

Next Steps 8

As described in the Plan Overview, the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan is a planning study that suggests a vision, guiding principles, and strategies that over time could lead to a more sustainable development pattern in Santa Cruz County. Completion of the Plan is an important first step. Many other steps will need to be taken by the County in the future in order to identify whether and how to move forward with the suggestions in this Plan. Each of the earlier chapters of this Plan have presented many suggestions for actions the County could consider to better support a sustainable future for Santa Cruz. As a first “next step,” the County will need to select which of the ideas to pursue, analyze these approaches, and carry out environmental review before any of the ideas could be adopted as new General Plan policies or County Code amendments.

It is anticipated that the County will develop a proposed set of General Plan Sustainability Updates involving the Land Use, Circulation, and Community Design Elements of the General Plan, along with implementing code amendments. Identification of which ideas to pursue is expected to occur during Summer 2015, and then work on the details of the proposed regulations would commence. Once adopted after CEQA review, which could occur by Fall/Winter 2016, the County regulatory framework would support implementation of this Plan’s vision by the County, property owners, and agencies involved with land use, transportation, and public infrastructure. Continued coordination with other governmental agencies, such as the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) and Santa Cruz Metro, as well as water and sanitation districts, will be needed.

In many ways the policies and regulations in the County’s existing General Plan and County Code support the broad vision of this Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan. In some ways, however, certain policies and standards of the existing

regulatory framework do not support the overall vision. Other chapters of this Plan have discussed suggested changes. In this chapter, there is a focus on identifying possible new planning policies and “tools” that the County could incorporate into its General Plan and County Code to support the sustainable land use, transportation, and urban design goals described in this Plan.

GENERAL PLAN SUSTAINABILITY AMENDMENTS

The County’s General Plan and County Code designate the types of land uses that are allowed on properties located in the unincorporated area. The General Plan and County Code land use designations identify permitted land uses and maximum permitted development intensity. Intensity is typically expressed as dwelling units per acre for residential uses, but sometimes also by floor area ratio (FAR). FAR is an expression of the percent of lot area that is allowed to be developed in terms of square footage on the parcel. For example, a 5,000-square-foot lot with an FAR of 0.5 (50% of lot size) allows a maximum of 2,500 square feet of structure on the lot, while a FAR of 1.5 (150% of lot size) would allow up to 7,500 square feet on the lot, allocated among the number of stories allowed by the zoning district. For example, under an allowed FAR of 1.5 on a 5,000-square-foot lot, in a zoning district that allows three-story development, a three-story building could be arranged with 3,200 square feet per floor on the first and second stories, and up to 1,100 square feet on the third story. The third story would be smaller, and feature greater setbacks designed into the massing of the structure.

FAR standards can also be used for non-residential development. Development standards such as maximum height, minimum setbacks, and parking requirements also

affect how much square footage may be developed on a piece of property.

The process of preparing the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan revealed that the County does not currently include in its General Plan or County Code all of the land use designations or regulatory approaches that would be needed to implement the vision of this Plan. In particular, the County lacks regulatory approaches for modern forms of mixed-use development. Currently, residential uses are allowed in commercial areas provided that the residential component of a mixed-use project is less than 50 percent of the total project square footage. This requirement prevents most forms of mixed-use development, which requires a greater proportion of residential development in order to be financeable and economically viable.

The County also lacks a residential zoning designation that would incentivize creation of smaller units in appropriate areas, which is a needed housing type that is generally more “affordable by design.” A new approach based on a maximum square footage (FAR) on a site, rather than a maximum number of dwelling units, should be considered. Such developments would still need to meet applicable parking standards, setbacks and other regulations, but would be able to divide the allowed square footage of development into the number and type of dwelling units that respond to market demand and can be accommodated on the site and still meet those other development standards.

New Land Use Policies and Regulatory Tools

The following policies and regulatory tools to accommodate the types of development envisioned by this Plan should be included in the County General Plan/Local Coastal Program (GP/LCP):

Mixed-Use Development Policies and Regulatory Framework

Mixed-Use development can support an efficient use of land resources, promote transportation choices, and provide for a greater range of housing choices. Policies supportive of Mixed-Use developments in appropriate locations and zoning districts should be included in the GP/LCP, in order to allow for residential and commercial development as part of a single development project. Uses could be combined within a single structure, “vertical mixed-use,” or on a single property in separate structures, “horizontal mixed-use.” The County should allow a higher proportion of a mixed-use development project to be residential in order to ensure the feasibility of such projects.

However, it will be important to ensure that commercial lands and uses needed to serve the community are not inappropriately converted to mostly residential use. Therefore, the County will need to develop criteria for how much residential space to allow, for whether and how to allow rezoning of non-residential land to residential or mixed-use designations, and to ensure that areas appropriate and needed for ground floor commercial use continue to serve that purpose while also accommodating office and residential development as appropriate on upper floors. To better support a neutral or positive fiscal impact, three stories of residential space and/or office space above ground-floor commercial should be considered for appropriate areas, limited to key travel corridors or activity nodes. Policies, standards, and design guidelines to ensure appropriate massing, setbacks, buffering, and transitions between taller developments and nearby neighborhoods and single-family residential areas will need to be included within any proposed regulatory approach.

As described in Chapter 3, policies encouraging mixed-use development could be created to encourage and guide private redevelopment or renovation of existing shopping centers such as East Cliff Village, to address underutilized sites located along transit corridors where new mixed-use activity nodes could be created, and to identify appropriate possible improvements within existing historic village centers to encourage revitalization of these areas. Chapter 7 recommends some specific sites where mixed-use projects could be encouraged within the Focus Areas, such as on Soquel Drive near the Dominican campus (Focus Area 1) and on the corner of 17th and Brommer (Focus Area 4). Within the Medical Focus Area, a new “Medical Mixed-Use” designation should be considered, as described below.

