

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

California law requires that every county and city adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning” (Government Code Section 65300). A general plan serves as the jurisdiction’s “constitution” or “blueprint” for future decisions concerning a variety of issues including land use, health and safety, and resource conservation. All area plans, specific plans, subdivisions, public works projects, and zoning decisions must be consistent with the direction provided in the general plan.

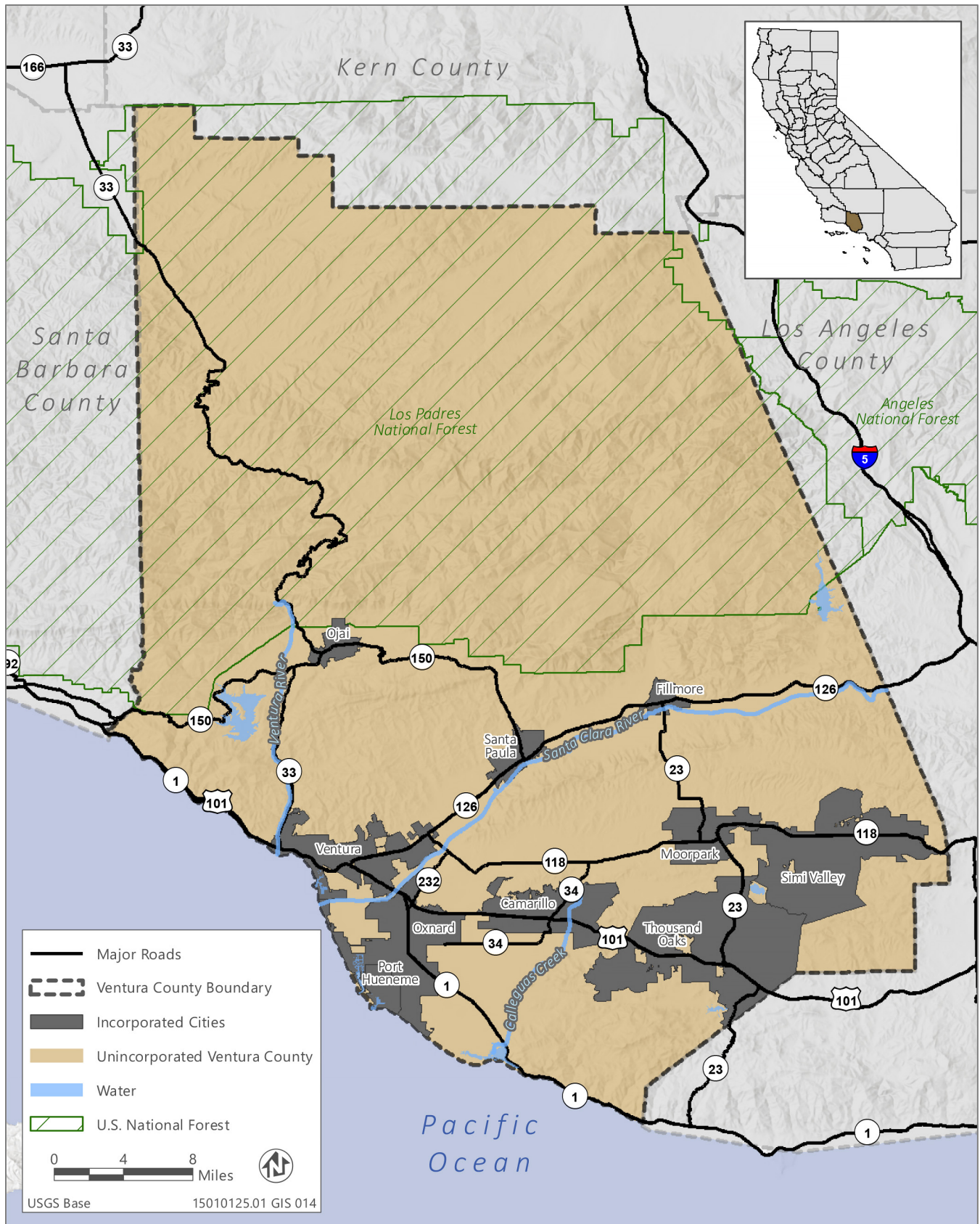
The proposed project is a comprehensive update of the existing General Plan for the County of Ventura. The 2040 General Plan establishes the County’s vision for development and resource management through the year 2040 and will serve as the fundamental land use and resource policy document for the County. This chapter of the draft EIR describes the key characteristics of the 2040 General Plan, including the geographic extent of the plan, objectives, development forecasted for the plan area, and required approvals.

