



Community Development Department

Karen L. Garner
DIRECTOR

7351 Rosanna Street, Gilroy, California 95020-6197
Telephone: (408) 846-0451 Fax: (408) 846-0429
<http://www.cityofgilroy.org>

Revised Notice of Preparation

SUBJECT: Revised Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the
Gilroy 2040 General Plan (State Clearinghouse # 2015082014)

Lead Agency:

Agency Name City of Gilroy
Street Address 7351 Rosanna Street
City/State/Zip Gilroy, CA 95020
Contact Stan Ketchum
General Plan Project Manager

Consulting Firm:

Firm Name EMC Planning Group Inc.
Street Address 301 Lighthouse Ave, Ste. C
City/State/Zip Monterey, CA 93940
Contact Teri Wissler Adam
Senior Principal

The City of Gilroy will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the proposed Gilroy 2040 General Plan. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information, which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for this project. The original NOP was circulated for public comment on August 6, 2015.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. An initial study was not prepared for this NOP, or for the original NOP.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice.

You are invited to attend a public scoping meeting that will be held on **Tuesday, February 18, 2020** from 4:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. at the City of Gilroy City Hall Council Chambers. See address above.

Please send your response to Stan Ketchum, General Plan Project Manager, Gilroy Community Development Department, at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: Gilroy 2040 General Plan

Project Location: City of Gilroy County of Santa Clara
City (nearest) County

Project Description: (brief) Please see attached document

Date January 22, 2020

Signature

Title

EIR Consultant

Telephone

Stan Ketchum (408-846-0566)

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

GILROY 2040 GENERAL PLAN DRAFT EIR

REVISED NOTICE OF PREPARATION

GILROY 2040 GENERAL PLAN OVERVIEW

The City of Gilroy is located in south Santa Clara County. It is bisected by U.S. Highway 101 in a north-south direction and State Route 152 in an east-west direction. State Route 25 is located south of the city limits. The regional location of the City of Gilroy is presented in [Figure 1, Regional Map](#). The Gilroy city limits and planning area, as well as other relative boundaries, are presented in [Figure 2, Boundaries in the Gilroy Area](#).

[Figure 3, Existing General Plan Land Use Plan](#), presents Gilroy's existing planning area and land use designations. [Figure 4 presents the Gilroy 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram – Preferred Alternative](#).

Original Notice of Preparation

The original Notice of Preparation (NOP) associated with the 2040 General Plan was released in August 2015 for which comments were received by the City from local, regional, and state agencies and members of the public. Since 2015, the 2040 General Plan Preferred Alternative has been revised and therefore this revised NOP is being released to solicit comments regarding the content of the EIR, which will be prepared addressing the new Preferred Alternative.

Introduction

Every city and county in California must have a general plan, which is the local government's long-term framework or "constitution" for future growth and development. The general plan represents the community's view of its future and expresses the community's development goals.

