Environmental Scoping Document

**for the 2030 Climate Action Plan**

Project Website:

https://sbco.mysocialpinpoint.com/2030cap/

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#  Purpose

This environmental scoping document describes the proposed 2030 Climate Action Plan (2030 CAP) Update (“Proposed Plan”) and provides a preliminary review of the Proposed Plan’s potential environmental impacts in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.). This scoping document, along with comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Proposed Plan, will assist the County of Santa Barbara, as the lead agency for the preparation of the EIR for the Proposed Plan, in identifying environmental impacts that must be evaluated in the EIR.

#  Background

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR to inform the public and decision-makers of the potential environmental effects of the proposed regulations. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15151, an EIR should include a “sufficient degree of analysis, or scope, to provide decision-makers with information that enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences.”

The EIR for the Proposed Plan will evaluate the environmental impacts of anticipated activities resulting from implementing the 2030 CAP. The environmental analysis will be based on the project description and, if potentially significant environmental effects are identified, will set forth mitigation measures to be implemented as requirements in the 2030 CAP approval process, in order to avoid or reduce significant impacts identified in the environmental analysis.

#  Project Description

This section describes the Proposed Plan, including the applicant/lead agency, project location, Proposed Plan summary, and Proposed Plan adoption and implementation actions.

1. Project Applicant/Lead Agency

The County of Santa Barbara is both the project applicant/proponent and the lead agency for the Proposed Plan.

1. Project Location

The Proposed Plan would update the County’s 2015 Energy & Climate Action Plan which is implemented across unincorporated Santa Barbara County, excluding lands under the jurisdiction of incorporated cities, the federal government (Los Padres National Forest and Vandenberg Space Force Base), and the University of California. Santa Barbara County is shown in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Regional Location**

1. Project Overview

In 2018, the County of Santa Barbara adopted a goal of 50 percent net reduction from 2018 emissions levels by 2030, and carbon neutrality by 2045. To reach this goal, the County is proposing to update the 2015 Energy and Climate Action Plan (i.e., the Proposed Plan; 2030 CAP). The 2030 CAP would include a community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory and create climate action strategies to address issues related to improving building efficiency; decreasing transportation emissions; decreasing emissions related to water, wastewater, and solid waste; increasing carbon sequestration, creating food system improvements; and encouraging a low carbon economy. Climate action strategies within the 2030 CAP would be fulfilled through implementation of 2030 CAP Measures and Actions. A Measure is a long-range policy developed to achieve specific GHG reductions. An Action is a specific program or step that supports GHG reduction Measures. Adoption of the 2030 CAP would require accompanying amendments to the Energy Element and amendments to other components of the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan as needed for consistency with 2030 CAP Measures and Actions.

1. Potential Development That May Result from the Proposed Plan

The 2030 CAP does not identify individual site-specific projects that may result from implementing actions included in the 2030 CAP. However, the types of supportive programs, policies, financial pathways, and other commitments identified in the Actions included in the 2030 CAP are considered during review of the Proposed Plan. Such programs, policies, or potential new development would be aligned with the 2030 CAP Measures, included in **Table 1**.

Each of the 2030 CAP Measures are fulfilled through 2030 CAP Actions. 2030 CAP Actions identify the supportive programs, policies, financial pathways, and other commitments that assist in accomplishing these Measures. The types of infrastructure, improvements, and other new development facilitated by the 2030 CAP Actions includes, but is not limited to, the installation of electric vehicle charging stations; new bicycle or pedestrian facilities; upgrading existing infrastructure including electrical panels and branch circuits; the increase of sustainable agricultural practices such as expanding solar development on agricultural lands, increasing the use of compost, mulching, cover crops, and hedgerow planting; the restoration of natural habitats and ecosystems; and the development of new building policies to increase wildfire resilience. The 2030 CAP Actions promote programs or developments aligned with the 2030 CAP Measures which could introduce physical changes associated with construction and could alter pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns. A full list of 2030 CAP Actions can be found in the Implementation Table within the 2030 CAP document.

Each of these example actions in 2030 CAP would either involve the initial development of programs to implement these actions and/or result in collaboration with other entities to promote an existing program. Therefore, future plans or projects requiring discretionary approval would be subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and individual impact analyses will identify required plan- or project-specific mitigation measures where applicable.

**Table 1 Santa Barbara County 2030 CAP GHG Emissions Reduction Measures List**

| **Measure #** | **Measures** |
| --- | --- |
| **Resilient Clean Energy**Measures: Building Energy - BE; Municipal Operations - MO |
| BE-1 | Increase clean energy use and energy resilience in new and existing buildings |
| MO-1 | Increase sustainability and resilience of County-operated facilities |
| **Connected Communities**Measures: Transportation - TR |
| TR-1 | Increase the use of zero-emission vehicles |
| TR-2 | Enhance transportation policy infrastructure planning |
| TR-3 | Increase affordable housing and reduce number of commuter car trips  |
| TR-4 | Increase reliability and accessibility of transit services |
| TR-5 | Reduce the need for commuting by encouraging work at home, walk to work and locating jobs near transit |
| TR-6 | Decarbonize Offroad Emissions |
| **Sustainable Economies**Measures: Waste - W; Water & Wastewater - WW; Food System - FS, Low Carbon Economy - LCE |
| W-1 | Reduce food waste and increase use of organic recycled materials |
| W-2 | Reduce use of non-recyclable and non-compostable single use items |
| WW-1 | Increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions of public water system operations |
| FS-1 | Increase community food access equity and resilience |
| FS-2 | Reduce energy- and carbon-intensity of the food system |
| LCE-1 | Limit the increase of fossil fuel extraction emissions and develop a sunset strategy |
| LCE-2 | Support local business in becoming more sustainable |
| **Nature-Based Solutions****(Land Stewardship & Carbon Farming - LCSF)** |
| LSCF-1 | Promote and support land management practices that sequester carbon |
| LSCF-2 | Facilitate mechanisms to value and fund carbon sequestration projects |
| LSCF-3 | Reduce carbon emissions from agricultural operations |

1. Adoption and Implementation

The County Planning Commission will consider and advise the Board of Supervisors (Board) regarding the adoption of the 2030 CAP. In order to implement the Proposed Plan, the Board will need to adopt environmental findings, certify the EIR, and, if necessary, adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations for any unavoidable, significant environmental impacts resulting from the Project. The Board will need to adopt any CAP-related Comprehensive Plan amendments (e.g., amendments to the Energy Element) to be consistent with, and ensure the successful implementation of, certain features of the CAP. In addition to the actions set forth above, the Coastal Commission must certify any amendments to the Local Coastal Program (LCP) – including Article II, as the implementing ordinance of the LCP.

#  Scope of the Environmental Review

1. Overview

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR to inform the public and decision-makers of the project’s potential environmental effects. This includes any potential environmental effects resulting from the allowance of the supplemental uses described in the project description. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15151, “[a]n EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences.”

1. Program EIR Requirements and Benefits

The EIR for the Proposed Plan is planned to fulfill the requirements for a Program EIR. Although the legally required contents of a Program EIR are the same as those of a Project EIR, Program EIRs are by necessity more conceptual and may contain a more general discussion of impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures than a Project EIR. As provided in Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, a Program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that may be characterized as one large project. Use of a Program EIR provides the County of Santa Barbara (as the Lead Agency) with the opportunity to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures and provides the County with greater flexibility to address environmental issues and/or cumulative impacts on a comprehensive basis. Agencies generally prepare Program EIRs for programs or a series of related actions that are linked geographically, are logical parts of a chain of contemplated events, rules, regulations, or plans that govern the conduct of a continuing program, or are individual activities carried out under the same authority and having generally similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways. A Program EIR considers the broad effects associated with implementing a program (such as a General Plan or Specific Plan, or in the case of the Proposed Plan, a Climate Action Plan) and does not, and is not intended to, examine the specific environmental effects associated with specific projects that may be accommodated by the provisions of a program.

Once a Program EIR has been prepared, subsequent activities within the program must be evaluated to determine what, if any, additional CEQA documentation needs to be prepared. If the Program EIR addresses the program’s effects as specifically and comprehensively as possible, many subsequent activities could be found to be within the Program EIR scope and additional environmental documentation may not be required (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168[c]). When a lead agency relies on a Program EIR for a subsequent activity, it must incorporate applicable mitigation measures and alternatives developed in the Program EIR into the subsequent activities (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168[c][3]). If a subsequent activity would have effects not contemplated or not within the scope of the Program EIR, the lead agency must prepare a new Initial Study leading to a Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or a project-level EIR.

As a wide-ranging environmental document, the Program EIR uses expansive thresholds as compared to the project-level thresholds that might be used for an EIR on a specific development project. It should not be assumed that impacts determined to be insignificant at a program level would be insignificant at a project level. In other words, determination that implementation of the Proposed Plan as a program would not have a significant environmental effect does not necessarily mean that an individual project would not have significant effects based on project-level CEQA thresholds, even if the project is consistent with the proposed 2030 CAP.

1. Environmental Topics to be Analyzed in the EIR

CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d) states that an initial study is not required in cases where preparation of an EIR is determined to be clearly required by the lead agency. Accordingly, an initial study for the project is not provided herein. However, preliminary review of the Proposed Plan identified the following issue areas for evaluation in the EIR. Additional environmental topics beyond what is set forth below might be added to the EIR, based on comments received in response to the NOP for the EIR and Draft EIR that will be prepared for the project.

1. Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The EIR will describe existing conditions within the South Central Coast Air Basin and in the Proposed Plan vicinity, including attainment status for criteria pollutants, climatic conditions, local emissions sources, and sensitive receptors, such as schools, elder care facilities, park visitors and adjacent neighborhoods. This section of the EIR will evaluate any potential conflicts the Proposed Plan may create with applicable Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District thresholds of significance (Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District 2022), including consistency with adopted federal, state, and local air quality plans for Santa Barbara County (ex. SBCAPCD 2019 Ozone Plan). The Proposed Plan’s potential to create objectionable odors will also be analyzed in this section of the EIR. This section of the EIR will identify the need for mitigation, as necessary, to reduce significant impacts to the maximum extent feasible.

1. Energy

Potential new development that may result from actions included in the 2030 CAP includes modifications to the existing built environment, including building retrofits and installation of pedestrian facilities. Such development would result in the consumption of energy resources during construction and/or operation. The EIR will describe the existing energy setting, including energy supply and energy consumption and sources, including the use of electricity, natural gas, and alternative energy sources. This section of the EIR will evaluate if the Proposed Plan would result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during construction or operation. In addition, this section of the EIR would evaluate any potential conflicts the Proposed Plan may create with State or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency (e.g., California Building Structure Code, Title 21, Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, and SBCAPCD 2019 Ozone Plan). This section of the EIR will identify the need for mitigation, as necessary, to reduce significant impacts to the maximum extent feasible.

