

3.11 Land Use and Recreation

This section describes the regulatory and environmental setting for land use and recreation. It also describes impacts on land use and recreation that would result from implementation of the Climate Action 2020: Community Climate Action Plan (CAP) and includes mitigation for significant impacts, where feasible and appropriate.

3.11.1 Environmental Setting

This section describes the existing land use and recreational resources present in Sonoma County (County). This information has been drawn and modified from the *Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Environmental Impact Report* (EIR) (Sonoma County 2006).

3.11.1.1 Land Use

Existing Land Use Pattern

Sonoma County has a diverse and unique physical setting, including mountain ridges, hills, and valleys, which are replete with forests, oak woodlands, stream corridors, and tidal and fresh water marshes. It borders on both the Pacific Ocean to the west and San Pablo Bay to the southeast. Sonoma County lies adjacent to Mendocino County to the north, Napa County to the east, and Marin County to the south. The main highways in Sonoma County include US 101 and State Route (SR) 1, both of which run north-south through the County. SR 12, 116, and 128 generally run east-west through the County, connecting Sonoma County to adjacent counties to the east. There are nine incorporated cities within Sonoma County, including Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma, and the Town of Windsor.

Sonoma County's development pattern is typical of California's rural counties, with low-density land uses in small towns, more dense urban/suburban growth in large cities, and extensive tracts of land with agricultural uses, timberlands, and open space in outlying areas. This has created a land use pattern in which much of the County's land area interfaces between wildlands, agriculture, and areas of residential and commercial development. The County General Plan and the individual city general plans establish a city-centered development pattern that directs future growth to cities and protects the surrounding agricultural and other resource lands. Thus, the majority of Sonoma County residents live in cities along US 101. Designated Community Separators (i.e., open space areas) provide separation between the cities. Beyond the main US 101 corridor, the city of Sonoma is located on SR 12 in the southeast portion of the County, and the city of Sebastopol is located west of US 101 on SR 116. The County's 12 unincorporated communities are concentrated along these three main highway corridors (i.e., US 101, SR 12, SR 116), though the area beyond Sebastopol and the coastal communities also contain small yet notable concentrations of unincorporated growth. However, the lack of infrastructure (e.g., highways and roads, water and wastewater systems, flood control facilities) constrains continued growth and development in these areas.

Existing Land Uses

Table 3.11-1 lists the land uses in Sonoma County, including the incorporated cities. According to State Department of Conservation data, about 71,825 acres, or 7 percent of the County's

1,026,080 acres, are developed at a density of at least 1.5 units per acre (i.e., “urbanized”) (California Department of Conservation 2012). The majority of this urbanized land, approximately 45,000 acres, is within the spheres of influence of the nine incorporated cities. Although most of the urbanized area is residential, about 5 percent of it is developed with industrial and commercial uses. Roads, schools, and other infrastructure account for a significant proportion of the urban acreage. Farmland (17 percent) and grazing land (41 percent) account for 58 percent of the County’s land area, with other land and water areas making up 35 percent. This 35 percent includes lower-density (i.e., more than 1.5 acres per unit) rural residential development areas and timberlands (California Department of Conservation 2012).

Table 3.11-1. Summary of Land Uses in Sonoma County

Land Use Type	Percentage
Urbanized	7%
Grazing Land	41%
Important Farmland	17%
Timber/Other Lands	33%
Water Bodies	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Source: Sonoma County 2006

3.11.1.2 Recreation

Several public agencies are responsible for recreational services and access to public recreational lands in the County. These agencies include Sonoma County Regional Parks, California State Parks, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, two local park and recreation districts, and the nine incorporated city jurisdictions. The County’s recreational resources includes coastal resources adjacent to the Pacific Ocean; rivers and lakes, including the Russian River and the Gualala River; multi-use trails; natural and open space parklands; and community-oriented parks (Sonoma County Regional Parks 2015).

Table 3.11-2 provides a summary of the four main types of outdoor recreational facilities in Sonoma County, the number of acres associated with each facility type, and the primary characteristics of each. Parklands are classified as Community and Neighborhood Parks, Regional Recreation Areas, Regional Open Space Parks, or Other Lands.

