

county of ventura

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and Scoping Meeting for the Ventura County 2040 General Plan Update (Case No. PL17-0141)

January 14, 2019

The County of Ventura, Resource Management Agency, Planning Division (County) is currently developing the Ventura County 2040 General Plan Update (2040 General Plan Update) as described below. The County, as the lead agency, has determined that the proposed 2040 General Plan Update may have one or more significant effects on the environment and will prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is being distributed to applicable responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested parties as required by CEQA. The purpose of this notice is to call your attention to this EIR and to request that you help the County identify the significant environmental issues, mitigation measures, and range of reasonable alternatives that should be addressed in the EIR. Information on the 2040 General Plan Update, topics to be addressed in the EIR, and instructions on how to provide comments on the scope and content of the EIR are provided below.

30-day NOP Comment Period: This NOP is available for a 30-day comment period that is open from **January 14, 2019**, to **February 19, 2019**. Please submit your comments on the scope and content of the EIR in writing no later than **5:00 p.m.** on **February 19, 2019**, to:

Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Planning Division
Attn: Susan Curtis, Manager, General Plan Update Section
800 S. Victoria Ave., L #1740
Ventura, CA 93009-1740

Alternatively, you may email your comments to Susan Curtis at susan.curtis@ventura.org or fax them to her attention at (805) 654-2509.

Scoping Meeting: The County will hold a Scoping Meeting to inform the public and interested parties about the 2040 General Plan Update and solicit comments on the scope of environmental issues, mitigation measures, and range of reasonable alternatives to be addressed in the EIR. The date, time, and location of the meeting are provided below.

Wednesday, January 30, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.
County Government Center, Hall of Administration
Multi-Purpose Conference Room
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Project Name: Ventura County 2040 General Plan Update

Project Location: All unincorporated areas within Ventura County. The project location is shown on Figure 1.

800 South Victoria Avenue, L# 1740, Ventura, CA 93009 (805) 654-2481 Fax (805) 654-2509



Project Background and Description: The County of Ventura is undertaking a comprehensive update of its General Plan. The County's current General Plan was most recently updated in 2005 and has not been comprehensively updated since 1988. The 2040 General Plan Update is anticipated to be adopted in 2020 and will set forth the County's vision of its future and express the goals, policies, and implementation programs that will guide future decisions concerning a variety of issues, including land use, health and safety, and resource conservation out to the year 2040. In addition, all area plans, specific plans, subdivisions, public works projects, and zoning decisions must be found to be consistent with the direction provided in the County's General Plan. More information on the existing General Plan and the 2040 General Plan Update is available online at: <https://vc2040.org/>.

The existing General Plan establishes land use designations that describe the land uses that are allowed in the unincorporated areas of Ventura County. These land use designations include: Rural, Existing Community, Urban, Agricultural, Open Space, State or Federal Facility, and Urban Reserve Overlay.

The Existing Community and Urban designations do not provide clear guidance on how dense or intense development can be within these areas. The 2040 General Plan Update identifies and proposes more refined land use designations, which are based on currently adopted zoning. As these designations reflect what is currently allowed in the unincorporated county, (i.e., they reflect the "existing regulatory setting"), these refinements are not considered a change in allowed land uses.

During 2018, the public, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors were engaged in an alternatives process that was designed to guide development of the General Plan Update. The alternatives process was used to discuss document organization, land use, and policy options. As part of the alternatives process for the 2040 General Plan Update, the County Board of Supervisors determined that the existing allowed land uses provide adequate land to accommodate projected population growth in the unincorporated areas of the County through the year 2040 – the planning horizon of the proposed 2040 General Plan Update.

Therefore, the 2040 General Plan Update is not expected to identify any increases in overall development relative to the existing General Plan, unless changes are required in order to meet future Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) numbers to be released in Fall 2019 (described further below as part of the recommended land use alternative).

The 2040 General Plan Update will reflect current conditions and issues, reduce redundancies in the existing General Plan, and achieve compliance with current state planning laws and guidelines. Current conditions and trends were described in detail and documented as part of the General Plan Background Report published in January 2018 (described further below). Issues to be addressed were defined and reported in the Assets, Issues, and Opportunities Summary Report. The 2040 General Plan Update will also provide a more concise and clear policy statement for the County 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.

The 2040 General Plan Update will also address 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 (Complete Streets), and wildfire hazards. The 2040 General Plan Update will also be designed to maintain consistency with the Guidelines for

Orderly Development, greenbelt agreements, and the Save Open Space & Agricultural Resources (SOAR) measures for Ventura County's unincorporated areas and eight incorporated cities.

The 2040 General Plan Update includes two key constituent documents: the Background Report (described further below) and the Policy Document. The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2018 will be the foundation for the goals, policies, and implementation programs included in the Policy Document. The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles are available on the 2040 General Plan Update website library at: <https://vc2040.org/review/documents>.