Medical Mixed-Use Designation

The Medical Mixed-Use designation would include a range of allowable uses including hospitals, medical clinics, laboratories, medical offices, and other medical-related or support services. It would allow four-story buildings of up to 60 feet subject to design review to ensure appropriate massing. It would be applied to the 14.5-acre former Skyview Drive-In/Flea Market parcel that will be the future Sutter/PAMF campus, to the Dignity Health/Dominican Hospital campus, and possibly other key medical use sites within the area.

Residential Flex Designation

The “Residential Flex” designation is envisioned as a land use designation that would allow greater density than currently allowed by the Santa Cruz County General Plan/Local Coastal Program, although predominately within the current maximum three-story height and minimum setback regulations of the existing County Code. A Residential Flex

designation could allow multi-family housing with the number of units governed by development standards such as maximum height, FAR, setbacks, and parking requirements rather than by a set maximum number of units per acre. The Residential Flex designation would promote more affordable housing choices by encouraging the construction of smaller units within a given size structure and other sustainability goals by encouraging infill development. Parking requirements, maximum height, and setback requirements would continue to restrict the size, bulk, and massing of structures.

The Residential Flex designation could be applied where multi-family housing with higher density and smaller units are desired, in particular to meet the housing needs of “singles, seniors, and students.” As discussed in Chapter 4, this includes areas that are close to major employment centers, near Cabrillo College, or that have access to transit that serve these areas. Chapter 7 identifies a property on Commercial Way in Focus Area 1 as a possible location for the Residential Flex designation.

The Residential Flex designation could also be applied in areas close to neighborhood-serving stores and services outside of existing single-family residential neighborhoods. Possible areas for the Residential Flex designation include vacant and underutilized parcels along the Soquel Drive transit corridor (such as the Attilia’s Antiques site), and certain sites in Aptos.

Workplace Flex Designation

The “Workplace Flex” designation would allow a range of modern employment uses, including offices, research and development, and high tech uses; in a manner that also allows for employee-serving uses such as coffee shops and

cafes, delis and restaurants, FedEx/UPS Store businesses, and other similar small commercial service uses. This designation would provide flexibility within employment areas and non-residential buildings to accommodate changes in the economy, growth of local businesses, and demand for a flexible range of commercial, office and light industrial uses in locations that also offer nearby opportunities for employees and businesses to walk or bike to lunch or access other business services needed during the workday.

The Workplace Flex designation could be applied in locations where the County wishes to encourage new employment uses and the creation of high paying jobs. This includes areas along Soquel Avenue south of Highway 1, the Research Business Park at Soquel Drive along South Rodeo Gulch and Research Park Drive, and existing heavier commercial areas in Live Oak such as near the intersection of 17th Avenue and Brommer Street along the rail corridor. Chapter 7 identifies several specific sites where the Workplace Flex designation could be applied within Focus Areas.

Master Plan/Specific Plan Approaches

In certain areas, a Master Plan/Specific Plan approach should be pursued, ideally through a public-private planning approach. One key area that would benefit from such an approach is the Medical Focus Area, which contains several large opportunity sites that are ripe for change. This area includes the Sutter/PAMF former drive-in site, the Dignity Health/Dominican Hospital/medical office buildings area, the Rittenhouse site at Soquel Drive and Thurber Lane, the Bei parcels, and other nearby underutilized lands. A Master or Specific Plan for this area would greatly assist with planning for transportation access to the development that is expected to occur in this area, particularly for the future Sutter/PAMF campus and the Rittenhouse property, but also

considering trips between Dominican Hospital and the surrounding medical uses. Such a plan could also address longstanding parking difficulties in the area.

It is expected that Caltrans will at some point in the future close off the Commercial Way connection to the Soquel Drive freeway off-ramp, which does not meet current Caltrans safety standards, which could lead to County/Caltrans abandonment of Commercial Way land area between the off-ramp and Commercial Crossing. In that case, that area could be consolidated with adjacent private properties in a manner that would increase re-use options on certain underutilized properties. The County should work with adjacent property owners to discuss the possibility of this future Caltrans action. As discussed below, additional height on certain sites that could be designated “Medical Mixed-Use” in the Medical District would be appropriate in order to facilitate appropriate public transportation access and desirable land uses within this Medical District area (also see *Visitor Accommodation Overlay* discussion below).

New Zoning Overlays

The suggested new Zoning Overlay Districts described below are examples of incentive zoning. The first four (Live/Work, Visitor Accommodation, Arts, and Neighborhood Commercial) would not mandate these uses, but would be applied to convey what is desired on identified properties, and what the County’s General Plan policies, designations and regulatory framework would allow through flexible incentive zoning approaches. The goal would be to foster greater land use diversity and public infrastructure and amenities. The County could designate and rezone a limited number of select sites with the overlays in order to lay the groundwork. Following that action, property owners could

submit applications to be rezoned with the overlays on a case-by-case basis.

Live/Work Overlay

The Live/Work overlay would allow residential and commercial or light industrial uses to occupy a single space. The live/work overlay could be used to accommodate shared artist residences and studio space in areas such as near 17th and Brommer in Focus Area 4, or within employment centers such as the Research Business Park in Focus Area 2 where start-up businesses may desire a live/work arrangement.

Visitor Accommodation Overlay

The Visitor Accommodation overlay could be applied to commercially zoned sites to identify areas where new hotels, motels, and other visitor uses are desired. The overlay could offer development incentives such as additional height for desired hotel uses. Chapter 7 suggests applying a Visitor Accommodation Overlay to the area bounded by Commercial Way, Soquel Drive, and the Highway 1 interchange to encourage the establishment of a new hotel to serve Dominican Hospital, Sutter/PAMF medical campus, and other medical uses in Focus Area 1, as well as to serve other travelers who would be able to see a hotel from Highway 1.

