



Planning Department  
107 West Highway 246  
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[www.cityofbuellton.com](http://www.cityofbuellton.com)

## Notice of Preparation

**DATE:** March 15, 2021  
**TO:** RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES AND INTERESTED PARTIES  
**SUBJECT:** NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE UPDATE TO THE LAND USE ELEMENT AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT OF THE CITY OF BUELLTON GENERAL PLAN

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the City of Buellton will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the update to the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan, as described below. This Notice of Preparation has been issued to provide an opportunity for responsible and trustee agencies and interested parties to submit comments on the scope of the EIR, relative to the attached Project Summary. Agencies should comment on such information as it relates to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. The City made the determination to prepare an EIR following preliminary review of the project. Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15063(a), because an EIR is needed, an initial study has not been prepared. Probable environmental effects of the project are described in the attached Project Summary.

**Project Name:** City of Buellton Land Use and Circulation Element Update EIR  
**Project Location:** City of Buellton (citywide) in the County of Santa Barbara (see Figure 1 attached).  
**Public Comment Period:** The City of Buellton welcomes and will consider all written comments regarding potential environmental impacts of the project and issues to be addressed in the Draft EIR. The public review period begins on March 18, 2021 and ends on April 16, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Please direct your comments to:

**Mail:** Andrea Keefer, Planning Director  
Planning Department  
P.O. Box 1819  
Buellton, California 93427

**Email:** [andrea@cityofbuellton.com](mailto:andrea@cityofbuellton.com)

Please include your name, phone number, and email or postal address.

**Scoping Meeting:** The City of Buellton will host a scoping meeting to solicit input on the content of the environmental analysis that will be included in the Draft EIR.

**Date and Time:** March 31, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

To Participate via Zoom, Pre-Registration is required:

- Send E-mail to: [planning@cityofbuellton.com](mailto:planning@cityofbuellton.com) by March 30, 2021 to receive an invitation to join and participate in the interactive meeting via Zoom.

To Watch meeting and send in comments via e-mail:

- The meeting will be broadcast live via Buellton CityTV:  
<https://cityofbuellton.com/government/cityTV.php>
- E-mail your comments either prior to or during the March 31<sup>st</sup> scoping meeting to: [planning@cityofbuellton.com](mailto:planning@cityofbuellton.com)

Any member of the public who needs accommodations can contact the City Clerk at (805) 688- 5177 and best efforts will be made to provide reasonable accommodations to provide as much accessibility as possible while also maintaining public safety in accordance with the City of Buellton's procedure for resolving reasonable accommodation requests.



**Informational Video:**

A brief informational video describing the project and the CEQA process will be available beginning on March 18, 2021 for viewing any time on the Buellton Planning Department web-page at: <https://cityofbuellton.com/departments/planning.php> (►scroll down ►click on last blue ribbon, "Community Meeting Workshop Archive Videos", ►select: "Informational Video #1 - EIR Scoping Meeting")

**Consulting Firm Retained to Prepare Draft EIR**

**Firm Name:** Rincon Consultants, Inc.

**Address:** 209 East Victoria Street, Santa Barbara, California 93101

**Contact:** Reema Shakra, AICP, Senior Planner

**Date:** March 15, 2021

**Signature:**

Andrea Keefer

**Title:** Planning Director, City of Buellton

**Phone:** (805) 688-7474

## Project Summary

### Project Location and Setting

The project applies to the entire City of Buellton (citywide). Buellton is located in southern Santa Barbara County and is approximately 1.6 square miles in size (see Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> Land uses are regulated under the City of Buellton's General Plan, which was comprehensively updated in 2007. Existing land uses in the city consist of residential at varying densities, office, commercial, industrial, parks and open space, and institutional. Land designated as open space can generally be found along the southern border of Buellton.<sup>1</sup> City parks include Oak Park, Avenue of Flags Medians, Village Park, Buellton PAWS Park, River View Park, and the Santa Ynez Botanic Garden. Other nearby open space areas include Cachuma Lake Recreation Area and Nojoqui Falls Park. Surrounding cities include the City of Solvang, located approximately 3 miles to the east, and the City of Lompoc, located approximately 20 miles to the west. Unincorporated Santa Barbara County surrounds the City of Buellton. Major roadway access to the city is provided by both U.S. Highway 101 and State Route 246.