1. Transportation

Transportation impacts associated with the Proposed Plan may result from possible safety hazards associated with increased pedestrian or bicycle use, and potential temporary disruptions or permanent alterations in traffic patterns due to construction and the implementation of active transportation improvements, respectively. The EIR will evaluate existing County traffic volume data, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impacts, geometric hazards, accident data, and safety issues including evacuation/emergency access; identify potential construction-related traffic impacts; assess the project’s long-term operational impacts associated with the expansion of active transportation facilities; and identify feasible mitigation measures to address significant impacts.

1. Cumulative Impacts

CEQA Guidelines Section 15355 defines “cumulative impacts” as follows:

*“Cumulative impacts” refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.*

*(a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.*

*(b) The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.*

The EIR will assess the significant cumulative impacts to which the project may make a “cumulatively considerable” contribution (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130).

1. Alternatives Analysis

The EIR will describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the project that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6. The alternatives discussion in the EIR will include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the project. The EIR will programmatically describe the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative. The EIR analysis will also include a brief discussion of each alternative considered but rejected from further analysis in the EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6).

1. Other CEQA Required Discussions

The EIR will include a section that addresses other issues for which CEQA Guidelines Section 15126 requires analysis beyond the environmental topical areas described above. In this section, the EIR will analyze the project’s additional possible impacts, including growth inducement and significant irreversible environmental changes.

1. Environmental Topics that will not be Analyzed in Further Detail in the EIR
2. Aesthetics/Visual Resources

Thresholds of Significance

1. Would the project result in the obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public or the creation of aesthetically offensive site open to public view?
2. Would the project result in a change to the visual character of an area?
3. Would the project result in glare or night lighting which may affect adjoining areas?
4. Would the project result in visually incompatible structures?

The County’s Visual Aesthetics Impact Guidelines classify coastal and mountainous areas, the urban fringe, and travel corridors as “especially important” visual resources. A project may have the potential to create a significantly adverse aesthetic impact if (among other potential effects) it would impact important visual resources, obstruct public views, remove significant amounts of vegetation, substantially alter the natural character of the landscape, or involve extensive grading visible from public areas. The guidelines address public, not private views (County of Santa Barbara 2021).

Setting

Santa Barbara County is defined by a multitude of scenic resources, including hillsides, mountains, coastline, beaches, historic buildings, and trees. Significant visual resources, as defined in the County’s Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan, include scenic highway corridors; parks and recreational areas; views of coastal bluffs, streams, lakes, estuaries, rivers, watersheds, mountains, and cultural resources sites; and scenic areas. Scenic vistas are often available from publicly accessible roadways, including designated and eligible State Scenic Highways such as U.S. Route 101, State Route 166, State Route 154, and State Route 1 (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2022).

Impact Analysis

**Threshold of Significance: a**

As a policy document the 2030 CAP would not result in the obstruction of scenic vistas or views open to the public or create an aesthetically offensive site open to public view. However, implementation of some 2030 CAP Actions may promote infrastructure development and other physical changes through policies and programs designed to achieve the County’s GHG emissions reductions goals. 2030 CAP Action BE-1.8 promotes increasing solar and battery storage requirements in buildings. Action TR-5.5 promotes prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian programmed projects implemented in the Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategies. Action BE-1.10 promotes implementation of best practices and upgrade energy systems to streamline permitting for projects associated with renewable energy and energy storage systems, building retrofits, and electrical infrastructure upgrades.

Although implementation of 2030 CAP includes actions that may result in future development that could change the visual environment of the County, infrastructure development, redevelopment, renewable energy, and other potential future development projects would be subject to County regulations and policies intended to ensure new development would be complimentary to existing development and land uses. Santa Barbara County Code (County Code) Section 21-28 requires preservation of natural features including, but not limited to, large trees; natural groves; watercourses; scenic points; and historic spots, and Section 25-22, which requires grading activities to keep aesthetic disfigurement to a minimum (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). Division 8 of the County Code includes provisions for Special Treatment Areas defined by the County, which requires the retention of trees and preservation of natural topographical features in order to avoid the destruction of natural scenic beauty and unsightly developments (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). The County’s Coastal Land Use Plan (CLUP) contains specific policies to protect scenic and visual qualities within the Coastal Zone (County of Santa Barbara 2019). Specifically, Policy 4-6 requires that posted signs do not detract from scenic areas or views from public roads or other viewing points, Policy 4-7 requires utilities to be placed underground in new developments (except where cost of undergrounding would be so high as to deny service), and Policy 4-9 requires structures to be sited and designed to preserve unobstructed broad views of the ocean from U.S. Route 101, and to be clustered to the maximum extent feasible (County of Santa Barbara 2019), minimizing potential aesthetic impacts.

As a result of required compliance with County regulations and policies, the 2030 CAP would not obstruct a scenic vista or view open to the public or create an aesthetically offensive site open to public view. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would result in insignificant impacts related to scenic vistas.

**Thresholds of Significance: b, d**

The visual character of the County is defined by a mix of urban land, agriculture, and open space, as designated by the County’s zoning ordinance (County of Santa Barbara 2019). The 2030 CAP does not include land use or zoning changes that would have the potential to alter the visual character of the County. As a policy document, the 2030 CAP would be used to implement actions designed to achieve the County’s GHG emissions reductions goals.

Implementation of some actions in the 2030 CAP may promote infrastructure improvements that could alter visual character, such as solar panels on existing and new buildings, bicycle facilities, and electric vehicle charging stations. Future CAP-related improvements would be designed and located to be complementary to existing land uses and would be required to be developed in conformance with applicable County regulations, including Land Use Element policies, which require submittal of a landscaping plan for all planned development; require new structures to have compatible height, scale, and design with existing development in areas designated as rural by the County; and require new structures in existing communities designated as urban land to be in conformance with the scale and character of such communities (County of Santa Barbara 2016). Pursuant to County Code Section 2-33.12, projects in the County promoted through 2030 CAP Actions would be subject to the standards of the appropriate Board of Architectural Review[[1]](#footnote-1) (BAR) which reviews changes or additions to the exterior architecture of buildings, structures, and signs (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). As described in County Code Section 2-33.14, BARs throughout the County review projects to maintain compliance with design standards including height, bulk, and area of building and structures; colors and types of building materials and applications; site layout, orientation, and relationship with open areas and topography, location and type of landscaping; and appropriateness of sign design and exterior lighting (County of Santa Barbara 2019).

Installation of new solar panels, development of battery storage projects and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and introduction of active transportation and public transit infrastructure may slightly change the scenic character of the County. Future CAP-related renewable energy and electrification improvements would be required to adhere to Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan policies and County zoning and development regulations, and as a result, would be designed complementary to existing land uses. Such regulations include Section 35.82.070(F)(1) of the County’s Land Use and Development Code which requires projects to have a harmony of color, composition, and material; have a harmonious relationship with existing and proposed adjoining development; design a project site in relationship to environmental qualities, open spaces, and topography; and be consistent with additional design standards expressly adopted for a specific local area, community, or zone (County of Santa Barbara 2020). In addition, future CAP-related improvements would be required to be reviewed by the County Planning and Development Department for consistency with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan policies described above and other applicable regulatory land use actions prior to approval. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not significantly impact the visual character of the area or introduce visually compatible structures.

**Threshold of Significance: c**

The 2030 CAP would not involve land use or zoning changes. Rather, the 2030 CAP would promote sustainable infrastructure development and redevelopment that is complimentary to existing development and land uses. As a policy document, the 2030 CAP would not directly result in impacts related to light and glare. However, the 2030 CAP would implement actions that would support the introduction of solar panels and EV charging stations. Solar panels have the potential to result in new sources of glare within the County if not thoughtfully designed and located. The design and location of proposed solar infrastructure would be complimentary to existing development in the County, such as the addition of small-scale rooftop solar panels, in order to reduce potential glare impacts. Pursuant to County Code Section 21-32A, implementation of development within an urban area, inner-rural area, existing developed rural neighborhood, or land zoned industrial that is located in a rural area, as designated by the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, would be required to implement a Lighting Plan. The Lighting Plan illustrates proposed lighting and would be required to reduce/shield light generating sources in agricultural buffers through project design. Lighting Plans are required to be submitted to the Director of the Planning and Development Department for approval (County of Santa Barbara 2019). Furthermore, installation of new solar panels and EV charging stations would be subject to the solar energy system review process provided within County Code Chapter 10, Article XVI and Chapter 10, Article XVII, respectively (County of Santa Barbara 2019). As such, all new solar and EV charging stations would be reviewed by the County for consistency with applicable requirements prior to project approval. Compliance with these and other County Code standards would ensure that implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would not result in glare or night lighting which may affect adjoining areas. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would result in an insignificant impact related to light and glare.

1. Agricultural Resources

Thresholds of Significance

1. Would the project convert prime agricultural land to non‑agricultural use, impair agricultural land productivity (whether prime or non-prime) or conflict with agricultural preserve programs?
2. Would the project result in an effect upon any unique or other farmland of State or Local Importance?

The County’s Agricultural Resources Guidelines (approved by the Board of Supervisors, August 1993) provides examples of types of projects that are considered to have a potentially significant impact. These projects include a division of land which is currently considered viable agricultural land; a Development Plan, Conditional Use Permit, or other discretionary act which would result in the conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural land; and discretionary projects which may result in substantial disruption of surrounding agricultural operations. As a general guideline, the Agricultural Resources Guidelines notes an agricultural parcel of land should be considered viable if it is of sufficient size and capability to support an agricultural enterprise (County of Santa Barbara 2021).

Setting

The County is characterized by both urban and agricultural land. According to the California Department of Conservation’s (DOC’s) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the County is comprised of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, and Urban and Built-Up Land (DOC 2016). There are lands under Williamson Act contract throughout the County (County of Santa Barbara 2017a).

Impact Analysis

**Thresholds of Significance: a-b**

The 2030 CAP does not include land use or zoning changes that would have the potential to convert agricultural land to non-agricultural use. As a policy document, the majority of the 2030 CAP’s proposed actions focus on promoting sustainable infrastructure and redevelopment of existing land uses. Actions in the 2030 CAP related to agriculture promote incentives and partnerships to increase sustainable agricultural practices in the County, rather than encourage development. Action FS-1.1 directs County departments to procure food and supplies from local vendors, giving preference to vendors who use regenerative agricultural practices. Action FS-1.3 requires the County to lead or support efforts in obtaining funding to increase local food cultivation. These actions would not convert agricultural land to nonagricultural use or impair agriculture land productivity. 2030 CAP actions also protect existing viable agricultural land from potential conversion to non-agricultural use. Action LSCF-1.5 reinforces the County’s support of the Williamson Act Program and requires the County to explore the expansion of tax incentives to conserve agricultural land. Action LSCF-1.6 requires the County to develop a Regional Agricultural Plan to identify agricultural areas at risk of development and identify policies, programs, and projects to reduce urban sprawl and avoid land conversion. These actions are designed to support the viability and longevity of existing agricultural lands and operations in the County.

