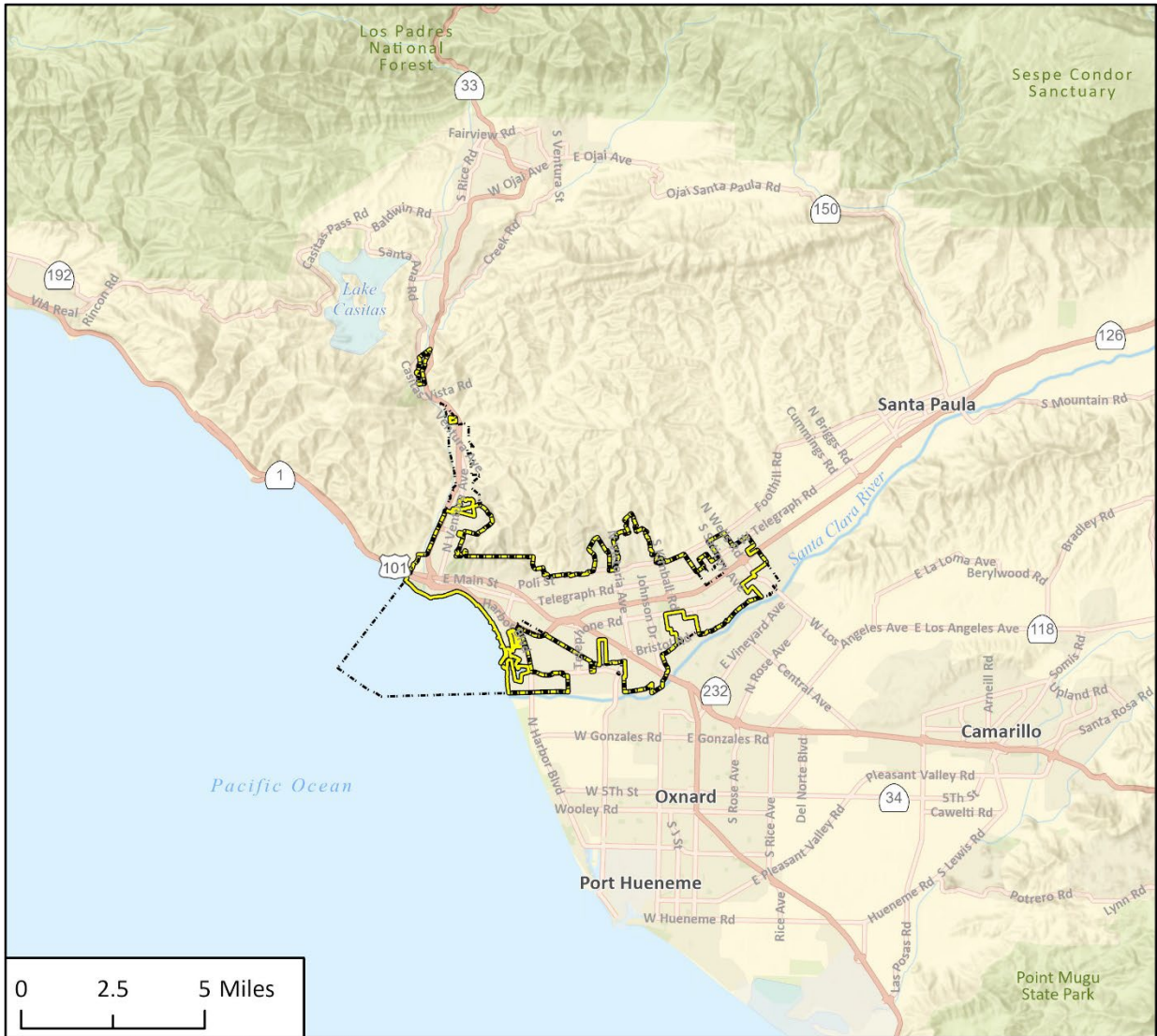
As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Ventura does not discriminate. Closed captioning or other assistive services may be provided upon request. Other services, such as translation between English and other languages, may also be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request no later than three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting by contacting Rachel Dimond at (805) 677-3964 or rdimond@cityofventura.ca.gov.

ALL INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING TO ASSIST IN IDENTIFYING ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE EIR. ATTENDEES WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE INPUT TO THE CONSULTANTS PREPARING THE EIR.



Rachel Dimond, AICP, Community Development Director

Figure 1 – Regional Location



Imagery provided by Esri and its licensors © 2024.