Table 3.11-2. Summary of Outdoor Recreational Facilities in Sonoma County

Recreational Facility Type	Total Acreage	Primary Providers	Defining Characteristics
Community and Neighborhood Parks	1,998	County and non-profit organizations, public schools, cities, and special districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 25 acres • Play areas • Sport fields • Picnicking areas
Regional Recreation Areas	1,181	County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 25 acres • Usually 200 acres • 10% of the area is active recreation
Regional Open Space Parks	3,105	County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 200 acres • Resources management • Public access
Other Lands	46,469	Federal agencies, state agencies, and non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and federal parks or preserves • State or nationally significant lands • Preserves with limited access

Source: Sonoma County 2006.

3.11.2 Regulatory Setting

3.11.2.1 Federal

There are no relevant federal regulations related to land use and recreation.

3.11.2.2 State

California General Plan Requirements

All cities and counties within California are required by the state to adopt a general plan, thereby establishing goals and policies for long-term development, protection from environmental hazards, and conservation of identified natural resources (California Government Code Section 65300, et seq.). Local general plans lay out the pattern of future residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, open space, and recreational land uses within a community. To facilitate implementation of planned growth patterns, general plans typically also include goals and policies that address the coordination of land use patterns with the development and maintenance of infrastructure facilities and utilities. California Government Code Section 65302 lists seven “elements,” or chapters, that cities and counties must include in their general plans: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety.

Local jurisdictions implement their general plans by adopting zoning, subdivision, grading, and other ordinances. Zoning identifies the specific types of land uses that may be allowed on a given site and establishes the standards that would be imposed on new development. Zoning regulations vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. However, typical standards promulgated in zoning ordinances

include the siting of structures relative to parcel boundaries, architectural design (including height limitations), and the percentage of building coverage allowed relative to the overall square footage of a parcel. In some jurisdictions, the zoning ordinance permits construction “by right” (i.e., without the need for hearing) as an allowable use. In others, a conditional use permit or similar discretionary action is needed.

Quimby Act

The Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) was established by the California Legislature in 1965 to preserve open space and parkland in rapidly urbanizing areas of the state. The Quimby Act allows local governments to establish parkland standards (at a maximum of 5 acres per 1,000 residents) and require residential developers to provide either land or in-lieu fees for developing new or rehabilitating existing neighborhood or community park or recreational facilities for new residents.

3.11.2.3 Local

General plans guide the physical development and character of a county or city/town. General plans set forth county or city/town policies regarding the types of and locations for future land uses and activities. General plans are used by a county or city/town council and planning commission in making planning and land use decisions.

Zoning ordinances implement the designated land uses and enforce the policies described in the general plans. Zoning ordinances generally define the zoning districts that the county or city/town is divided into and identify permitted land uses or conditionally permitted land uses. Zoning ordinances also establish development regulations pertaining to building height, land cover by buildings, and floor area.

Appendix C, *Local General Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies*, provides a list of the goals, objectives, and policies in the local general plans of the participating jurisdictions, including those related to land use and recreation. These goals, objectives, and policies were reviewed to assess whether the project is consistent with the general plans of participating jurisdictions. Disclosure of this consistency analysis is for informational purposes. An additional purpose of providing a list of relative local policies is, where appropriate, to provide the context within which the CAP will be locally implemented. As described in the CAP, most of the CAP measures represent implementation of many of the priorities outlined in existing local policies.

Inconsistencies with general plan policies are not necessarily considered significant impacts under CEQA unless they are related to physical impacts on the environment that are significant in their own right.

Implementation of the CAP is consistent with the applicable general plan goals, objectives, and policies of the participating jurisdictions in relation to land use and recreation.

3.11.3 Impacts Analysis

3.11.3.1 Methodology

The evaluation of potential land use impacts associated with implementation of the CAP was based on a review of relevant planning documents from Sonoma County and the eight incorporated cities

and a comparison of the CAP features. The planning documents that were reviewed in the analysis of potential land use impacts included *Sonoma County General Plan 2020* and the general plans for the Cities of Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol, and Sonoma and the Town of Windsor.

This section evaluates the potential for land use incompatibilities to occur as a result of CAP implementation. New development adjacent to existing land uses, particularly if it is much more intensive or involves operations or activities with effects that would extend beyond the property, may result in land use incompatibilities. The significance of the land use impact was determined by considering whether implementation of the project would result in incompatibilities between the types and intensities of development allowed under the relevant planning documents and the adjacent land uses.

This section also discusses the general consistency between the CAP and the applicable land use policies of the aforementioned general plans. A conflict between a proposed project and the applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations of an agency with jurisdiction over a project does not necessarily indicate a significant effect on the environment under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The local jurisdiction's planning commission and/or board of supervisors ultimately determines whether an individual project that may be advanced during implementation of the CAP is consistent with the goals and policies contained in the general plan and the requirements of other planning documents.