Arts Overlay

The Arts overlay could be applied to sites to identify where artists' studios, gallery spaces, residences for artists, and other arts-related uses are desired. This overlay could be structured to provide incentives for such uses, and applied in locations that currently do not have a residential character but are attractive for artists and arts related uses. The site bounded

by 17th Avenue and the rail line in Focus Area 4 is one possible location for the Arts Overlay.

Neighborhood Commercial Overlay

The Neighborhood Commercial overlay could be added to the County Code to provide a way for property owners to propose rezoning their sites so that neighborhood-scale and neighborhood-serving commercial uses could locate at appropriate neighborhood locations, such as at street intersections. Examples include small markets, small fitness studios, and small co-working spaces that users could walk or ride a bicycle to. This type of overlay would need to be carefully crafted to ensure that the types and scale of uses are appropriate to a neighborhood and do not create impacts. The intent would be to offer convenient locations for residents to be able to walk or bike to corner grocery stores or other sites for quick trips without driving.

Height Overlay

The Height overlay would allow increased building height in select locations where the increased building height would allow for better use of land resources in a manner that also provides some type of public benefit, such as a new public road, new public plaza or other public amenity. For example, larger sites along and near the Soquel Drive and Soquel Avenue corridors, such as the Kraft Auto Body Repair site or other freeway frontage parcels, may be appropriate to be rezoned with the height overlay in order to allow for high quality development projects consistent with the goals in this Plan.

The Height Overlay would be subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors through a rezoning process, and likely only be approved for areas where increased building height would not negatively impact adjacent residential properties.

Increased height allowed by this overlay would be subject to identified criteria and findings, including some type of public benefit. Examples of possible locations include properties within the Research Business Park at Soquel Drive and 41st Avenue, and large properties along or near the Soquel Avenue frontage road. Such an incentive zoning strategy may make it more feasible to construct the road infrastructure “retrofits” that are highly desired by the public in order to improve connectivity and travel choices, and reduce congestion.

Height that is increased from the current maximums in the County Code could also be considered through other regulatory approaches, such as through new General Plan/zoning designations, Master Plans or Specific Plans, or Planned Unit Developments. Each of these approaches would require approval by the Board of Supervisors. The suggested new Medical Mixed-Use designation would allow four stories by right (up to 60 feet, with appropriate massing) on the Sutter/PAMF campus and the Dignity Health/Dominican Hospital campus.

It should be pointed out that most future development in the unincorporated area is expected to occur as one-, two-, or possible three-story developments. Four-story development is not a development type that is anticipated to be requested, needed or appropriate in the vast majority of situations. However, from time-to-time a four-story development may allow for desired uses or desired arrangements of uses. For example, allowing a four-story hotel at an appropriate location with an appropriate design may allow less coverage of land in a manner that allows for public plazas or more open space, while generating Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT) that support public sector fiscal health and the ability to provide desirable public services. Allowing a four-story medical building may serve its users more compassionately,

allowing for more direct access via elevators rather than longer hallway journeys to doctors’ offices or laboratory services. This is becoming a more relevant consideration as ADA requirements and an aging population bring these issues to light.

Agricultural Support Overlay

The Agricultural Support Overlay would allow uses such as tractor, truck and heavy equipment storage, tree removal and landscaping businesses, and agricultural support or technology buildings to be located on Agricultural or Commercial Agricultural lands within a certain distance of designated arterial roads serving agricultural areas. For example, perhaps the first 200 feet of land along arterial roads could be eligible for the agricultural support overlay zoning. Greater extents of coverage could require the applicant to submit a master plan that would demonstrate need and no net impact on prime agricultural lands.

The idea behind this suggestion is to create a mechanism for farmers and agricultural/landscaping support businesses to efficiently manage storage and land-intensive activities, as well as other agricultural support uses that require that land be covered, in areas that are close to key roadways yet out of areas that are served by urban infrastructure. Areas with urban infrastructure such as water and sewer lines, sidewalks and transit service, would be prioritized for more intensive urban housing or employment uses, rather than uses that do not particularly rely on such urban infrastructure. Uses that take a lot of land, have few employees, and do not require urban services would be located out of urban areas, such as along selected arterial roads in agricultural and rural areas.

Figures 8-1 and 8-2 illustrate the type of development envisioned by many of these new designations and overlays.

FIGURE 8 - 1 RECOMMENDED NEW GENERAL PLAN POLICIES/ZONING APPROACHES (1 OF 3)

C-WF

Workplace Flex

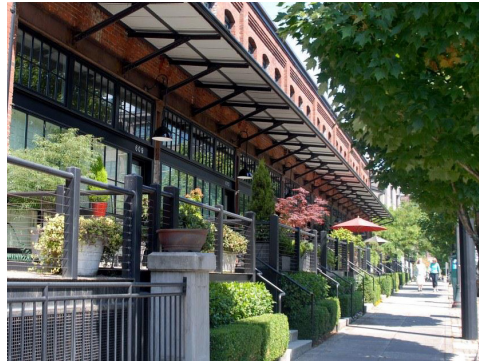
Purpose:

To allow for dynamic employment districts to serve existing, growing, and new businesses. Allow for a mixture of office, commercial, and research-oriented uses; provide flexibility for existing businesses.

Type of Development:

Office, commercial services, research and development, limited retail and personal services, food establishments, and public/quasi-public facilities.

EXAMPLES:



Commercial in Portland, OR



Sash Mill in Santa Cruz



Live Oak Business Park



Office in Livermore

FIGURE 8 -1 RECOMMENDED NEW GENERAL PLAN POLICIES/ZONING APPROACHES* (2 OF 3)

MU

Mixed Use

Purpose:

To create lively and welcoming places that increase housing, employment and transportation choices; and support economic growth consistent with the County's sustainability goals. The designation will be implemented by flexible zoning that allows residential development at various intensities.