Action FS-2.3 would direct the County Planning and Development Department to update and adopt a utility-scale solar ordinance to expand opportunities for solar development on agricultural lands. The provisions of the updated utility-scale solar ordinance would be developed by the County Planning and Development Department in accordance with existing County regulations regarding the protection of agricultural land. These County regulations include Agricultural Element Policy IA, which prohibits the integrity of agricultural operations to be violated by recreational or other non-compatible uses, and Policy II.D, which discourages conversion of highly productive agricultural lands, whether urban or rural (County of Santa Barbara 2009a). Conformity with these Comprehensive Plan Policies would ensure the updated utility-scale solar ordinance would not result in development that would substantially reduce agricultural productivity. Other 2030 CAP actions, such as Action LSCF-1.5 and Action LSCF-1.7 would substantially minimize introduction of new development on agricultural preserves such that substantial agricultural land would be converted to non-agricultural use. As a result, solar development on agricultural lands would not result in a loss of agricultural land, Important Farmland, or impairment of agricultural productivity.

Future development within or near rural areas of the County would be subject to the provisions of County Code Section 21-32A which requires a 100-foot minimum buffer between agricultural and other commercial, industrial, or residential development. Any development promoted as a result of implementation of 2030 CAP Actions which occur on commercial, industrial, or residential development in an urban area, inner-rural area, existing developed rural neighborhood, or land zoned industrial that is located in a rural area would adhere to established agricultural buffers. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not convert prime agricultural land to non-agricultural use, impair agricultural land productivity, conflict with agricultural preserve programs, or have an effect upon unique or other farmland of State or Local importance.

1. Biological Resources

Thresholds of Significance

**Flora**

1. Would the project result in a loss or disturbance to a unique, rare or threatened plant community?
2. Would the project result in a reduction in the numbers or restriction in the range of any unique, rare or threatened species of plants?
3. Would the project result in a reduction in the extent, diversity, or quality of native vegetation (including brush removal for fire prevention and flood control improvements)?
4. Would the project result in an impact on non‑native vegetation whether naturalized or horticultural if of habitat value?
5. Would the project result in the loss of healthy native specimen trees?
6. Would the project result in introduction of herbicides, pesticides, animal life, human habitation, non‑native plants or other factors that would change or hamper the existing habitat?

**Fauna**

1. Would the project result in a reduction in the numbers, a restriction in the range, or an impact to the critical habitat of any unique, rare, threatened or endangered species of animals?
2. Would the project result in a reduction in the diversity or numbers of animals onsite (including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish or invertebrates?
3. Would the project result in a deterioration of existing fish or wildlife habitat (for foraging, breeding, roosting, nesting, etc.)?
4. Would the project result in introduction of barriers to movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species?
5. Would the project result in introduction of any factors (light, fencing, noise, human presence and/or domestic animals) which could hinder the normal activities of wildlife?

The County’s Environmental Threshold and Guidelines Manualincludes guidelines for the assessment of biological resource impacts. The Manual addresses types of impacts to biological resources and provides habitat-specific impact assessment guidelines for project-specific development (County of Santa Barbara 2019).

Setting

The County contains natural areas that provide habitat supporting a wide variety of plants and animals. The County Code and CLUP incorporate policies to protect biological resources such as plants, trees, wildlife habitats, vegetation communities, wetlands, coastal resources, and species throughout the County (County of Santa Barbara 2019; County of Santa Barbara 2022a). Species including, but not limited to, the federally-listed California Red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), the federally and State listed San Joaquin Kit Fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) and the federally and State listed Least Bell’s Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), have the potential to be present within the County’s open space (United States Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2022).

Impact Analysis

**Thresholds of Significance: a-b, g-j.**

The 2030 CAP would not involve land use or zoning changes, rather it would promote actions that encourage sustainable infrastructure development and redevelopment. Furthermore, the 2030 CAP would introduce actions that would supplement existing Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan policies to protect and improve natural areas in the County, such as the restoration of riparian, native grassland, oak woodland, and wetland areas. Implementation of some 2030 CAP Actions may promote infrastructure development that would result in impacts to protected species through construction activities. For example, the promotion of installation of electric vehicle charging stations, solar infrastructure, and electrification retrofits could indirectly result in the disturbance of nesting habitat for bird and raptor species protected under Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) and under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). However, construction activities for future projects promoted by 2030 CAP Actions would be required to comply with the requirements of the MBTA and Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the CFGC which include obtaining prior authorization by the USFWS before the take of a protected migratory bird species occurs, subject to USFWS requirements, and prohibiting the take, possession, or destruction of nests or eggs. In addition, new development that may result from 2030 CAP Actions would be required to be reviewed for consistency with applicable federal and State policies related to protected species and habitat, including, but not limited to, the federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act. In addition, 2030 CAP Action LSCF-1.9 would result in the planting of 3,000 new trees within the County by 2030. The planting of trees and reforestation of County parks and public rights-of-way could promote additional foraging, breeding, roosting, and/or nesting habitat within the County.

The majority of 2030 CAP Actions promote projects in urbanized areas of the County; however, it is possible 2030 CAP Actions could promote projects near County-designated Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs). Any new development that may be facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions near County-designated ESHAs would be subject to applicable CLUP policies that address the protection of special status flora and fauna species and associated habitat. Policy 9-1 requires projects within a Habitat Overlay designation to show the precise location of habitats potentially affected on all development plans and requires site inspection by a qualified biologist. Policy 9-14 requires projects within proximity to a wetland to not result in a reduction of biological productivity or water quality due to runoff, noise, thermal pollution, or other disturbances. Policy 9-36 requires projects to be sited, designed, and constructed to preserve native vegetation, and prohibits grading and paving activities from adversely affecting root zone aeration and stability of native trees in native plant communities (County of Santa Barbara 2019). The CLUP contains similar policies for 13 distinct ESHAs which any project within the vicinity of an ESHA would be required to follow. Similarly, the County’s Land Use and Development Code Section 35.28.100 applies an ESHA Overlay Zone within the Eastern Goleta Valley Community Plan, the Gaviota Coast Plan, the Goleta Community Plan, the Mission Canyon Community Plan, and the Toro Canyon Plan areas (County of Santa Barbara 2020). Development within these areas is subject to a CLUP issued by the County after the determination is made that the development shall protect the ESHA to the fullest extent feasible and is compliant with the biological resource policies and development standards within the applicable community plan (County of Santa Barbara 2020). Although Action FS-2.3 would direct the County Planning and Development Department to update and adopt a utility-scale solar ordinance to expand opportunities for solar development on agricultural lands, the ordinance would be updated consistent existing County regulations including the provisions of Section 35.28.100. This would minimize the potential for future solar development to substantially impact ESHAs. Overall, a 2030 CAP strategy which would promote a project near an ESHA would not result in substantial impacts to these critical habitats as existing County regulations would minimize such impacts.

Implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would not significantly impact areas of the County considered critical habitat which serves unique, rare, threatened, and endangered species. Furthermore, the 2030 CAP would introduce actions to protect and improve natural areas in the County, such as the planting of 3,000 new trees. The 2030 CAP would promote the improvement of habitat quality for plant and animal species and existing County regulations would minimize the potential for 2030 CAP Actions to result in a reduction of unique, rare, threatened or endangered species of plants or animals; deterioration of existing habitat used for foraging, breeding, roosting, or nesting; or introduction of barriers to wildlife movement. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not have a substantial adverse effect on a plant species, animal species, or habitat, including habitat which serves as a migratory corridor.

**Thresholds of Significance: c-e**

The 2030 CAP would not involve land use or zoning changes but would promote sustainable infrastructure development and redevelopment primarily within urbanized portions of the County. Although Action FS-2.3 would direct the County Planning and Development Department to update and adopt a utility-scale solar ordinance to expand opportunities for solar development on agricultural lands, the development and implementation of an updated utility-scale solar ordinance would not directly result in solar development on rural or agricultural lands where native and/or non-native horticultural vegetation could be present. Further, the utility-scale solar ordinance would be updated by the County Planning and Development Department in compliance with existing County regulations concerning the protection of rural lands. As stated in Section 4.2.2, *Agricultural Resources,* CAP Actions CS-1.5 and CS-1.7 promote the protection of rural lands through policies and incentives which would deter substantial urban sprawl or development on rural lands. Therefore, the extent to which native and non-native vegetation (including native specimen trees) in rural lands would be impacted is limited, as new development would occur in compliance with existing County regulations and 2030 CAP Actions would protect rural land where such vegetation may be present.

Future 2030 CAP-related projects would be required to adhere to County development regulations and Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan policies intended to protect and preserve native vegetation and non-native vegetation of habitat value. County Code Section 35-911 requires implementation of an oak tree management plan and oak tree replacement should any deciduous oak tree removal occur. County standards for an oak tree replacement ratio is 15:1 (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). County Code Chapter 28 Article II prohibits the removal, cutting, mutilation, or injury of street trees except upon the approval of the County Road Commissioner or Director of Parks. Section 28-63 requires the issuance of a permit by the County Department of Transportation to remove or cut trees within a road right-of-way. These County Code policies would minimize potential impacts to trees, particularly in an urbanized environment where 2030 CAP Actions promote infrastructure development and redevelopment. County Code Section 14-9 requires erosion control permits for projects which must include details on revegetation practices and that would be implemented if vegetation would be disturbed. This permit is subject to approval by the County Building Official (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). CLUP Policy 9-36 prohibits grading and paving activities from adversely affecting root zone aeration and stability of native trees in native plant communities (County of Santa Barbara 2019). These policies would minimize adverse impacts to vegetation. In addition, the location and details of future CAP projects would be reviewed for consistency with applicable local, regional, and State regulations related to sensitive habitat prior to approval.

The purpose and intended effect of 2030 CAP is to reduce GHG emissions generated in Santa Barbara to help reduce the effects of climate change, including the restoration of native grassland and oak woodland areas, and development of vegetation management programs. As a result, the 2030 CAP would serve as a benefit to vegetation, and trees in the County and would not have a substantial adverse effect on native vegetation or non-native vegetation of habitat value. In addition, the 2030 CAP would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable policies for preserving biological resources and would not affect the County’s ability to attain goals and policies that protect biological resources. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would result in insignificant impacts associated with the reduction of native vegetation, impact non-native vegetation of habitat value, or result in a loss of healthy native specimen trees.

