



**County of Santa Barbara**  
Community Services Department  
Parks Division

**Jesús Armas, Director**  
Jeff Lindgren, Deputy Director, Parks Division

## **NOTICE OF PREPARATION**

**DATE:** January 10, 2025

**TO:** State Clearinghouse  
Office of Planning and Research  
1400 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**FROM:** County of Santa Barbara  
Community Services Department, Parks  
Division  
123 East Anapamu Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101-2058

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Preparation and Scoping of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

**PROJECT NAME:** Santa Barbara County Recreation Master Plan and Related Recreation Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinances

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The Project involves unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County (inland and coastal) within five recreation planning areas (Figure 1).

**LEAD AGENCY:** The County of Santa Barbara, Community Services Department, Parks Division, is the lead agency preparing the EIR with the purpose of informing decision-makers and the public regarding the potential environmental effects related to the Project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The Project includes the proposed Recreation Master Plan, a strategic long-range plan to fund and construct new public parks and trails to meet current and future recreation needs countywide. The Recreation Master Plan identifies recreation needs within five recreation planning regions and proposes capital improvements, programs, funding, and implementation strategies to guide the development of a range of public parks and trail projects over 10 to 20 years. In addition, the Project would introduce the Recreation Benefit Project (RBP) Program, which would create a voluntary opportunity for private development projects to contribute directly to the County's public recreation system. The program would establish incentives for eligible projects that provide public recreation facilities as part of a proposed private development project. To support the Recreation Master Plan and the RBP Program, the Project involves a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to update the Recreation Section of the Land Use Element and policies within the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Project would also amend the County Land Use and Development Code (LUDC), the Montecito LUDC, and the Coastal Zoning

Ordinance (CZO) to update the Recreation (REC) zoning district consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and implement the RBP and other related amendments, including allowing and regulating parks and trails as permitted uses in selected zoning districts. Finally, the Project includes targeted rezones of public park properties to REC zoning either to improve the accuracy of the County Zoning Map or support the implementation of the Recreation Master Plan.

More information about the project description, location, and potential environmental effects are included in the attached Environmental Scoping Document for the Project. Additional information regarding the Project will be posted to the Project’s webpage as it becomes available at: <https://www.countyofsb.org/1214/Recreation-Master-Plan>. Please also visit [www.sbcrecplan.com](http://www.sbcrecplan.com) for more information about the Project and its background.

**PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS:** The County requests input from your agency regarding the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project. Members of the public are also encouraged to provide comments on the scope of the EIR. All comments must be received no later than **5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 2025**. Please send your comments and the name of a contact person in your agency to Jeff Lindgren, Deputy Director of Parks Division, at the address below.

**Submit Comments to:** Jeff Lindgren

**Via Email:** [RecPlan@countyofsb.org](mailto:RecPlan@countyofsb.org)

**Via USPS:** Community Services Department, Parks Division  
123 East Anapamu Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**VIRTUAL PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING MEETING:** The County will hold one virtual environmental scoping meeting for the EIR. The purpose of the meeting is to present the Project and receive input on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR.

All are welcome to participate online using Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**

<p>To join on your computer or mobile app, please click the link below:</p> <p><b><a href="#">Join the meeting on 2/6</a></b></p>	<p>To call into the meeting on your phone, please use the numbers below:</p> <p>Dial <b>1-213-267-3760</b> Enter conference ID no. <b>481 670 356#</b></p>
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cc: County of Santa Barbara Clerk of the Board  
Enclosure: Environmental Scoping Document

# Environmental Scoping Document

## **Santa Barbara County Recreation Master Plan and Related Recreation Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinances**

Project Website:

<https://www.countyofsb.org/1214/Recreation-Master-Plan>

Contact:

Jeff Lindgren, Deputy Director

[RecPlan@countyofsb.org](mailto:RecPlan@countyofsb.org)

Community Services Department

Parks Division

123 E. Anapamu St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

(805) 568-2467

January 10, 2025

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## **1.0. PURPOSE**

This environmental scoping document describes the proposed Santa Barbara County Recreation Master Plan and Related Recreation Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinances (Project), as well as a preliminary review of the Project’s potential environmental impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.). This scoping document, along with comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Project, will assist the County of Santa Barbara, as the lead agency for the preparation of the EIR for the Project, in identifying environmental impacts that must be evaluated in the EIR.

## **2.0. BACKGROUND**

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR to inform the public and decision-makers of the potential environmental effects of the proposed regulations. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15151, an EIR should include a “sufficient degree of analysis, or scope, to provide decision-makers with information that enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences.”

In compliance with CEQA, the EIR for the Project will evaluate the environmental impacts of anticipated activities resulting from the implementation of the proposed Recreation Master Plan and associated proposed amendments to the County Comprehensive Plan and the County’s zoning ordinances, as further described below. The environmental analysis will be based on the project description and will set forth mitigation measures to be included as development standards or requirements in the Recreation Master Plan or related regulations to avoid or reduce significant impacts identified in the environmental analysis. The EIR will also evaluate a sufficient range of feasible alternatives to avoid or minimize potentially significant impacts of the Project.

## **3.0. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This section describes the proposed Project, including the Project Proponent/Lead Agency, location, Project summary, and Project adoption and implementation actions.