3.1 GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT OF THE PLAN AREA

Ventura County is one of the six counties that collectively form the Central Coast region of California. It was created on January 1, 1873, when it separated from Santa Barbara County. Ventura County covers 1.2 million acres bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the southwest, Los Angeles County to the southeast and east, Santa Barbara County to the west, and Kern County to the north (Figure 3-1). The Los Padres National Forest accounts for approximately 574,000 acres, or 47 percent of the county’s total land area. This includes privately owned inholdings surrounded by Los Padres National Forest which are not part of the national forest. Outside of the Los Padres National Forest, there are approximately 528,000 acres of land in the unincorporated area (43 percent) and 121,000 acres in the county’s 10 incorporated cities (10 percent). In addition to the mainland part of the county, two of the eight Channel Islands off the coast (San Nicolas Island and Anacapa Island) are also part of Ventura County. Anacapa Island is approximately 700 acres and is located within the Channel Islands National Park. San Nicolas Island encompasses approximately 14,000 acres and is located 65 miles south of Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu. Managed by the US Navy, San Nicolas Island serves as a launch platform and observation platform for short- and medium-range missile testing. Anacapa Island covers approximately 3,200 acres and is located 14 miles from the coast of Ventura County; it is one of the most visited islands of Channel Islands National Park because of its proximity to the mainland.¹

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

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



Sources: Ventura County 2016; California Department of Transportation 2007

Figure 3-1 Project Location

3.2 BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The Ventura County General Plan was most recently updated in 2005 and has not been comprehensively updated since 1988. The current, comprehensive update process was initiated in 2015. To reach a wide variety of county residents and stakeholders, Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Planning Division staff conducted extensive community outreach to secure initial public, focus group, and advisory body input on the development of the draft 2040 General Plan. The County gathered community input through the following methods:

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

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

3.2.1 Alternatives Report

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

- ▶ Vision Statement and Guiding Principles,
- ▶ Proposed General Plan Organization,
- ▶ Preferred Land Use Alternative, and
- ▶ Policy Choices.

VISION STATEMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A vision statement reflects what community members value most about the county and their shared aspirations for the future. The 2040 General Plan Vision Statement is intended to be inspirational and set the direction for the general plan's goals, policies, and implementation

programs. The visioning process helped to identify issues important to the community and provided early direction for alternatives development and analysis during the update process.

The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the 2040 General Plan provide general direction for the future and introduce key themes that are addressed. Specifically, the Guiding Principles serve as touchstones to guide consistency of goals, policies, and implementation programs with the overarching vision. The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles were reviewed and recommended by the Board of Supervisors in 2018 as part of the Alternatives Report process.

The following is the 2040 General Plan Vision Statement:

Ventura County is an exceptional place to live, work, and play. Our quality of life and economic vitality are rooted in the stewardship of our cultural and natural resources, including agricultural lands and soils, open spaces, mountains and beaches, and talented people. The General Plan reflects the County's ongoing commitment to collaborate with residents, cities, businesses, and non-profit organizations to meet our social and economic needs in a sustainable manner, to protect the environment and address climate change, and to encourage safe, healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities to thrive.

The Guiding Principles are included in Section 3.3 below and serve to guide the development of the policies and implementation programs in each element. The Guiding Principles also serve as the project objectives for the 2040 General Plan in this draft EIR.

PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN ORGANIZATION

This chapter of the Alternatives Report presented the 2040 General Plan's proposed organizational structure, land use designations, and updated set of land use density and intensity standards.

2040 General Plan Land Use Designations

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

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

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

As part of the 2040 General Plan, several key designations are maintained as presented in the existing General Plan. All lands in the existing General Plan with a land use designation of Agricultural, Open Space, or Rural located outside of Existing Community and Urban designated areas are maintained unchanged. This ensures the 2040 General Plan remains consistent with the Save Open Space & Agricultural Resources [SOAR] initiative. The current Existing Community and Urban designations were retained as new area designations in the 2040 General Plan. Also retained are the lands designated as State and Federal Facility, which is applied to parcels owned by the State or federal government and are outside of the County's land use jurisdiction. The only change to this designation is its name, which in the 2040 General Plan is under the term "State, Federal, Other Public Lands." There is a new land use designation for "Parks and Recreation," which provides for parks and recreation facilities and associated recreation uses. There is no land currently in the Parks & Recreation designation. This new designation will be applied to parcels within Existing Community, Area Plans, and Urban Centers within Areas of Interest that provide for parks and recreation facilities and associated recreation uses to serve all residents in Ventura County. A new zone classification titled Parks and Recreation (REC) would also be established for parks and recreational uses in the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance and Coastal Zoning Ordinance that would be compatible with this land use designation and separate from the General Plan Update project as part of the 2040 General Plan's implementation.

Two changes are also proposed for lands within or adjacent to the incorporated cities in the county. As the County does not have land use authority over lands within the cities, these areas are noted as "City" on the 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram and not given a land use designation. The final land use designation change is the proposed removal of the Urban Reserve Overlay. This overlay is replaced by a policy that references the use of adopted spheres of influence to provide the same geographic boundary. Table 3-1 provides the land use designations that would be established and used by the 2040 General Plan.