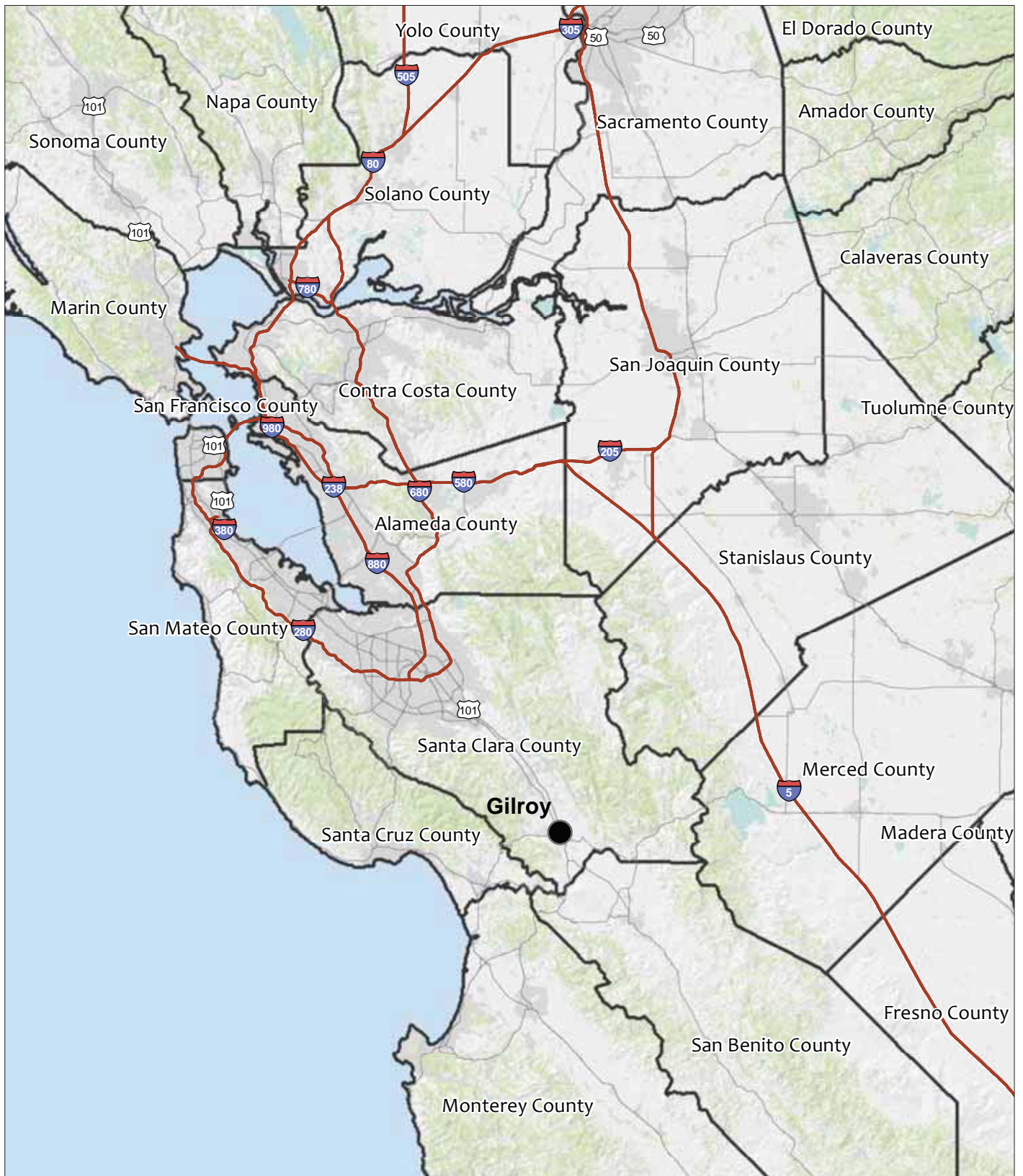
The general plan contains the goals and policies upon which the City Council and Planning Commission base their decisions. The general plan is made up of a collection of “elements,” or chapters, of which eight are mandatory. The eight State-mandated elements are: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, safety, and environmental justice.

The Gilroy 2040 General Plan will be used by the Gilroy City Council, Planning Commission, and City staff on a daily basis to make decisions with direct or indirect land use implications. It provides a framework for inter-jurisdictional coordination of planning efforts among officials and staff of the City and other government agencies (e.g., Federal, State, and local). Gilroy residents, property owners, and businesses also use the 2040 General Plan for City guidance for particular geographic areas or for particular subjects of interest to them.

The 2040 General Plan will provide the basis for a variety of City regulatory measures and administrative procedures. California planning law requires consistency between the general plan and its implementing programs, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, capital improvement programs, specific plans, environmental impact procedures, and building and housing codes.

The Gilroy 2040 General Plan is made up of two documents: the Background Report and Policy Document. The Background Report is further divided into 13 chapters so that information can be easily referenced by subject or issue. The following paragraphs provide a summary of these two component documents:

- **Background Report.** The Background Report takes a “snapshot” of current conditions and trends in Gilroy when the 2040 General Plan update process was initiated in 2014. It provides a detailed description of a wide range of topics within the Planning Area, such as demographic and economic conditions, land use, public facilities, and environmental resources. The report provides decision makers, the public, and local agencies with context for making policy decisions. Unlike the Policy Document, the Background Report is objective and policy-neutral. The Background Report also serves as the “Environmental Setting” section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the 2040 General Plan.
- **Policy Document.** The Policy Document is the essence of the 2040 General Plan. It contains the goals and policies that will guide future decisions within the city. It also identifies a set of implementation programs that will ensure the goals and policies in the General Plan are carried out.