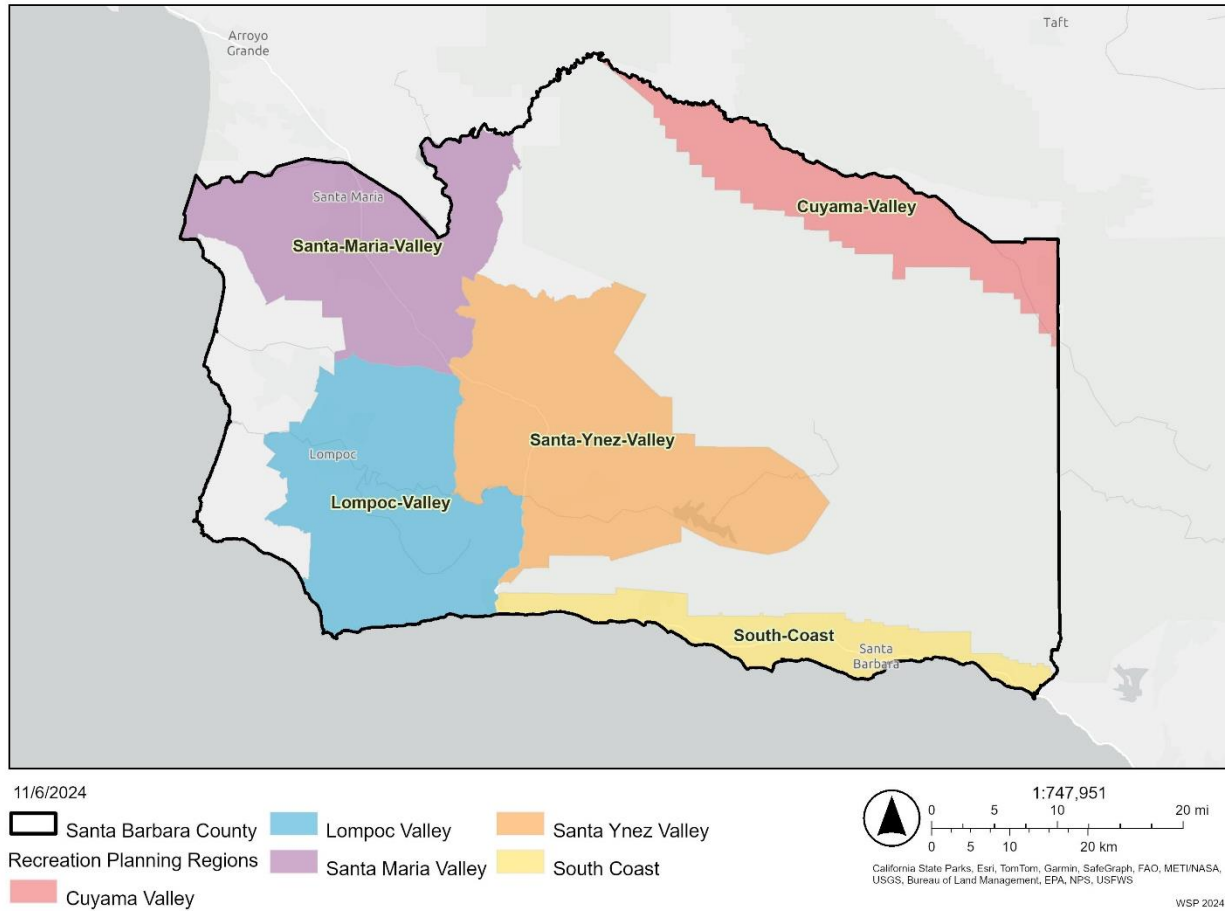
### **3.1. Project Proponent/Lead Agency**

The County of Santa Barbara, Community Services Department, Parks Division (County Parks) is both the Project proponent and the Lead Agency for the proposed Project.

### **3.2. Project Location**

The Project area includes unincorporated inland and coastal areas of Santa Barbara County. Project implementation actions would occur relative to the five Recreation Planning Areas defined by the proposed Recreation Master Plan to distinguish the different existing recreational facilities and identify and assess region-specific recreational needs. These recreation planning areas include Santa Maria Valley, Lompoc Valley, Santa Ynez Valley, Cuyama Valley, and the South Coast (Figure 1). The Project area excludes areas owned and/or managed by federal agencies (i.e., Los Padres National Forest, Vandenberg Space Force Base, and Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and San Miguel Channel Islands).

**Figure 1. Santa Barbara County Recreation Master Plan – Recreation Planning Areas**



### 3.3. Project Summary

The Project comprises the proposed Recreation Master Plan and a package of amendments to the County Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinances, including the County Land Use and Development Code (LUDC), Montecito LUDC, and Article II, Coastal Zoning Ordinance, to support the implementation of the Recreation Master Plan over 10 to 20 years. The project description outlined in this scoping document does not constitute a staff recommendation to the decision-maker on the Project to be evaluated in the EIR. Staff will formulate a recommendation upon completion of the EIR. The standards and requirements for the Project may be modified and/or augmented by mitigation measures that may be identified in the EIR.

#### 3.3.1. Recreation Master Plan

The proposed Recreation Master Plan is a strategic long-range plan to fund and construct new public parks and trails to meet current and future recreation needs countywide over approximately 20 years. A summary of the Recreation Master Plan is provided below. Details about the Recreation Master Plan’s proposed public parks and trails projects, as well as an inventory of public parks and trails and a countywide recreation needs assessment, are available online: [www.sbcrecplan.com](http://www.sbcrecplan.com)

### ***Planned Park and Trail Projects***

The Recreation Master Plan identifies recreation needs within five recreation planning regions in Santa Barbara County, including Santa Maria Valley, Lompoc Valley, Cuyama Valley, Santa Ynez Valley, and the South Coast (Figure 1). To meet those needs, the Recreation Master Plan includes planned capital improvements, programs, funding, and implementation strategies to guide the development of a range of public park and trail projects over 10 to 20 years.

Under the proposed Recreation Master Plan, public parks, open space, and trail projects are identified and described as a basis for near-term (5 to 10 years) and long-term (10 to 20 years) capital improvement planning and funding. Some projects identified in the Recreation Master Plan are sourced from existing County planning documents such as the County's Community Plans and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Public park and open space projects are planned primarily on public lands in unincorporated and incorporated areas to expand community access to competitive sports fields and courts, aquatic facilities (i.e., pools, splash pads, cooling centers), playgrounds, and gathering areas for community events. Local trail projects are proposed to meet long-standing needs for outdoor exploration, access to natural areas, and exercise in all recreation planning areas in response to community input.

Parks and trail projects planned on existing public properties would require site design, construction, and operation consistent with the Recreation Master Plan. Parks and trail projects identified entirely or partially on privately owned properties would require real estate acquisition for long-term public use, as well as site design, construction, and operation in alignment with the Recreation Master Plan.

An interactive map of the proposed parks and trails projects is available here: <https://tinyl.io/BvN1>.