19-07111 EIR
Fig 1 Regional Location

- Ventura City Limits
- Sphere of Influence

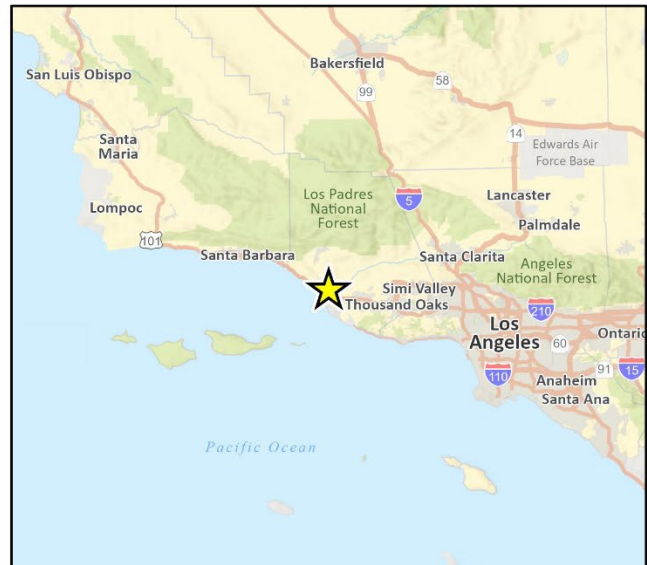


Figure 2 – Project Location

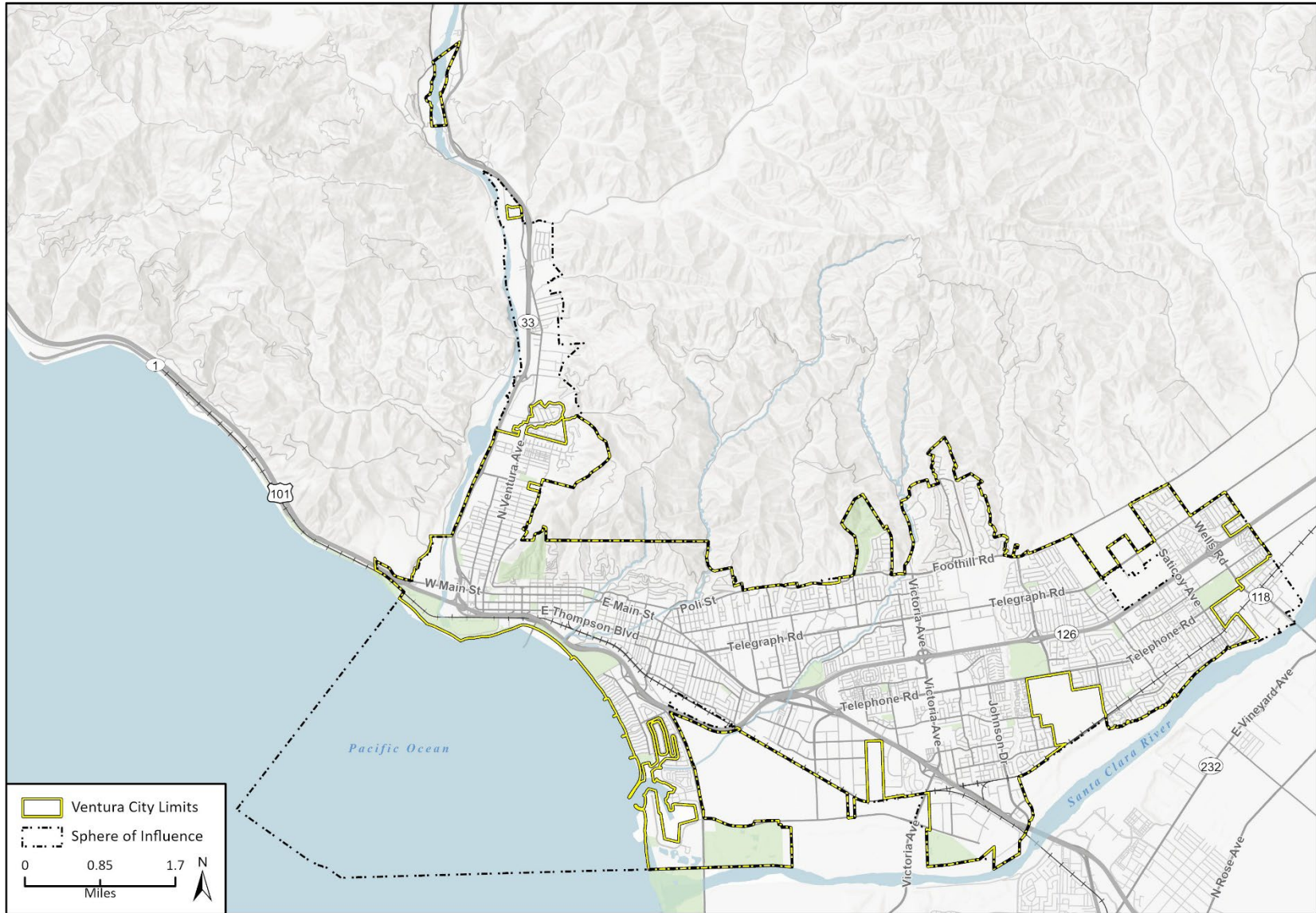
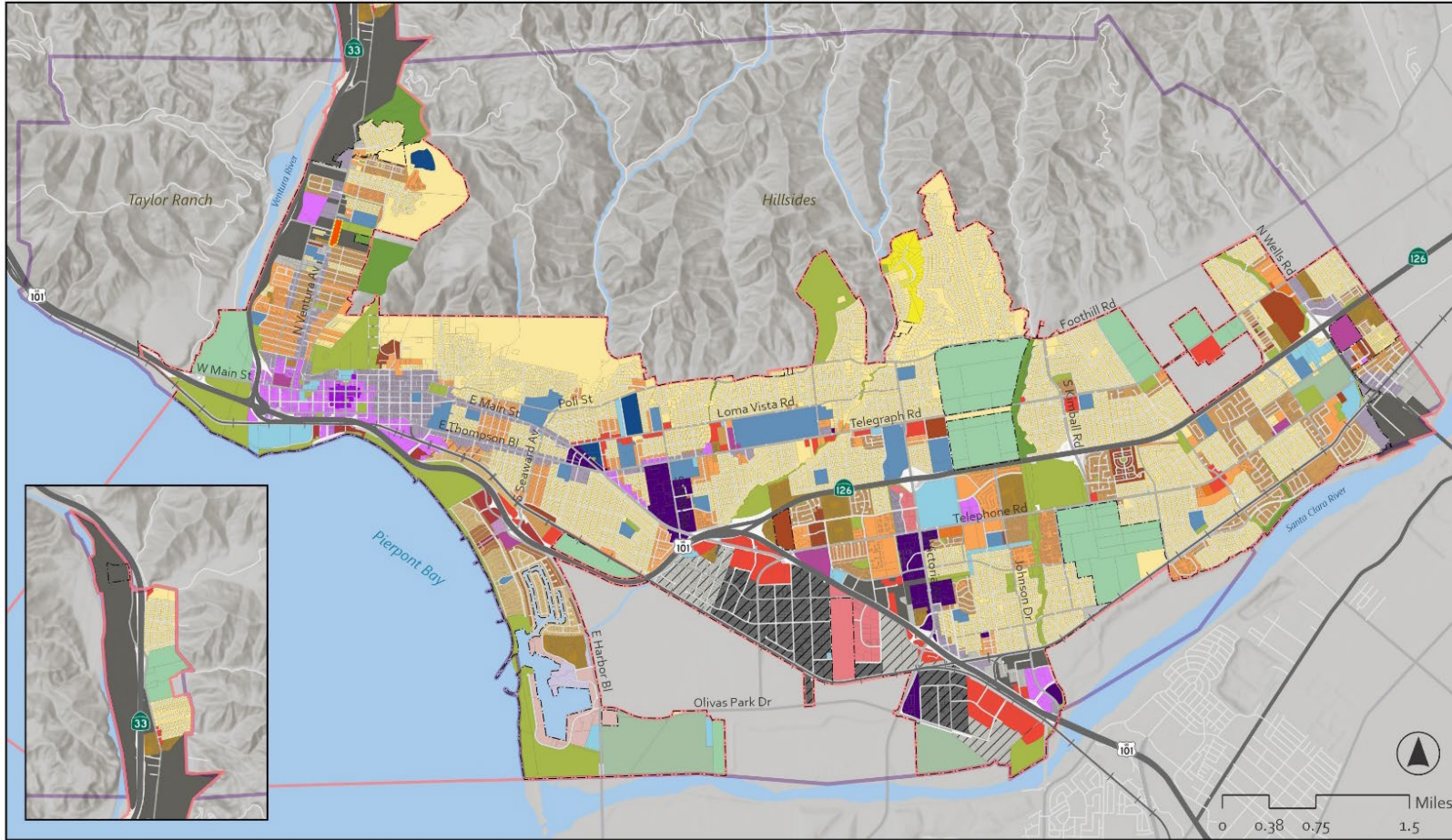


Figure 3 – Endorsed Land Use Map



- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| —+— Railroads | Neighborhood Very Low | 3 Story Multifamily Coastal | Harbor Mixed Use | Light Industrial/Flex (6 Story) | Park |
| - - - City Limits | Neighborhood Low | 4 Story Multifamily | Coastal Mixed Use | General Industrial (3 Story) | Open Space |
| — Sphere of Influence | Single Family Beach | Mobile Home Exclusive | Commercial | General Industrial (6 Story) | Golf Course |
| — Planning Area | Neighborhood Low Medium | Mixed Use 3 | Neighborhood Center | Office/R&D | Agricultural |
| — Freeways | Two Family Beach | Mixed Use 4 | Commercial Tourist Oriented | Hospital | Other or Undesignated |
| — Streams | Neighborhood Medium | Mixed Use 5 | Harbor Commercial | Public (General) | |
| — Waterbodies | 3 Story Multifamily | Mixed Use 6 | Light Industrial/Flex (3 Story) | School | |