Type of Development:

Retail, restaurants, personal services, professional offices, medical offices and clinics, public and quasi-public uses, multi-family residential, townhomes, vertical and horizontal mixed use, live/work units, and apartments for families, seniors, students, and singles. Typical arrangements include ground-floor commercial with residences above, or separate commercial and residential buildings on one property.

EXAMPLES:



Mixed Use in Santa Cruz



Mixed Use in Santa Cruz



Mixed Use in Santa Cruz



Mixed Use in Santa Cruz

*Including a "medical mixed use" designation

FIGURE 8 - 1 RECOMMENDED NEW GENERAL PLAN POLICIES/ZONING APPROACHES (3 OF 3)

R-F

Residential-Flexible

Purpose:

To accommodate greater intensity of residences using a flexible approach along and near transit corridors, to create opportunities for infill in areas with good transit and in proximity to nodes along corridors, and to provide a more complete range of housing choices for local workforce and all income levels.

Type of Development:

Residential development including townhouses, smaller units for seniors, students and singles, and apartments.

EXAMPLES:



Multi-family homes in Pasadena



Multi-family homes in Chico



Multi-family homes in Richmond



Apartments in Santa Cruz

FIGURE 8 - 2 RECOMMENDED NEW ZONING OVERLAYS (1 OF 3)

-VA Visitor Accommodations Overlay

Purpose:

Encourage the establishment of visitor accommodations to enhance the economic vitality of commercial and employment districts.

Permitted Uses:

Hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, and other similar visitor accommodation establishments.



FIGURE 8 - 2 RECOMMENDED NEW ZONING OVERLAYS (2 OF 3)

-LW Live-Work Overlay

Purpose:

To allow residential uses within commercial areas to create active and vibrant employment and retail districts.

Permitted Uses:

Live/work units with non-residential uses integrated into dwelling units; multi-family housing accessory to a principal commercial use.



FIGURE 8 - 2 RECOMMENDED NEW ZONING OVERLAYS (3 OF 3)

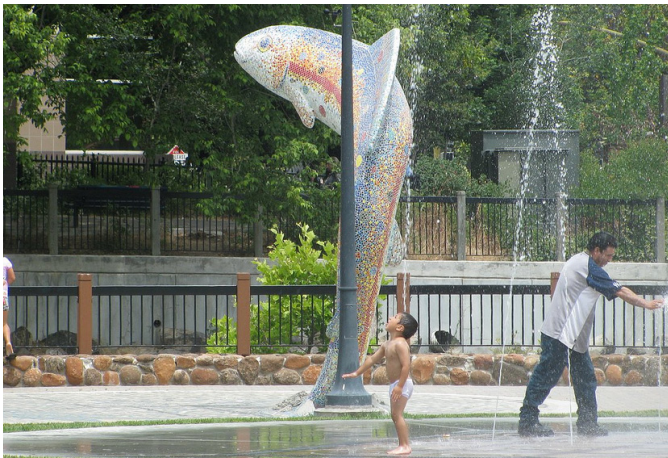
-A Arts Overlay

Purpose:

Support the arts by allowing for artist studios, gallery spaces, residences for artists, and other arts-related uses.

Permitted Uses:

A range of uses associated with commercial artistic activities.



NEW SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND POLICIES

New goals and policies that relate to the guiding principles of the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan could be added to the General Plan/Local Coastal Program and land use regulations.

Examples of new or amended sustainability goals include:

- Focus development in urban areas and utilize resources efficiently.
- Provide flexibility within land use designations and development standards to support economic vitality and creation of needed types of workforce housing.
- Encourage a land use pattern that supports transportation choices.
- Maintain and enhance the character of existing communities.
- Incentivize creation of a range of housing types to provide more choices.
- Ensure transparent decision-making.
- Coordinate decision-making between governmental agencies and other stakeholders.

Examples of new policies might include:

- Recognizing the possibility that churches and other places of worship that are located in urban areas may change location in the future, consider a new policy stating that all or a portion of these sites may be appropriate for reuse for other urban purposes. The sites could be rezoned with the Residential Flex zoning overlay or other overlays to indicate the

preferred future use of such sites if and when they transition.

- Consider a new policy stating that the Nigh/Protiva R-Combining housing site along the Soquel Avenue frontage road could be considered for rezoning to a Workflex or Commercial designation, if a substitute approach is concurrently identified to accommodate the housing capacity that the site currently accommodates with its current 20 units per acre zoning.
- Explore opportunities for shared-use parking structures on existing large surface parking lots located in areas with high employment and housing density.
- Explore opportunities for park-and-ride locations, with structures or facilities to increase capacity for both vehicles and bicycles adjacent to or near the rail corridor and Highway 1, such as at nearby schools and churches.
- Explore the potential for accommodating student housing on the Cabrillo campus site, or nearby locations.
- Consider a “Park and Ride” parking lot in the southernmost portion of the O’Neill Ranch/Anna Jean Cummings Park property at Upper 41st Avenue, to provide “park and walk or bike” users with a connection from Soquel Drive/41st Avenue to Soquel High School and Anna Jean Cummings Park, with a particular goal to shift some school trips away from the congested Soquel/Porter village intersection.
- Consider installation of an appropriately coordinated and time traffic signal at Soquel Drive/Robertson (Wharf Road) to replace the three-way stop signs, to

reduce traffic congestion within the Village, which currently extends through the Soquel Drive/41st Avenue intersection.