**Thresholds of Significance: f, k**

As a policy document, the 2030 CAP would not directly introduce light, fencing, noise, human presence, domestic animals, herbicides, or non-native plants. 2030 CAP Actions would generally apply to the urbanized areas of the County with existing human presence. However, Action FS-2.3 would direct the County Planning and Development Department to update and adopt a utility-scale solar ordinance which could apply to areas of the County with a lack of human presence. Action FS-2.3 would not directly result in new solar development in rural areas. Solar development is not conducive to the introduction of domestic animals, fencing, herbicides, non-native plants, or lighting. As discussed in Subsection 4.2.9, *Noise*, construction activities would be required to comply with County Code Chapter 40 which limits construction noise to prohibited hours. Therefore, existing County regulations would require development in rural areas to minimize disturbance associated with human presence. Consequently, the introduction of human disturbance brought about by 2030 CAP Actions would be incremental.

The 2030 CAP would not result in land use or zoning changes which could increase human or domestic animal presence or result in the introduction of herbicides or pesticides in parks, open spaces area, or undeveloped portions of the County. As discussed in Subsection 4.2.1, *Aesthetics/Visual Resources*, glare and light introduced through development promoted by 2030 CAP Actions would be limited through adherence to the County Code Section 21-32A, which requires implementation of a Lighting Plan for projects in rural areas, subject to the approval of the Director of the Planning and Development Department. Projects promoted through 2030 CAP Actions, such as installation of solar and EV charging stations, would be subject to review and approval by the County pursuant to County Code Chapter 10, Article XVI and Chapter 10, Article XVII (County of Santa Barbara 2019) which would minimize impacts concerning light and glare. Projects promoted through 2030 CAP Actions would be reviewed for consistency with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, including the CLUP, and other applicable regulatory standards prior to approval. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would result in insignificant impacts associated with the introduction of herbicides, pesticides, animal life, human habitation, non-native plants, light, fencing, or noise, which would change or hamper existing habitat or hinder normal wildlife activities.

1. Cultural Resources

Thresholds of Significance

1. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any object, building, structure, area, place, record, or manuscript that qualifies as a historical resource as defined in CEQA Section 15064.5?
2. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a prehistoric or historic archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Section 15064.5?
3. Would the project disturb any human remains, including those located outside of formal cemeteries?
4. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in the Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
5. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or
6. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Chapter 8 of the County’s Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual contains guidelines for the identification, significance evaluation, and mitigation of impacts to cultural resources, including archaeological, historic, and tribal cultural resources. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, these guidelines specify that if a resource cannot be avoided, it must be evaluated for importance under specific CEQA criteria (County of Santa Barbara 2021).

Setting

The County contains numerous historical resources, including El Presidio de Santa Barbara, Mission Santa Barbara, and various buildings that display Spanish-style architecture, among other resources (County of Santa Barbara 2010). According to the County’s Conservation Element, there are several areas throughout the County which contain numerous archaeological resources. The South Coast region of the County is considered one of the most important archaeological regions in California due to Chumash occupation at the time of Spanish contact (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Impact Analysis

**Threshold of Significance: a**

The 2030 CAP would not involve land use or zoning changes but would promote actions to redevelop infrastructure complementary to existing development. 2030 CAP Actions would promote minor alterations to existing development which would not substantially adversely change existing development within the County. New development resulting from implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would be required to comply with County policies related to the preservation of historic resources, including County Code Section 18A-5 which imposes conditions on historical landmarks, that are approved by the Historical Landmarks Advisory Commission. Such conditions include, but are not limited to, prohibition of demolition, removal or destruction; prohibition of alterations, repairs, additions, or changes unless approved by the Historical Landmarks Advisory Commission; and prohibition of placement, alteration, or removal buildings or structures exposed to public view within a specified distance (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). In compliance with California Public Resources Code 5024.5(f), if a project would potentially interfere with a historical resource, measures to eliminate or mitigate adverse effects would be adopted, pursuant to recommendations from the State Historic Preservation Officer. 2030 CAP-related projects would be reviewed for compliance with applicable local, regional, and State regulations regarding cultural resources and in addition to compliance with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan to avoid adverse impacts related to historic resources. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any object, building, structure, area, place, record, or manuscript that qualifies as a historical resource, and would result in an insignificant impact related to historical resources.

**Thresholds of Significance: b, d**

2030 CAP Actions would promote minor alterations to existing development which would not substantially adversely affect known archaeologically sensitive locations. New development that could result from 2030 CAP Actions, such as installation of EV charging stations and bicycle paths, would involve small-scale construction that may expose previously undiscovered archaeological resources which could be of Native American origin during ground disturbing activities. Chapter 8 of the County’s Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual requires the likelihood of buried archaeological deposits be considered, and Phase I and Phase II archaeological studies are performed, if necessary. As part of standard County condition of approval CulRes-09, all future development resulting from implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would require construction workers to stop or redirect work immediately in the event archaeological resources are encountered during grading, construction, or other construction related activities. Construction contractors are required to immediately contact the County and retain a County-qualified archaeologist and Native American representative to evaluate the significance of the find in compliance with the County’s Standard Conditions CulRes-01, -05, -07, -08, -09, and/or -10 of the County Archaeological Guidelines, as necessary. If a discovery proves to be potentially significant and avoidance of the resource is not feasible, the resource would be subject to a Phase III mitigation program consistent with the County Archaeological Guidelines. The mitigation program may include, but shall not be limited to, data recovery and curation of non-burial related artifacts within a qualified institution within Santa Barbara County (such as the University of California, Santa Barbara’s Department of Anthropology). Consistent with these requirements, archeological resources would be protected prior to and/or upon discovery and, thus, potential impacts would be reduced to a minimal level. With implementation of the County’s Standard Conditions typical for a construction project, future development associated with 2030 CAP Actions would not result in a significant impact to archaeological and tribal cultural resources.

**Threshold of Significance: c**

There is a possibility of encountering unknown buried human remains/burial sites where new development that could result from 2030 CAP Actions would require ground disturbing activities, particularly in native soils/previously undisturbed areas. CAP-related projects would be reviewed for compliance with applicable local, regional, and State regulations regarding cultural resources and human remains to avoid impacts related to unknown human interments. In addition, CAP projects would be required to comply with State coroner requirements related to burial findings, including assessment and mitigation incorporation once project details and locations are known. Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, if human remains are encountered, the County Coroner must be notified immediately, and no further disturbance would occur until the County Coroner determines their origin and disposition pursuant to California Public Resource Code Section 5097.98. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the County Coroner would notify the NAHC, which would determine and notify a most likely descendant (MLD). The MLD has 48 hours from being granted site access to make recommendations for the disposition of the remains. If the MLD does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the landowner shall reinter the remains in a location that would not be affected by future ground-disturbing activities. Projects promoted by 2030 CAP Actions would comply with the provisions set forth pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5. Although it is possible ground-disturbing activities from future development associated with 2030 CAP Actions could disturb human remains, adherence to California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 would ensure human remains, including those located outside of formal cemeteries, are not disturbed. Therefore, the CAP would result in an insignificant impact related to human remains.

1. Fire Protection

Thresholds of Significance

1. Would the project result in introduction of development into an existing high fire hazard area orexposure of people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?
2. Would the project result in project-caused high fire hazard?
3. Would the project result in introduction of development into an area without adequate water pressure, fire hydrants or adequate access for fire fighting?
4. Would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?
5. Would the project result in introduction of development that will substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan, emergency evacuation plan, or fire prevention techniques such as controlled burns or backfiring in high fire hazard areas?
6. Would the project result in development of structures beyond safe Fire Dept. response time?

Setting

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the County contains lands designated as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones in both State Responsibility Areas and Local Responsibility Areas. These fire hazard severity zones occur primarily in central Santa Barbara, extending east to west from the Los Padres National Forest to the coastline (CAL FIRE 2022).

Impact Analysis

**Thresholds of Significance: a-c**

Although portions of Santa Barbara Country are at risk of wildfires, the 2030 CAP is a policy-level document that does not propose new residential, commercial, or industrial development that would be at substantial risk from wildfire, nor would the 2030 CAP grant entitlements for development that would have the potential to directly cause wildfire. Development such as EV charging stations, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, installation of condensate drains, and existing building retrofits would occur in urbanized areas that already provide existing infrastructure, such as water pressure and fire hydrants, to allow for use for firefighting. CAP Action FS-2.3 requires the County to update and adopt the utility-scale solar ordinance to expand opportunities for solar development on agricultural lands. Implementation of Action FS-2.3 would not directly result in utility-scale solar development. Potential utility-scale solar projects would be subject to Seismic Safety & Safety Element Implementation Measure 8 which enforces development standards set forth by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department, Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District, and Montecito Fire Protection District, each of which services rural and urbanized areas within and/or surrounded by land designated as a fire hazard severity zone (CAL FIRE 2022; County of Santa Barbara 2015). Development standards are designed to reduce the risk of wildfire in rural and urbanized areas, including areas designated as fire hazard severity zones. Development standards include implementation of defensible space for new structures subject to the approval of the respective Fire Marshal, implementation of a vegetation management plan, required installation of fire alarm and sprinkler systems subject the approval of the respective Fire Marshal, and implementation and approval of stored water systems for fire protection (Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District 2018; Montecito Fire Protection District 2019; Santa Barbara County Fire Department 2022). These development standards minimize the risk of wildfire by limiting the potential for vegetation to ignite nearby structures and implementing safeguards for structures in the event a fire occurs.

Fire risk for potential new CAP-related development would also be minimized through compliance with County Code Chapter 15 which adopts the 2019 California Fire Code (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). The 2019 California Fire Code establishes minimum requirements to safeguard public health, safety, and general welfare from fire hazards. Pursuant to the County’s Seismic Safety & Safety Element, development would be required to adhere to the California Fire Code’s standards for water quantity, automatic detection, and early warning devices (County of Santa Barbara 2015).Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not expose people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, cause a high fire hazard, or introduce development into an area without adequate firefighting equipment and access.

**Threshold of Significance: d**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions that are consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. The 2030 CAP does not include land use or zoning changes; therefore, no new habitable development would occur that would be subject to wildfire risk, nor does it grant entitlements for development with the potential to directly cause wildfire. Implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would not directly result in increases in population. Similarly, the 2030 CAP would not directly result in an increase in employment, and any new employment opportunities that may result indirectly from implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would target existing residents and not induce population growth. As such, the CAP would not require the construction of new or physically altered governmental facilities to serve additional population, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts.

