

## **Addendum to the June 11, 2021 General Plan Subcommittee and Planning Commission Policy Recommendations Memorandum**

The following edits were made to the June 11, 2021 General Plan Subcommittee and Planning Commission Policy Recommendations Memorandum on August, 27, 2021. Text edits are denoted with **red text** and ~~strikeouts~~.

**Page 6:** At the March 23, 2021 GPAC Meeting, the GPAC recommended pursuing a policy option that would “Prohibit development within all designated Critical Habitat areas and within a buffer area around such areas.” However, after the March 23 GPAC meeting, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) ~~Service~~ submitted a letter ~~with~~ **which included a number of** recommendations about how to protect critical habitat in the Hollister vicinity (see Attachment 3). **Based in part on USFWS’ guidance,** ~~the~~ General Plan team recommends the Planning Commission and City Council consider the **following** ~~USFWS recommendations~~ in place of the policy options originally presented to the GPAC:

- Require a qualified biologist **to** evaluate the potential for protected biological resources for proposed projects on sites that may support ~~these species~~ **the California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander**.
- Avoid development in areas with high quality habitat. High quality habitat includes sites ~~with~~ known **to be occupied by the** species ~~occupants~~, presence of breeding habitat, larger area of suitable habitat, and the absence of nearby development.

## MEMORANDUM

DATE June 11, 2021  
TO City Council  
FROM The General Plan Team (City of Hollister, PlaceWorks, BAE, Kimley-Horn, and Todd Bressi)  
SUBJECT General Plan Subcommittee and Planning Commission Policy Recommendations

Note: This memorandum was updated on May 28, 2021 to incorporate Planning Commission recommendations. Changes are shown in strikethrough and underline.

This memorandum presents policy recommendations from the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) for the General Plan Update. The policy issues in this memorandum were identified through input given at the General Plan visioning workshops held in Summer 2020 and the three GPAC meetings held in Fall 2020. The General Plan Team prepared a Policy Issues Memorandum (Attachment 1) which identified the policy issues and presented several policy options to respond to each issue. These policy issues were reviewed with the community at three workshops and through an online survey, available in both English and Spanish. The community workshops took place on:

- March 9, 2021, at 9 a.m.
- March 10, 2021, at 6 p.m.
- May 6, 2021 at 6 p.m. (Spanish language workshop)

Attachment 2 includes a summary of the community input from the workshops and online survey. Attachment 3 includes the public comments on the policy options submitted via email to the City.

The GPAC reviewed the policy issues and options at a series of five meetings held on:

- March 23, 2021
- March 30, 2021
- April 6, 2021
- April 13, 2021
- April 27, 2021

This memorandum divides the GPAC policy recommendations by General Plan Element. To review the 2005 General Plan Goals and Policies in each existing element, visit [https://hollister2040.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Complete\\_General\\_Plan.pdf](https://hollister2040.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Complete_General_Plan.pdf).

Each policy recommendation is accompanied with background information about the topic. For most of these topics, more detailed information is available in the 2020 Existing Conditions Reports, found at <https://hollister2040.org/documents-past-meeting-materials/>.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

The existing Community Services and Facilities Element largely remains valid today and there is not a need for a major overhaul of the element under the General Plan Update. However, the GPAC proposes the Community Services and Facilities Element be updated to enhance policy direction for:

- Parks and recreation
- New school funding

The 2005 General Plan includes the following goals to guide the provision of public services:

- Goal LU 3: Develop and maintain attractive landscaping on public and private properties, open space, and public gathering spaces.
- Goal CSF 1: Coordinate with other agencies and plan for the provision of adequate infrastructure, facilities, and services.
- Goal CSF 4: Provide for an adequate level of community services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare, and safety of all residents and businesses.
- Goal OS 1: Preserve and protect open space and the natural environment for all to enjoy.

### 1. Parks and Recreation

Community feedback has indicated a strong desire for increased access to a network of quality parks distributed equitably throughout Hollister. The Draft General Plan Vision<sup>1</sup> identifies safe bicycle and pedestrian trail connections across parks and throughout Hollister to encourage physical activity and alternative modes of travel. At the General Plan Update visioning workshops, participants identified the need for youth recreation opportunities and public spaces, including community centers, a pool, and vibrant parks.

The 2005 General Plan includes policies to ensure equitable distribution, improvement, operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of parks and recreational facilities. In addition, the General Plan requires new development and future growth to help fund new park and recreational facilities and programs to maintain acceptable levels of service.

The 1975 Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) authorizes cities and counties to adopt ordinances requiring developers to set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for park improvements. Cities with a high ratio of park space to inhabitants can set a standard of up to 5 acres of park space per 1,000 persons for new development; cities with a lower ratio can require the provision of up to 3 acres per 1,000 persons. The 2005 General Plan includes a standard of 4 acres of park space per 1,000 residents within the greater Hollister area, but the 2018 Hollister Park Facility Master Plan suggested raising the goal to 5 acres of park space per 1,000 residents.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://hollister2040.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Hollister\\_VisionStatement\\_Draft\\_Oct7.pdf](https://hollister2040.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Hollister_VisionStatement_Draft_Oct7.pdf)

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to address parks and recreation:

- Increase the standard for parkland provision by new developments from 4 acres of park space per 1,000 persons to 5 acres of park space per 1,000 persons.
- Require that any private parks and open space that is counted toward the City's park and open space requirement be publicly accessible.
- Prioritize the implementation of the recommendations from the 2018 Draft Hollister Parks Master Plan to complete the suggested improvements,
- Develop a Trail Master Plan which should include a gap-analysis study of existing parks, trails, and open spaces in Hollister to help ensure future improvements prioritize access and equity.

## **2. New School Funding**

Senate Bill (SB) 50 requires developers to pay impact fees to school districts to mitigate student growth impacts borne by the school district, but it also caps such fees at a level that are generally acknowledged as inadequate to pay for needed new school facilities in growing communities. The Hollister School District (HSD) and San Benito High School District (SBHSD) has reported that existing impact fees are insufficient to fund a new schools necessitated by the amount of pipeline growth within the City Limits and unincorporated county.

To ensure that the school districts maintain existing service levels, the City could explore new strategies to increase developer contributions to new school facilities. Although SB 50 limits the amount of required impact fees a jurisdiction can require, there are several other methods that the City could use to generate additional fees.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to address new school funding:

- Grant additional density, more flexible setbacks and building heights, and/or reduced parking requirements for projects that voluntarily provide additional school funding.
- Require the preparation of a Specific Plan, [Financing Plan or other similar document as a pre-condition for annexation or redesignation of land for new urban use. The plan shall identify means to ensure adequate funding to support construction of all needed public facilities, including water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks, and public schools.](#) ~~that includes adequate voluntary developer funding as a pre-condition for development in new development areas. This would ensure that the City and other public agencies could collect needed funds even if it exceeds what is already exacted.~~

## OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURE ELEMENT

The existing Open Space and Agriculture Element largely remains valid and there is no need for a major overhaul of the element under the current General Plan Update. However, the GPA proposes this element be updated to establish a farmland mitigation standard.