### ***Recreation Benefit Project (RBP) Program***

As a key strategy of the Recreation Master Plan, the County proposes to create and enact the Recreation Benefit Project (RBP) Program. The RBP Program would foster public-private partnerships to help fulfill the recreation needs identified by the Recreation Master Plan. To do so, the RBP Program would create voluntary opportunities in unincorporated areas for private developers to contribute directly to the County's public recreation system.

Under the RBP Program, the County would encourage private development to contribute directly to the County's public recreation system by providing incentives to applicants who voluntarily provide needed public park, recreation, or trail projects as a part of proposed private development projects. The program would be available to eligible projects only within the unincorporated areas of the county.

To be processed as an RBP, a proposed project must have two components:

- 1) **A public recreation component.** The proposed RBP would offer needed public parks, trails, and recreation facilities or substantially contribute to the creation of needed public parks, trails, and recreational facilities identified in the Recreation

Master Plan and/or at the discretion of County Parks. The proposed public recreation component must meet the needs identified in the Recreation Master Plan, must be permanent and open to the public, and must be provided either onsite or offsite within the same recreation planning area as the site.

**2) A private use or development component.** The proposed RBP would involve a component of private use or development that could benefit from incentives offered by the County in exchange for the public recreation component. Private uses or development could include:

- a. Private recreation, such as campgrounds, recreation vehicle (RV) parks, country clubs, community centers, equestrian facilities, golf courses, sports and outdoor recreation facilities, and rural recreation.
- b. Housing, including single-family and multifamily developments.
- c. Other private development projects, including mixed-use, commercial, industrial, and agricultural development (i.e., wineries).

County Parks would assess the public recreation component of the proposed RBP to determine eligibility. Criteria for the assessment would include whether the project would result in a public recreation project that meets community needs identified in the Recreation Master Plan and whether the public park or trail is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, as amended. If County Parks qualifies the proposed project as an eligible RBP based on the public recreation project offered and the location of the project, the eligible RBP could access incentives from the County through its zoning ordinances and permitting regulations. County Planning & Development Department (P&D) would grant any incentives based on County Parks' assessment of RBP eligibility. Examples of incentives only available to eligible RBPs would include:

- Downshifted permit types for currently allowed uses to reduce the cost and time required and streamline the review process (Table 1).
- Allowing land uses that are otherwise not allowed within selected zoning districts (Table 2).
- Increased intensity of use (i.e., more square footage, increased density, or increased building height).
- Waiver or modification of site development standards (i.e., property line setbacks, parking, and landscaping).
- Waiver or reduction of fees (i.e., Development Impact Mitigation Fees/Quimby fees, permitting fees).
- Waiver or reduction of PRD/DR zoning district open space requirements and allowance for the provision of public parks, open spaces, and trails in dedicated common and public open spaces, either on- or offsite.
- Waiver of requirement for a Development Plan for RBPs, subject to applicable permitting standards (e.g., CUP requirements).



**Table 1. Proposed RBP Program - Downshifted Permitting for Currently Allowed Land Uses by Zone**

Zoning Districts	Land Use Permit Downshifting for Eligible RBPs by Zone
<p><b>Eligible RBPs in the zoning districts listed could be eligible for permit downshifting for the land uses below. Permit downshifting could reduce a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to a Minor CUP (MCUP) or a Land Use Permit (P), depending on the project location and details. All RBPs would be subject to all applicable regulations and development standards for each proposed use to ensure compatibility with zoning district regulations and between the proposed private development and public recreation components.</b></p>	
<p><b>Agriculture Zones (AG-I &amp; AG-II)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country clubs</li> <li>• Equestrian facilities</li> <li>• Golf course or driving range</li> <li>• Lodging – Guest ranch</li> <li>• Lodging – Homestay</li> <li>• Lodging - Hostel</li> <li>• Rural recreation</li> <li>• Sports and outdoor recreation facilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resource Management Zones (RMZ, MT-GAV, MT-GOL, MT-TORO)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country clubs</li> <li>• Equestrian facilities</li> <li>• Golf course</li> <li>• Golf driving range</li> <li>• Rural recreation</li> <li>• Sports and outdoor recreation facilities</li> <li>• Education or research facility, limited</li> </ul>
<p><b>Residential Zones (PRD &amp; DR only)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country clubs</li> <li>• Conference center</li> <li>• Equestrian facilities</li> <li>• Golf course or driving range</li> <li>• Rural recreation</li> <li>• Sports and outdoor recreation facilities</li> <li>• Hostel</li> </ul>
<p><b>Commercial Zones (CN, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-S, C-H, C-V only)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor or indoor commercial entertainment</li> <li>• Conference center</li> <li>• Country clubs</li> <li>• Conference center</li> <li>• Equestrian facilities</li> <li>• Golf course or driving range</li> <li>• Rural recreation</li> <li>• Sports and outdoor recreation facilities</li> <li>• Lodging - Hostel</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Proposed RBP Program - Additional Allowed Land Uses by Zone**

Zoning Districts	Additional Land Uses Allowed for Eligible RBPs by Zone
<p><b>The land uses below would only be allowed for eligible RBPs in the zoning districts listed. All additional allowable land uses would be subject to all applicable regulations and development standards for each use to ensure compatibility with zoning district regulations and between the proposed private development and public recreation components.</b></p>	