Implementation of 2030 CAP Actions may result in electrification retrofits, the construction of which could temporarily increase fire risk. However, new construction in the County would be subject to the California Fire Code, which includes safety measures to minimize risk of fire, including Section 603 which requires electrical equipment and wiring to be installed, used, and maintained in accordance with the National Electrical Code. Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations sets forth the minimum development standards for emergency access, fuel modification, setback, signage, and water supply, which help prevent loss of structures or life by reducing wildfire hazards. California Public Resources Code Section 4291 requires maintenance of a minimum 100 feet of vegetation management around all buildings. Pursuant to County Code Chapter 15, combustible materials are required to be kept greater than 10 feet from ground-mounted solar panel systems, and up to 30 feet if the ground-mounted solar system is greater than 1,500 square feet (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). A minimum defensible space of 30 feet is required around communication towers, non-fire-resistive water tanks, water supply pumps, pump houses, and generators (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). Installation and maintenance of infrastructure promoted by 2030 CAP Actions would be implemented in accordance with these standards which would minimize fire risk. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not result in a significant impact related to the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk or may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.

**Thresholds of Significance: e-f**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document which would not increase population or density in a manner that would impair an adopted emergency plan or impact a Fire Department’s ability to adequately respond to emergencies associated with developed structures. While the implementation of some 2030 CAP Actions may cause intermittent and temporary traffic interference due to construction, existing emergency access and other applicable County requirements would minimize impacts to emergency response. Temporary construction barricades or other obstructions that could impede emergency access on State highway systems/routes would be subject to the standards set forth in the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Manual) (Caltrans 2021). The Manual requires the creation and approval of temporary traffic control plans to be used for facilitating road users through a work zone (Caltrans 2021). Per the County’s Land Use and Development Code, utility-scale-solar photovoltaic facilities would be required to implement a project-specific traffic control plan which would include traffic control measures to avoid impacts to vehicles and pedestrians (County of Santa Barbara 2020). Pursuant to County Code Section 28-31 and Section 28-33 construction activities which have been granted a permit occurring on County roads would be required to maintain safe crossing for two lanes of vehicle traffic at all road intersections and is required to take measures to maintain traffic conditions, subject to the County Road Commissioner (County of Santa Barbara 2022a).

Implementation of the 2030 CAP would not interfere with the County’s Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan which provide direction for traffic control and management in emergency situations as the 2030 CAP would not promote actions which would result in increased population density or land use designation changes which could change traffic patterns (County of Santa Barbara 2017b). As part of standard procedures, plans for projects promoted by 2030 CAP Actions would be submitted to the County for review and approval to ensure that all new development has adequate emergency access and escape routes in compliance with existing County and Santa Barbara County Fire Department regulations (Santa Barbara County Fire Department 2022). Implementation of the 2030 CAP would not introduce actions which would preclude implementation of or alter established emergency response and evacuation policies or procedures. In addition, 2030 CAP Measures and Actions would help to increase community resiliency and reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change in Santa Barbara County, thereby reducing the burden on local public services related to such climate impacts and disasters. For example, 2030 CAP Action BE-1.8 promotes the development and adoption of building and land use standards that encourages solar and battery storage, reduces heat island effects, and enhances wildfire resilience. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not introduce development that would substantially impair adopted emergency response plans or structures beyond safe Fire Department response time. The 2030 CAP would not conflict with the County’s adopted thresholds of significance and impacts would be insignificant.

1. Geologic Processes

Thresholds of Significance

1. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving exposure to or production of unstable earth conditions such as landslides, earthquakes, liquefaction, soil creep, mudslides, ground failure (including expansive, compressible, collapsible soils), or similar hazards?
2. Would the project result in disruption, displacement, compaction or overcovering of the soil by cuts, fills or extensive grading?
3. Would the project result in exposure to or production of permanent changes in topography, such as bluff retreat or sea level rise?
4. Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?
5. Would the project result in any increase in wind or water erosion of soils, either on or off the site?
6. Would the project result in changes in deposition or erosion of beach sands or dunes, or changes in siltation, deposition or erosion which may modify the channel of a river, or stream, or the bed of the ocean, or any bay, inlet or lake?
7. Would the project result in the placement of septic disposal systems in impermeable soils with severe constraints to disposal of liquid effluent?
8. Would the project result in extraction of mineral or ore?
9. Would the project result in excessive grading on slopes of over 20%?
10. Would the project result in sand or gravel removal or loss of topsoil?
11. Would the project result in vibrations, from short-term construction or long-term operation, which may affect adjoining areas?
12. Would the project result in excessive spoils, tailings or over-burden?

Setting

The County of Santa Barbara is susceptible to seismic activity. Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zones are regulatory zones compiled by the California Geological Survey which designate the surface traces of active faults in California (DOC 2019). Under the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, an active fault is defined as a fault that has ruptured in the past 11,000 years (DOC 2019). There is one Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zone, the Los Alamos Fault, within the County, located adjacent to U.S. Route 101 approximately 5.25 miles northwest of Los Olivos, extending approximately 2.85 miles northwest and ending at the intersection of Alisos Canyon Road and U.S. Route 101 (DOC 2021)

According to the County’s Seismic Safety & Safety Element, low to moderate liquefaction potential exists throughout the County (County of Santa Barbara 2015). The areas considered to be most susceptible to liquefaction include low coastal areas with high groundwater near Carpinteria, the valleys along the Santa Ynez River, and along the Santa Maria River near Santa Maria and Guadalupe (County of Santa Barbara 2015). In addition, the County’s mountainous and hilly topography creates concern for landslides and slope stability (County of Santa Barbara 2015).

Impact Analysis

**Threshold of Significance: a**

Earthquake faults, such the Los Alamos Fault, have the potential to produce strong seismic groundshaking. The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing climate actions and supporting actions to reduce GHG emissions and is consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan and other regional regulations. The 2030 CAP does not include land use or zoning changes, and new development that may be facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions would not exacerbate fault rupture or seismic groundshaking conditions beyond what is already present within the region.

The County has adopted the California Building Code (CBC), which includes measures such as requiring site-specific geotechnical investigations and incorporating site specific recommendations regarding suitability and foundation design for new development projects (County Code Section 10-8.1). New development that may be facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions would be required to comply with CBC standards regulating procedures for soil preparation, including, but not limited to: excavation, grading and earthwork, fills and embankments, expansive soils, foundation investigations, liquefaction potential, and soil strength loss. Compliance with CBC requirements would ensure current engineering practices and standards are followed, reducing the potential to directly or indirectly cause the risk, loss, injury, or death involving exposure to or production of unstable earth conditions. Incorporation of required CBC soil treatment programs (replacement, grouting, compaction, drainage control, etc.) in future grading and construction plans would ensure site-specific soil conditions achieve accepted safety standards relative to soil stability. In addition, the 2030 CAP would not result in the construction of new habitable development that could expose people to substantial adverse geologic effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction, or landslides. Therefore, 2030 CAP would not directly or indirectly cause significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving exposure to, or production of, unstable earth conditions.

**Thresholds of Significance: b, e-f, i-j.**

The 2030 CAP would not involve land use or zoning changes but would promote sustainable actions designed to redevelop infrastructure which generally would not require excessive grading on slopes greater than 20 percent grade. 2030 CAP Actions would not result in the alteration of beach sands or dunes. As a policy document, the 2030 CAP would not directly require ground disturbing activities. However, implementation of 2030 CAP Actions may result in construction activities that could cause soil erosion.

2030 CAP-related projects and actions would be required to be reviewed for consistency with Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan policies and other local and State geology and soils regulations prior to final siting and construction. Construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land are subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit, which requires the development of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) developed by a certified Qualified SWPPP Developer. The SWPPP includes project-specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion, sediment release, and otherwise reduce the potential for discharge of pollutants from construction into stormwater. Additionally, pursuant to County Code Chapter 14, a grading plan is required to be prepared by or under the direction of a registered civil engineer, licensed architect, licensed surveyor, registered designer or landscape architect, unless waived by the County Building Official. The grading plan would detail drainage, erosion, and sediment control measures that would be implemented as required by County Code Section 14-29 (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). Construction activities, including those disturbing under an acre of land, would also be required to comply with California Building Code Chapter 70 standards, which are designed to ensure implementation of appropriate measures during grading and construction to control erosion and storm water pollution. Consequently, the 2030 CAP would not result in the disruption, displacement, compaction or overcovering of soil by cuts, fills or extensive grading; would not increase wind or water erosion of soils; would not change the deposition or erosion of beach sands or dunes; would not result in significant excessive grading on slopes over 20 percent; and would not significantly remove sand, gravel, or topsoil.

**Threshold of Significance: c**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document that includes actions developed to achieve the County’s GHG emissions reductions goals. Actions in the 2030 CAP are designed to combat climate change and its effects, including sea level rise. Future development that may be facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions located near a bluff that could be affected by sea level rise would be subject to CLUP Policies 3-4 through 3-8, which require setbacks from bluff edges for a minimum of a 75-year sea level rise projection, maintenance of drought-tolerant vegetation for erosion control, project design that would not contribute to erosion of a bluff face or stability of a bluff, and prohibition of development on the bluff face (County of Santa Barbara 2019). Therefore, consistency with existing regulatory requirements would ensure future development that may be facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions would not result in exposure to, or production of, permanent changes in topography such as bluff retreat or sea level rise.

**Threshold of Significance: d**

The 2030 CAP would not involve land use or zoning changes that would encourage new development but would instead include Actions designed to redevelop infrastructure in a manner that would reduce GHG emissions and impacts related to climate change. As a policy document, the 2030 CAP would not directly result in impacts related to paleontological resources or unique geologic features. New development facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions which would involve construction activities, such as building energy-efficiency, renewable energy retrofits, active transportation and public transit infrastructure, and EV charging infrastructure, would primarily involve work within previously developed and disturbed areas where the likelihood of encountering intact and previously undiscovered paleontological resources would be minimal. Nonetheless, there is a possibility that small-scale construction projects may expose paleontological resources during ground disturbing activities. To reduce such risks, 2030 CAP-related project would be reviewed for consistency with State geotechnical and paleontological regulations prior to final siting and construction. New development facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions would be located and designed to reduce ground disturbance to the maximum extent possible, consistent with County Code Section 14-25 which limits excessive excavations and cut slopes greater than a slope of 1.5 units horizontal to one unit vertical and CLUP Policy 3-13 which requires development plans minimize cut and fill operations and states plans requiring excessive cut and fill may be denied if it is determined development could be carried out with less alteration of natural terrain (County of Santa Barbara 2022a; County of Santa Barbara 2019). Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not result in a significant impact directly or indirectly to paleontological resources, sites, or unique geologic features.