Table 3-1 Land Use Designation General Development Standards

Acronym	Land Use Designation	Maximum Density / Intensity	Minimum Lot Size	Maximum Lot Coverage ¹
Rural, Agricultural, and Open Space Designations				
RUR	Rural ²	1 du/2 ac	2 acres, or zone suffix equal to or more restrictive than 2 acres	25%
ECU-R ³	ECU-Rural	1 du/2 ac	2 acres	25%
AG	Agricultural ²	1 du/40 ac	40 acres	5%
ECU-A ³	ECU-Agricultural	1 du/40 ac	40 acres	5%
OS	Open Space ²	1 du/parcel	10 acres, or 20 acres if contiguous w/Agricultural	5%
ECU-OS ³	ECU-Open Space	1 du/parcel	10 acres, or 20 acres if contiguous w/Agricultural	5%
Residential Designations				
VLDR	Very Low Density Residential	4 du/ac	10,000 SF	n/a

Acronym	Land Use Designation	Maximum Density / Intensity	Minimum Lot Size	Maximum Lot Coverage ¹
LDR	Low-Density Residential	6 du/ac	6,000 SF	n/a
MDR	Medium-Density Residential	14 du/ac	3,000 SF	n/a
RHD	Residential High-Density	20 du/ac	No minimum	n/a
RPD	Residential Planned Development	20 du/ac	No minimum	n/a
CRPD	Coastal Residential Planned Development	36 du/ac	No minimum	n/a
RB	Residential Beach	36 du/ac	1,500 SF	n/a
Mixed Use, Commercial, and Industrial Designations				
MU	Mixed Use	20 du/ac; 60% lot coverage	No minimum	60%
C	Commercial	60% lot coverage	No minimum	60%
CPD	Commercial Planned Development	60% lot coverage	No minimum	60%
I	Industrial	50% lot coverage	10,000 SF	50%
Other Designations				
PR	Parks & Recreation	n/a	None	5%
P	State, Federal, Other Public Lands ²	n/a	None	n/a

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

1. Maximum lot coverage is per applicable County zoning classification.
2. Existing General Plan land use designations that would be retained.
3. The acronym "ECU-" preceding a designation name refers to land use designations that apply only within the boundaries of an Existing Community or Urban area designation (boundary) as defined in 2040 General Plan Policies LU-1.2 and LU-2.1.

PREFERRED LAND USE ALTERNATIVE

The land use alternative recommended in the Alternatives Report consists of two parts: Proposed 2040 General Plan Land Use Designations and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The proposed 2040 General Plan land use designations provide a more refined range of designations, compared to the existing General Plan, with clear density ranges to accommodate the County's housing needs. To comply with housing element law (Government Code Section 65863), the County must demonstrate that there is adequate capacity in the unincorporated area 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) based on the existing zoning and general plan designations.

As discussed further below, the County's existing housing element was adopted in 2013 and will remain in effect through 2021. The 2040 General Plan integrates the County's current 2014–2021 Housing Element by formatting the document to be consistent with the 2040 General Plan.

Housing Element

This component of the Preferred Land Use Alternative would 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 and 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). However, housing need (by income level) is based on the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) data from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and follows a planning cycle that is distinct from the 2040 General Plan. SCAG will release draft RHNA numbers for the 2021–2029 Housing Element update cycle in February 2020, with final RHNA numbers expected in October 2020. For this reason, the RHNA component of the alternative will be addressed as part of the Housing Element that will occur subsequent to the adoption of the 2040 General Plan.

POLICY CHOICES

The final component of the Alternatives Report included a definition of key policy changes that would be pursued in the development of the 2040 General Plan. This included the identification of opportunities to streamline existing goals, policies, and programs by eliminating redundant policies and programs; removing language that restates requirements to comply with federal, State, or local legislation/regulations. The Alternatives Report also laid out an overview of the statutory requirements for general plans pursuant to Government Code Section 65302 and defined the element organization designed to meet these requirements. In addition to addressing the State-required elements, the Alternatives Report identified three new optional elements for the 2040 General Plan: Agriculture Element, Water Resources Element, and Economic Vitality Element.

3.2.2 Relationship to Other Plans and Regulations

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

There are also nine Area Plans that are incorporated and made part of the 2040 General Plan. An Area Plan specifies the distribution, location, types, and intensity of land uses, and provides specific policies concerning development in a distinct geographical area. The goals, policies, and programs of an Area Plan are designed to supplement, not duplicate, the General Plan. See Section 3.4.2, below, for further details.

LAND USE PLANNING CONTEXT AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

One of Ventura County's distinguishing characteristics is its open space and scenic character. The County is dedicated to directing urban development to cities and existing unincorporated communities to preserve its working and rural landscapes, agricultural lands, scenic vistas, natural resources, and recreational opportunities. The County has a direct role in maintaining agricultural, rural, and open space areas and shaping the character of urban development. At the same time,

the County seeks to support and encourage the cities in their land use planning efforts to ensure that a quality living environment is provided for all existing and future county residents.

Ventura County is unique in California because of the successful countywide land use planning efforts that have preserved the county's open space and scenic character, as described further below.