- Consider removing on-street parking spaces on the south side of Soquel Drive in Soquel Village so that right-of-way can be used instead for bike lanes as a priority to widen sidewalks and improve streetscapes, and/or to accommodate restriping and lengthening the vehicular turning pockets for turns onto both Soquel-San Jose Road/Porter Street, and Main Street, in order to increase safety and reduce congestion at the Soquel/Porter village and Soquel/Main intersections. The goal would be to reduce the dominance of vehicular congestion within the center of Soquel Village and better accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.
- Continue to explore opportunities for multi-modal crossings (including vehicles) of Highway 1, particularly between the 7th Avenue/Highway 1 interchange and 41st Avenue/Highway 1 interchange, such as at 17th Avenue and between the future Sutter/PAMF campus and Protiva/Nigh housing site; and between Park Avenue/Highway 1 interchange and State Park/Highway 1 interchange, such as with a crossing to connect Cabrillo College Drive to McGregor Drive at the lands owned by the State of California. Compare costs and benefits of bike-pedestrian only bridges with multi-modal bridges. Connections between large properties located across Highway 1 from each other may be most feasible. Recognize that such Highway 1 crossings would involve funding requirements that are not currently within feasible funding levels to 2035, but study and plan future Highway 1 auxiliary lane or other widening improvements so as to not preclude these

local multi-modal transportation connectivity improvements in the future.

- Consider extending the Soquel Avenue frontage road between 17th Avenue and 41st Avenue so that it connects due east to 41st Avenue rather than turning south onto Gross Road before it adjoins 41st Avenue. This strategy may require land trades or acquisition from the State to use right-of-way adjacent to the off-ramp, and/or from an existing office building owner, to reconfigure parking and access.
- Create Design Guidelines that illustrate desired scale and massing for various development types, especially for mixed-use and taller buildings, to show stepped back upper floors.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The County should consider the following additional recommendations when updating the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements:

General Plan Organization

- Consider reorganizing or combining the General Plan elements to reflect the sustainability focus. For example, the County's existing Land Use, Community Design and Circulation Elements could be combined into one element as was done in the Santa Monica Land Use and Circulation Element.
- Consider organizing the General Plan around basic themes of sustainability, as opposed to topical areas. For example, the award-winning Marin County General Plan is organized around the concept of the Three E's of Sustainability: Economy, Environment, Equity.

Element Organization

- Revise the introduction to emphasize sustainability goals.
- Revise the goals to reflect the ideas in the Vision and Guiding Principles for urban areas of County.
- Nest policies and actions under individual goals.
- Integrate policies from the Climate Action Strategy into the General Plan.
- Separate general county policies from area-specific policies (e.g., revise Policy 2.8.4).
- Organize countywide policies around themes, not single land use types. Move descriptions of land use designations to the General Plan Land Use Map section.

Minimize Redundancy and Repetition

- Minimize text by presenting standards in tables instead of text (e.g., Policy 2.7.1).
- Eliminate duplication of policies (e.g., Policies 2.7.2 and 2.8.2).
- Avoid re-stating permitted land uses for designations in policies; state it once in the description of the land use designation.
- Avoid stating where designations should be applied (e.g., Policy 2.13.1). The Land Use Map serves this function.
- Use more general references to exceptions to permitted uses on individual parcels, permits required, and special development requirements; leaving greater specificity to be provided by the Zoning Code (2.13.7, 2.13.8). If references to specific

parcels are kept in the General Plan, show their locations on a map.

- Avoid stating that a project must comply with an adopted ordinance.

ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS TO DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Additional amendments to the County Code, including some changes to existing zoning districts, are suggested in order to further the goals of this Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan.

Floor Area Ratio

The existing FAR allowed in the County's multi-family zoning districts is too low to make development of multi-family units feasible. Currently the maximum FAR for RM multi-family districts is the same (0.5) as for single-family zoning districts. It is recommended that the FAR for RM districts increase to at least 1.5 FAR.

Height

The County Zoning Ordinance currently allows a maximum height of 28 feet for single-family and multi-family development. Under certain conditions building height may be increased to 33 feet for single-family homes and to 35 feet for multi-family development. In commercial districts, the maximum permitted height is three stories not to exceed 35 feet, and with design review, a height exception can be approved to allow up to 40 feet.

These existing height limits would not allow for the types of multi-family, commercial, and mixed-use projects illustrated in Chapter 3 and described in this chapter. To achieve this vision of this Plan, the County should increase the base

height limit in commercial, multi-family and mixed-use districts to 40 feet, with an additional 5 feet allowed with design review (which can allow for varied roof designs and other architectural features that don't usually provide additional leased or habitable area).

As discussed earlier, the County should also allow for a "by right" maximum building height of four stories and 60 feet on properties within a designated Medical Mixed-Use activity center and certain opportunity sites, such as at the future Sutter/PAMF medical campus. In a medical building context, a two-story building could be 30 to 40 feet tall, and three- and four-story buildings could require heights within the 50- to 60-foot range, depending on mechanical and other design features of the buildings.

The suggested 40-foot (or 45 feet with design review) maximum heights for three-story mixed-use and "regular" commercial areas would allow for 15- to 20-foot ceilings on the ground floor as desired by retailers, generous modern ceiling heights for upper story residential units or office spaces, as well as interesting roof architecture and other design elements.

A four-story/50-foot residential height limit (where permitted through the suggested Residential Flex designation/zoning) would accommodate modern residential ceiling heights and variation in roof forms, and allow for more creative building design.

A four-story/60 foot non-residential height limit (where permitted through the Medical Mixed-Use Designation, Workflex District, hotel incentive zoning, Master/Specific Plan, or Planned Unit Development zoning approaches) would also allow for market-based, economic vitality, and quality design

considerations when approved for appropriate locations by the Board of Supervisors.