**Thresholds of Significance: g-h, l**

The 2030 CAP does not include actions which would result in development of new habitable structures or septic disposal systems, or mining activities that would result in the extraction of mineral ore or lead to excessive spoils, tailings, or over-burden. Therefore, the project would not result in the placement of septic disposal systems in impermeable soils, extraction of mineral or ore, or excessive spoils, tailings, or over-burden. The 2030 CAP would not conflict with the County’s adopted thresholds of significance and there would be no impact.

**Threshold of Significance: k**

While people have varying sensitivities to vibrations at different frequencies, in general, they are most sensitive to low-frequency vibration. Vibration in buildings, such as from nearby construction activities, may cause windows, items on shelves, and pictures on walls to rattle. Vibration of building components can also take the form of an audible low-frequency rumbling noise, referred to as groundborne noise (Caltrans 2020). Although groundborne vibration is sometimes noticeable in outdoor environments, it is almost never annoying to people who are outdoors. The primary concern from vibration is that it can be intrusive and annoying to building occupants and vibration-sensitive land uses.

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions which assist the County in meeting its GHG emission reduction targets which is consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. Some 2030 CAP Actions would support small scale construction projects, such as EV charging stations and building energy efficiency retrofits that may result in a temporary and intermittent increase in groundborne vibration during construction activities. However, projects involving new construction would be reviewed by the County Planning and Development Department for consistency with the County Land Use and Development Code which prohibits the creation of objectionable vibration (County of Santa Barbara 2020). To reduce construction noise and vibration, the County of Santa Barbara Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual indicates construction within 1,600 feet of sensitive receptors shall be limited to weekdays between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm (County of Santa Barbara 2021). As discussed in Section 4.2.9, *Noise*, construction activities would be required to comply with County Code Chapter 40, which limits the hours of construction. Vibrations occurring from any future construction work that would affect adjoining areas would be short-term and would occur during permitted hours. Furthermore, 2030 CAP-related project would not include operational sources of groundborne vibration. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not result in vibrations which may affect adjoining areas or otherwise result in significant impacts associated with groundborne vibration.

1. Hazardous Materials/Risk of Upset

Thresholds of Significance

1. In the known history of this project, have there been any past uses, storage or discharge of hazardous materials (e.g., fuel or oil stored in underground tanks, pesticides, solvents or other chemicals)?
2. Would the project result in the use, storage or distribution of hazardous or toxic materials?
3. Would the project result in a risk of an explosion or the release of hazardous substances (e.g., oil, gas, biocides, bacteria, pesticides, chemicals or radiation) in the event of an accident or upset conditions?
4. Would the project result in possible interference with an emergency response plan or an emergency evacuation plan?
5. Would the project result the creation of a potential public health hazard?
6. Would the project result in public safety hazards (e.g., due to development near chemical or industrial activity, producing oil wells, toxic disposal sites, etc.)?
7. Would the project result in exposure to hazards from oil or gas pipelines or oil well facilities?
8. Would the project result in the contamination of a public water supply?

Setting

The County contains numerous site-specific hazardous materials sites, which are generally commercial and industrial land uses (State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB] 2022). Additionally, oil and gas wells and hazardous/flammable material pipelines span portions the County (California Geologic Energy Management Division [CalGEM] 2022; Southern California Gas Company 2022).

Impact Analysis

**Threshold of Significance: a**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan that are designed to reduce GHG emissions. The 2030 CAP does not include site-specific proposals and development, however, 2030 CAP Actions could result in implementation of projects that could be located on a hazardous materials site. However, 2030 CAP-related projects would be required to comply with Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan policies and other local, State and federal regulations related to hazardous materials sites. In Santa Barbara County, hazardous materials sites are monitored by the County’s Site Mitigation Unit which provides regulatory oversight and corrective actions at properties where hazardous substance releases have occurred. The Site Mitigation Unit oversees cases including the releases of crude oil, toxic heavy metals, oilfield restoration, properties contaminated by former industrial/commercial uses, and sites with historically contaminated fill. Leaking Underground Fuel/Storage Tanks are regulated and remediated by the County’s Environmental Health and Safety department (County of Santa Barbara 2022b). 2030 CAP-related projects that would occur on a hazardous materials site would be subject to the regulations and remedial actions set forth by the County’s Site Mitigation Unit and Environmental Health and Safety department. Furthermore, the 2030 CAP would not directly result in increases in population. Similarly, the 2030 CAP would not directly result in an increase in employment, and any new employment opportunities that may result indirectly from implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would target existing residents and not induce new residences or new commercial properties that have the potential to expose persons or workers to hazardous materials due to their respective siting. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not result in significant impacts due to being located on a site with past uses, storage, or discharge of hazardous materials.

**Thresholds of Significance: b-c, e**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions designed to achieve the County’s GHG emissions reductions goals. The 2030 CAP does not involve identified site-specific development and, for the most part, CAP 2030 Actions would not promote development that would involve the routine use of hazardous materials. Implementation of some 2030 CAP Actions, such as energy efficiency retrofits, installation of EV charging stations, and implementation of active transportation projects, would require construction activities. Construction would involve the temporary use of hazardous materials such as vehicle fuels and fluids that could be released should an accidental leak or spill occur. However, these types of materials are not considered acutely hazardous, and storage, handling, and disposal of these materials are required to comply with applicable regulations from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and Occupational Safety & Health Administration. In addition, standard construction BMPs for the use and handling of such materials would avoid or reduce the potential for such conditions to occur. Any transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during construction would be carried out in accordance with applicable local, State, and federal regulations regarding the handling of potentially hazardous materials. These regulations include Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Hazardous Material Transportation Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the California Hazardous Materials Management Act, and California Code of Regulations Title 22, Division 4.5. Risk of spills would cease after construction is completed. Therefore, construction activities associated with 2030 CAP-related projects would not be anticipated to create upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials, and operation of the majority of 2030 CAP-related projects would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during operation.

2030 CAP Actions BE-1.8, BE-1.9, BE-1.10, FS-2.3, WW-1.3, and MO-1.4 emphasize increasing local renewable energy production and use, and battery energy storage within the County by encouraging the deployment of renewable energy systems such as local solar and battery storage systems. Hazardous materials used in a solar panel and battery energy storage systems would generally consist of lithium-ion batteries. Lithium-ion technology is a common battery storage medium and is considered one of the safest and most efficient methods of energy storage on the market. Lithium-ion batteries do not represent a risk to off-site receptors, and safety standards applicable to energy storage systems and safety certifications tests established by independent bodies, such as the National Fire Protection Association, would prevent any reasonably possibility of a substantial adverse environmental effect related to hazardous material exposure from batteries. However, in the unlikely event of a fire, there is a risk of the accidental release of hazardous materials associated with solar panels and battery energy storage systems. Any future proposed battery energy storage facilities or solar development would be subject to the development standards within the County’s Hazardous Waste Element, including creation of a risk management and prevention plan which details risk reduction measures for the construction of a facility (County of Santa Barbara 2009b). The County would review the plan for appropriate locations, safety measures, and consistency with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, County Code, and applicable local, State, and federal regulations. As such, the 2030 CAP would not result in a significant impact due to the use, storage, or distribution of hazardous materials; risk of explosion; or creation of a potential public health hazard.

**Threshold of Significance: d**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document intended to reduce GHG emissions. The 2030 CAP does not involve site-specific development, nor would 2030 CAP Actions interfere with adopted emergency plans. Implementation of some 2030 CAP Actions, such as TR-2.6 which would implement Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategies projects, could involve construction within the local right-of-way. Construction activities associated with such projects have the potential to impact traffic due to lane closures and vehicle speeds on affected roadways. However, as discussed in Subsection 4.2.5, *Fire Protection*, these impacts would be temporary and access to roadways would be maintained throughout project construction in accordance with applicable regulations such as the Caltrans Manual and County Code Section 28-31 and Section 28-33 which require the implementation of traffic control plans on State highways and maintenance of traffic conditions subject to the County Road Commissioner, respectively (Caltrans 2021; County of Santa Barbara 2022a). Implementation of the 2030 CAP would not interfere with the County’s Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan which provide direction for traffic control and management in emergency situations as the 2030 CAP would not promote actions which would result in increased population density or land use designation changes which could change traffic patterns (County of Santa Barbara 2017b). As part of standard procedures, plans for 2030 CAP-related projects would be submitted to the County for review and approval to ensure that all new development has adequate emergency access and escape routes in compliance with existing County and Santa Barbara County Fire Department regulations (Santa Barbara County Fire Department 2022). Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not result in a significant impact due to interference with an emergency response or an emergency evacuation plan.

**Thresholds of Significance: f-g**

The 2030 CAP is a policy-level document that does not propose new residential, commercial, or industrial development that would expose people to hazards from oil or gas pipelines or oil well facilities. The 2030 CAP contains actions consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan that are designed to reduce GHG emissions. 2030 CAP Actions would not promote projects which would be associated with the use of oil and gas. Potential 2030 CAP-related projects, such as installation of EV charging stations and building retrofits, would not introduce any adverse conditions which could increase the chance of exposure to hazards associated with oil and gas pipelines or well facilities. If a 2030 CAP-related project would be located near petroleum facilities, existing regulatory standards would minimize the potential to create a public safety hazard. County Code Chapter 25 requires petroleum facilities and operations not to exceed set limits for hazardous vapor release. Drilling, well servicing, and piping are required to be maintained in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Storage of materials associated with well facilities are required to prevent the escape of fluid and be of sufficient size to contain 1.5 times the capacity of the largest tank (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). Petroleum facilities are regulated such that hazardous material release would be minimized. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would result in insignificant impacts related to the creation of public safety hazards or exposure to hazards from oil or gas pipelines or oil well facilities.

**Threshold of Significance: h**

2030 CAP-related projects could result in the minor use of hazardous materials, primarily due to fuel use during construction. Any use of hazardous materials would be carried out in compliance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations. As discussed in Subsection 4.2.6, *Geologic Processes*, project-specific BMPs would be implemented into future construction to ensure erosion is minimized, which would minimize the risk of contaminated soil entering a water supply. Furthermore, projects located on hazardous sites would be developed in compliance with the County’s Site Mitigation Unit and/or Environmental Health and Safety protocols. With adherence to applicable regulatory standards, the 2030 CAP would result in an insignificant impact to the contamination of a public water supply.

1. Land Use

Thresholds of Significance

1. Would the project result in structures and/or land use incompatible with existing land use?
2. Would the project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?
3. Would the project result in the induction of substantial unplanned population growth or concentration of population?
4. Would the project result in the extension of sewer trunk lines or access roads with capacity to serve new development beyond this proposed project?
5. Would the project result in loss of existing affordable dwellings through demolition, conversion or removal?
6. Would the project result in displacement of substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?
7. Would the project result in displacement of substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?
8. Would the project result in the loss of a substantial amount of open space?
9. Would the project result in an economic or social effect that would result in a physical change? (i.e. Closure of a freeway ramp results in isolation of an area, businesses located in the vicinity close, neighborhood degenerates, and buildings deteriorate. Or, if construction of new freeway divides an existing community, the construction would be the physical change, but the economic/social effect on the community would be the basis for determining that the physical change would be significant.)
10. Would the project result in conflicts with adopted airport safety zones?