The 2005 General Plan includes the following goals to guide farmland preservation:

- Goal OS 1: Preserve and protect open space and the natural environment for all to enjoy.
- Goal OS 2: Preserve viable agricultural activities and lands.

### 3. Farmland Mitigation

Agricultural mitigation is a method by which the loss of important agricultural land is offset to reduce physical impacts to the environment, and it is typically used for projects that require the removal of large amounts of agricultural land. In such cases, the developer is required to compensate for the destruction of agricultural land to receive project approval. The California courts have upheld legal challenges to these agricultural mitigation programs over the past decade.

At least eight cities and three counties in California, including San Benito County, require agricultural land mitigation at a ratio of one acre preserved for each acre of farmland converted, or a 1:1 ratio.<sup>2</sup> Other California jurisdictions, such as Butte County, Yolo County, City of Davis, and City of Hughson, have adopted a 2:1 ratio. A higher mitigation ratio preserves more farmland but can also increase development costs.

The City of Hollister does not currently have an agricultural land mitigation policy in place. Hollister is part of a larger agricultural region, which contributes to Hollister's economy and cultural heritage. The 2005 General Plan calls for the development of an agricultural land mitigation program, and the recent Chappell Road Pre-Zone Project EIR called for 1:1 mitigation for the development project. Given the continued development of agricultural and open space land in Hollister, the City will need to identify an agricultural mitigation strategy, in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Jurisdictions can define what type of agricultural land warrants mitigation upon conversion. Jurisdictions with existing agricultural mitigation programs have typically defined the eligible land in one of two ways:

- Classified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance by the California Natural Resources Agency. This option would align with the CEQA standards of significance.
- Has an existing agricultural land use designation.

A local jurisdiction establishes the agricultural land mitigation program through local ordinance or policy, which authorizes power to administer the program. The local jurisdiction must establish the mitigation ratio and specify various ways an applicant can meet the program requirements (i.e., conservation easement dedication, purchase of fee title, management requirements, in-lieu fees, etc.).

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<sup>2</sup> California Council of Land Trusts, 2014, Conserving California's Harvest, <http://www.calandtrusts.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/conserving-californias-harvest-web-version-6.26.14.pdf>, accessed November 20, 2020.

All mitigation options established by the local jurisdiction must be feasible, adequate, and effective to withstand legal scrutiny.

Local jurisdictions often lack the resources and technical expertise to undertake the long-term stewardship responsibilities of holding, preserving, protecting, and managing agricultural lands. Therefore, jurisdictions typically assign power of program enforcement to a conservation organization, rather than administering the program internally. The enforcing agency, often a land trust, has the experience and capacity to enforce and monitor protected agricultural land. This third-party agency serves as the technical expert for agricultural land mitigation and acts as the liaison between the local government project applicant, and landowners willing to sell land or development rights to the mitigation program.

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to support agricultural mitigation:

- Require two acres of agricultural land be preserved for each acre of farmland converted (2:1 ratio).
- Establish the City as the agricultural mitigation enforcement agency, but assign management responsibilities to a conservation organization.
- Require agricultural mitigation for land classified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT**

The existing Natural Resources and Conservation Element largely remains valid and there is not a need for a major overhaul of the element under the General Plan Update. However, the GPAC proposes the Natural Resources and Conservation Element be updated to enhance policy direction for:

- Sensitive habitats
- Heritage trees

The 2005 General Plan includes the following goals to guide protection of sensitive habitats and heritage trees:

- Goal LU 3: Develop and maintain attractive landscaping on public and private properties, open space, and public gathering spaces.
- Goal NRC 1: Assure enhanced habitat for native plants and animals, and special protection for threatened or endangered species.
- Goal NRC 3: Conserve and manage natural resources.

### **4. Sensitive Habitats**

Special-status species are plants and animals that are legally protected under the State and/or federal Endangered Species Acts or other regulations, as well as other species that are considered rare enough by the scientific community and trustee agencies to warrant special consideration. Many sensitive

natural community types support special-status plants and animals and are addressed under CEQA as essential habitat for those species.

At the local level, the 2005 General Plan contains policies in the Natural Resources and Conservation Element that call for the protection or enhancement of environmental resources and habitat for threatened and endangered species (Policy NRC 1.1), identification and protection of habitats of endangered species (Policy NRC 1.2), developers to assure the provision of compensatory habitat (Policy NRC 1.3), and the use of mitigation bank to offset the cumulative effects of development on habitat for special-status species (Policy NRC 1.4).

The 2020 Existing Conditions Biological Resources Report<sup>3</sup> identified Critical Habitat for the California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog, which are both protected special-status species, within the General Plan Planning Area. California tiger salamander have been reported at the periphery of Hollister, including the eastern hills, the plains along the San Benito River corridor, and in the vicinity of the Hollister airport. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the hillsides in the eastern hills, generally east of Fairview Road, as Critical Habitat for the California tiger salamander. Occurrences of California red-legged frogs have also been reported within the General Plan Planning Area along the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, and drainages with suitable habitat in the eastern and southwestern hills. Designated Critical Habitat for the California red-legged frog occurs in the southern and southwestern portion of the General Plan Planning Area, extending south of Tres Pinos through the Gabilan Mountains.

Although federal, state, and local regulations provide for the protection of the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) and California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), the General Plan Update could bolster existing protections by requiring potential development to avoid and/or provide buffer zones between a proposed project and Critical Habitat.

#### *Recommendation(s)*

At the March 23, 2021 GPAC Meeting, the GPAC recommended pursuing a policy option that would “Prohibit development within all designated Critical Habitat areas and within a buffer area around such areas.” However, after the March 23 GPAC meeting, the United States Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Service submitted a letter with recommendations about how to protect critical habitat in the Hollister vicinity (see Attachment 3). The General Plan team recommends the Planning Commission and City Council consider the USFWS recommendations in place of the policy options originally presented to the GPAC:

- Require a qualified biologist evaluate the potential for protected biological resources for proposed projects on sites that may support these species.
- Avoid development in areas with high quality habitat. High quality habitat includes sites with known species occupants, presence of breeding habitat, larger area of suitable habitat, and the absence of nearby development.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://hollister2040.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/5\\_Biological-Resources\\_PRDraft\\_09-29-20.pdf](https://hollister2040.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/5_Biological-Resources_PRDraft_09-29-20.pdf)

## 5. Heritage Trees

Heritage trees are trees that provide special significance to the community based on historical, environmental, or aesthetic value. The preservation of heritage trees can enhance the attractiveness of a city, protect against extreme temperatures, encourage quality development, and help increase property values. For these and other reasons, jurisdictions establish policies and regulations to control the removal and preservation of heritage trees within the city.