Zoning Districts	Additional Land Uses Allowed for Eligible RBPs by Zone
<b>Agriculture Zones                      (AG-I &amp; AG-II)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campground</li> <li>• Recreational vehicle (RV) Parks</li> <li>• Lodging – Hotel or motel (boutique only, under 60 rooms)</li> <li>• Lodging – Bed &amp; breakfast inn</li> <li>• Café or coffee shop or food service with or without alcohol sales</li> <li>• Visitor-serving commercial, retail, or market</li> <li>• Outdoor amusement and recreational activities for a fee or admission charge such as ropes course/zip line, BMX/mountain bike course, horseback riding, petting zoo, fishing, mini-golf, skate park, outdoor rink, and other non-motorized outdoor recreational activities</li> <li>• Outdoor motorbike/ATV trails and riding parks</li> <li>• Outdoor aquatic centers, pools, water slides, splash zones</li> <li>• Outdoor theaters (e.g., amphitheaters)</li> <li>• Education or research facility, limited</li> <li>• Outdoor shooting or archery range</li> <li>• Onsite employee housing</li> </ul>
<b>Residential Zones (PRD &amp; DR)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community centers</li> <li>• Outdoor or indoor aquatic centers, pools, water slides, splash zones</li> <li>• Café or coffee shop or food service with or without alcohol sales</li> <li>• Visitor-serving commercial, retail, or market</li> <li>• Office – Professional/Administrative</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial Zones                      (CN, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-S, C-H, C-V)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campground (City style only; KOA, AutoCamp, etc.)</li> <li>• Recreational vehicle (RV) park</li> <li>• Community center</li> <li>• Education or research facility, limited</li> <li>• Outdoor or indoor aquatic centers, pools, water slides, splash zones</li> <li>• Outdoor theaters (e.g., amphitheaters)</li> </ul>

**3.3.2. Related Recreation Amendments**

Funding and constructing parks and trails in sufficient numbers and locations to meet the needs identified in the Recreation Master Plan is challenging due to several factors, including land availability, land acquisition, site development, staffing, and ongoing maintenance costs. Park and trail projects are more feasible when land is either already owned by a public agency or is acquired through donation or other public-private agreement, when site development is supported with a clear, reliable permitting path and a variety of secured funding sources, and maintenance needs are accounted for in the project design and implementation. The County recognizes that the success of the Recreation Master Plan in fostering the development of new parks and trails to meet community needs hinges on the ability of the County to acquire and develop the land for parks, recreation, and trails, including in partnership with other agencies, such as cities and special districts in

Santa Barbara County, as well as private entities, such as local foundations, non-profit organizations, and property owners.

To foster the successful implementation of the Recreation Master Plan, the Project includes amendments to County policy and regulations to support public parks and recreation as a key component of sustainable communities and the County's One Climate program (<https://sbco.mysocialpinpoint.com/oneclimatehome>). As described further below, the Project would amend the Comprehensive Plan with updated policies for parks, recreation, open spaces, and trails that reflect current community input and more actively support the County's efforts and attention to recreation needs in the unincorporated area. The Project would also amend the County's zoning ordinances to support permitting public parks and trails by private entities. Lastly, the Project would create a new program to foster public-private partnerships as a key strategy to acquire and construct new parks and trails in Santa Barbara County. The Project includes related recreation amendments to support the planning and construction of new public parks and trails in Santa Barbara County, as follows:

### ***Proposed General Plan Amendments (GPA) for Public Parks, Recreation, and Trails***

To support the implementation of the Recreation Master Plan, the Project proposes amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to update the Recreation Section of the Land Use Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of these amendments would be to:

1. Provide a more accurate and timely description of parks, trails, and open spaces in the county and the value of these resources for outdoor recreation, public health, and community sustainability.
2. Update the Comprehensive Plan's policy framework in support of public recreation goals and needs, as indicated by community outreach and engagement performed as part of the Recreation Master Plan planning process.

The Land Use Element updates would include updating the Recreation Section (Section III), which was last amended in 1980, with up-to-date information collected for the Project. The updated section puts a renewed emphasis on the importance of County parks, recreation, and trails by acknowledging the health benefits, community sustainability, and need for equitable access and usage of recreational facilities. The 1980 amendment of the Recreation Section focused predominately on park users and infrastructure needs, which is valuable but will be replaced by the recreation needs assessment and planning included in the proposed Recreation Master Plan. The proposed amendment to the Recreation Section entails a new policy framework for recreational land use and development, including the implementation of the Recreation Master Plan, to establish capital improvements planning, recreational development recommendations, and sources of both public and private funding and administration to address the County's evolving recreational needs.

The proposed amendments to the Land Use Element include a new Parks and Recreation Policies section, which establishes five goals and 23 policies that align with the community recreation needs, support implementation of the proposed Recreation Master Plan, and

advocate for recreational uses and development over the long term. A summary of the proposed goals and policies is provided below:

**Proposed Goal 1:** Meet countywide recreation demand by providing recreational opportunities that are welcoming and convenient to all people and in all communities.

- Proposed policies respond and adhere to a growing demand for recreational facilities from a diverse public demographic including, children, adults, families, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged communities. To do so, barriers to entry, such as costs, quantity, and a limited scope of recreational facilities are addressed.

**Proposed Goal 2:** Build and maintain a network of attractive regional and local trails that provide users with convenient access to both urban and rural lands and beautiful natural areas.

- Proposed policies facilitate and support the development and maintenance of trails that provide access to the County's natural environments. Additionally, policies emphasize increasing access to public recreational trails by expanding the allowable accessory usage in recreation zones (e.g., overnight accommodations, services) and diversifying trail networks to serve the needs of pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists.

**Proposed Goal 3:** Coordinate public-private partnerships and interagency cooperation to support public parks, recreation, and trails for the benefit of all Santa Barbara County residents and visitors.

- Proposed policies navigate the implementation of the RBP Program and aid in facilitating public parks and trails in areas where they are currently not allowed.

**Proposed Goal 4:** Provide parks, recreation, and trails in the County that are visually attractive components of both the urban and rural areas through careful design and consideration of the character of the existing community and natural environment.

- Proposed policies promote designing a cohesive aesthetic of recreational facilities that consider the context of their natural and physical surroundings.

**Proposed Goal 5:** Provide sustainable and resilient parks and recreation facilities.

- Proposed policies promote maximizing the value of parkland to community resiliency and sustainability through the incorporation of sustainability features and innovative environmental solutions, as well as the consideration of and support in hazard mitigation and emergency management (e.g., shelters, horse evacuation, cooling/warming centers) in park design and siting.

Amendments to the Land Use Element would also recognize and support the RBP Program (see above), including policies supporting RBP development.