Setting

The County is comprised of both urban and rural land uses. Rural land uses, such as rangeland, agricultural land, and open space, are generally located outlying of associated City limits. The 2022 population of Santa Barbara County is estimated to be approximately 445,164, with approximately 139,956 persons living in unincorporated areas (California Department of Finance [DOF] 2022).

Impact Analysis

**Thresholds of Significance: a-j**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan that are designed to reduce GHG emissions. The 2030 CAP would not involve land use or zoning changes that would divide an established community but would promote actions designed to promote Comprehensive Plan policies. 2030 CAP Measure TR-5.5 promotes prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian programmed projects implemented in the Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategies. Such Measures would be consistent with the County’s Circulation Element goal to develop programs and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation (County of Santa Barbara 2014). Furthermore, the increase of alternative transportation would increase connectivity within the County.

Action BE-1.1 includes the adoption and enforcement of new building and major remodel electrification ordinance to require all-electric commercial and residential buildings. Action BE-1.4 proposes the development and adoption of an ordinance that establishes building performance standards for existing large buildings and facilities to reduce their carbon emissions over time. Action TR-3.2 includes development of an ordinance to phase out light duty gasoline and diesel-powered off road equipment by 2025, leading to a ban in 2035. Action WW-1.1 would consider an ordinance for installation of greywater systems for new construction of commercial and multifamily buildings. In order to implement these Actions, the County Code, Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, and other applicable documents may need to be amended to reflect new or modified requirements. However, where modifications of existing policies are needed, such as updates to policies related to energy, solid waste, and transportation, the 2030 CAP would result in greater avoidance or reduction of environmental effects.

Implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would not directly result in increases in population. Similarly, the 2030 CAP would not directly result in an increase in employment, and new employment opportunities that may result indirectly from implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would target existing residents and not induce population growth. 2030 CAP Actions do not include residential or commercial development. Implementation of the 2030 CAP would not displace people or housing, but rather encourage GHG reduction actions in existing and future development. Implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would generally apply to the urbanized areas of the County; however, it is possible 2030 CAP Actions could promote solar development in rural areas. Implementation of future solar development promoted by the 2030 CAP in rural areas would occur in compliance with existing County regulations regarding the preservation of open space. As a result, the 2030 CAP would not result in the loss of substantial open space. New development that may be facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions that would occur within an adopted airport safety zone would adhere to the provisions of the airport safety zone provided in the applicable Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Specific projects that may affect navigable airspace would be subject to Federal Aviation Administration review, pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 77.5, 77.7, and 77.9, ensuring incompatible uses or structures would not be constructed. The 2030 CAP would not introduce incompatible structures, conflict with applicable land use plans, introduce substantial population, extend sewer trunk lines or access roads with capacity to serve new development, result in the loss of existing affordable housing, displace people or housing, result in the loss of substantial open space, result in an economic change or social effect that would result in a physical change, or conflict with adopted airport safety zones. These impacts would be insignificant.

1. Noise

Thresholds of Significance

a. Would the project result in long-term exposure of people to noise levels exceeding County thresholds (e.g. locating noise sensitive uses next to an airport.)?

b. Would the project result in short-term exposure of people to noise levels exceeding County thresholds?

c. Would the project result in project-generated substantial increase in the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas (either day or night)?

The County’s *Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual* establishes an interior noise level of 45 decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA) for all residential uses, consistent with State noise insulation standards (California Code of Regulations Title 24 Part 11). The manual also establishes a 65 dBA threshold of significance for exterior noise levels. In addition, the manual states that noise from grading and construction activity proposed within 1,600 feet of sensitive receptors would generally result in a potentially significant impact, and to mitigate this impact, construction within 1,600 feet of sensitive receptors shall be limited to weekdays between the hours of 8 AM to 5 PM only.

Setting

Noise is unwanted sound that disturbs human activity. Environmental noise levels typically fluctuate over time, and different types of noise descriptors are used to account for this variability. Noise level measurements include intensity, frequency, and duration, as well as time of occurrence. Noise level (or volume) is generally measured in decibels using the A-weighted sound pressure level. Because of the way the human ear works, a sound must be about 10 dBA greater than the reference sound to be judged as twice as loud. In general, a 3 dBA change in community noise levels is noticeable, while 1-2 dBA changes generally are not perceived. Quiet suburban areas typically have noise levels in the range of 40-50 dBA, while arterial streets are in the 50-60+ dBA range. Normal conversational levels are in the 60-65 dBA range, and ambient noise levels greater than 65 dBA can interrupt conversations.

Noise levels typically attenuate (or drop off) at a rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance from point sources (such as construction equipment). Noise from lightly traveled roads typically attenuates at a rate of about 4.5 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise from heavily traveled roads typically attenuates at about 3 dBA per doubling of distance, while noise from a point source typically attenuates at about 6 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise levels may also be reduced by the introduction of intervening structures. For example, a single row of buildings between the receptor and the noise source reduces the noise level by about 5 dBA, while a solid wall or berm that breaks the line-of-sight reduces noise levels by 5 to 10 dBA.

The County’s Noise Element identifies transportation facilities as the dominant source of noise within the County (County of Santa Barbara 2009c). In addition, airport operations and railroad operations contribute to noise within the County; however, these sources of noise are predictable and intermittent (County of Santa Barbara 2009c).

Impact Analysis

**Thresholds of Significance: a, c**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan that are designed to reduce GHG emissions. Some 2030 CAP Actions would support small scale construction projects that could result in temporary noise. These include, but are not limited to, Action MO-1.4 which expands the use of renewable energy at County facilities, Action TR-2.2 which implements Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategies projects, Action TR-2.7 which would convert County parking facilities to support commuter parking and electric bike sharing, and Action BE-1.8 which would develop building standards that would increase solar and battery storage requirements. However, 2030 CAP-related projects would be reviewed for consistency with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, and construction activities would be required to comply with the provisions in County Code Chapter 40 which limits hours of construction. Furthermore, 2030 CAP Actions would not promote projects that would result in substantial operational noise. Rather, the 2030 CAP provides GHG-reduction opportunities that affect the transportation sector and sources of associated transportation related noise. For example, 2030 CAP Actions TR-1.3 – TR-1.7 would encourage the adoption of EVs, which are quieter than gas-powered alternatives. TR-1.2 and TR-2.9 and promote shared alternative transportation and TR-2.3 prioritizes bike and pedestrian improvements to increase active transportation and transit ridership. These Actions would result in a decrease of VMT and traffic-related noise. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not result in significant impacts due to long-term exposure of people to noise levels exceeding County thresholds or project-generated substantial increase in ambient noise levels.

**Threshold of Significance: b**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan that are designed to reduce GHG emissions. 2030 CAP Actions would support small scale construction projects that could result in temporary and intermittent noise. Construction activities would be required to comply with the provisions of County Code Section 28-48 which requires measures are implemented to reduce noise to the fullest extent practicable. In addition, pursuant to County Code Chapter 40, construction noise would not be permitted to occur between the hours of 10:00 P.M. and 7:00 A.M. Sunday through Thursday or between the hours of 12:00 A.M. and 7:00 A.M. Friday through Saturday (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). County Code 14-22 limits grading work between the hours of 7:00AM and 7:00PM (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). Pursuant to the County’s Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual, construction within 1,600 feet of a sensitive receptor would be limited to weekdays between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Construction would be conducted in compliance with project-specific measures to reduce noise to the fullest extent practicable. Therefore, construction activities associated with new development that may be facilitated 2030 CAP Actions would result in insignificant impacts regarding short-term exposure to noise levels.

1. Public Facilities

Thresholds of Significance

a. Would the project require or result in a need for new or altered police protection and/or health care services?

b. Would the project require or result in student generation exceeding school capacity?

c. Would the project require or result in significant amounts of solid waste or breach any federal, state, or local standards or thresholds relating to solid waste disposal and generation (including recycling facilities and existing landfill capacity)?

d. Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities (sewer lines, lift-stations, etc.) the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

e. Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded storm water drainage or water quality control facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Setting

The County operates one active Class III landfill, the Tajiguas Landfill, located in Goleta. The landfill also serves as a composting and transfer/processing facility. The Tajiguas landfill can accept a max throughput of 1,500 tons per day and has a remaining capacity of approximately 4,336,335 cubic yards (California Department of Resources, Recycling, and Recovery [CalRecycle] 2019).

Impact Analysis

**Thresholds of Significance: a-b, d**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan that are designed to reduce GHG emissions. Implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would not directly result in increases in population. Similarly, the 2030 CAP would not directly result in an increase in employment, and any new employment opportunities that may result indirectly from implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would target existing residents and not induce population growth. Therefore, no increased demand from public facilities providers including police protection, health care services, or schools would occur. As such, the 2030 CAP would not require the construction of new or physically altered police protection, health care, or schools. Further, the 2030 CAP would not result in new land uses that would generate sanitary wastewater or otherwise contribute to an increase in wastewater treatment requirements. Therefore, the 2030 CAP would not cause the relocation or construction of new or expanded sewer system facilities. 2030 CAP Measures and Actions would help to increase community resiliency and reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change within Santa Barbara, thereby reducing the burden on local public services related to such climate impacts and disasters. Furthermore, future 2030 CAP-related projects would be reviewed for consistency with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, County Code, and other applicable local and State regulations related to public facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur related to the need for police protection facilities, health care facilities, schools, or sewer system facilities.

**Threshold of Significance: c**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan that are designed to reduce GHG emissions and does not include land use or other policy changes which would result in increased residential, commercial, or other development that would increase solid waste generation in the County. 2030 CAP-related small-scale construction projects would generate minimal solid waste. In compliance with AB 939, at least 50 percent of solid waste generated from the 2030 CAP would be diverted from landfills. Pursuant to County Code Section 17-23, at least 65 percent of construction waste would be required to be recycled, pursuant to the California Green Building Standards Code (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). 2030 CAP-related projects would adhere to these regulatory standards which would minimize solid waste generation. As described above, Tajiguas Landfill has sufficient capacity to accept construction waste generated by new development that may be facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions. Furthermore, implementation of 2030 CAP Actions W-1.1 through W-1.4 and W-2.1 through W-2.3 would reduce organic waste and the use of non-recyclable and non-compostable single-use items, thereby reducing overall waste generated in Santa Barbara. The 2030 CAP would not create significant amounts of solid waste or breach any federal, State, or local standards or thresholds related to solid waste disposal. Therefore, this impact would be insignificant.