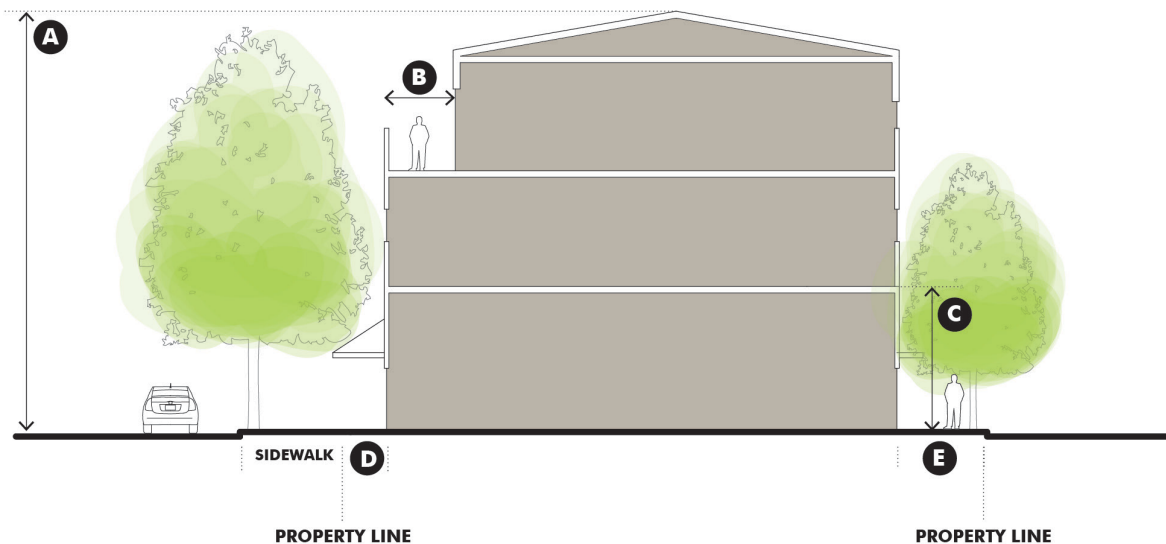
Figure 8-3 illustrates one example of a mixed-use development within commercial areas or along key transportation corridors such as along the Soquel Drive frontage. To minimize visual impacts from increased height, these standards also include upper-floor step backs and increased setbacks from adjacent residential properties.

Note that the suggested maximum heights, if approved by the Board of Supervisors for specific sites or areas, would be 50 feet for residential, and 60 feet for non-residential development such as for hotels and/or medical district uses—within the new zoning districts that are contemplated for certain limited areas. Such heights would not be allowed within areas where it is not suggested that the County consider amending zoning designations. Any newly designated areas would be selected and regulated to ensure that uses transition to and are compatible with adjacent areas, in the limited locations where such heights might be considered.

TABLE 8-1 EXAMPLE STANDARDS FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT ALONG TRANSIT CORRIDOR

Building Height	A	40 ft. (3 stories) plus 5 additional ft. with design review
Upper Floor Stepbacks	B	10 ft. min. above the second floor
Ground floor Ceiling Height, Minimum	C	15 ft. minimum
Floor Area Ratio		1.75
Residential Density		20 du/acre; selected sites have no maximum
Setbacks		
Front and Street Side	D	5 ft. minimum or as required by a Town or Village Plan
Interior Side		10 ft. minimum for parcels adjacent to a residential zone; 5 ft. required interior side rear setback for all other parcels
Rear	E	10 ft. minimum for parcels backing into a residential zone; 5 ft. required rear setback for all other parcels

* Maximums for non-residential to be determined through Plan implementation process; up to 4 stories and 60 feet in specific selected locations such as the Medical District should be considered.

Figure 8-3 Example Mixed Use Development along Transit Corridors

The following text is included in the SSCC to show an example of how another California jurisdiction has adopted regulations to incentivize desirable development types and patterns.

Incentives for Community Benefits

The County should consider the following example of an Incentive Zoning approach that provides substantial benefits to the community.

- A. Incentives Restricted to Added Benefits.** The County may grant additional incentives when the community benefits or amenities offered are not otherwise required by the Zoning Code or any other provision of local, state, or federal law. The County is not required to grant incentives; the County will decide if a project should receive an incentive on a case-by-case basis.
- B. Allowable Benefits – All Districts.** A proposed project in any district that provides one or more of the following benefits is eligible for an incentive:
1. Sustainable development features, including on-site renewable energy generation and green roofs.
 2. Design improvements to increase transit accessibility, including installing additional transit stops or facilities around proposed development.
 3. Commuter trip reduction measures, such as providing transit passes to employees, for office or employment center development proposals.
 4. Features that increase the community's ability to access healthy, fresh foods, such as providing space for community gardens, farmers' markets, or grocery stores.
 5. Building and site design features that help to reduce the fear and incidence of crime.
 6. Development of a blighted property, or a vacant property in a blighted area, as determined by the Planning Commission.

- C. Allowable Benefits – Mixed-Use Districts.** A proposed project in a Mixed-Use district that provides one or more of the following benefits is eligible for an incentive:
1. Improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including wider sidewalks, street furniture, and direct pedestrian or bike connections to destinations.
 2. Public outdoor gating places, including parks and plazas.
 3. Measures to expand arts and entertainment facilities in the Downtown Mixed-Use district.
 4. Installation of informational kiosk to improve way finding for residents and visitors in the Downtown Mixed-Use district.
- D. Available Incentives – All District.** A proposed project in any district providing benefits is eligible for the following incentives:
1. A reduction in the minimum required number of off-street parking spaces up to 25 percent.
 2. The waiver, reduction, or deferral of planning, plan check, and building permit fees up to 25 percent.
- E. Available Incentives – Mixed-Use District.** A proposed project in the Downtown Mixed-Use district providing benefits is eligible for an increase in the maximum permitted FAR of up to [insert]. This incentive is in addition to the incentives for all districts listed in section (D) above.
- F. Relationship to State Density Bonus Law.** The incentives allowed by this section are in addition to any development incentive required by Section 65915 of the California Government Code or Section 26-22 (Residential Density Bonus) of Oroville's Zoning Code.
- G. Permits Required.**
1. A Conditional Use Permit is required for an applicant to receive incentives in exchange for benefits. The County recommends that an applicant requests a pre-application hearing with the Planning Commission to receive non-binding input as to whether the request for incentives is worthy of consideration.