Guidelines for Orderly Development

The County of Ventura, cities within the county, and the Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) adopted the Guidelines for Orderly Development to direct urban-level development and services to the incorporated areas. Through Policies LU-1.1 and LU-2.1 in the 2040 General Plan, the County would continue to work with these entities to promote and maintain reasonable city boundaries and spheres of influence to prevent growth-inducing urban development in unincorporated areas, and require unincorporated urban development to be located in areas designated as Existing Communities and unincorporated urban centers consistent with the Guidelines for Orderly Development.

Greenbelt Agreements

Greenbelt agreements, voluntary agreements between the County and one or more cities, are used to limit development of agricultural and/or open space areas within the unincorporated county. Through greenbelt agreements, cities express their commitment to not annex any property within a greenbelt while the County expresses its commitment to restrict development to uses consistent with existing agricultural or open space zoning. There are seven greenbelts in Ventura County totaling approximately 164,000 acres.

Save Open Space & Agricultural Resources Initiative

Ventura County voters first approved the countywide SOAR initiative in 1998. In general, and subject to certain exceptions, SOAR requires countywide voter approval of any (1) substantive change to the general plan's agricultural, open space, or rural land use goals or policies, and (2) redesignation of land with these general plan land use designations. In November 2016, Ventura County voters renewed the County's SOAR initiative and extended its provisions through 2050. Similarly, voters in eight of the county's 10 cities renewed SOAR initiatives adopted by the respective jurisdictions that are applicable within their boundaries (the cities of Ojai and Port Hueneme have not adopted SOAR measures). SOAR measures within cities establish voter-controlled urban growth boundaries, known as City Urban Restriction Boundaries. The County SOAR initiative's Agricultural, Open Space, and Rural goals and policies are included in the 2040 General Plan with only technical, non-substantive revisions for clarification and internal consistency with the rest of the 2040 General Plan.

3.3 GENERAL PLAN OBJECTIVES

Section 15124 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to include a statement of project objectives. The objectives assist the County, as lead agency, in developing a reasonable range of alternatives to be evaluated in this draft EIR. The project objectives also aid decision makers in preparing findings and, if necessary, a statement of overriding considerations. The statement of objectives also includes the underlying purpose of the project.

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

- ▶ **Land Use and Community Character:** Direct urban growth away from agricultural, rural, and open space lands, in favor of locating it in cities and unincorporated communities where public facilities, services, and infrastructure are available or can be provided.
- ▶ **Housing:** Support the development of affordable and equitable housing opportunities by preserving and enhancing the existing housing supply and supporting diverse new housing types, consistent with the Guidelines for Orderly Development.
- ▶ **Circulation, Transportation, and Mobility:** Support the development of a balanced, efficient, and coordinated multimodal transportation network that meets the mobility and accessibility needs of all residents, businesses, and visitors.
- ▶ **Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure:** Invest in facilities, infrastructure, and services, including renewable energy, to promote efficiency and economic vitality, ensure public safety, and improve quality of life.
- ▶ **Conservation and Open Space:** Conserve and manage the County's open spaces and natural resources, including soils, water, air quality, minerals, biological resources, scenic resources, as well as historic and cultural resources.
- ▶ **Hazards and Safety:** Minimize health and safety impacts to residents, businesses and visitors from human-caused hazards such as hazardous materials, noise, air, sea level rise, and water pollution, as well as managing lands to reduce the impacts of natural hazards such as flooding, wildland fires, and geologic events.
- ▶ **Agriculture:** Promote the economic vitality and environmental sustainability of Ventura County's agricultural economy by conserving soils/land while supporting a diverse and globally competitive agricultural industry that depends on the availability of water, land, and farmworker housing.
- ▶ **Water Resources:** Develop and manage water resources in a manner that addresses current demand without compromising the ability to meet future demand, while balancing the needs of urban and agricultural uses, and healthy ecosystems.
- ▶ **Economic Vitality:** Foster economic and job growth that is responsive to the evolving needs and opportunities of the County's economy, and preserves land use compatibility with Naval Base Ventura County and the Port of Hueneme, while enhancing quality of life and promoting environmental sustainability.
- ▶ **Climate Change and Resilience:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve all adopted targets, proactively anticipate and mitigate the impacts of climate change, promote employment opportunities in renewable energy and reducing greenhouse gases, and increase resilience to the effects of climate change.
- ▶ **Healthy Communities:** Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by investing in infrastructure that promotes physical activity, access to healthy foods, supporting the arts and integrating Health in All Policies into the built environment.
- ▶ **Environmental Justice:** Commit to the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies, protect disadvantaged communities from a disproportionate burden posed by toxic exposure and risk, and continue to promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process.