3.11.3.2 Significance Criteria

State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] 15000 et seq.) identifies the significance criteria to be considered when determining whether a project could have significant impacts on existing land uses and recreation.

An impact would be considered significant if construction or operation of the project would result in any of the following consequences.

Land Use

- Physically divide an established community.
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) of an agency with jurisdiction over the project that has been adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Recreation

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated.
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

3.11.3.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact LU-1: Implementation of the CAP could physically divide an established community (less than significant).

The CAP is a policy-level document that does not include any site-specific designs or proposals or grant any entitlements for development that would have the potential to divide an established community. As a policy document, the CAP would have no direct impact, but future implementation of activities supported by the CAP could physically divide an established community.

There are several CAP measures that promote the construction of new facilities. These are aimed at increasing the use of renewable energy, increasing solid waste diversion, increasing the capture/use of methane from landfills, and reducing emissions from livestock operations. Most of these new facilities would be constructed within or on existing buildings (e.g., rooftops, wastewater treatment plants, landfills, dairies) and would not physically divide an established community because these facilities would be additions to the existing structure.

The CAP also promotes the construction of mixed-use and transit-oriented development in city centers to reduce fuel use and travel demand through “smart” land use and development. It also promotes the construction of solid waste facilities to increase waste diversion, the reuse of materials, and recycling. Infill mixed-use and transit-oriented development in city centers would be located near similar existing uses and would most likely not physically divide an established community but rather allow for more connectivity between communities through increased transit accessibility. Although the locations of the solid waste facilities are unknown, these facilities could be located in established communities. However, solid waste facilities are generally located on continuous parcels of land and therefore would most likely not divide an established community or change access for nearby uses. Furthermore, there are several CAP measures that encourage a shift related to mode of transportation and reduced travel demand. These CAP measures promote minor changes to the existing streetscape, such as traffic-calming improvements and additional transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities to promote increased transit accessibility. In general, these roadway and transit improvements would not affect accessibility or divide established communities. Streetscape improvements involving transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities would improve connectivity within established communities. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

Impact LU-2: Implementation of the CAP could conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations (less than significant).

Although the CAP does not directly involve the construction of structures, future implementation of activities supported by the CAP could result in uses that would conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations. Several CAP measures could include the construction of new facilities to increase the use of renewable energy, increase solid waste diversion, increase the capture/use of methane from landfills, and reduce emissions from livestock operations. Most of these new facilities would be constructed within or on existing buildings (e.g., rooftops, wastewater treatment plants, landfills, dairies) and, in general, would not result in incompatibility with surrounding land uses.

The CAP promotes mixed-use and transit-oriented development as well as transit facilities that reduce fuel use and travel demand through smart land use and development. These mixed-use and transit-oriented developments within city centers are likely to be compatible with local land use plans. The County and incorporated cities have already adopted policies that promote city-centered development patterns in order to direct future growth toward cities and protect the surrounding agricultural and other resource lands. Benefits related to reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG)

emissions would also be realized. Because many local plans already promote such development, mixed-use and transit-oriented development within city centers would not result in incompatibility with similar surrounding land uses.

The CAP also promotes the construction of solid waste facilities to increase waste diversion, the reuse of materials, and recycling. Although the locations of these facilities are unknown, potential land use compatibility issues may arise. In general, solid waste facilities are typically located in industrial areas or near existing utility infrastructure; this would include areas that have been designated in the general plans for industrial, institutional, public, and semi-public facilities. Land use compatibility conflicts would not generally be expected for facilities located in these areas. The specifics of land use conflicts would be analyzed in project-specific CEQA documents. Therefore, impacts related the potential conflicts with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations are considered to be less than significant at this time.

Impact LU-3: Implementation of the CAP would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan (no impact).

No habitat conservation plans, natural community conservation plans, or other approved conservation plans have been adopted that encompass all or any relevant portions of Sonoma County. Thus, implementation of the CAP would not conflict with any conservation plan, and there would be no impact.

Impact LU-4: Implementation of the CAP could temporarily disrupt recreational facilities during construction but would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated (less than significant).