2. Applicants requesting incentives shall submit the following information as part of the Conditional Use Permit application:
 - a. A description of the proposed amenities and how they will benefit the community.
 - b. All information needed by the Planning Commission to make the required findings described in Section F below, including a pro forma analysis demonstrating that the economic value of the proposed amenities is equal to or greater than the economic value of the requested incentives.
- H. Findings.** The Planning Commission may approve the requested incentives only if the following findings can be made in addition to the findings required for a Conditional Use Permit:
1. The proposed amenities will provide a substantial benefit to the community and advance the goals of the General Plan.
 2. There are adequate public services and infrastructure to accommodate the increased development potential provided by the incentive.
 3. The economic value to the community of the proposed amenities is equal to or greater than the economic value of the requested incentive.

PARKING

Table 8-2 and 8-3 show existing on-site parking required by the County Zoning Code. The County may approve reductions to the required number of on-site parking spaces for shared parking arrangements, housing for the elderly, employers with transportation demand management programs, and uses with approved parking plans. The County also allows payment of in-lieu fees for uses within the boundaries of business improvement districts or parking and business improvement areas, which provide for shared, managed, and/or public parking.

Even with these reduction opportunities, the County's existing parking requirements may constrain development of

the types of mixed-use infill development envisioned by this Plan. The number of required on-site parking spaces could render desirable projects economically infeasible, and could also result in use of land for parking lots that could better be used to accommodate jobs, housing and other uses.

The County should consider a variety of tools to better manage parking supplies to support infill mixed-use development. These tools introduce greater flexibility and reflect the reduced parking demand that results from mixed-use development. These tools could be adopted by the County through both General Plan and Zoning Code amendments.

TABLE 8-2 EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Bedrooms	Required Parking Spaces	
	Single-Family Dwelling and Mobile Homes	Multi-Family Dwellings*
1	2	2
2	3	2.5
3	3	2.5
4	3	3
Additional	1 each	0.5 each

*Additional guest parking is required in an amount equal to 20 percent of the required resident parking

TABLE 8-3 EXISTING NON-RESIDENTIAL PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Land Use	Required Parking Spaces
Retail and service	1 per 300 square feet of gross floor area
Restaurants	1 per 100 square feet (9.3 square meters) of gross floor area, and 0.3 per employee
Business offices	1 per 300 square feet of gross floor area
Medical offices	1 per 225 square feet of gross floor area; 2 minimum

Table 8-2 describes current county residential parking requirements. In particular, the county should consider reductions of the requirements for studio, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom units.

Of the non-residential requirements above, the County should in particular consider more flexible requirements for restaurant and food uses.

Some parking tools the County may consider include the following:

- Establish new parking districts in the Dominican Hospital and Cabrillo College areas. Within these new parking districts, manage parking through permits, time limits, fees, valet services, or increased supply (see Chapter 5, Transportation).
- Increase the maximum distance for shared parking from 300 feet to 500 feet or 1,000 feet.
- Allow additional reductions in required on-site parking in transit priority areas for:
 - Projects with a parking demand study that demonstrates the land use will not utilize the required number of spaces
 - Commercial or multiple-family development projects within 500 feet of a bus stop.
 - Commercial or multiple-family development projects which participate in a car- or bike-sharing program, and provide dedicated on-site spaces for the program with the approval of a Minor Use Permit.
 - Mixed-use projects with residential and commercial or office uses.
- Establish maximum parking in transit priority areas.

- Specifically allow for tandem and valet parking.
- Unbundle parking spaces from the cost of leased commercial space and residential rent or purchase.
- Require shared parking as part of large development projects.
- Require on-site car-sharing vehicles in larger residential developments and non-residential developments once a provider is present in Santa Cruz County.
- Require participation in transportation demand management (TDM) programs for large employers.
- In transit-priority areas the County may also consider reduced on-site parking minimum and maximum parking requirements, as shown in Table 8-4. Reduced parking standards would need to be combined with aggressive parking demand management programs and shared parking arrangements to reduce spillover effects on adjacent neighborhoods.

TABLE 8-4 EXAMPLE RESIDENTIAL PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGH LAND USE DIVERSITY OR DESIGNATED TRANSIT-PRIORITY AREAS

Land Uses	Minimum Required Spaces
Single-Family and Two-Family	
Units less than 1,500 sq. ft.	1.5 spaces per dwelling unit
Units 1,500 sq. ft. to 2,200 sq. ft.	2 spaces per dwelling unit
Units over 2,200 sq. ft.	3 spaces per dwelling unit
Multi-Family*	
Units less than 750 sq. ft.	1 space per dwelling unit
Units 750 to 1,250 sq. ft.	1.25 space per dwelling unit
Units greater than 1,250 sq. ft.	1.5 spaces per dwelling unit

* One additional guest parking space required for every four units for projects greater than 10 units.

TRANSPORTATION NEXT STEPS

The Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan is the basis of a potential update to the General Plan Circulation Element to promote a balanced and sustainable transportation system. The County will need to explore potential multi-modal level of service (MMLOS) methods to plan and implement the transportation vision. Below is a summary of key components that could serve as a new Countywide Street Types Network with a combination of system-wide and multimodal performance measures. This is a comprehensive transportation planning approach that builds on the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan, with potential benefit including CEQA streamlining, balanced transportation system planning, and enhanced community benefits.