### **Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

The Project involves amendments to the County LUDC, Montecito LUDC, and Article II, Coastal Zoning Ordinance consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, as amended, and in support of the Recreation Master Plan, as summarized below:

#### **Changes to Permitting Requirements for Parks and Trail Projects.**

The proposed zoning ordinance amendments would involve targeted updates to support permitting of parks, recreation, and trails in unincorporated areas. In summary, the Project would:

1. Allow and regulate parks and trails as permitted uses in selected zoning districts where these uses are currently not permitted, including agricultural, resource protection, residential, commercial, special purpose, and industrial zones.
2. Provide objective development standards for parks and trails to ensure high-quality, safe, and accessible facilities to enhance community sustainability and protect natural resources.

#### **Changes to Recreation (REC) Zone Regulations**

The Project would amend the REC zone to apply to public and private lands committed to leisure and recreation uses that are primarily outdoor, but which may also include indoor facilities such as public gyms, community halls, etc. The intent is to encourage a diversity of recreational uses that accommodate both active and passive recreation and enhance access to recreational areas for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Recreational uses should feature, incorporate, preserve, and enhance the natural features of the site setting to the extent feasible and consistent with the provision of such facilities.

Private development projects in REC zones currently require a Development Plan and Design Review under the County's zoning ordinances. The Project would eliminate the requirement for a Development Plan and Design Review in REC zoning and instead require permitting (CUP, MCUP, or LUP) subject to proposed development standards for the REC Zone and any park, recreation, or trail project. The proposed development standards would establish standards for access, parking, agriculture viability, location of development, preserving existing site features, water supply, wastewater disposal, lighting, material and design compatibility, and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Recreation Master Plan. The proposed development standards would ensure that new recreation development, including public parks and trails, would preserve the natural environment and avoid adverse community impacts. Adequate access to safe roads and entrances is also emphasized, along with providing the necessary vehicle and bicycle parking spaces.

Additionally, a range of additional land uses would be allowed in the REC zone to support community recreation needs identified in the Recreation Master Plan (Table 3). The Project would also permit compatible agricultural activities alongside outdoor recreation in the REC zone.

**Table 3. Proposed Additional Allowed Land Use in REC Zone**

Zoning District	Additional Allowed Uses
Recreation (REC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor aquatic centers, pools, water slides, splash zones</li> <li>Outdoor amusement and recreational activities for a fee or admission charge such as ropes course/zip line, BMX/mountain bike course, horseback riding, petting zoo, fishing, mini-golf, skate park, outdoor rink, and other non-motorized outdoor recreational activities</li> <li>Outdoor motorbike/ATV trails and riding parks</li> <li>Outdoor theaters (e.g., amphitheaters)</li> <li>Education or research facility</li> <li>Rural recreation (only in rural areas)</li> <li>Outdoor shooting or archery range</li> </ul>

**Changes to the Allowed Uses in AG-II Zoning District**

The proposed zoning ordinance amendments allow additional recreation and educational uses within the AG-II, as shown in Table 4, to support compatible recreational activities in the rural areas of the county.

**Table 4. Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Additional Allowed Uses**

Zoning Districts	Additional Land Uses Allowed
Agricultural Zone (AG-II)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor shooting or archery range</li> <li>Education or research facility</li> </ul>

**Changes to Enact the RBP Program**

The RBP Program of the Recreation Master Plan would be enacted through amendments to the County’s zoning ordinances, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as amended. Amendments to the zoning ordinances would include a new code section to provide the purpose, criteria for RBP eligibility, and incentives offered to eligible RBPs.

**Targeted REC Zoning Map Updates**

The Project includes targeted rezones of public park properties to either improve the accuracy of the County Zoning Map or support the implementation of the Recreation Master Plan. Proposed rezones will be considered as a component of Recreation Master Plan adoption actions to support the proposed public park and trail projects and may be modified to reflect future decision-maker actions.

**3.4. Adoption and Implementation**

The County Planning Commission will consider the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments, County LUDC and Article II, Coastal Zoning Ordinance Amendments, and potential Zoning Map Updates and provide a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding these components of the Project. The Planning Commission will need to take action on the following:

1. Recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt environmental findings, certify the EIR as applicable, and, if needed, adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations for any

unavoidable, significant environmental impacts that will result from the applicable Recreation Amendments; and

2. Recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, County LUDC, and County Zoning Map, as proposed.

The Montecito Planning Commission will consider the Comprehensive Plan Amendments, MLUDC amendments, and potential Zoning Map Updates that would affect the Montecito community plan area and provide a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding these components of the Project. The Montecito Planning Commission will need to take action on the following:

1. Recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt environmental findings, certify the EIR as applicable, and, if needed, adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations for any unavoidable, significant environmental impacts that will result from the applicable Recreation Amendments; and
2. Recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Montecito LUDC, and County Zoning Map, as proposed.

The Board of Supervisors will consider all components of the Project, including the County Planning Commission and Montecito Planning Commission's actions on the components identified above, and will take action on the following to adopt and implement the Project:

1. Adopt the environmental findings, certify the EIR, and, if needed, adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations for any unavoidable, significant environmental impacts that will result from the Project; and
2. Adopt amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, County LUDC, Montecito LUDC, Article II, Coastal Zoning Ordinance, and the County Zoning Map, as proposed.

The Recreation Master Plan includes areas within the Coastal Zone. Project implementation in the Coastal Zone would be subject to California Coastal Commission review and permitting requirements and compliance with the County's LCP.

## **4.0. SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

### **4.1. Overview**

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR to inform the public and decision-makers of the project's potential environmental effects. This includes any potential environmental effects resulting from the allowance of the supplemental uses described in the project description. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15151, "[a]n EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences."

### **4.2. Environmental Topics to be Analyzed in the EIR**

CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d) states that an initial study is not required in cases where the preparation of an EIR is determined to be required by the lead agency. Accordingly, an initial study for the Project is not provided herein. However, a preliminary review of the Project identified the following issue areas for evaluation in the EIR. Additional

environmental topics beyond what is set forth below might be added to the EIR, based on comments received in response to the NOP for the EIR and Draft EIR that will be prepared for the Project.