### Project Description

The project consists of a focused update to the Land Use Element and a comprehensive update to the Circulation Element of the City of Buellton's General Plan.

### Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is a chapter of the General Plan that describes long-range goals for the physical development of the community, both in terms of land use type and intensity, as well as urban character and form. Updates to the Land Use Element will be made to reflect the implementation of several private development projects and the adoption of new policy and regulatory standards, including the Avenue of Flags Specific Plan (adopted in 2017), Village Specific Plan (adopted in 2013), the 2012 Vision Plan, and Economic Development Strategy (adopted in 2018). New environmental and social justice policies will be added to address state regulatory requirements. The update will inform the more comprehensive future update of the General Plan, which is scheduled to take place in 2025.

<sup>1</sup> City of Buellton. 2007. City of Buellton General Plan 2025. Land Use Element Revised December 2008. Available: <https://cityofbuellton.com/departments/planning.php>. Accessed March 2, 2021.





The Land Use Element will also establish 10-year land use or build-out scenarios based on an assessment of approved building permits, vacant parcels, accessory dwelling unit development, potential development in the Avenue of Flags Specific Plan area, and potential development along State Route 246. The update will include new policies addressing State Route 246 and opportunities to create new community spaces and parklets, and redevelop adjacent land uses with new transit-oriented development.

The Land Use Element of the General Plan will also be updated to incorporate appropriate modifications to ensure consistency with the Circulation Element update.

## **Circulation Element**

The Circulation Element Update will address regulatory requirements such as compliance with state standards regarding social equity, level of service, and vehicle miles traveled. Level of service is a measure to describe how well roadway intersections and other transportation facilities operate for drivers. Vehicle miles traveled evaluates the number of miles traveled by each vehicle. Level of service thresholds have been used as a metric to evaluate environmental impacts of proposed projects under CEQA. These standards will be maintained by the City to adequately serve community needs. However, new standards for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) will be established as the metric for measuring transportation impacts under CEQA, in accordance with Senate Bill 743. This shift in the CEQA standard from level of service to VMT is mandated by the State as part of Senate Bill 375 in keeping with the State's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage infill development and improve public health through active transportation (e.g., bicycling and walking).

The update will also establish relevant long-term improvements to the City-wide circulation system, including State Route 246. New policies addressing State Route 246 will include opportunities to slow traffic, create safer pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and enhance transit stops. The Circulation Element will update existing and future circulation system characteristics, including parking, and transit, in Buellton.

## **Required Approvals**

Actions to be taken by the City include:

- Certification of the EIR prepared for the update to the Land Use Element and Circulation Element;
- Adoption of the General Plan amendments to update the Land Use Element; and
- Adoption of the General Plan amendments to update the Circulation Element.

## **Probable Environmental Effects**

The EIR will evaluate whether implementing the proposed project would potentially result in one or more significant environmental effects. The following issue areas will be addressed in the EIR:

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

## **Issues Scoped Out from Analysis in the EIR**

The City anticipates that the project would have less than significant or no impacts on the following environmental issue areas. These areas will not be discussed in the EIR for the reasons discussed below.



### Agriculture and Forestry Resources

No forestry resources or timberlands are located within the city. According to the California Department of Conservation, there are no agricultural lands designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance within city limits, nor are there lands within city limits zoned for agricultural use. There are agricultural lands outside city limits, however the City does not propose to expand its boundaries into adjacent agricultural lands or expand urban development in a manner that would indirectly convert agricultural uses. Therefore, this issue area will not be discussed in the EIR.