Proposed 2040 General Plan: Background Report

The Background Report describes existing conditions as of 2016 and potential future trends in Ventura County. It is divided into 12 chapters that cover a wide range of topics, such as demographics, economic conditions, land use, public facilities, and environmental resources. The Background Report presents objective information and is intended to be policy-neutral, however, it provides decision makers, the public, and local agencies with context for making policy decisions.

The Background Report will also serve as the basis for the required "Environmental Setting" section of the EIR. If any substantial new or revised information related to the environmental setting becomes available during preparation of the EIR, it will be documented in the Environmental Setting and Regulatory Setting sections of the EIR. The Background Report, published in January 2018, is available at the 2040 General Plan Update website library at: <https://vc2040.org/review/documents>.

2040 General Plan Update: Policy Document

The Policy Document will be the essence of the 2040 General Plan Update. It will set forth the goals and policies that guide future decisions within the unincorporated areas and will identify the implementation programs required to carry out the goals and policies of the General Plan. The Policy Document will also include land use designations and a land use diagram that specifies the allowable uses of land, (e.g., residential, commercial, etc.) throughout the unincorporated area. The proposed structure and content of the General Plan and the recommended land use alternative for the 2040 General Plan Update are described below.

Structure and Content of the General Plan

The 2040 General Plan Update will reorganize the General Plan based on the state's required General Plan Elements (or chapters), and will include new content to address new state planning requirements and guidelines and policy topics identified by the Board of Supervisors related to healthy communities, environmental justice, and sustainability, including climate change mitigation, vulnerability, and adaptation. It may also include minor, non-substantive revisions to remove redundant and obsolete content.

The General Plan will address the state's mandatory elements including 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.

The state allows jurisdictions to structure a General Plan to best meets its needs. The County's 2040 General Plan elements will be 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. Regardless of the organization of the elements, the 2040 General Plan Update will address all relevant statutory requirements.

The 2040 General Plan Update will also include a Climate Action Plan which, among other things, will include a vulnerability analysis and describe how the County plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The Climate Action Plan will comply with the requirements of state law (CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5 and Government Code Section 65302).

The 2040 General Plan Update will also include updates to seven of the ten Area Plans that are part of the existing General Plan:

- 1) El Rio/Del Norte
- 2) Thousand Oaks
- 3) Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley
- 4) Ojai Valley
- 5) Oak Park
- 6) Piru
- 7) North Ventura Avenue

These seven Area Plans will be reviewed and assessed to compare the Area Plan goals, policies, and programs with proposed General Plan Update goals, policies and programs to ensure internal consistency. Area Plans will be updated to reflect a common format and achieve consistency with the 2040 General Plan Update elements. If directed by the Board of Supervisors, this may include deletion or modification of Area Plan goals, policies or programs that repeat the same or similar information from the General Plan and outdated information. Area Plan land use and circulation diagrams will also be reviewed for recommended revisions to ensure consistency with the updated General Plan land use and circulation diagrams.

The Coastal Area Plan, which is part of the County's Local Coastal Program, the Ahmanson Ranch Area Plan, which expired in September 2018, and the Saticoy Area Plan, which was updated in 2015, will not be notably changed as part of the 2040 General Plan Update. The existing Area Plans are available online at: vcrma.org/area-plans.

Recommended Land Use Alternative: Proposed 2040 General Plan Land Use Designations and Regional Housing Needs Allocation

The recommended land use alternative consists of two parts: Proposed 2040 General Plan Land Use Designations and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). Each is described further below.

The Proposed 2040 General Plan Land Use Designations are intended to provide a refined set of land use designations within the Existing Community and Urban land use designations of the existing General Plan. Although these existing designations apply to land that allows for a range

of residential, commercial, or industrial uses, neither designation identifies distinct land uses for the various parcels subject to these designations.

The Proposed 2040 General Plan Update Land Use Designations would refine the Existing Community and Urban land use designations of the existing General Plan to more clearly distinguish among land uses allowed within each designation and set forth maximum development density and intensity standards.

Specifically, the 2040 General Plan Update would establish 13 new 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. These proposed 2040 General Plan Update 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 land use designations apply the same minimum lot size requirement as the existing General Plan, where the existing General Plan provides such a requirement. 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.

The proposed 2040 General Plan Update would not make changes to the following existing land use designations:

- ▶ Agricultural, Open Space, or Rural land use designations located outside of Existing Community and Urban designated area (consistent with the SOAR initiative);
- ▶ State and Federal Facility Designation since they apply to parcels owned by the state or federal government and are outside of the County’s land use jurisdiction; and
- ▶ Urban Reserve Overlay, since it applies to all unincorporated areas within city spheres of influence, which are the probable future growth areas of the incorporated cities.