3.4 STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

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

The 2040 General Plan addresses topics and issues pursuant to State requirements adopted since the existing general plan was approved in 2005. These include environmental justice, transportation issues such as assessing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and analyzing transportation systems more holistically (e.g., “Complete Streets”), and wildfire hazards. It is designed to maintain consistency with the Guidelines for Orderly Development, greenbelt agreements, and SOAR measures for Ventura County’s unincorporated areas and ten incorporated cities. The 2040 General Plan also includes a Climate Action Plan which, among other things, will include a vulnerability analysis and describe how the County plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

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

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

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

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

The following provides a brief summary of each element of the 2040 General Plan.

Land Use and Community Character Element

The Land Use and Community Character Element establishes a pattern and intensity of land use that directs urban growth away from agricultural, rural, and open space lands, in favor of locating it in cities and unincorporated communities where public facilities, services, and infrastructure are available or can be provided. This element serves as the primary vehicle for ensuring that new land uses are logically organized and developed in a way that is sustainable and enhances Ventura County's unique identity. The element includes goals, policies, and implementation programs related to growth management; and use designations and standards; Area Plans; character and design; environmental justice; civic engagement; development review and inter-agency coordination; and military compatibility. The goals and policies identify the County's philosophy for future change, development, and natural resource protection.

Housing Element

The Housing Element ensures that there is adequate land in the unincorporated area to accommodate the County's fair share of population growth as defined by the RHNA. The County adopted the current 2014–2021 Housing Element in 2013 to identify and address housing needs in the county in compliance with State housing regulations. The 2040 General Plan integrates the County's current 2014–2021 Housing Element by formatting the document to be consistent with the 2040 General Plan.

The next cycle of housing element updates for cities and counties within the SCAG region will cover the planning period from 2021 to 2029. As part of this process, SCAG will work with the County and the cities within the county to develop a RHNA. The RNHA process requires the County to identify land available to accommodate the development of adequate housing for all household income categories (i.e., extremely low, very low, low, moderate, and above moderate-income) in the unincorporated area. As indicated above, SCAG will release draft RHNA numbers for the 2021–2029 Housing Element update in February 2020, with final RHNA numbers expected in October 2020. The County will subsequently initiate the Housing Element update in 2020; therefore, it is not included in the 2040 General Plan currently under review. Rather, a placeholder Housing Element chapter is included in the draft 2040 General Plan.

Circulation, Transportation, and Mobility Element

The Circulation, Transportation, and Mobility Element focuses on creating and maintaining a transportation network that both meets the needs of all users for safe and convenient travel, and is suitable in rural, suburban, or urban contexts. The element also serves as a strategy for addressing infrastructure needs to ensure the adequate circulation of people, goods, and services. The element includes policies related to the design, construction, and maintenance of the roadway system, the regional multimodal system; reduction of per capita VMT; safe, efficient, and reliable air transportation; and includes policies that support use emerging technologies and environmentally-sustainable practices to increase transportation system efficiency and resiliency.

Public Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Element

The intent of the goals, policies, and programs included in the Public Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Element is to develop and maintain essential public facilities and services, prioritize energy efficiency, and ensure adequate levels of infrastructure funding, wastewater treatment and disposal, solid and hazardous waste management, flood control and drainage, public utilities, community facilities, library facilities and services, parks and recreation facilities, law enforcement and emergency services, and fire protection. This element provides the framework for decisions concerning public and private infrastructure, utilities, and services.

Conservation and Open Space Element

The intent of the Conservation and Open Space Element is to conserve and enhance the county's natural and open space environment for present and future residents. This element addresses a variety of topics, including open space, habitat conservation, energy resources, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and climate change. The Conservation and Open Space Element is coordinated with the Land Use and Community Character Element to guide and balance conservation and development within the unincorporated area.

Hazards and Safety Element

The intent of the Hazards and Safety Element is to protect the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of wildfire hazards, flood hazards, sea level rise and coastal flooding, geologic and seismic hazards, hazardous materials, transportation related hazards, oil and gas production and transportation incidents, military compatibility, noise, air quality, and increasing temperatures. This element establishes goals and policies to protect life, minimize property damage, and maintain or restore services during future disasters and emergencies. Specifically, this element includes policies and programs that would improve the County's resilience to climate change.

Agriculture Element

The intent of the Agriculture Element is to protect, preserve, and expand productive agriculture. This element addresses several topics including preservation of agricultural land, agricultural and urban area compatibility, innovative specialty agriculture, food security, sustainable farming and ranching, and resilience to climate change.

Water Resources Element

The goals, policies and programs included in the Water Resources Element recognize that water is an essential resource for the future of Ventura County, both for ensuring quality of life for residents and a sustainable economy. The element also acknowledges that adequate water supply is an ongoing concern due to climate change, drought, the related declines in river flows and reservoir levels, historic overdraft of several local groundwater basins, curtailment of groundwater supplies in southern Ventura County, new groundwater well prohibitions, and reduced deliveries of imported water.