Several CAP measures promote the construction of new facilities, such as electric charging or alternative fueling facilities; transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities; renewable energy facilities; and mixed-use and transit-oriented development in city centers. Depending on the locations of these facilities, construction associated with implementation of the CAP measures could temporarily disrupt the use of existing nearby parks and recreational facilities. However, the temporary disruption of nearby parks and recreational facilities would be limited to the construction period for the new facilities and would most likely not result in the permanent disruption of park and recreational facility use. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

Several CAP measures promote the construction of new facilities to increase renewable energy use, increase solid waste diversion, increase the capture/use of methane from landfills, and reduce emissions from livestock operations. Most of these new facilities would be constructed within or on existing buildings (e.g., rooftops, wastewater treatment plants, landfills, dairies) where employees already work. The installation of these new facilities within or on existing buildings would not result in a new employee population that would increase the use of existing parks and other recreational facilities. The CAP promotes the construction of solid waste facilities to increase waste diversion, the reuse of materials, and recycling. Furthermore, the CAP also promotes mixed-use and transit-oriented development in city centers to reduce fuel use and travel demand through smart land use and development. These new structures could generate a new employee and residential population and increase the use of existing parks and other recreational facilities, which could accelerate the physical deterioration of these recreational facilities. However, as discussed above, the CAP does not directly involve the construction of any structures. Any structures that could be constructed under the CAP would be subject to further CEQA analysis of project-specific impacts. Although new solid waste facilities promoted by the CAP may generate an employee population, it is likely that the

people who would work at the solid waste facilities would be existing employees or County residents. New mixed-use and transit-oriented development could generate a residential population that would increase localized use of existing parks and other recreational facilities in city centers because of the denser population; however, all future development projects would be subject to applicable local regulations, requirements, and development impact fees for recreational uses and parklands. Furthermore, such mixed-use and transit-oriented development is already called for in the local land use plans, and thus, the CAP will not be causing a change in that future expected demand for recreational facilities. Through compliance with local regulations, impacts on parks and other recreational facilities in city centers would be less than significant.

Impact LU-5: Implementation of the CAP would include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that could have an adverse physical effect on the environment (less than significant with mitigation).

The CAP promotes additional recreational bicycle facilities (such as bike paths) to reduce vehicle fuel use by encouraging a shift related to mode of transportation. The additional recreational bicycle facilities would most likely be located adjacent to existing roadways or pedestrian paths. The construction-related and operational impacts of the additional recreational facilities promoted by the CAP are addressed in other resource sections of this chapter. Some new bicycle facilities may require road widening adjacent to sensitive biological resources, which could result in significant impacts and warrant mitigation. Mitigation for any new facilities would be identified during project-level review, but given the limited scale of bicycle pathways, even those requiring road widening, such impacts would be readily mitigable to less-than-significant levels.

3.11.3.4 Cumulative Impacts

Impact C-LU-1: Implementation of the CAP, in combination with other foreseeable development in the surrounding area, could have a significant cumulative impact on land use and recreation (less than considerable contribution).

The geographic context for the evaluation of cumulative impacts on land use and recreation considers the effects of the CAP in combination with other development in Sonoma County. Past, present, and future development within this geographic context assumes full buildout of *Sonoma County General Plan 2020* and the general plans of the nine incorporated cities.

Implementation of CAP policies to reduce GHG emissions would focus growth and development in city centers. This densification of land uses near city centers and transit corridors is consistent with local land use plans that promote a city-centered development pattern to direct future growth toward cities and protect the surrounding agricultural and other resource lands. As discussed in Impact LU-2, implementation of CAP policies that support increased solid waste diversion could result in the siting of new solid waste facility uses adjacent to existing sensitive land uses. Furthermore, consistency with land use plans and policies is inherently a project-specific issue. Each jurisdiction determines project consistency at the project level. Given the general consistency of the CAP with existing land use plans and policies, and the limited extent of the new facilities that would be necessary to support the CAP, the CAP's contribution to any cumulative land use impacts would be less than considerable with mitigation.

In terms of recreational resources, implementation of the CAP would not result in a population increase greater than that projected for buildout of *Sonoma County General Plan 2020* or the local city general plans. Rather, the CAP encourages a pattern of settlement that concentrates expected population growth in city centers and along transit corridors. Densifying the population in city

centers could result in a localized incremental increase in the use of recreational facilities within the area. However, all future development that could be constructed consistent with the CAP would be subject to local regulations pertaining to impacts on recreational facilities. The CAP would not generate a new population beyond that projected for buildout of the general plans or increase the use of countywide recreational resources or require additional resources. Thus, the CAP's contribution to any cumulative impacts on recreational facilities would be less than considerable.

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