Existing and proposed General Plan land use designations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Existing General Plan Land Use Designations and Proposed New General Plan Land Use Designations

Acronym	Land Use Designation	Max. Density/ Intensity	Min. Lot Size
Existing General Plan Land Use Designations to Remain*			
RUR	Rural	1 du/2 ac (1 dwelling unit per each 2 acres)	2 acres
AG	Agricultural	1 du/40 ac	40 acres
OS	Open Space	1 du per parcel	10 acres, or 20 acres if contiguous w/Agricultural
P	State or Federal Facility	N/A	None
UR	Urban Reserve Overlay	N/A	None
Proposed New Land Use Designations (to be applied only to areas with current Existing Community or Urban land use designations)			

Table 1 – Existing General Plan Land Use Designations and Proposed New General Plan Land Use Designations

Acronym	Land Use Designation	Max. Density/ Intensity	Min. Lot Size
ECU-R	ECU-Rural	1 du/2 ac	2 acres
ECU-A	ECU-Agricultural	1 du/40 ac	40 acres
ECU-OS	ECU-Open Space	1 du per parcel	10 acres, or 20 acres if contiguous w/Agricultural
VLDR	Very Low Density Residential	3 du/ac	10,000 SF
LDR	Low-Density Residential	5 du/ac	6,000 SF
MDR	Medium-Density Residential	13 du/ac	3,000 SF
RHD	Residential High-Density	20 du/ac	No Minimum
RPD	Residential Development Planned	20 du/ac	No Minimum
MU	Mixed Use	20 du/ac; 60% coverage	No Minimum
C	Commercial	60% coverage	No Minimum
CPD	Commercial Development Planned	60% coverage	No Minimum
I	Industrial	50% coverage	10,000 SF
PR	Parks & Recreation	N/A	N/A

* Acronyms used for existing General Plan designations are not used in the existing General Plan but are added here for reference.

As part of the 2040 General Plan Update, work will be completed in preparation for the next 8-year Housing Element cycle, which runs from 2021-2029. The 2040 General Plan Update will include an analysis of the County’s currently identified potential housing sites to ensure that the County can demonstrate that there is adequate capacity based on the proposed land use designations and existing Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance development standards to accommodate the development of dwelling units that are affordable for all household income categories (i.e., extremely low, very low, low, moderate, and above moderate income).

The update will include evaluation of sites identified in the current Housing Element to determine whether they can accommodate the County’s housing need for 2021-2029. Additional sites will be identified, if needed. The unincorporated County’s portion of the RHNA for the 2021-2029 Housing Element cycle is anticipated to be released by the Southern California Association of Governments in the Fall of 2019. Therefore, the Housing Element will be updated separately, likely following 2040 General Plan Update’s adoption.

Additional Components of the Proposed 2040 General Plan

In addition to the land use designations and RHNA analysis described above, the 2040 General Plan Update will also:

- ▶ Eliminate the designation of land within incorporated cities as Urban, and instead reference this land as “City” on the General Plan Land Use Diagram;

- ▶ Retain the current boundaries assigned to the Existing Community and Urban land use designations to ensure consistency with the Guidelines for Orderly Development (Existing General Plan Goal 3.1.1-5); and
- ▶ Amend the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance to create a new Open Space-Parks and Recreation zoning designation that would apply to publicly-owned parcels currently dedicated to parks and recreational uses.

Environmental Topics Addressed in the EIR: Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines, no Initial Study will be prepared. The EIR will analyze the full range of environmental topics contemplated under CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, including the following:

- ▶ Aesthetics
- ▶ Air Quality
- ▶ Cultural Resources
- ▶ Geology/Soils
- ▶ Hazards/Hazardous Materials
- ▶ Land Use/Planning
- ▶ Noise
- ▶ Public Services
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Utilities/Service Systems
- ▶ Agriculture and Forest Resources
- ▶ Biological Resources
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- ▶ Hydrology/Water Quality
- ▶ Mineral Resources
- ▶ Population/Housing
- ▶ Recreation
- ▶ Tribal Cultural Resources
- ▶ Wildfire

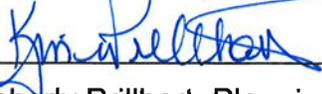
The EIR will analyze alternatives, cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, and other issues required by CEQA. In addition, the EIR will expand on the environmental topics addressed in CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines by addressing the full range of environmental topics contemplated in the County's 2011 Initial Study Assessment Guidelines which are available online at: https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/ceqa/current_ISAG.pdf

NOTICE OF PREPARATION: This NOP is posted at the following locations:

- Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Planning Division, 3rd Floor, Hall of Administration, 800 S. Victoria Avenue, CA, 93009;
- Ventura County Clerk-Recorder, Registrar of Voters, 1st Floor, Hall of Administration, 800 S. Victoria Avenue, CA, 93009;
- Ventura County General Plan Update website at <https://vc2040.org/>