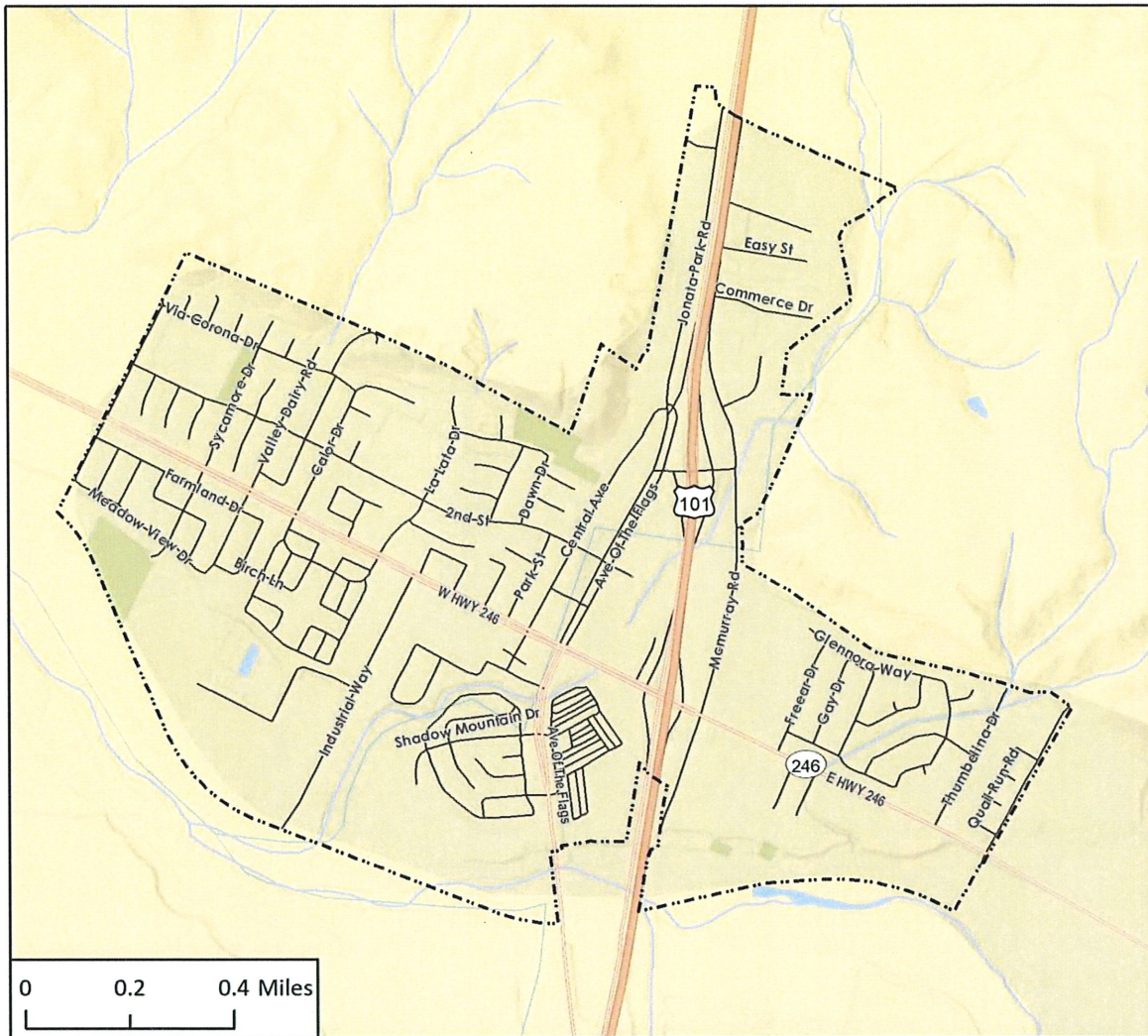
### Mineral Resources

No significant mineral resources have been identified within the city, as stated in the City's General Plan, nor are there are mineral extraction activities within city limits. Additionally, the California Geological Survey has classified Buellton as Mineral Resource Zone 1, meaning there is little likelihood for the presence of significant aggregate resources. Therefore, there would be no impact on mineral resources and this issue will not be discussed in the EIR.





Figure 1 City of Buellton Vicinity Map



--- Buellton City Boundary

★ City of Buellton