#### **4.2.1. Aesthetics and Visual Resources**

Santa Barbara County supports a wide range of aesthetic resources, including scenic highways (e.g., State Routes 1 and 154, portion of U.S. Highway 101), scenic natural resources such as the Santa Ynez Mountains, oak woodlands, historic buildings, and areas with panoramic views. Public parks and trails may also be visual resources or provide scenic views. The Project would result in new recreational facilities (e.g. trails, sports fields, public parks) or improvements to existing recreational facilities within the unincorporated areas of the county. The Project would also enable private development with new public recreational facilities identified in the Recreation Master Plan. Minor alterations to existing facilities or the installation of small pocket or neighborhood parks within existing developed areas would not substantially alter existing views or the character or quality of designated visual resources. Recreational trails, which involve unpaved pathways in generally natural settings, would also not substantially alter visual resources with proposed design standards that ensure minimal adverse effects. However, major park and trail projects, including new community or regional parks, sports complexes, and/or aquatic facilities, could substantially affect scenic and visual resources, particularly within the rural area and in scenic areas of the county. New parks and trails would involve grading, construction, and landscaping. New community parks with sports fields may also create potential new sources of light and glare. The development of new facilities may also facilitate increased activities and visitation that could detract from the visual character or quality of an area (e.g., night lighting). As such, the proposed Project could affect the character, quality, or public enjoyment of visual resources within the county.

The EIR will assess the Project's potential impacts on visual and scenic resources and identify mitigation measures as necessary. This includes a characterization of the existing physical setting; identification of potential impacts upon the character of scenic areas, gateways, relevant aspects of the built environment, public open spaces, and recognized landmarks; and cumulative effects on public vistas and scenic routes.

#### **4.2.2. Agricultural Resources**

The County supports over 500,000 acres of productive agricultural land, including extensive areas of grazing land and cultivated agriculture such as row crops, strawberries, and broccoli in the Santa Maria Valley, vineyards in the Santa Ynez Valley, and orchards, truck crops, and cannabis along the South Coast. The County's agricultural lands are concentrated within the rural areas but include important pockets of urban agricultural land, particularly in the South Coast and Santa Ynez Valley. Agriculture is a key component of the County's economy, providing tens of thousands of jobs and attracting tourists to visit the County's famed wineries. County goals prioritize agricultural preservation and protection from urban development and adverse influences.



The EIR analysis will consider direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on agricultural resources, including the potential for direct conversion of agricultural lands, loss or conversion of prime soils and important farmlands, the potential for conflicts with agricultural operations between uses, and loss of agricultural viability. The analysis will also consider the relationship between Williamson Act contracts and agricultural resource policies, including the *County of Santa Barbara Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones*.

#### **4.2.3. Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The Project area includes the unincorporated area of Santa Barbara County, which is located in the South-Central Coast Air Basin (Basin). The EIR will describe existing conditions within the Basin and in the Project vicinity, including attainment status for criteria pollutants, climatic conditions, local emissions sources, and sensitive receptors, such as schools, elder care facilities, park visitors, and adjacent neighborhoods. The EIR will document the existing climatic and air quality conditions in Santa Barbara County, relevant Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD), State, and federal regulatory standards and thresholds, and attainment/nonattainment pollutants for the Basin. It will also provide an up-to-date description of the current regulatory setting regarding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate change and assess consistency with Assembly Bill (AB) 32, Senate Bill (SB) 32, SB 375, State Attorney General, Office of Planning and Research and Climate Action Team recommendations, the County's Comprehensive Plan and Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, and other recent State and federal regulations and standards. Development proposed or enabled by the Project could generate criteria air pollutant and ozone precursor emissions from construction and operational activities. The primary sources of emissions during construction would occur from heavy-duty construction equipment, haul trucks and vehicles, and fugitive dust. The primary sources of emissions during operational activities would be from motor vehicles traveling to and from parks and recreational facilities and from energy demand from any ancillary buildings (if not supplied by renewable sources), evaporative sources (e.g., use of paints and consumer products), and landscaping activities. The EIR analysis will be supported by an air quality modeling and impact analysis that will quantify direct (e.g., emissions from operation of construction equipment) and indirect (e.g., emissions from electrical power generation) emissions for temporary construction and ongoing operational/maintenance emissions. Calculated emissions will be compared against adopted SBCAPCD and County thresholds. The EIR will also assess the consistency of the proposed Project with applicable plans, regulations, and policies, including the County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element – Air Quality Supplement, and the Air Quality Attainment Plan as well as the Climate Action Plan and other applicable GHG policies.

#### **4.2.4. Biological Resources**

Santa Barbara County supports a wide range of habitats, including oak and riparian woodlands, chaparral and coastal sage scrub, vernal pools, native grasslands, and coastal wetlands, which together support dozens of special status or sensitive species. These include rare wildlife species such as the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma*

*californiense*), southern steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), and arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*), among others, and rare plants such as Gaviota tarplant (*Deinandra increscens ssp. Villosa*). New recreation development is proposed in both rural areas, where these resources tend to be most intact, and in more urban communities which can also support intact habitat areas and sensitive species. The proposed Project has the potential to result in direct impacts associated with construction in or adjacent to sensitive habitats, as well as by potentially facilitating increased human presence and activities within these areas.

The EIR will discuss the special status plant and wildlife species, and habitat found within the Project area and analyze the potential for significant Project-specific and cumulative effects on biological resources. The analysis would be based largely on desktop research using tools such as the California Natural Diversity Data Base, National Wetlands Inventory Maps, habitat maps (e.g., Environmentally Sensitive Habitats maps in the Coastal Zone), or other data from adopted general and community plans, as well as regional plans or State and federal data. The EIR will include a discussion of existing conditions based on the literature and database review and desktop evaluation, an evaluation of the potential for sensitive species and their habitats to occur, and a discussion of potential impacts to biological resources resulting from future development resulting from the proposed Project.