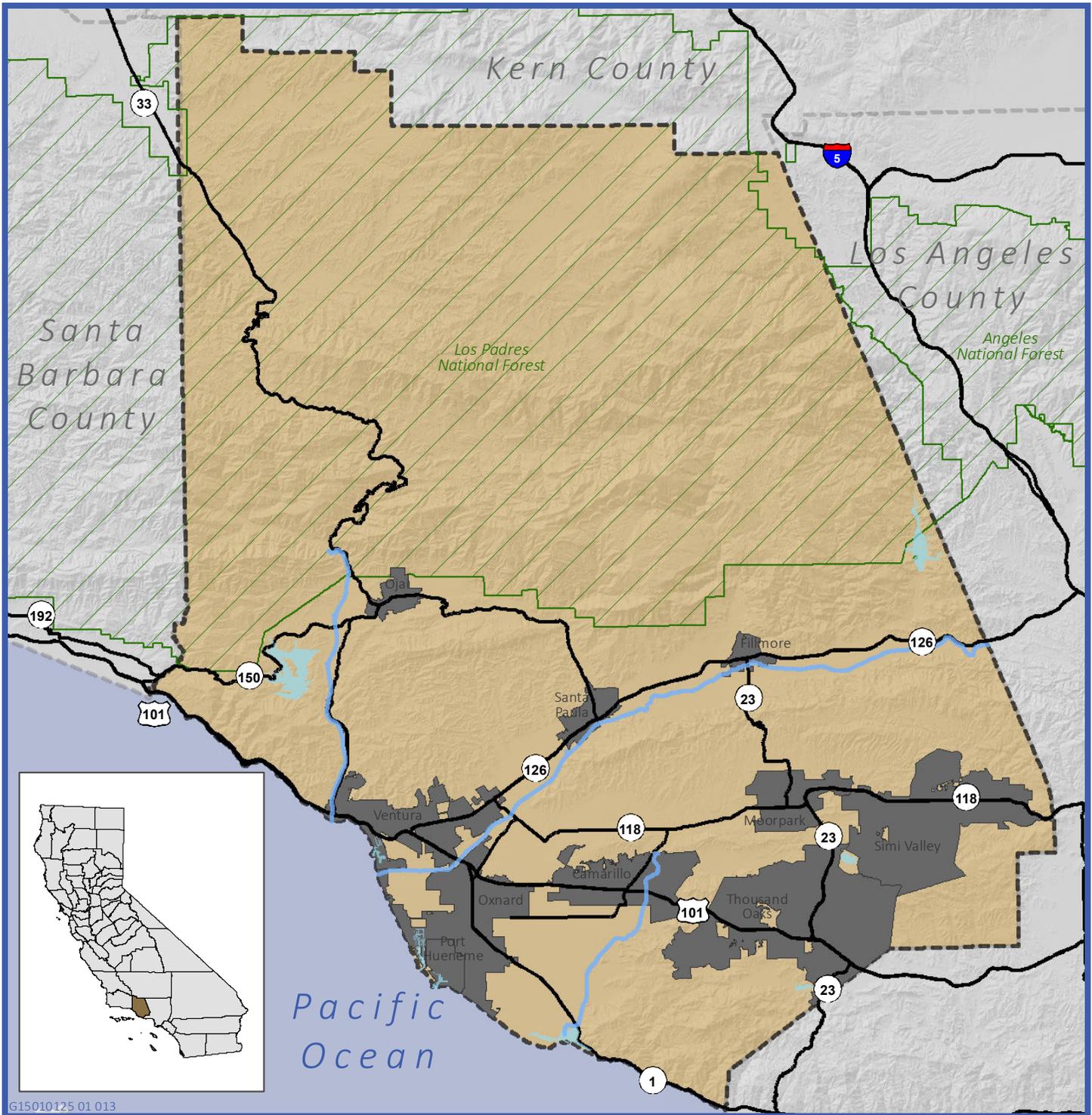
Any person is privileged to attend and be heard on this matter. If you challenge the above described action in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the Public Hearing described in this Notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the County of Ventura at, or prior to, the Public Hearing. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need assistance to participate in this meeting, call (805) 654-2805.

If you have questions on the contents of this notice, please contact Susan Curtis, Manger
General Plan Update at (805) 654-2497 or email susan.curtis@ventura.org.



Kimberly Prillhart, Planning Director

Attachment: Figure 1. Project Location



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Figure 1:
Project Location

Map Date: December 14, 2018

Source: Ventura County, 2016; California Department of Transportation, 2007; USGS, 2013.



- Major Roadways
- Major Waterways
- Water Bodies
- Ventura County Boundary
- Incorporated Cities
- Unincorporated Ventura County