Economic Vitality Element

The Economic Vitality Element focuses on supporting a resilient economy that promotes economic health of the county, sustainable funding for public services, a thriving business environment, and job retention and growth. Goals, policies, and implementation programs in this element pertain to business and employment; creating a diversified economy and fostering strong economic foundations by facilitating the retention, expansion, and attraction of key industries and businesses, diversifying the economic base of the county, and promoting a strong local economy by improving critical infrastructure, including water, transportation, broadband, and renewable energy; and developing the labor force.

LAND USE DIAGRAM

The purpose of the 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram is to guide the general distribution, location, and extent of the various land use designations throughout the county. The land use designations established in the 2040 General Plan are listed in Tables 3-1 and 3-2 and depicted on Figures 3-2a and 3-2b. The approximate acreage and percent of total acreage in

the unincorporated portions of the county for each land use designation is also provided in Table 3-2.

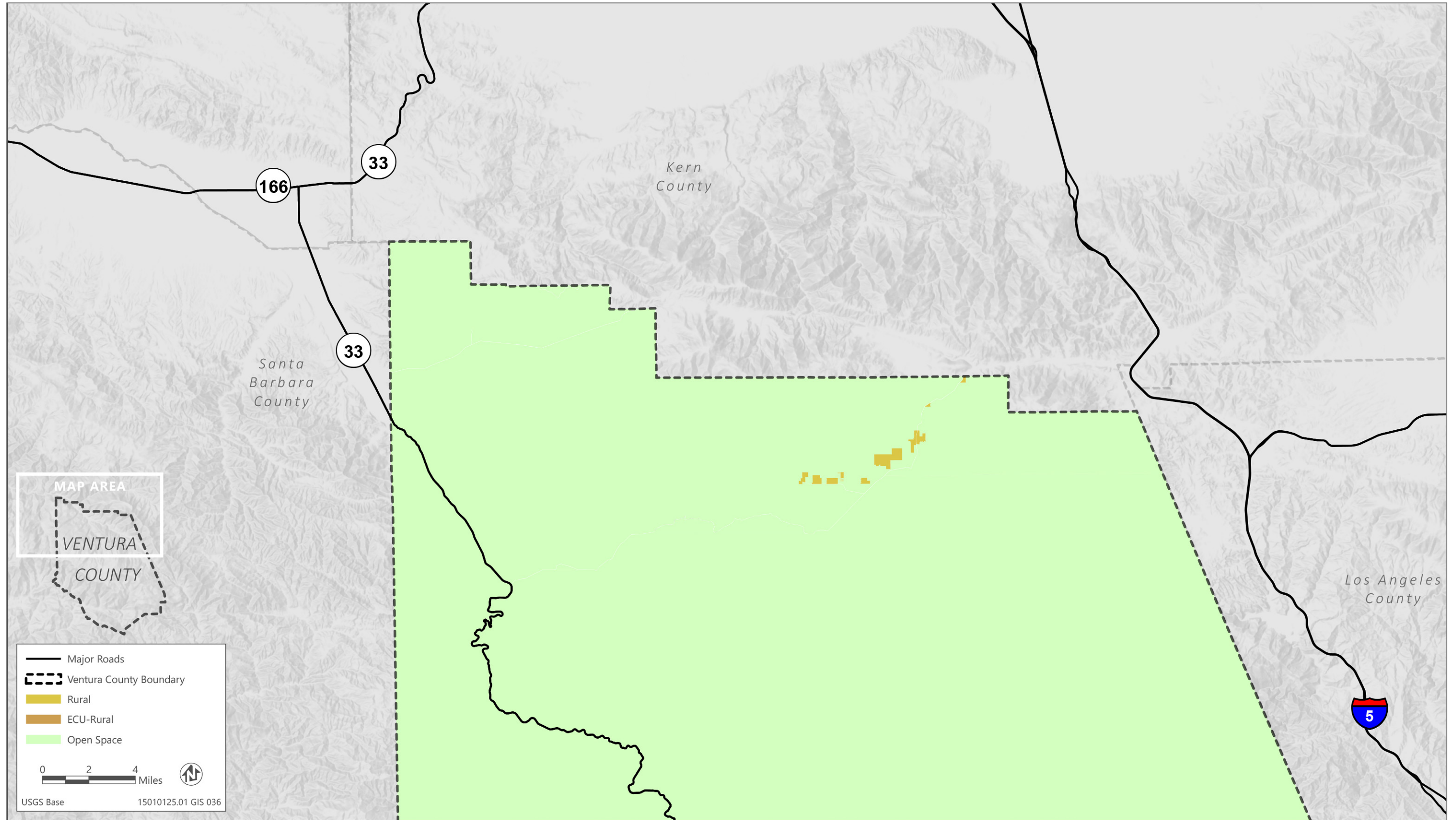
Table 3-2 Land Use Designation Descriptions and Acreage in the Plan Area