The 2005 General Plan Policy LU 3.4 calls for the preservation of existing significant trees and tree groupings where possible and replacing trees when removed due to site development. The Hollister Municipal Code (HMC) has a Street Tree Ordinance for trees along publicly maintained streets that requires written authorization prior to pruning, cutting, removing, or replacing any street trees. There is also a provision for new residential development to preserve existing trees greater than 4 inches in diameter and 4 feet or more above grade level. While the 2005 General Plan and HMC promote tree preservation, there are no clear definitions of what constitutes a significant tree and there are no measures in place to ensure heritage trees on private property are protected.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to support heritage trees:

- Add a new policy to generally protect and preserve heritage trees.
- Specify the requirements for removal, pruning, and trimming of heritage trees.
- Identify heritage tree protection measures during construction.
- Define heritage trees as those trees, exclusive of eucalyptus, with a trunk circumference of 60 inches measured at 24 inches above ground level.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

This section presents the GPAC policy recommendations related to the Economic Development Element, which will be a new element to be incorporated as part of the General Plan Update. The Economic Development Element will focus on business attraction and expansion across multiple sectors, as well as capturing additional resident and tourist spending in Hollister. This section presents policy recommendations for the following topics:

- Economic development
- Retail leakage
- Job creation
- Tourism
- Industrial uses
- Airport

The 2005 General Plan includes the following goal to guide growth management:

- Goal LU 5: Develop a land use pattern and mix of uses that contribute to the financial health and stability of the community.



In addition, the City's Economic Development Committee has established nine economic development priorities for the City, some of which are already completed:

1. Completing a new wastewater treatment plan. This project was completed in 2008.
2. Supporting the construction of the Highway 25 bypass project. This project was completed in 2008.
3. Setting a citywide target for job creation and retention.
4. Expanding Hollister's agricultural heritage.
5. Guiding the redevelopment of Downtown.
6. Supporting the implementation of the Master Plan for Hollister Airport and Airport Land Use Plan.
7. Working with the Chamber, Business Council, Economic Development Corporation, and other entities to sponsor specific business support programs and resources.
8. Assisting Gavilan College to locate and build a new campus with connections and proximity to Downtown. Gavilan College currently offers classes at the Briggs Building, located at 365 Fourth Street in Hollister.
9. Supporting the creation of important community facilities and sponsor events to expand cultural and recreation opportunities.

## **6. Economic Development**

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to support general economic development to retain existing businesses and increase business expansion and attraction:

- Ensure economic development is a critical function and focus of City staff under the guidance of the City Manager and other executive positions. This includes implementing economic development programs, assisting with business attraction and retention, and initiating other economic development strategies.
- Improve the collaboration between the City and local and regional stakeholder organizations.
- Collaborate with local and regional education institutions to increase the skills and expertise of the local workforce.
- Improve the collaboration between existing industrial users and City staff to ensure existing needs are being met and potential expansion efforts are supported.
- Maintain a database of available commercial and industrial land and prioritize sites based on evaluation of site characteristics and suitability to accommodate future

development. Target high-priority sites for City-led efforts that can help to make them shovel ready for development.

- Upgrade City infrastructure in specific areas of Hollister (e.g., roads, sewer, water, broadband internet, etc.) to support business expansion and attraction to Hollister.
- Ensure that economic development policies and procedures are responsive and resilient to the needs created by natural disasters and pandemics.
- Periodically evaluate the City's economic development performance and update/adjust policies and actions accordingly.

## 7. Retail Leakage

As summarized in the 2020 Market Demand Analysis,<sup>4</sup> the City of Hollister currently experiences an estimated \$26 million in retail leakage on an annual basis. Retail leakage is spending by Hollister residents that occurs outside of the City Limits. This amounts to roughly \$700 per capita of annual spending by Hollister residents outside of Hollister. By comparison, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) region experiences just \$30 in retail leakage per capita on an annual basis. According to local stakeholders, this retail leakage is driven by several factors, including the significant amount of out-commuting by Hollister residents to other workplaces. On the commute back to Hollister, these residents have several retail destination options before reaching Hollister that capture a significant amount of their spending. Another potential reason for the retail leakage is the gaps in the City of Hollister's existing retail offerings. More specifically, the 2020 Market Demand Analysis found significant retail leakages in clothing and clothing accessory stores, general merchandise stores, and home furnishing stores. This indicates areas of potential shortages in the local retail inventory that are forcing residents to spend money outside of the City limits.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to address retail leakage:

- Actively market existing vacant retail land and spaces to potential retail businesses and other active uses.
- Create a summary of the demographic and economic characteristics required by retailers and food service businesses to locate within Hollister (i.e., population densities, projected housing growth, household incomes, etc.) and include strategies to make Hollister a more appealing location for these business types. Use this summary and strategies to help attract potential retailers that would best serve Hollister's demographic and economic conditions.
- Encourage proposed projects in the Downtown to incorporate experiential retail and entertainment opportunities to bolster Downtown as a regional destination that is the cultural and social center of the community.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://hollister2040.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Hollister-GPU-Market-Demand-Analysis-11-12-20.pdf>

- Reduce the number of inactive storefronts within Downtown to improve the pedestrian environment by requiring proposed projects to include ground-floor uses, such as retail businesses or lobbies, to activate the street front.
- Create a City-funded program to improve the condition of existing downtown buildings (e.g., façade improvements, infrastructure upgrades, etc.).
- Prioritize mixed use development and the rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing retail and mixed-use buildings within the West Gateway District.
- Prioritize Downtown infrastructure upgrades to support rehabilitation and redevelopment of retail and mixed-use buildings within the downtown.
- Study the feasibility of constructing an additional Downtown parking structure to accommodate future mixed-use development.
- Conduct a study to identify strategies to improve the utilization of existing Downtown parking.