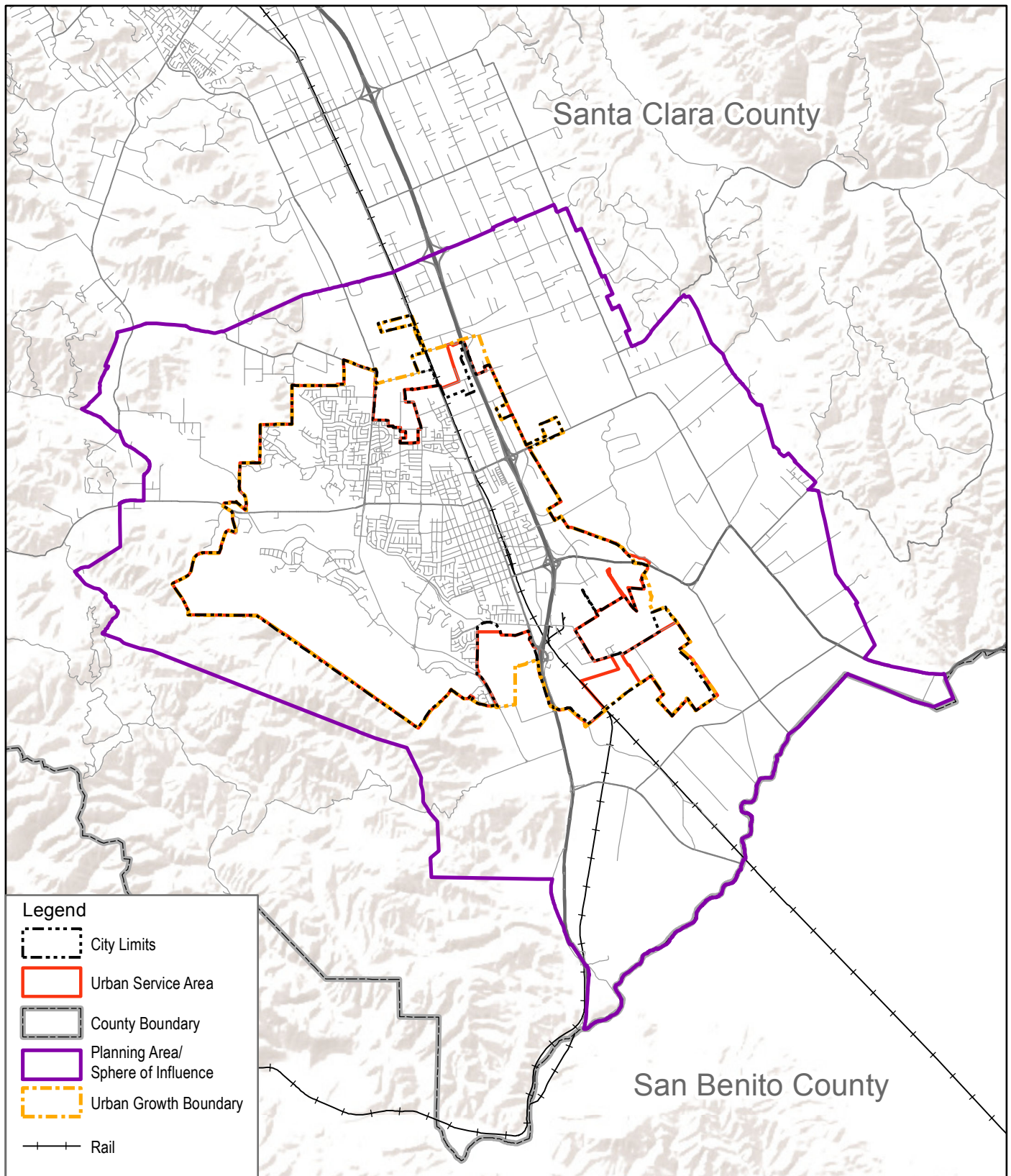
Source: ESRI 2020



Figure 1
Regional Map

Gilroy 2040 General Plan Notice of Preparation of an EIR

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Source: City of Gilroy 2020