#### **4.2.5. Cultural & Tribal Cultural Resources**

Santa Barbara County supports a rich assemblage of cultural resources, including hundreds of known prehistoric archaeological sites, historic structures, and historic districts, a high potential for unknown subsurface prehistoric and historic resources, as well as potential tribal cultural resources. The Project directly proposes the development of new recreational facilities (e.g. trails, sports fields, public parks) or improvements to recreational facilities within the unincorporated areas of the county, as well as amendments to County plans and policies that would enable the development of new recreational facilities. Depending on the nature, location, and extent of proposed improvements, construction and operation of recreational development may have the potential to disrupt known and unknown cultural resources, including archaeological and historic architectural resources.

A program-level CEQA analysis will be conducted to address potential cultural resource impacts, including archaeological and historic architectural resources, associated with construction and operational activities from the implementation of proposed improvements. The cultural resources analysis will include an inventory of resources included in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, National Historic Landmarks, California Historic Landmarks, County of Santa Barbara Historic Landmarks, and other relevant resource databases. This section of the EIR will provide the results of the inventory and impact analysis. Further, a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search will be requested from the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to solicit information on sensitive or undocumented traditional/cultural sites in the vicinity. The EIR section will summarize communication resulting from the County's Assembly Bill (AB) 52 and Senate Bill (SB) 18 consultations and will document the methods and results of the tribal consultation as needed. This section will include the results of the

will summarize the County's Assembly Bill 52 (Public Resources Code Sections 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, and 21082.3) tribal consultation as needed.

#### **4.2.6. Energy**

Southern California Edison (SCE) and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) provide electricity to the county and Southern California Gas Company (SoCal Gas) provides natural gas. The CEQA Guidelines require that EIRs include a discussion of the potential energy impacts of proposed projects, with emphasis on avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy. The CEQA Guidelines also require that EIRs include a discussion of potential conflicts with state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

To assess energy issues related to the proposed Project, the EIR will investigate the energy availability and demand associated with new development proposed or enabled by the Project. The EIR will review and compile information from existing plans and studies and describe existing energy infrastructure and services and any shortfalls or inadequacies in existing infrastructure or services. The EIR will quantify the energy demands associated with the proposed Project, including estimates of electricity, natural gas, and fuel. The EIR will estimate energy demands for recreation development projects using consumption factors from the California Energy Commission's (CEC's) California End-Use Survey and results from the air pollutant and GHG emissions modeling. The analysis will determine whether the proposed Project would have impacts from a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, as well as any potential conflicts with applicable plans and policies addressing renewable energy and energy efficiency.

#### **4.2.7. Geology and Soils**

Santa Barbara County supports diverse geologic features, topography, and soils. This includes coastal terraces and alluvial valleys, steep foothills and mountains, multiple potentially active earthquake faults and associated seismic hazards, and a wide range of soil types with varying constraints (e.g., limited capacity for septic wastewater disposal, soil expansion, and soil liquefaction). Several active and potentially active faults in the San Andreas Fault system fall within the county. Faults in the northern part of the county are predominantly northwest-southeast but generally trend east-west in the Coastal Zone. The varied topography of the Project area supports areas of steep or very steep slopes, some of which are known to be susceptible to landslide hazards or other types of slope failure (e.g., mudflows). Soils also vary widely throughout the Project area and can be subject to geotechnical hazards and restrictions for disposal of wastewater via septic systems and leach fields.

The EIR will describe the existing geologic setting, including a general characterization of county terrain, soils, seismicity, and other geologic features, such as groundwater basins and faults; and describe the existing regulatory setting, including the Alquist-Priolo Fault Maps, Dibblee Geologic Maps, Natural Resource Conservation Service soils maps, the County's Seismic Safety and Safety Element, Land Use Element, community plans, and Grading Ordinance. The EIR will assess direct, indirect, and cumulative geologic hazards

and impacts posed by the project's potential new uses and development; and will identify recommended mitigation measures as needed to address geologic impacts, building from the California Building Code and the County Code.

#### **4.2.8. Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

The County has a wide range of potential hazards, including contaminated soils from past uses (e.g., oil and gas, commercial agriculture) and transportation hazards such as heavy rail and airport operations. The hazards and hazardous materials analysis will be based on desktop research using tools such as hazardous materials databases (e.g., Envirostor, Envirofacts, County Fire Department records), Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) database, past EIRs, etc. The EIR will describe the existing regulations that address existing contaminated sites as well as procedures for addressing previously unknown contaminants during any ground disturbance. The EIR will assess impacts associated with the development of new recreational facilities in proximity to sites with known hazards and potential contamination, as well as the potential for exposure of users to existing hazards such as pesticides. The EIR will identify mitigation measures, if necessary, to address hazards and hazardous materials, including consideration of existing regulations and best management practices or development standards to address how and where hazards and hazardous materials would occur relative to the Project. Further, the EIR will assess the project for consistency with requirements of federal, state, and county regulations of hazardous materials.

#### **4.2.9. Hydrology & Water Quality**

The County supports three river or large stream systems, including the Santa Ynez River, Santa Maria River, and San Antonio Creek, along with hundreds of perennial and intermittent creeks and both coastal and inland wetlands. Many of the smaller creeks flow through the County's urban areas such as Atascadero and Maria Ygnacia Creeks in the Eastern Goleta Valley, Zanja de Cota and Alamo Pintado Creek in the Santa Ynez Valley, and Orcutt Creek in Orcutt. These rivers and creeks present flood hazards in low-lying rural areas, as well as provide important aquatic habitats that are dependent upon clean water to support associated wildlife and other beneficial uses. Flooding in urbanized areas is generally controlled through devices and management provided by the County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (Flood Control). New recreational development and/or the operation of recreational facilities may impact surface water quality and hydrology through increased grading, vegetation clearing, erosion, and additional water use and wastewater disposal.

The EIR will describe the existing regulatory setting for the management of groundwater and surface waters within the County and the existing hydrologic setting. The EIR will identify potential impacts associated with hydrology, including both flooding and water quality impacts. Groundwater supplies and quality will also be addressed. The EIR section will contain relevant flooding and water quality and supply information and/or links to agency websites. The analysis of Project impacts will be based on desktop research using tools such as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps, County Flood

Control data, County Project Clean Water information, and other readily available databases and maps, including State and federal data.