## **8. Job Creation**

According to the AMBAG, the City of Hollister currently contains nearly 14,000 total jobs. An estimated 32 percent of these jobs are in service industries, primarily driven by local demand for services, including healthcare, real estate, and financial services. Another 27 percent of the existing employment is driven by the public sector, including local, state, and federal employment. Nearly 20 percent of Hollister employment is within the industrial sector, including manufacturing, transportation and distribution, and construction firms. Over the past decade, job growth within the region has not kept pace with population and household growth, leading to a significant amount of Hollister residents commuting to the Monterey Bay Area and San Francisco Bay Area for jobs. Hollister does, however, contain a significant inventory of vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial sites to accommodate business location and expansion within the city.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to address job creation:

- Identify and market the city to potential businesses interested in locating in Hollister (e.g., formalize marketing materials, attend conferences, etc.).
- Improve the collaboration between the City and existing Hollister businesses to better understand business needs (e.g., conduct a business survey, direct outreach to businesses, attend stakeholder organization meetings, etc.).

## **9. Tourism**

With an estimated 210,000 tourists visiting Pinnacles National Park and Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) annually, Hollister is well positioned to capture significant tourism spending. The San Benito County region also boasts additional outdoor recreation amenities, arts and cultural

venues, and agricultural-oriented tourist attractions that bring additional visitors to the area. Currently, however, it appears that Hollister captures relatively little business from these visitors.

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to address tourism:

- Identify and address any gaps in the existing tourism market in San Benito County (e.g., regional sporting events, additional outdoor amenities, etc.).
- Create a unique brand and identity for the City of Hollister as a tourism and visitor destination.
- Incentivize regional agricultural-related producers (e.g., fresh food, wine producers, etc.) to open brick-and-mortar retail establishments in Hollister through outreach, permit streamlining, financial assistance, and other incentives.
- To attract visitor and tourism spending, use improved signage directed at travelers on Highways 25 and 156 as well as other investments and policies to highlight Hollister destinations, with a focus on Downtown.
- Increase the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) rate as a mechanism to raise revenues that can be directed specifically to tourism marketing, promotion, and programming (e.g., special events that attract visitors).
- Continue to collaborate with local tourism-oriented entities to increase visitor attraction.
- Continue to implement strategies to attract more hotel developments by updating and marketing the existing hotel incentive policy<sup>5</sup> and assessing whether existing zoning designations restrict hotel uses.
- Support the development of campgrounds and RV parks within the Planning Area.

## **10. Industrial Uses**

As previously noted, industrial jobs account for roughly 20 percent of all jobs within Hollister. Based on input from local businesses and stakeholders, these industrial jobs are typically higher-paying and require less educational attainment than jobs within the science and technology sector. Historically, Hollister has attracted more price-sensitive manufacturers, given the less expensive industrial real estate and affordability of the local residential market for employees. More recently, however, the City has seen demand for industrial space from the emerging cannabis industry, discussed in more detail herein, as well as from advanced manufacturing and research and development firms. There is roughly 4 million square feet of industrial space in Hollister, with an additional 850,000 square feet of space already in the development pipeline. In addition to projects in the pipeline, Hollister's inventory of

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<sup>5</sup> See the existing Hollister Hotel Incentive Program (HIP) at: <http://hollister.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/City-of-Hollister-Hotel-Incentive-Program-Res-2017-223-09-05-2017.pdf>.

vacant and underutilized industrial sites within the City limits can accommodate another 8 million square feet of industrial space. This suggests Hollister has the potential to capture additional industrial jobs by supporting expansion of existing businesses and recruiting new businesses in search of industrial space.

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to support industrial uses:

- Identify existing gaps within Hollister’s current industrial sector on an ongoing basis and work to attract industrial companies in these categories.
- Enhance and strengthen existing business clusters, such as manufacturing, construction, and agriculture.
- Create a cohesive plan or plans for the industrial and business parks throughout Hollister to improve the overall appearance and reputation of these job centers.
- Ensure a transparent and streamlined process for approving and permitting industrial development and building occupancy in the City.

## **11. Airport**

Located in north Hollister, the Hollister Municipal Airport is a major asset for existing and future economic development within the city. The City of Hollister has invested heavily in recent upgrades to the runways, storm drainage, and other on-site infrastructure to support aviation and future development. In addition to potential new development on airport property, one unique aspect of the Hollister Municipal Airport is its “through-the-fence” access, which allows privately-owned land adjacent to the airport direct access to the airport runways and taxiways. This can be an attractive attribute for nearby properties, according to industrial developers and landowners in northern Hollister.

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to support the airport:

- Recruit potential aviation-related companies to locate on or near the airport property.
- Incentivize additional development of industrial and aviation-related uses on the airport property by undertaking infrastructure upgrades, streamlining the permitting process, or offering financial incentives through reduced impact fees or other mechanisms.
- Allocate City and other public funds to support additional upgrades and investments in airport facilities, such as adding fueling stations or constructing support buildings and additional hangars.
- Market the Hollister Airport as an amenity to existing and future businesses.

## **CIRCULATION ELEMENT**

The existing Circulation Element largely remains valid and there is no need for a major overhaul of the element under the current General Plan Update. However, the GPAC proposes the Circulation Element be updated to enhance complete streets and safe routes to school, metrics to measure traffic delay (i.e., level of service standards), and using roundabouts to improve traffic flow at intersections.

The 2005 General Plan includes the following goals to guide complete streets, safe routes to school, and traffic:

- Goal LU 4: Ensure that Hollister has attractive, safe and functional streets, parking areas, and pedestrian walkways.
- Goal C 1: Design and implement the City's circulation system to serve the planned residential and economic growth specified in the General Plan.
- Goal C 2: Provide a variety of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to promote safe and efficient non-motorized vehicle circulation in Downtown and throughout Hollister. Facilities should accommodate recreational and commuter circulation patterns.
- Goal C 4: Continue to implement a uniform set of standards for Hollister's transportation system, including standard rights-of-way and typical sections. These standards may be amended as necessary in response to changes in technology and industry design standards.

### **12. Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School**

The Complete Streets Act (Assembly Bill [AB] 1358) requires cities to modify the Circulation Element of their General Plan to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets all users' needs for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the local context. Any revision of a General Plan Circulation Element triggers AB 1358's requirements. A complete street is a street that is planned, designed, operated, and maintained to provide safe mobility for all users, not just for vehicles. Examples of elements of complete streets include sidewalks, bike lanes, transit lanes, frequent crossings, median islands, curb extensions, and other transportation facilities.

Safe Routes to School is an international effort to encourage K-12 students to walk or bicycle to school and is an important component of planning for complete streets. Children make up a special group of pedestrians whose needs are different than those of adults. Additional safety considerations must be made when planning pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure for youth as they have lower inhibitions, do not necessarily know to use peripheral vision or listen for oncoming vehicles, are smaller and therefore more difficult for motorists to see, and do not yet understand driver behavior.