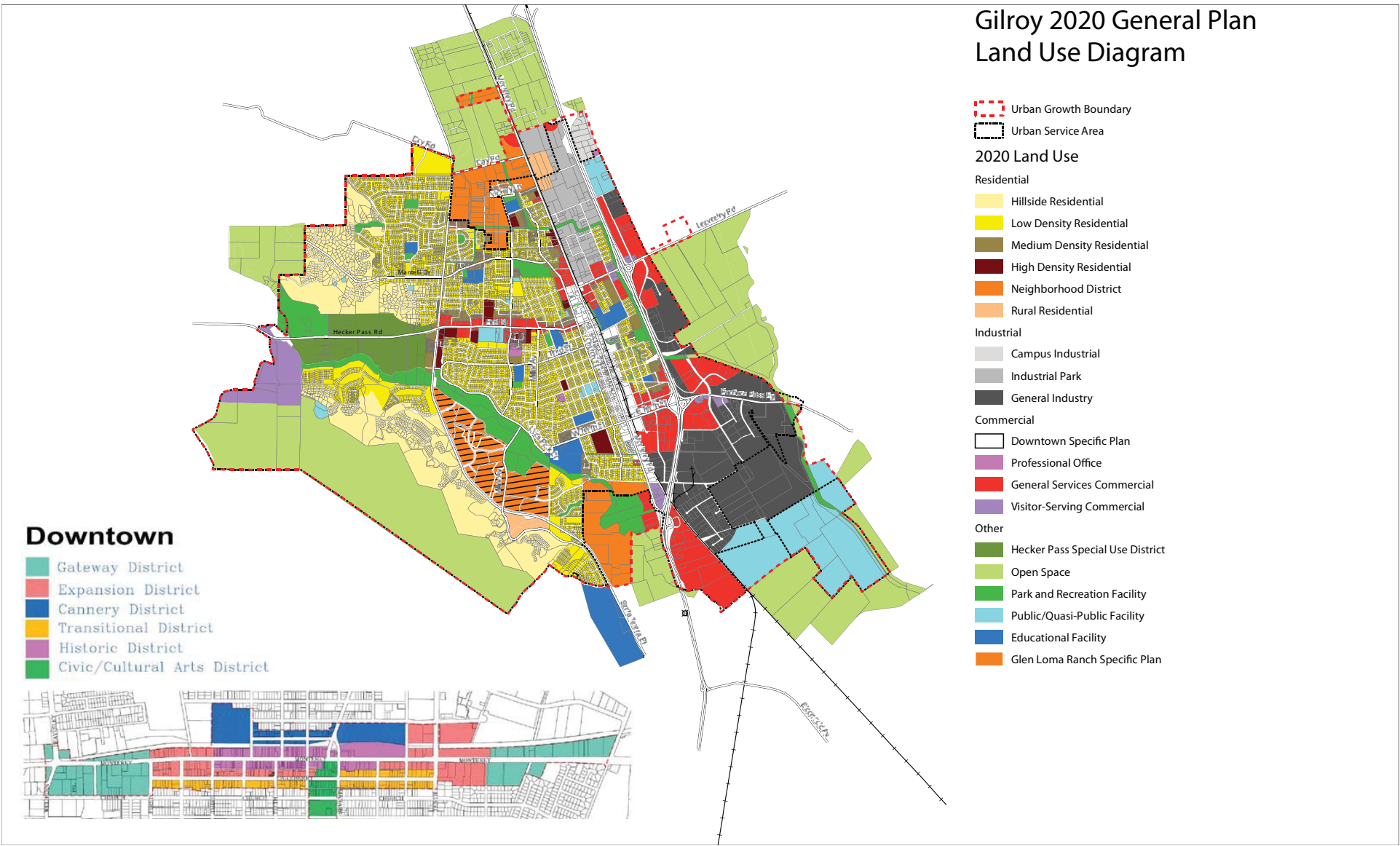
Figure 2

Boundaries in the Gilroy Area

Gilroy 2040 General Plan Notice of Preparation of an EIR

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Gilroy 2020 General Plan Land Use Diagram