#### **4.2.10. Land Use and Planning**

Land use and development are governed by a range of County plans and policies, including the Land Use Element and community plans, the amended 1980 Circulation Element, and a range of County and State regulations and ordinances. Recreational development and uses within the county are currently governed by the 1980 Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Land use conflicts that can arise in the County relate primarily to agriculture, recreation, noise, odors, dust, light and glare, transportation associated with vehicle miles traveled (VMT), level of service (LOS)/congestion, safety, and accessibility. In particular, the potential conversion of agricultural land to provide recreational facilities may raise land use policy considerations or concerns for conflicts between adjacent uses.

The EIR will programmatically address potential policy consistency issues regarding land use compatibility, resource preservation, road geometrics and safety, and other land use issues of possible community concern while acknowledging the Comprehensive Plan's priority for open space, agriculture, and rural character. The land use planning analysis will assess related impacts and consistency with adopted policies. Results of the analysis of other resources will be incorporated as needed into this policy consistency analysis.

#### **4.2.11. Noise**

Unincorporated communities in the county generate a range of noises from ambient transportation noise, special uses and events, and construction, but generally maintain an acceptable noise environment (i.e., below 65 A-weighted decibels [dBA] outdoors; below 45 dBA indoors). In contrast, the County's rural area is generally quiet. The Project has the potential to introduce new noise-generating uses into both rural and unincorporated areas, including temporary noise associated with construction activities, increased roadway noise from additional new vehicle trips, noise from recreational activities (e.g., sports practices and games, camping), and noises typical of maintenance and operation of new recreational facilities.

The EIR will describe the existing noise setting, focusing on noise, particularly concerning proposed recreational improvements proximate to sensitive receptors or in areas of the county with low existing ambient noise. The EIR will analyze and identify the noise level impacts for the Project, including identifying the maximum potential construction and operational noise associated with certain recreational activities to compare against adopted community noise standards.

#### **4.2.12. Public Services, Utilities, and Recreation**

Public services provided by the County include fire protection, sheriff services, and parks, which provide recreation resources for residents and visitors either directly or in collaboration with special districts. Utility services, including water, wastewater, and solid waste transport and disposal, are provided by numerous public and private service providers, municipalities, and special districts. New recreational uses proposed or enabled

by the Project may increase demand for these public services, including fire protection and law enforcement, as well as other services, such as water, wastewater management, and solid waste disposal. Some proposed recreational development may occur in areas served by special districts (e.g., Isla Vista Recreation and Park District). Additionally, rural areas where new recreational facilities may be located are often designated high-fire hazard areas and areas where response and access can be challenging for first responders. Rural recreation (e.g., hiking, horseback riding) would introduce a larger, albeit temporary, human population onto rural lands farther from first responders.

The EIR will analyze public service, recreation, and utility issues, focusing on services that could be adversely affected by the proposed Project. The EIR will assess existing service capabilities of applicable services and systems, demand for new or expanded facilities to adequately serve new development, and identify Project direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on public services and utility systems. Given the nature of the Project and proposed recreation improvements, the Project is intended to improve the adequacy, number, and diversity of recreational facilities throughout to better meet the recreational needs of the county and its residents. The EIR will identify the potential adverse and beneficial impacts, associated with new park development.

#### **4.2.13. Transportation**

The County supports a diverse transportation network, including regional freeways such as U.S. 101, State Highways (State Route 1, 154, and 246), and local roads in both urban and rural areas of the county. Public transit service, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities are present in virtually all communities in the county, although these become much less prevalent in the more rural lands. Many roads have incomplete or no pedestrian and bicycle facilities and lack safe links within urban communities. With the introduction of new recreational development, there is a potential for increases in new vehicular trip generation, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), possible safety hazards associated with increased traffic and pedestrian or bicycle use, and increases in demand for active transportation linking these new facilities to the communities.

The EIR will evaluate existing County traffic volume data, Project trip generation/distribution, VMT impacts, geometric hazards, accident data, and safety issues including evacuation/emergency access; identify potential construction-related traffic impacts; assess the Project's long-term operational impacts associated with development of new recreational facilities; evaluate the Project's cumulative effects to transportation based on regional development trends; and identify feasible mitigation measures to address significant impacts.

#### **4.2.14. Wildfire**

The County supports large areas that are exposed to high wildland fire hazards, particularly in the "chaparral urban interface" or wildland-urban interface (WUI) between wildland vegetation and adjacent urban development. The Santa Ynez Mountains and other wildland areas are subject to dry conditions during fire season, seasonal 40- to 50-mile-per-hour winds, and high temperatures of over 90 degrees that contribute to a much higher threat of

wildfire year-round. As such, much of the county is located within an area designated as subject to high fire hazards – Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by CALFIRE. The proposed Project could introduce new development within high-fire hazard areas, increasing the risk of wildfires, as well as increasing public visitation in vulnerable areas such as the WUI.

The EIR will assess existing conditions as they relate to wildfire risk and evaluate the potential increase in wildfire danger that could result from the Project. The EIR will identify mitigation measures where necessary to reduce or eliminate impacts to these resources.

#### **4.2.15. Cumulative Impacts**

CEQA Guidelines Section 15355 defines “cumulative impacts” as follows:

*“Cumulative impacts” refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.*

*(a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.*

*(b) The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.*

The EIR will assess the significant cumulative impacts to which the Project may make a “cumulatively considerable” contribution (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130).

#### **4.3. Alternatives Analysis**

The EIR will describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Project, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6. The alternatives discussion in the EIR will include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Project. The EIR will programmatically describe the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative. The EIR analysis will also include a brief discussion of each alternative considered but rejected from further analysis in the EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6).

#### **4.4. Other Required CEQA Discussions**

The EIR will include a section that addresses other issues for which CEQA Guidelines Section 15126 requires analysis beyond the environmental topical areas described above. In this section, the EIR will analyze the Project’s additional possible impacts, including growth inducement and significant irreversible environmental change. Effects found not to be significant also will be summarized and likely will include topical areas such as forest resources, mineral resources, population/housing, and others that are determined not to be affected by the implementation of the proposed Project.