The City has participated in Safe Routes to School efforts in collaboration with the Council of San Benito County Governments, Hollister School District, two local schools and school principals, Police and Sheriff Departments, San Benito County Health Department, local bicycle groups, parents, and the community. Safe Routes to School programs provide several community benefits, such as lowering transportation costs, decreasing pedestrian and bicycle collisions, reducing traffic congestion and student absences or tardiness, improving academic performance, and promoting cleaner air, which helps lower asthma attacks.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to support complete streets and safe routes to school:

- Support Infrastructure upgrades to improve the safety, convenience, and comfort of bicyclists, pedestrians, including students walking or biking to school by encouraging roadway improvements such as mid-block crosswalks, buffers between the sidewalks and major roadways, protected bike routes, timely pavement maintenance, adequate pedestrian crossing times, and installing bicycle parking.
- Promote transit-friendly street design by encouraging features such as bus stop shelters, streetlighting, and wayfinding.
- Promote wellness and safety education in local schools.
- Work with the local school districts to improve bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic flow around school sites.

## **13. Level of Service**

Level of service (LOS), the measurement of travel delay at an intersection or roadway segment, has been the standard metric the City has used to evaluate proposed development projects and long-range planning documents. To maintain an adopted LOS standard, mitigation measures typically include roadway and/or intersection widening, which can be detrimental to the pedestrian and bicycle network. Per SB 743, LOS has been replaced with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the metric to evaluate circulation impacts. However, LOS remains a key metric for evaluating the roadway network operations and could continue to be used for engineering evaluations of future roadway improvements.

Although LOS can no longer be used to evaluate environmental impacts and is not required for General Plans, it can be useful in evaluating local access and circulation for some transportation or land use projects. The General Plan's Circulation Element establishes the acceptable LOS at signalized and unsignalized intersections as LOS C, which is an average vehicle delay of 15.1 to 25.0 seconds at an intersection, as shown in Table 1. Intersections operating at LOS D or worse would therefore be considered deficient. In 2020, Kimley-Horn assessed the LOS at 37 intersections in Hollister and found that 29 of the 37 intersections were operating at the adopted standards.

There are tradeoffs when choosing a lower or higher LOS standard. If the goal is to decrease vehicle delay to the maximum extent possible, it can lead to an auto-centric roadway network with wide roadways with higher vehicle speeds that are less conducive to walking and biking. A high LOS standard can also make it difficult to accommodate infill development as the mitigation measures to resolve the vehicle delay often do not fit within the existing roadway right-of-way. Choosing an LOS standard that accepts some congestion at intersections, can improve bicycle and pedestrian safety by decreasing vehicle speeds and maintaining more compact roadways.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC made the following recommendation in regard to LOS:

- Maintain LOS C in most parts of the city with the following exception:

- Establish LOS D at the following Downtown intersections:
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Monterey Street
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Street and San Benito Street
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Sally Street
  - South Street and San Benito Street
- For all other Downtown intersections, do not apply an LOS standard. Figure 1 shows the area where this policy would apply.

In addition, Kimley-Horn, the General Plan transportation subconsultant, recommended the industrial area in North Hollister have an LOS D. The proposed industrial area LOS policy boundary is shown on Figure 2.

**TABLE 1    LEVEL OF SERVICE DEFINITIONS FOR SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS**

Level of Service	Vehicle Delay (Seconds)	Description
A	0–5.0	Free flow, no congestion (very little delay)
B	5.1–15.0	Stable flow, moderate congestion (slight delay)
C	15.1–25.0	Stable flow, moderate congestion (acceptable delay)
D	25.1–40.0	Approaching unstable flow, high congestion (tolerable delay)
E	40.1–60.0	Unstable flow, near breakdown (typically unacceptable delay)
F	>60.0	Forced flow, breakdown (excessive delay)

Source: 2005 City of Hollister General Plan, page 4.13.