Not to scale

Source: City of Gilroy 2016

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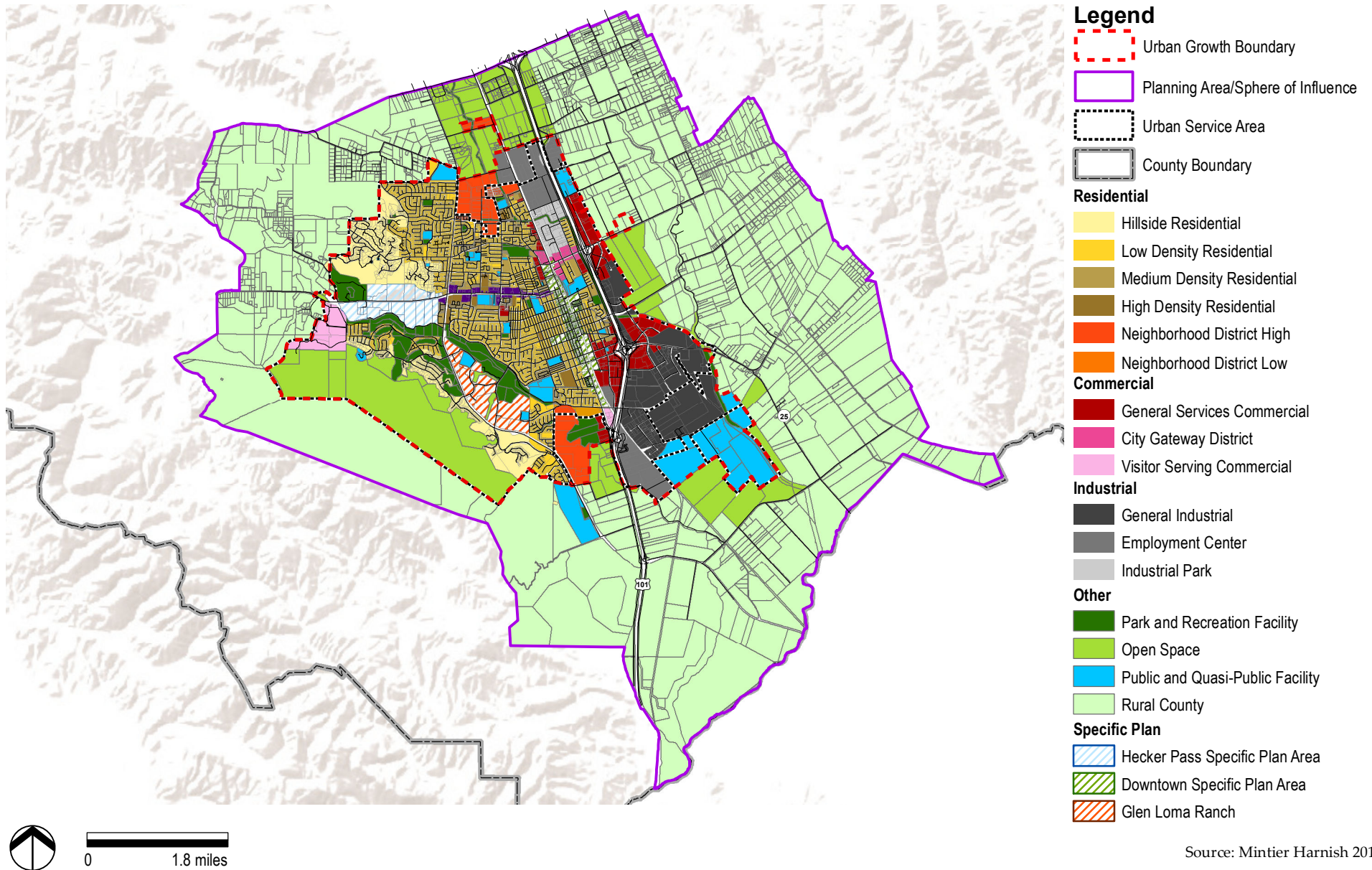


Figure 4

Gilroy 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram - Preferred Alternative

Gilroy 2040 General Plan Notice of Preparation of an EIR

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Gilroy 2040 General Plan Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

The Gilroy City Council established a vision and guiding principles upon which the 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and programs are based.

Vision Statement

In 2040, Gilroy is a diverse and culturally rich community with a small-town feel. Gilroy's economy is thriving, with a healthy business environment and ample job opportunities for residents. Visitors come to Gilroy for its wineries, shopping, festivals, and recreational opportunities. It is well-known throughout the region for its excellent schools, agriculture, and downtown.

Guiding Principles

1. **Foster Economic Growth.** Promote a strong local economy by fostering the growth and expansion of a diversified business community. Support businesses that create good jobs for Gilroy's resident workforce. Attract visitors to Gilroy's many destinations.
2. **Cultivate a Downtown Renaissance.** Restore downtown to a vibrant destination with unique retail, entertainment, arts, and dining options. Support and attract businesses. Provide the infrastructure and amenities needed for the growth of downtown. Preserve the historic character while supporting new development, including commercial, housing, and mixed-use projects.
3. **Balance Growth and Open Space.** Focus growth in areas that are already serviced by roads, sewers, and infrastructure. Support a balanced growth management strategy that protects productive agricultural lands and sensitive wildlife habitats while allowing for new economic opportunities. Ensure Gilroy retains its "small-town feel."
4. **Promote Fiscal Strength.** Plan land uses, their intensities, and their locations to provide the right balance of revenues and costs to allow the City to deliver high-quality services expected by the community. Manage fiscal resources in a responsible and efficient manner.
5. **Foster a sustainable community.** Balance resource conservation with economic growth. Ensure today's needs are met without jeopardizing the community's ability to meet future needs. Promote high-quality, long-lasting development that allows residents to meet daily needs, such as shopping, employment, and recreation, in close proximity to their homes.

Promote efficient use of energy, support alternative energy use, and protect natural resources.

6. **Ensure Public Safety.** Provide public safety services at a level that will keep the community safe, even as Gilroy grows. Manage growth to ensure that it does not create new threats to public safety, exacerbate existing hazards, or place undue strain on public safety services.
7. **Offer Recreation Opportunities.** Ensure all residents have easy access to high quality City parks and recreation opportunities. Expand park land and recreational programs to ensure high levels of use by both residents and visitors. Provide a variety of sports and activities for Gilroyans of all ages.
8. **Support Housing Options.** Encourage a mix of housing types to create diverse neighborhoods that meet the needs of all Gilroyans. Promote the building, retention, and renovation of quality housing for all incomes, ages, and abilities.