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

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

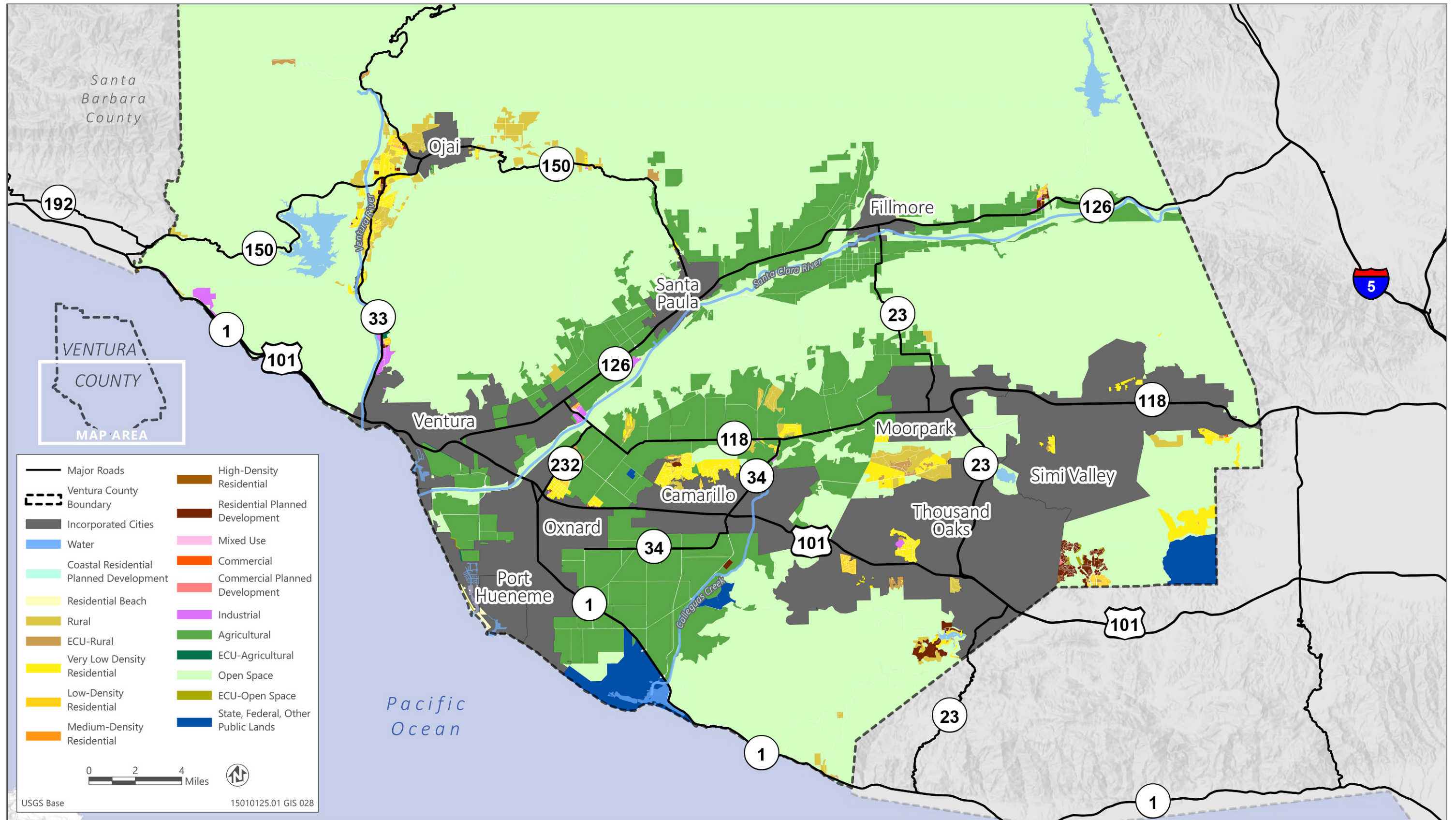
¹ There is no land currently in the Parks & Recreation designation. This is a new designation that can be applied to parcels within Existing Community, Area Plans, and Urban Centers within Areas of Interest that provide for parks and recreation facilities and associated recreation uses.

As shown in Table 3-2, the land use diagram of the 2040 General Plan would concentrate future development of relatively higher intensity residential, commercial, mixed use, and industrial land uses within the Existing Community area designation (boundary) and the Urban area designation (boundary). The Existing Community area designation includes existing land uses that have been developed with urban building intensities and urban land uses. The Urban area designation refers to areas with commercial and industrial uses and residential uses where the building intensity is greater than one principal dwelling unit per two acres. These areas are generally located adjacent to the boundaries of incorporated cities or along highway corridors such as SR 33, SR 118, SR 126, and Highway 101.



Source: Data received from Ventura County in 2016

Figure 3-2a 2040 General Plan Land Use, Northern County



Source: Data received from Ventura County in 2016

Figure 3-2b 2040 General Plan Land Use, Southern County

Under the 2040 General Plan relatively higher intensity residential (Very Low Density, Low Density, Medium Density, Residential Planned Development, Coastal Planned Development, Residential Beach), commercial (Commercial and Commercial Planned Development), mixed use, and industrial land use designations would apply to approximately 1.2 percent of land in the unincorporated county. The types of future development that could occur in these land use designations include but are not limited to small- and large-lot detached single-family homes, one- to three-story attached single-family dwellings and lower density multifamily developments, mixes of commercial, office, residential, civic, and/or recreational uses, one- to two-story structures for retail and commercial services, and industrial employment-generating uses, such as production, assembly, warehousing, and distribution.