**Threshold of Significance: e**

2030 CAP-related projects may include infrastructure development and redevelopment involving small-scale construction. Construction could result in soil erosion and a minimal increase in impervious surfaces. However, as discussed under Subsection 4.2.6, *Geologic Processes*, development that would disturb one or more acres would be subject to the NPDES Construction General Permit, including the implementation of a SWPPP and BMPs to control drainage patterns and erosion. In addition, and for projects under an acre, a grading plan would be required to be implemented, pursuant to County Code Section 14-29 (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). These projects would also comply with California Building Code Chapter 70 standards, which are designed to ensure implementation of appropriate measures during grading and construction to control erosion and storm water pollution. Regulatory compliance would minimize stormwater runoff, erosion, and potential impacts to a stormwater drainage system generated by 2030 CAP-related projects. The 2030 CAP would not necessitate the construction of new or the expansion of existing stormwater drainage or water quality control facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. Therefore, this impact would be insignificant.

1. Recreation

Thresholds of Significance

1. Would the project conflict with established recreational uses of the area?
2. Would the project conflict with biking, equestrian and hiking trails?
3. Would the project result in a substantial impact on the quality or quantity of existing recreational opportunities (e.g., overuse of an area with constraints on numbers of people, vehicles, animals, etc. which might safely use the area)?

Setting

The County contains regional parks, beaches, biking trails, equestrian trails, hiking trails, golf courses, and recreational facilities (County of Santa Barbara 2009d). The County has established a minimum standard ratio of 4.7 acres of recreation and/or open space per 1,000 persons to meet the needs of the community (County of Santa Barbara 2016).

Impact Analysis

**Thresholds of Significance: a-c**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing programs that are consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. The 2030 CAP would not result in substantial new population growth or direct land use changes. As such, implementation of the 2030 CAP would not have a substantial impact on the quality of existing recreational opportunities including deterioration of parks or other recreational facilities. Implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would not promote development where biking, equestrian, and hiking trails are present. Furthermore, some 2030 CAP Actions, such as TR-4.5 which would convert County parking facilities to support commuter park and electric bike share, would result in an increase of access to recreational opportunities for residents in the County. The 2030 CAP would not conflict with established recreational uses; conflict with biking, equestrian, or hiking trails; or substantially impact the quality or quantity of existing recreational opportunities. Therefore, impacts would be insignificant.

1. Water Resources/Flooding

Thresholds of Significance

1. Would the project result in changes in currents, or the course or direction of water movements, in either marine or fresh waters?
2. Would the project result in changes in percolation rates, drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface water runoff?
3. Would the project change in the amount of surface water in any water body?
4. Would the project result in discharge, directly or through a storm drain system, into surface waters (including but not limited to wetlands, riparian areas, ponds, springs, creeks, streams, rivers, lakes, estuaries, tidal areas, bays, ocean, etc) or alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, or thermal water pollution?
5. Would the project result in alterations to the course or flow of flood water or need for private or public flood control projects?
6. Would the project result in exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding (placement of project in 100 year flood plain), accelerated runoff or tsunamis, sea level rise, or seawater intrusion?
7. Would the project result in alteration of the direction or rate of flow of groundwater?
8. Would the project result in a change in the quantity of groundwater, either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations or recharge interference?
9. Would the project result in overdraft or over-commitment of any groundwater basin? Or, a significant increase in the existing overdraft or over-commitment of any groundwater basin?
10. Would the project result in the substantial degradation of groundwater quality including saltwater intrusion?
11. Would the project result in substantial reduction in the amount of water otherwise available for public water supplies?
12. Would the project result in introduction of storm water pollutants (e.g., oil, grease, pesticides, nutrients, sediments, pathogens, etc.) into groundwater or surface water?

As detailed in the County’s *Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual*, a project is determined to have a significant effect on water resources if it would exceed established threshold values which have been set for each overdrafted groundwater basin. These values were determined based on an estimation of a basin’s remaining life of available water storage. If the project’s net new consumptive water use [total consumptive demand adjusted for recharge less discontinued historic use] exceeds the threshold adopted for the basin, the project’s impacts on water resources are considered significant. A project is also deemed to have a significant effect on water resources if a net increase in pumpage from a well would substantially affect production or quality from a nearby well (County of Santa Barbara 2021).

Setting

The County contains streams, channels, tributaries, and groundwater basins that contribute to the availability of surface water and groundwater supplies (County of Santa Barbara 2010). Approximately 85 percent of total water used is derived from groundwater resources (County of Santa Barbara 2009e). The County identifies 16 groundwater basins within Santa Barbara (County of Santa Barbara 2009e). Of these basins, three are designated by the California Department of Water Resources as high priority and two are designated as medium priority, meaning they are subject to management by local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). These high and medium priority basins are the Carpinteria basin, the Montecito basin, the Cuyama Valley basin, the Santa Ynez River Valley basin, and the San Antonio Creek Valley basin, respectively (California Department of Water Resources 2022). Based on County Code Chapter 15A, there are areas of the County within a 100-year flood hazard zone, as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (County of Santa Barbara 2022a).

Impact Analysis

**Thresholds of Significance: a-d, l**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing actions designed to achieve the County’s GHG reduction goals. New development that may be facilitated by 2030 CAP Actions, such TR-4.5 which would convert County parking facilities to support commuter park and electric bike share and TR-1.9 which would spearhead the installation of 225 publicly accessible EV chargers, may result in small scale construction activities which could result in water quality impacts due to ground disturbance and soil erosion. In addition, 2030 CAP Action CS-1.6 would result in the planting of 2,800 net new trees in the public right-of-way which would result in ground disturbing activities.

2030 CAP-related projects would be reviewed for consistency with applicable regulations, including the NPDES permitting program, which requires implementation of SWPPPs and County Code Chapter 14, *Grading Code* (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). These regulations require the implementation of BMPs during construction to minimize potential impacts to surface and groundwater quality. Typical BMPs include, but are not limited to, installation of silt fences, erosion control blankets, and anti-tracking pads at site exists to prevent off-site transport of soil materials. Adherence to State and local regulatory requirements would minimize the potential to alter surface water quality or introduce stormwater pollutants.

2030 CAP Actions would generally apply to the urbanized areas of the County where impervious surfaces are largely present. However, it is possible the 2030 CAP could indirectly promote solar development areas with little impervious surfaces. While 2030 CAP Action FS-2.3 would require the update and adoption of the utility-scale solar ordinance to expand opportunities for solar development on agricultural lands, this Action would not directly result in solar development, and any individual developments would be reviewed for consistency with applicable County regulations related to stormwater prior to project approval. Primarily, 2030 CAP-related projects would result in marginal increases to impervious surfaces in the already urbanized environment. If a 2030 CAP-related project would occur near a watercourse the project would be subjected to the requirements of County Code Section 15B-5 which requires any development within 50 feet from the top of the bank of a watercourse, or within 200 feet from the top of the riverbank to not significantly reduce the capacity of the existing watercourse, not realign streambeds, or otherwise not affect other properties by altering velocity, depth, or flows such that an erosion hazard would exist. Projects would be reviewed and approved by the Building Official for consistency with local regulations prior to implementation. Therefore, County regulatory requirements would minimize impacts to changes in currents, drainage patterns, and surface water. The 2030 CAP would not result in changes in currents, drainage patterns, amount of surface water in a water body, alternation of flood flows, or introduction of stormwater pollutants. Therefore, impacts would be insignificant.

**Thresholds of Significance: e-f**

The 2030 CAP is a policy document containing programs that are consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. The 2030 CAP would not result in direct land use changes. However, implementation of 2030 CAP Actions may promote infrastructure development and small-scale construction activities within the County. Providing new active and public transportation infrastructure and battery storage facilities may marginally change the City’s existing drainage pattern and amount of impervious surface. Construction of 2030 CAP-related projects could also result in erosion, as discussed in Section 4.2.6, *Geologic Processes*. However, impacts to drainage patterns and alterations of water courses would be minimized through implementation BMPs as required by the NPDES Construction General Permit program and County Code. In addition, 2030 CAP Action CS-1.9 would result in the planting of over 3,000 trees which would reduce the potential for erosion. 2030 CAP-related projects occurring in a flood hazard zone would be subject to the requirements of County Code Chapter 15A, *Floodplain Management*. Section 15A-16 sets standards of construction in flood hazard zones, including anchoring, construction materials, and elevation and floodproofing. Section 15A-22 requires all new development within a coastal high hazard area to be adequately leveled and elevated, and prohibits the use of fill for structural support, among other requirements (County of Santa Barbara 2022a). 2030 CAP-related projects would be required to present proof to a floodplain administrator which shows all standards within County Code Chapter 15A have been met. In addition, the 2030 CAP would not promote new residential, commercial, or industrial development that have the potential to expose people or structures to water related hazards, including tsunamis, sea level rise, or seawater intrusion. The 2030 CAP would not alter the course or flow of flood water or expose people to water related hazards. Therefore, impacts would be insignificant.

**Thresholds of Significance: g-j**

The CAP is a policy document containing programs that are consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. Implementation of 2030 CAP Actions related to infrastructure development and redevelopment, such as electrifying existing buildings, improving active transportation and public transit facilities, and implementing EV charging stations, would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge as impervious surfaces would only marginally increase. Small scale construction would require minimal amounts of water for routine construction activities, such as suppressing fugitive dust in compliance with the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District’s Rule 345 (Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District 2010). Although the minimal amount of water supplied for these construction activities may consist of groundwater, water purveyors who supply this groundwater would be subject to management requirements and pumping limitations implemented by a GSA for a specific basin. Therefore, the potential minimal use of groundwater supplies for CAP-related construction activities that occur within the boundaries of medium and high priority basins would not result in the overdraft of a groundwater basin in conflict with a GSA. Implementation of the 2030 CAP would not require groundwater use that would change the quantity of groundwater; overdraft, substantially overcommit, or significantly increase existing overdraft of a groundwater basin; or degrade water quality. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**Threshold of Significance: k**

The CAP is a policy document containing programs that are consistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. Implementation of 2030 CAP Actions would result in small scale construction activities. These small-scale projects would require minimal amounts of water for routine construction activities, such as fugitive dust control. Small, temporary, and intermittent uses of water for construction activities would not substantially reduce the amount of water available for public water supplies. Therefore, implementation of the 2030 CAP would result in an insignificant impact to reduction of public water supplies.

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1. Santa Barbara County has established separate Boards of Architectural Review for the geographic regions of North County, Central County, South County, and Montecito. Each Board of Architectural Review has the same regulatory authority over their respective jurisdiction. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)