Policy Document

The Gilroy 2040 General Plan Policy Document contains nine elements. Each element is introduced below.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element establishes goals, policies, and programs to strategically accommodate future growth and change while preserving and enhancing the qualities that make Gilroy a great place to live and work. The Element contains the Land Use Diagram, a map of land uses within the planning area. It also contains a description of the land use designations. The goals, policies, and programs are designed to enhance Gilroy's neighborhoods and districts with an attractive mix of uses and amenities that expand the local economy, protect environmental resources, and improve the overall quality of life of residents. A variety of topics are discussed within the Element, including growth and change, mixed-use districts, residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, and community design.

Table 1, Development Potential, summarizes the development potential in the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.

Table 1 Development Potential

Vacant or Under-utilized Land (Acres)	Designation	Single-Family Units	Multi-Family Units	Population	Jobs
197	Hillside Residential	191	-	626	-
37	Low Density Residential	130	-	425	-
15	Medium Density Residential	-	127	352	-
15	High Density Residential	-	259	717	-
22	Downtown Specific Plan	149	1,045	3,308	2,843
90	General Services Commercial	-	-	-	1,594
619	General Industrial	-	-	-	3,821
60	Industrial Park	-	-	-	373
9	Public/Quasi-Public Facility	-	-	-	217
321	Hecker Pass Special Use District	127	-	416	-
292	Glen Loma Ranch Specific Plan	997	-	3,260	254
19	Mixed Use	-	143	397	584
420	Neighborhood District High	1,605	1,704	10,255	366
482	Employment Center	-	-	-	10,188
10	City Gateway District	-	-	-	1,063
6	Visitor Serving Commercial	-	-	-	131
Totals		3,199	3,278	19,756	21,434

Residential Total**6,477**

Mobility Element

People and goods must be able to move within and through Gilroy to ensure community vitality and quality of life. When transportation networks are safe and efficient, they can contribute to the local economy, minimize impacts to the environment, and provide freedom of movement. When mobility networks are overburdened and inefficient, communities can fail to live up to their full potential, and the economy and overall quality of life can suffer.

The Mobility Element provides the framework for decisions in Gilroy concerning the citywide transportation system. It seeks to create a balanced transportation network that supports and encourages walking, bicycling, and transit ridership. The goals and policies address a variety of

topics, including multimodal transportation, complete streets, pedestrian facilities, bikeways, public transit, vehicular transportation, parking, and goods movement.

Economic Prosperity Element

Gilroy has a rich history as an agricultural community and continues to be the home of major agricultural industries including Olam, Christopher Farms, Syngenta, International Paper, Monterey Foods, and others. Gilroy is located at the cross roads between the Bay Area, the Central Coast and the Central Valley, an important strategic location for many industries. The City's retail base is extensive and serves as a visitor attraction in its own right. The Economic Prosperity Element contains goals, policies, and programs that aim to improve the balance between jobs and Gilroy's workforce, grow businesses within Gilroy, and attract new businesses and industries.

2015–2023 Housing Element (Adopted December 2014)

The adopted housing element includes existing and projected housing needs and resources and constraints to address these needs. Goals, policies and scheduled programs for the maintenance, improvement and development of housing are identified and analyzed in the housing element. The adopted housing element can be reviewed at <https://www.cityofgilroy.org/290/Housing-Element>. The adopted housing element will be updated in 2023.

Public Facilities and Services Element

Gilroy residents, workers, and visitors rely on the public facilities and services provided by the City and other agencies and organizations to keep them safe; provide water, energy, communication services; and remove wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste. Gilroy businesses rely on these facilities and services as well. State-of-the art facilities and services (e.g., fiber-optic internet) can help grow Gilroy's economy. The Public Facilities and Services Element establishes goals and policies to guide the overall provision of public facilities and services in Gilroy. Implementing the policies will help to ensure Gilroy's public facilities and services are efficient and adequate for today and tomorrow.

Parks and Recreation Element

The City provides high-quality facilities and services that help residents lead healthier, happier lives. Gilroy residents can walk, bike, hike, play, and learn in one of Gilroy's many parks or recreation facilities. The Gilroy Recreation Department sponsors extensive programs classes and activities for the youth of the community. Gilroy senior citizens enjoy a wide range of programs

at the Gilroy Senior Center. The Parks and Recreation Element builds on this legacy of excellence and plans for the future of Gilroy's park and recreation facility system and recreation and cultural program offerings.