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

Approximately 97.1 percent of the unincorporated county is designated as either Open Space or Agriculture. The Open Space land use designation would be unchanged from the existing General Plan (covering 88 percent of the unincorporated county), allowing a minimum parcel size of 10 acres and one dwelling unit per parcel (see Table 3-1). The Open Space land use designation would also allow for development of other uses such as composting operations, greenhouses, correctional institutions, fire stations, and oil and gas wells.

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

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

GROWTH PROJECTIONS

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

anticipated to be approximately 4 percent and employment growth is expected to be approximately 9 percent.

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

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

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

Source: Calculated by Ascent Environmental using data provided by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG 2017)

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

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

3.5 KEY TERMS

The 2040 General Plan and this draft EIR use several terms to describe the county and areas beyond, including the following:

- ▶ **Area of Interest.** An Area of Interest is a major geographic area reflective of community and planning identity. The Ventura LAFCo established “areas of interest” in Ventura County in the late 1960s. Areas of interest divide the south half of Ventura County (the non-U.S. Forest Service land) into 15 major geographic planning areas based primarily on topography and community identity.
- ▶ **Area Plan.** Area plans are an integral part of a general plan. An Area Plan specifies the distribution, location, types and intensity of land uses, and provides specific policies concerning development in a distinct geographical area. The goals, policies, and programs of an Area Plan are designed to supplement, not duplicate the general plan, and, therefore, an Area Plan should be read in conjunction with the general plan. There are nine Area Plans: Coastal, El Rio/Del Norte, Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley, North Ventura Avenue, Oak Park, Ojai Valley, Piru, Saticoy, and Thousand Oaks.
- ▶ **City.** Includes the area within a city’s corporate and jurisdictional boundary (city limits), for which it exercises land use authority.
- ▶ **County Boundary.** The jurisdictional boundary of the county.
- ▶ **Existing Community.** The Existing Community area designation (2040 General Plan Policy LU-1.2 and policies under Goal LU-3) identifies existing urban residential, commercial, or industrial enclaves located outside areas designated as Urban. This designation recognizes existing land uses in unincorporated areas that have been developed with urban building intensities and urban land uses; contains these enclaves within specific areas so as to prevent further expansion; and limits the building intensity and land use to previously established levels. The Existing Community and Urban area designations included in the 2040 General Plan (and are the same as the areas in the existing General Plan) and are shown on Figure 3-3.
- ▶ **Plan Area.** A general plan, pursuant to State law, must address all areas within the jurisdiction’s “plan area,” which is defined as the geographic territory of the local jurisdiction and any other territory outside its boundaries that bears relation to the planning of the jurisdiction. The jurisdiction may exercise its own judgment in determining what areas outside of its boundaries to include in the plan area. The plan area for the 2040 General Plan is the county boundary.
- ▶ **Sphere of Influence.** A Sphere of Influence is the probable ultimate physical boundary and service area of a local agency, as adopted by LAFCo. It includes both incorporated and unincorporated areas within which a city or special district will have primary responsibility for the provision of public facilities and services.
- ▶ **Unincorporated Urban Center.** An existing or planned community located in an area of interest where no city exists. The unincorporated urban center represents the focal center for community and planning activities within the area of interest. For example, the community of Piru represents the focal center in the Piru Area of Interest.

- ▶ **Urban.** The Urban area designation, referred to in the County’s SOAR initiative, is used to depict existing and planned urban centers. These include commercial and industrial uses, as well as residential uses where the building intensity is greater than one principal dwelling unit per 2 acres. In the existing General Plan, Urban was a land use designation that described allowable land uses. In the 2040 General Plan, this is an “area” designation that is only used to define a geographic area for purposes of SOAR implementation.
- ▶ **Goal.** A goal is a statement that describes in general terms a desired future condition or “end” state. Goals describe ideal future conditions for a topic and tend to be very general and broad.
- ▶ **Policy.** A policy is a clear and unambiguous statement that guides a specific course of action for decision-makers to achieve a desired goal.
- ▶ **Implementation Program.** An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out general plan policy. While many policies can be implemented as part of standard County operations, some policies require specific programs to assure their implementation.

3.6 REQUIRED DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

As the lead agency under CEQA, the County is responsible for considering the adequacy of the EIR and determining if the 2040 General Plan should be approved. Following the completion of the final EIR, the Ventura County Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing and make a recommendation on the 2040 General Plan to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. The Ventura County Board of Supervisors will then conduct a separate public hearing to consider:

- ▶ Certification of the Final EIR for the 2040 General Plan Update, and
- ▶ Approval of the 2040 General Plan.