Planning a Countywide Multimodal Transportation System

As the County updates its General Plan policies, the County will continue to monitor and manage traffic operations along streets and intersections as individual development occurs to ensure that the street system is optimized for steady, safe, and orderly traffic flow and is balanced for each mode of travel. Next steps that the County can take toward implementation of a County-wide balanced transportation system would include the following components, listed in suggested chronological order:

1. *Prepare a Countywide Street Type Network and Impact Fee*

The expectations for a balanced transportation network should also reflect expectations of funding availability to build and maintain the transportation system. Identifying the mode preference for specific streets will further reflect the community values. This would be an expansion of the Street Types network within the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan

Area that defines the mode preference and attributes for each street and functional classification.

2. *Develop a System-wide Performance Measure(s) for Program/General Plan Level Analysis*

Using the performance measures described in the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan as a starting point, the County would refine and adopt system-wide performance measures such as vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to determine consistency with the goals of the land use and transportation elements and evaluate cumulative traffic and transportation related conditions. Using VMT as a program-level performance measure would take advantage of potential CEQA streamlining of projects within the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy (MTIP/SCS) transit priority areas and be a helpful metric to evaluate cumulative future conditions.

3. *Develop a Multimodal Connectedness Checklist for Project Level Analysis*

To complement the Street Types Network and program level performance measures, the County would prepare a multimodal connectedness checklist of basic and enhanced design features associated with land use and transportation projects. This checklist could vary based on the street user priorities and may include a mixture of quantitative and qualitative performance measures described above. To address a spectrum of transportation and land use projects, a combination of a built environment check list, tiered level of service policy, and person delay analysis would be beneficial.

Multimodal Connectedness Checklist

At a minimum, a transportation and/or land use project would be evaluated relative to basic and enhanced built environment factors near a project site (perhaps within a 10-

to 20-minute walking and bicycling distance). The main idea is to evaluate activity centers and destinations around projects to ensure that walk times to necessary destinations are minimized and the walking experience is comfortable. This multimodal connectedness checklist would inventory existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities near the site and identify potential enhancements to achieve the desired Street Type mode priority near the project site. Using geographic information systems, travel time for each mode (e.g., walking, bicycles, transit, and vehicles) between the project and surrounding land uses can be used to gauge the degree of accessibility for a project. The County desires to minimize travel time to necessary destinations while minimizing unnecessary vehicle travel.

Tiered Vehicle Level of Service and Person Delay

At hot-spot locations or corridors where vehicle congestion occurs, vehicle LOS may be used; however, careful consideration should be given to how vehicle LOS is used, especially in transit priority areas. Specifically, with a greater emphasis on transit and active modes, it is recommended that other performance measures, such as person delay, that can more accurately evaluate the effects of transportation system on person mobility at a specific location, be considered.

In some locations of Santa Cruz County it may be possible to adopt a vehicle level of service policy of LOS E (with LOS F permissible at locations within transit priority areas and hot spot locations approved by the Board of Supervisors). This tiered LOS policy could support County General Plan objectives, utilize public investment to its full potential, and provide a quantitative performance metric to monitor system performance. However, the overall priority of the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan is focused on person delay. Funding

and constructing a system that is substantially underutilized most of the day and encourages higher vehicle speed, has secondary effects that degrade the mobility of pedestrians and bicyclists.

4. Update Guidelines and Programs

Update the appropriate County Design Criteria, and other existing documents, to reflect the Street Types network. These updates should reflect a Complete Streets approach where all modes of travel are routinely accommodated. Other policy guidance documents that should be created or updated include a Parking Master Plan and Street Design Guidelines. In addition, the County should consider establishing both a Safe Routes to School Program and a Transportation Management Association.

5 Prepare Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program

To provide guidance and articulate expectations, a TDM program should be established, including modification of the Trip Reduction Ordinance (Chapter 5.52 of the Zoning Code). The purpose of the TDM program is to reduce vehicle trips and provide transportation options to achieve the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan vision to improve the environment and quality of life for residents and employees. Santa Cruz County should encourage firms located within the County to use flexible work hours and other traffic demand management strategies to reduce traffic congestion during typical commute periods.

To the extent possible, companies should also be encouraged to share parking facilities with other adjacent uses through easement agreements. The County should also encourage residential developers to design and build project elements that support TDM, such as car-share and bike-share facilities, neighborhood electric vehicle (NEV) operation,

transit stop amenities, and neighborhood transportation centers. School day start and end times should also be considered for change and/or staggering, especially those in or near Soquel Village.

6. Prepare Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) Guidelines

Develop and adopt transportation impact study guidelines that specify the process by which impacts due to new developments are identified. These guidelines should include specific performance measures and thresholds for the identification of impacts and mitigation measures in accordance with the General Plan objectives, including person mobility, the reduction in VMT, and the development of a balanced transportation network for all modes. Roadway widenings should be evaluated in the context of potential impacts to community character, convenience for non-auto modes, safety, and cost/benefit.

7. Circulation Plan for Commercial Way/Soquel Drive/Thurber Area

The existing configuration of intersections in the Medical District Focus Area will need to be further studied in order to accommodate multiple travel modes and serve the future needs of the area. This area is also identified for a possible new multi-modal connection over Highway 1. The Circulation Plan, which could be included within a Master or Specific Plan for the area, should look at various options and assumption, with the goal of establishing and implementing a long-term infrastructure improvement plan for the area.

8. Community Review

This complement to previous steps would involve the presentation of process/methods to decision makers and the public for comment. The presentation would be based on the project-specific examples and include the data needs,

information provided and criteria used for determining impacts.

9. Adoption

If the new techniques produce the desired results in terms of evaluating the transportation system, at a reasonable level of effort, the County could adopt a multi-modal level of service for project-level analysis.