Natural and Cultural Resources Element

With its pristine mountainous backdrop, Gilroy is a relatively compact city surrounded by open space and agricultural land that separate it from adjacent communities. The Gilroy area contains some remaining natural areas, but primarily contains developed properties, agricultural lands, and landscaped ornamental areas such as parks and residential yards. Grassland, oak woodland, and riparian corridors (e.g. Llagas Creek and Uvas Creek) make up much of the natural area found in and near Gilroy. The Natural and Cultural Resources Element establishes goals, policies, and programs to preserve and enhance Gilroy's natural areas, plant and animal species, water, views, and historic and culturally significant resources.

Potential Hazards Element

The city of Gilroy is located in a region that is susceptible to a variety of natural disasters. The city's geologic setting was formed by regional and local earthquake faults, many of which are still active and can pose significant risks to buildings and infrastructure in the event of an earthquake. The city's climate can also create hazardous conditions. Severe winter and spring storms can cause landslides in hillside areas and flooding along stream corridors. Dry weather during spring and summer months can create hazardous conditions related to wildland fires, which when combined with strong winds, pose a significant risk to hillside neighborhoods. Climate change is anticipated to increase the severity of weather conditions in the future, and will likely increase flood, landslide, and wildfire risks together with more extreme temperature events. In addition to natural hazards, Gilroy also has transportation facilities and industrial businesses that create risks for man-made hazards, such as hazardous material spills and exposure to excessive noise.

While it is impossible to completely avoid natural and man-made hazards, the Potential Hazards Element establishes goals and policies to protect life and minimize property damage during future disasters and emergencies. The goals and policies address regional hazards mitigation, seismic and geologic hazards, flood hazards, rising sea levels, wildland wildfires, hazardous materials, airport hazards, and noise.

Environmental Justice Element

Legislation adopted in 2016, Senate Bill 1000, now requires both cities and counties that have disadvantaged communities to incorporate environmental justice policies into their general plans, either in a separate environmental justice element or by integrating related goals, policies, and objectives throughout the other elements. The City of Gilroy has chosen to prepare a separate Environmental Justice Element. Policies addressing environmental justice issues are addressed throughout the other elements of the general plan, and are summarized in the Environmental Justice Element. The element includes additional policies addressing community outreach and inclusion in the public decision-making process, access to health care and healthy foods, managing environmental concerns, and job training and development.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The City of Gilroy has determined that a Program EIR will be prepared to evaluate the environmental issues associated with the adoption and buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.

CEQA Guidelines section 15146 states that, “The degree of specificity required in an EIR will correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the underlying activity which is described in the EIR.” The underlying activity is adoption of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan. Therefore, the EIR will evaluate the environmental impacts of buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan to the greatest degree feasible; however, additional environmental review in compliance with CEQA may be required when development proposals requiring discretionary action are proposed. This process is called “tiering.” “Tiering” or “tier” means the coverage of general matters and environmental effects in an EIR prepared for a policy, plan, program or ordinance followed by narrower or site-specific EIRs or negative declaration that incorporate by reference the discussion in any prior EIR and which concentrate on the environmental effects that (a) are capable of being mitigated, or (b) were not analyzed as significant effects on the environment in the prior EIR.

Probable environmental effects associated with buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan are discussed below.

Aesthetics

The City values scenic views from the following locations, based upon policies in the current general plan:

- Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area;
- Hillsides;
- Hecker Pass Highway and Pacheco Pass Highway;
- Uvas Park Drive, Santa Teresa Boulevard, and Miller Avenue from First Street to Mesa Road;
- Farmland viewed from U.S. Highway 101; and
- Principal gateways to the City (north and south Monterey Street, State Route 152/Hecker Pass Highway, State Route 152/Pacheco Pass Highway, north and south Santa Teresa Boulevard, and at the U.S. Highway 101 interchanges at Masten Avenue, Buena Vista Avenue, Leavesley Road, and Tenth Street.

This section of the EIR will address the potential for visual impacts associated with implementation of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.

Agricultural Resources

The City of Gilroy is adjacent to active, productive agricultural land to the north, south, and east. The most productive agricultural land has been identified as the land east and south of the city, as identified in the South County Agricultural Study.

This section of the EIR will address impacts to agricultural resources including the conversion of important farmlands (including prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance), potential conflicts with Williamson Act contracts, and potential impacts associated with land use conflicts where urban development could be proposed adjacent to active agricultural operations.

Air Quality

This section of the EIR will include an air quality analysis using the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's methodology focusing on consistency with current air quality plan control measures and the proposed Gilroy 2040 General Plan's projected vehicle miles travelled or vehicle trips.