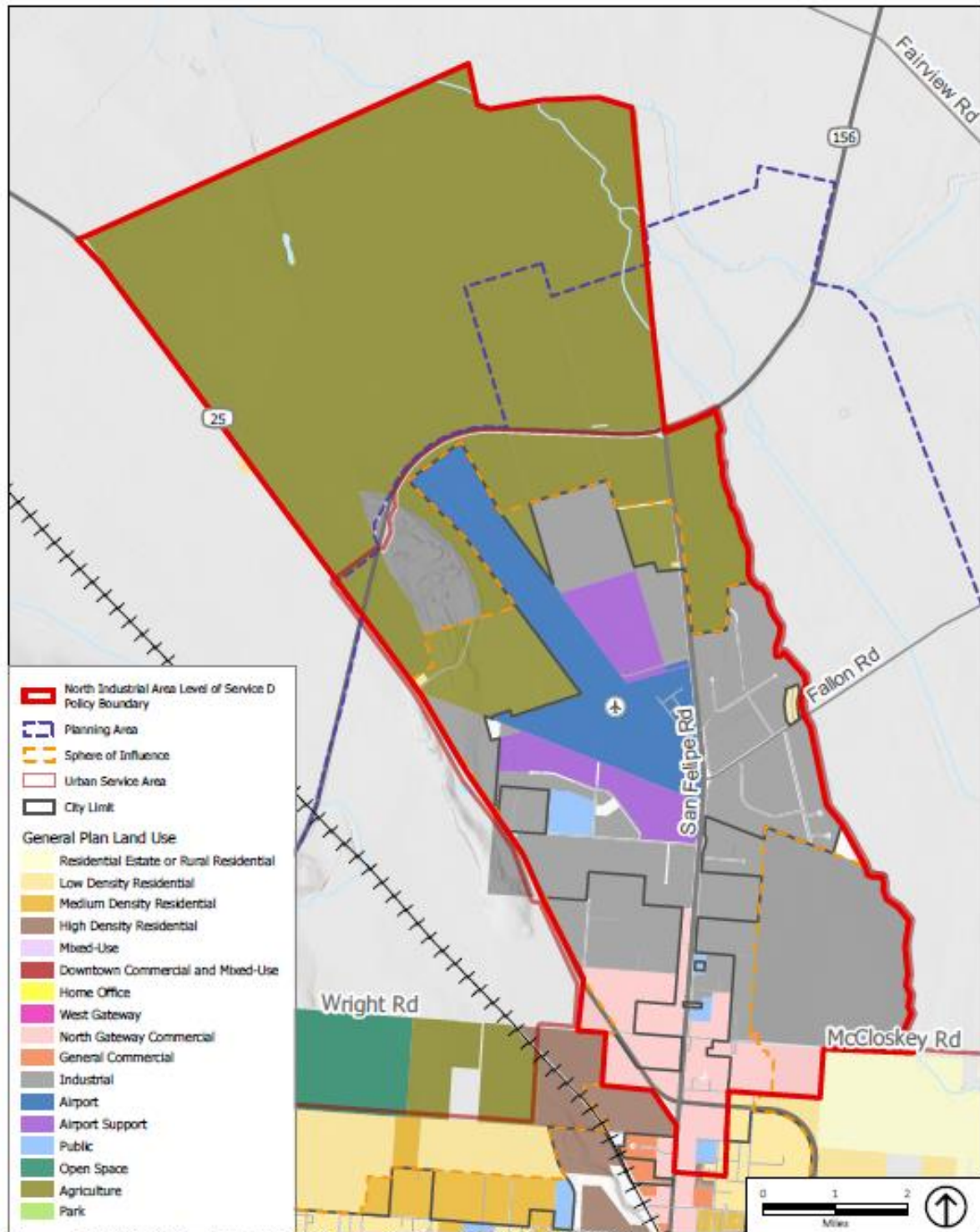


Figure 1 Downtown Level of Service Policy Boundary



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2020; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

Figure 2 Industrial Area Level of Service Policy Boundary



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2020; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

## 14. Roundabouts

Resolution No. 2019-75, which was adopted by the City Council on April 15, 2019, has established that roundabouts may be considered at some intersections as it may improve intersection operations to increase pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety. As new intersections are planned and constructed, the potential control method should be evaluated based on metrics such as cost, safety, and operational efficiency. Modern roundabouts are a form of intersection control that have proven to be highly efficient, safe, and environmentally responsible. The analysis to determine appropriate intersection control is called ICE (Intersection Control Evaluation). Implementing roundabouts has several community benefits, including:

- Maintaining moderate traffic flow.
- Reducing potential conflict points and severe collisions.
- Decreasing pedestrian crossing distances.
- Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Shortening vehicular queues.
- Improving roadway aesthetics.
- Decreasing environmental impacts due to reduced vehicle fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policy be developed to support roundabouts:

- Encourage the use of roundabouts at existing intersections with capacity, efficiency, or safety problems as feasible.

## LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

This section presents policy recommendations related to the Land Use and Community Design Element, covering the following specific topics:

- Growth management
- Special planning areas
- High-density residential land use designation
- Inclusionary housing
- Historic and cultural resources
- Coordination with local Native American tribes
- Environmental justice/equity/community health

The 2005 General Plan includes the following goals to guide growth management, land use planning, housing, cultural and historic resources, and environmental justice:

- GOAL LU 1: Maintain and enhance Hollister’s small town agricultural valley culture and identity. Organize and design the city with an attractive and positive image.



- Goal LU 4: Ensure that Hollister has attractive, safe and functional streets, parking areas, and pedestrian walkways.
- Goal LU 5: Develop a land use pattern and mix of uses that contribute to the financial health and stability of the community.
- GOAL LU 6: Promote orderly and balanced growth within Hollister’s planning area boundaries.
- GOAL LU 7: Promote diverse housing opportunities for existing and future residents.
- Goal LU 8: Maintain the stability of existing neighborhoods.
- Goal LU 9: Encourage development patterns that promote energy efficiency and conservation of natural resources.
- Goal H 1: Work together to build a sense of community and achieve housing goals.
- Goal H 3: Use land efficiently to encourage a diversity of housing types and to implement “smart” and sustainable development principles.
- Goal H 4: Develop affordable housing opportunities.
- Goal C 1: Design and implement the City’s circulation system to serve the planned residential and economic growth specified in the General Plan.
- Goal C 2: Provide a variety of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to promote safe and efficient non-motorized vehicle circulation in Downtown and throughout Hollister. Facilities should accommodate recreational and commuter circulation patterns.
- Goal C 4: Continue to implement a uniform set of standards for Hollister’s transportation system including standard rights-of-way and typical sections. These standards may be amended as necessary in response to changes in technology and industry design standards.
- Goal CSF 3: Provide adequate drainage facilities, limit erosion, and maintain clean water.
- Goal CSF 4: Provide for an adequate level of community services and facilities to ensure the continued health, education, welfare and safety of all residents and businesses.
- Goal HS 1: Protect community health and safety from natural and human-made hazards.
- Goal NRC 2: Provide for clean air.

## **15. Growth Management**

This section presents the GPAC policy recommendations related to residential growth, growth management, and wastewater treatment. Growth management and wastewater treatment are interconnected because the City is the primary wastewater treatment provider for both itself and development in the unincorporated portion of the Hollister Urban Area, which means the City plays an important role in serving future development in both incorporated and unincorporated areas.

Hollister and the surrounding unincorporated area represent most of the urbanized areas of San Benito County and much of the county’s future growth will likely take place in this area. The 2020 Market Demand Analysis estimated that the City of Hollister and the unincorporated area surrounding the City Limits will see demand for between 3,600 and 6,800 new housing units in the period through 2040. Hollister’s portion of the anticipated residential growth would be between 2,038 to 6,854 units. A total of 2,463 units are already under construction or approved within incorporated new development areas (due to a backlog of pre-approved projects), while 4,263 units are approved or proposed within the unincorporated County, with capacity for thousands of additional units, within the City Limits and in unincorporated areas within the Planning Area.

Although the City does not have direct jurisdiction over County development permitting on unincorporated lands, development outside the City Limits utilizes City services, such as wastewater treatment, police, fire, parks, and roadways, and it increases the number of students at local schools. If there is not proper coordination between the City and County, the City of Hollister could find it challenging to create an orderly growth pattern and maintain adequate public service levels.

Through the existing residential development pipeline and remaining buildout capacity of vacant and underutilized sites in the City Limits and in the Sphere of Influence (SOI), Hollister has adequate residential capacity to support the growth outlined in the 2020 Market Demand Analysis. However, should the City want to plan for the Robust Growth Scenario, the City would need to identify roughly 69 acres of new residential land in addition to the land already designated for residential development within the City Limits and the SOI. The 2020 Market Demand Analysis findings assume the future demand for residential units is predominantly located in high-density and mixed-use developments, given that most of Hollister's buildout capacity is designated for these unit types. If the future demand trends do not align with the buildout capacity, additional land may be needed to accommodate the Moderate and Robust Growth Scenarios. For example, assuming lower-density single-family homes constitute a greater proportion of the new housing units delivered on existing and future residentially zoned sites, the City would require roughly 220 additional acres of residential land to accommodate the Moderate Growth Scenario and 636 additional acres of residential land to accommodate the Robust Growth Scenario.