Biological Resources

Much of the potential for development within Gilroy's Planning Boundary is subject to the requirements of the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan ("habitat plan"). This section of the EIR will focus on the following:

- impacts to species covered in the habitat plan;
- impacts to species not included in the habitat plan, but identified as candidate, sensitive, or special status species by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community;
- impacts to federally-protected wetlands;
- impacts to wildlife movement; and
- conflicts with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.

Cultural Resources (Pre-historic & Historic, and Paleontological)

Over two dozen prehistoric sites have been recorded or are thought to exist within the general plan area, with the majority occurring along the Uvas Creek drainage or the upper elevations of the floodplain to the east. Historic sites include many within historic downtown Gilroy, as well as many historic farmsteads, buildings and roadway features located in the previously rural portions of the general plan area. Most of the recorded archaeological studies conducted in the area have occurred on small parcels (less than 20 acres) and have consisted mostly of lineal studies for street or utility projects. It is assumed that the probability of prehistoric and historic sites in some areas is high within some areas.

This section of the EIR will address the potential for impacts to pre-historic, historic, and paleontological resources associated with general plan buildout.

Energy

This section of the EIR will address anticipated energy consumption associated with buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan, as well as proposed and or potential energy conservation measures.

Geologic Hazards

The following geology and soils issues will be addressed in this section of the EIR: earthquake faults, seismic ground shaking, ground failure, landslides, soil erosion, and expansive soils.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This section of the EIR will include greenhouse gas emissions analysis using the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's methodology and thresholds for evaluating a project's greenhouse gas emissions impacts.

Hazardous Materials and Wildland Fire Hazards

This section of the EIR will address the known hazardous materials within the Planning Boundary that are included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5. This section will also address exposure of people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

Flooding and Water Quality

This section of the EIR will address flooding, storm drainage patterns and systems, water quality, and the City's storm water management requirements, including low impact development features that will need to be addressed in the review and approval of new development projects.

Mineral Resources

This section of the EIR will address potential impacts to mineral resources associated with buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.

Noise

This section of the EIR will describe impacts of Gilroy 2040 General Plan development policies and associated future buildout on the local noise/vibration environment. The EIR will also include short- and long-term noise measurements and existing noise contours. Projected noise modeling and contours under the 2040 General Plan will be developed. The EIR will analyze construction noise/vibration; traffic, and rail noise/vibration; and land use compatibility within the projected noise environment. The EIR will then identify effective and feasible mitigations that can be incorporated directly into 2040 General Plan policies.

Police Protection Facilities

This section of the EIR will be prepared based on consultation with the City of Gilroy Police Department regarding the capacity of the department to serve buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.

Fire Protection Facilities

This section of the EIR will be prepared based on consultation with the City of Gilroy Fire Department regarding the capacity of the department to serve buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.

School Facilities

This section of the EIR will be prepared based on consultation with the school district to determine capacity at existing schools, existing enrollment, and to estimate the number of students that would be generated by buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan. The EIR will evaluate if existing and proposed school(s) have or would have sufficient capacity and whether additional facilities will be required.

Park and Recreation Facilities

This section of the EIR will be prepared based on consultation with the City of Gilroy Recreation Department regarding the capacity of the department to serve buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.

Transportation and Mobility

This section of the EIR will address potential impacts from buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan on multimodal transportation, complete streets, pedestrian facilities, bikeways, public transit, vehicular transportation, parking, and goods movement.

Water Service

This section of the EIR will focus on the capability of the City and the Santa Clara Valley Water District to provide potable and recycled water to accommodate buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan, and whether any new or expanded facilities are required.

This section will also address the project's effect on groundwater resources, which is the City's primary source of potable water.

Wastewater Service

This section of the EIR will focus on the capability of the South County Regional Wastewater Authority to provide wastewater services to accommodate buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan, and whether any new or expanded facilities are required.

Solid Waste Facilities

This section of the EIR will address potential impacts to relevant landfill(s) based upon solid waste generated from buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.

Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative effects of buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan, combined with other relevant plans and programs, will be analyzed in this section of the EIR. The following issues will be addressed in this section: mobility and transportation, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, energy, groundwater, biological resources, solid waste, and wastewater.

Growth Inducement

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(d) the EIR will include a discussion of the growth-inducing impacts of buildout of the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.

Alternatives

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 the EIR will include analysis of a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project, or to the location of the project, which could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. An evaluation of the comparative merits of the alternatives will be presented. The alternatives will include those considered during the alternatives consideration process for the Gilroy 2040 General Plan.