As noted previously, the City of Hollister is the primary wastewater treatment provider. The provision of wastewater treatment is guided by two Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), described below, which unintentionally conflict with State laws about extending wastewater service outside the City Limits and SOI. The City's role as the wastewater treatment provider places Hollister in a unique role because the City Council could have substantial say in whether a proposed project in the unincorporated county, an area the City traditionally has no jurisdiction over, receives wastewater service and thus is ultimately approved.

The City of Hollister is a party to a 2008 MOU with the County of San Benito, San Benito County Water District, and Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD), which established the Hollister Urban Area (HUA), the area where wastewater and water service would be provided if requested by landowners or developers. By establishing the HUA, the MOU parties incorrectly believed that they would be compliant with Government Code Section 56133 by establishing a water and wastewater service area, eliminating the need for Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) approval of future service extensions. Government Code Section 56133 regulates where public service providers, such as wastewater services, can offer their services. The San Benito County LAFCO has indicated that service extension requests need to be approved by the Commission and that it will not approve future wastewater service extension requests if they are outside of the City's SOI. Providing wastewater treatment to projects outside the SOI has led to leapfrog development, especially in the area near Southside and Union Roads.

In addition, the City is also a party to a 2016 MOU with the SSCWD that calls for the City to unconditionally provide wastewater treatment in all areas within the SSCWD service area, regardless of whether these areas are inside the City Limits or SOI. This agreement will automatically renew annually each year starting on August 15, 2021, although it has provisions for both non-renewal and termination. According to information from San Benito LAFCO, the MOU may violate California Government Code

Section 56133<sup>6</sup> and its subsections, which stipulate that a City cannot provide sewer service outside its City Limits or SOI unless the City gets LAFCO approval, and which also specifies that service may only be provided in portions of the SOI where future annexation is expected, and outside the SOI only to address an immediate or pending health and safety threat, such as a failing septic system.

Because the City is the primary regional wastewater treatment provider in the City Limits and adjacent urbanized areas, the City Council has authority to approve or deny wastewater treatment requests to projects outside the City Limits. In addition, wastewater treatment fees provide the City with a cashflow cushion. Although the City recently invested \$100 million in upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, there is a substantial number of costly improvements that have yet to be undertaken.

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

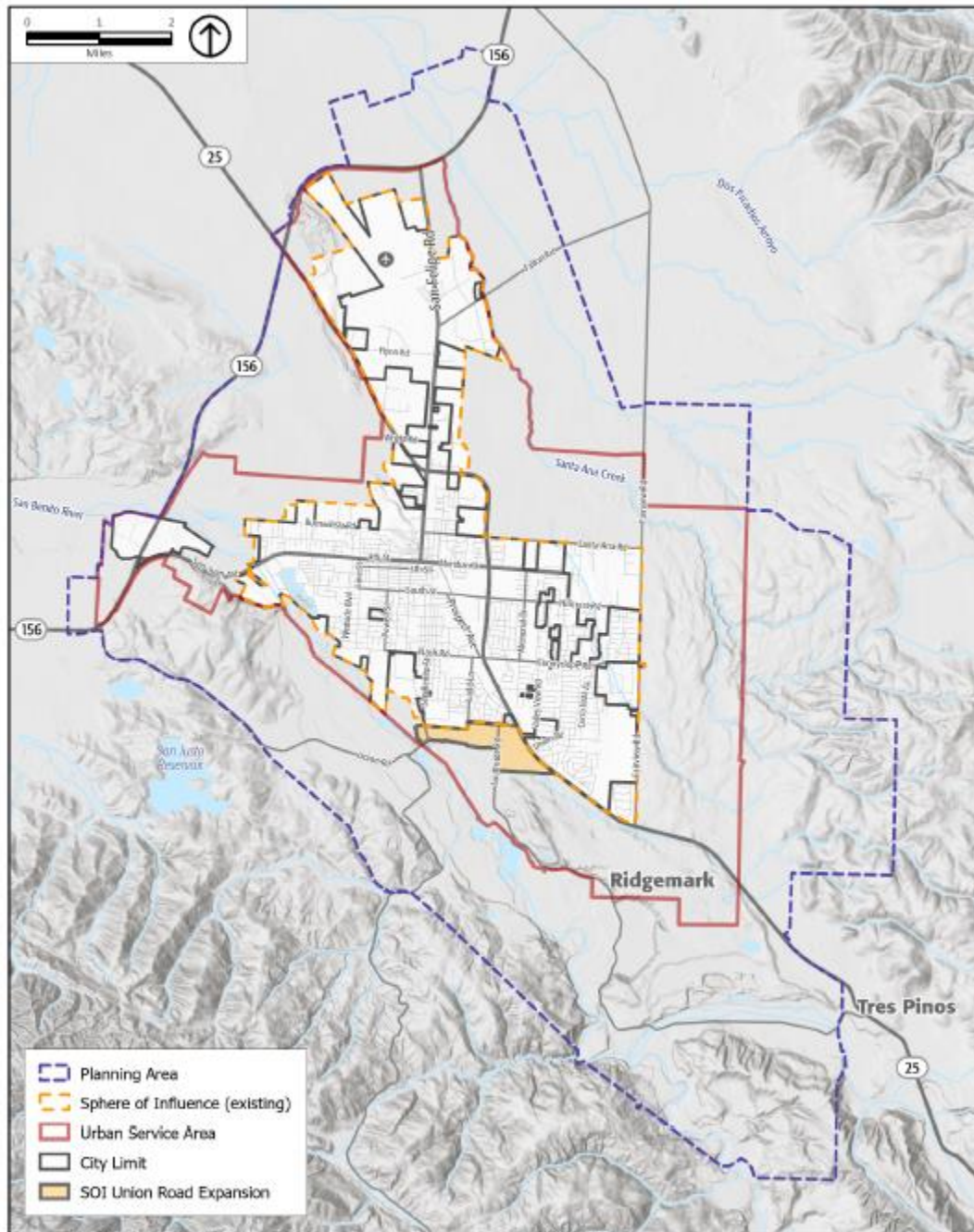
The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to manage growth and wastewater service in Hollister:

- Expand the SOI by roughly 190 acres in the Union Road Special Planning Area as shown in Figure 3.
- Require that wastewater treatment service and other City services only be extended to lands within the City Limits or areas of the SOI that are anticipated to be annexed by the City to be consistent with Government Code Section 56133(b) regarding the provision of services outside the City Limits but inside the SOI.
- Do not renew the 2016 MOU with SSCWD once the MOU expires.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=56133](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=56133)

Figure 3 GPAC Recommended Sphere of Influence



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2020; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

## 16. Special Planning Areas

The City has designated three new “Special Planning Areas” for consideration during the Hollister General Plan Update process. The Special Planning Areas are either anticipated to experience growth and development through 2040 and/or will receive focused policy direction. The three new Special Planning Areas are:

1. **Buena Vista Corridor**, bounded to the north by Wright Road, to the east by San Felipe Road, to the south by Santa Ana Road, and to the west by State Route 156. When considering land use changes for this area, PlaceWorks also examined the adjacent North Gateway Special Planning Area, which includes land to the southwest of the Hollister Municipal Airport and east of State Route 25, extending partially down the San Felipe Road corridor until reaching the Downtown.
2. **Meridian Road Extension** along the eastern edge of the City Limits, generally bounded by Santa Ana Road to the north, Fairview Road to the east, Hillcrest Road to the south, and El Toro Drive and Clearview Drive to the west. Route 25, extending partially down the San Felipe Road corridor until reaching the Downtown.
3. **Union Road Corridor**, which includes lands to the south of the City Limits, bounded to the north by Union Road, the east by State Route 25, to the south by the Ridgemark Golf Club and Resort, and to the west by Cienega Road. Route 25, extending partially down the San Felipe Road corridor until reaching the Downtown.

This section presents the GPAC land use recommendations for the three new Special Planning Areas. The descriptions of the GPAC recommendations refer to the existing General Plan Land Use Designations which are summarized in Table 2.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

#### ***Buena Vista Road/North Gateway Special Planning Area***

Figure 4 shows the GPAC recommendation for the Buena Vista Road/North Gateway Special Planning Area. The GPAC recommended that most of the existing General Plan Land Use designations within the City Limits be maintained with the following exceptions:

- Change the High Density Residential designation along the railroad corridor to Low Density Residential.
- Change parcels near the intersection of San Felipe Road and Highway 25 and near the intersection of Santa Ana Road and San Felipe Road from North Gateway Commercial to High Density Residential.

For parcels outside the City Limits, but within the SOI the GPAC made the following recommendation:

- Change some parcels along Buena Vista Road from Medium Density Residential to High Density Residential.

For parcels outside the SOI, the GPAC recommended that all parcels be designated as Agriculture.



**TABLE 2 EXISTING HOLLISTER GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

Land Use Designation	Description	Maximum Permitted Intensity
Residential Estate	Residential Estate is intended to provide sites for larger, distinctive residences in areas that the City does not provide public infrastructure	1 du/5 ac
Low Density Residential	Low Density Residential land uses are intended to provide sites for single-family detached units, zero lot-line single-family units	1 to 8 du/ac
Medium Density Residential	Medium Density Residential is intended to provide greater housing choices in the City for different family sizes and incomes (examples include duplexes and triplexes).	8 to 12 du/ac
High Density Residential	High Density Residential land uses are intended to provide sites for multi-family apartments, condos, row houses, apartments, court homes, and cluster housing.	12 to 35 du/ac
Mixed Use	Mixed Use is intended to promote a vertical or horizontal combination of residential and commercial uses within a single building or site. The designation is intended to encourage retail sales, service, office, and public uses on the ground floor with upper floors of office and residential uses.	25 to 40 du/ac
Downtown Commercial and Mixed Use	The designation is intended to encourage ground floor, pedestrian friendly, retail sales and service uses with upper floors of office and residential uses.	25 to 40 du/ac
Home Office	This designation allows residential and office uses, including administrative and professional offices, in the same area.	8 to 12 du/ac
West Gateway Commercial/Mixed Use	The goal of this designation is to foster an attractive entry to the City of Hollister by featuring community shopping, retail and offices with residential uses.	20 to 35 du/ac
North Gateway Commercial	The goal of this designation is to foster an attractive entry to Hollister by featuring commercial and service-oriented businesses along with uses such as office parks.	2.0 FAR
General Commercial	This designation allows for a variety of commercial uses and service-oriented businesses at scales ranging from large retail stores serving the community and region to smaller businesses oriented towards neighborhood activity.	2.0 FAR
Industrial	This designation provides for a range of uses, from business and research parks, large individual corporate establishments, professional and administrative offices and industrial complexes.	1.0 FAR
Airport Support	This designation allows industrial or commercial development on those areas that are adjacent to and have direct access to the Hollister Municipal Airport.	1.0 FAR
Airport	This designation is applied to publicly owned lands of the Hollister Municipal Airport. Uses include airport operations and support facilities as well as limited commercial and industrial uses incidental to and in support of the airport.	N/A
Public	This designation is applied to publicly and privately owned lands used for activities such as utilities, schools, and other City of Hollister, county, state or federal facilities.	1.0 FAR
Open Space	The Open Space designation is applied to public and privately owned lands used for low-intensity, open space activities such as hiking, walking or picnicking.	.01 FAR
Agriculture	The Agriculture designation encompasses lands with continuing commercial agriculture potential.	N/A

Source: City of Hollister; PlaceWorks, 2020.

### ***Meridian Road Extension Special Planning Area***

Figure 5 shows the GPAC recommendation for the Meridian Road Extension Special Planning Area which is entirely within the Sphere of Influence.

The GPAC made the following recommendations:

- To reflect the existing rural character of the area, designate additional parcels currently designated as Low Density Residential and Mixed Use to Residential Estate.
- Plan for the extension of Meridian Street, which would require a vehicular bridge crossing over an existing creek. Also, plan for the extension of Prater Street to Hillcrest Road. To maintain the rural character of this area and limit traffic speeds by adding a traffic [calming measures](#) at Prater Street and Meridian Street. [Traffic calming measures could include a traffic circle, narrowed right-of-way, or an offset configuration of the two Meridian Street segments at Prater Street](#) ~~circle~~.

### ***Union Road Special Planning Area***

Figure 6 shows the GPAC recommendation for the Union Road Special Planning Area. This Special Planning Area is entirely outside the City Limits and Sphere of Influence. The GPAC recommendation includes:

- Require the creation of a Specific Plan for proposed projects within the Union Road Special Planning Area.
- Establish a policy to preserve elements of the existing orchards in the Union Road Special Planning Area [such as retaining a small group of trees as part of a proposed project's landscaping](#).
- Change the area west of Southside Road and north of Union Road to Medium Density Residential from Low Density Residential. Maintain the Public designation of the Ladd Lane Elementary School.
- Change the area north of Union Road and east of Southside Road from Low Density Residential and Mixed Use to High Density Residential.
- Designate the area south of Union Road and east of Southside Road as Mixed Use.
- Designate the area south of Union Road and west of Southside Road as Agriculture. Note that this area does not currently have an existing General Plan Land Use designation.
- Expand the SOI to include the parcels with an urban land use designation.

Figure 4 Buena Vista Special Planning Area GPAC Recommendation

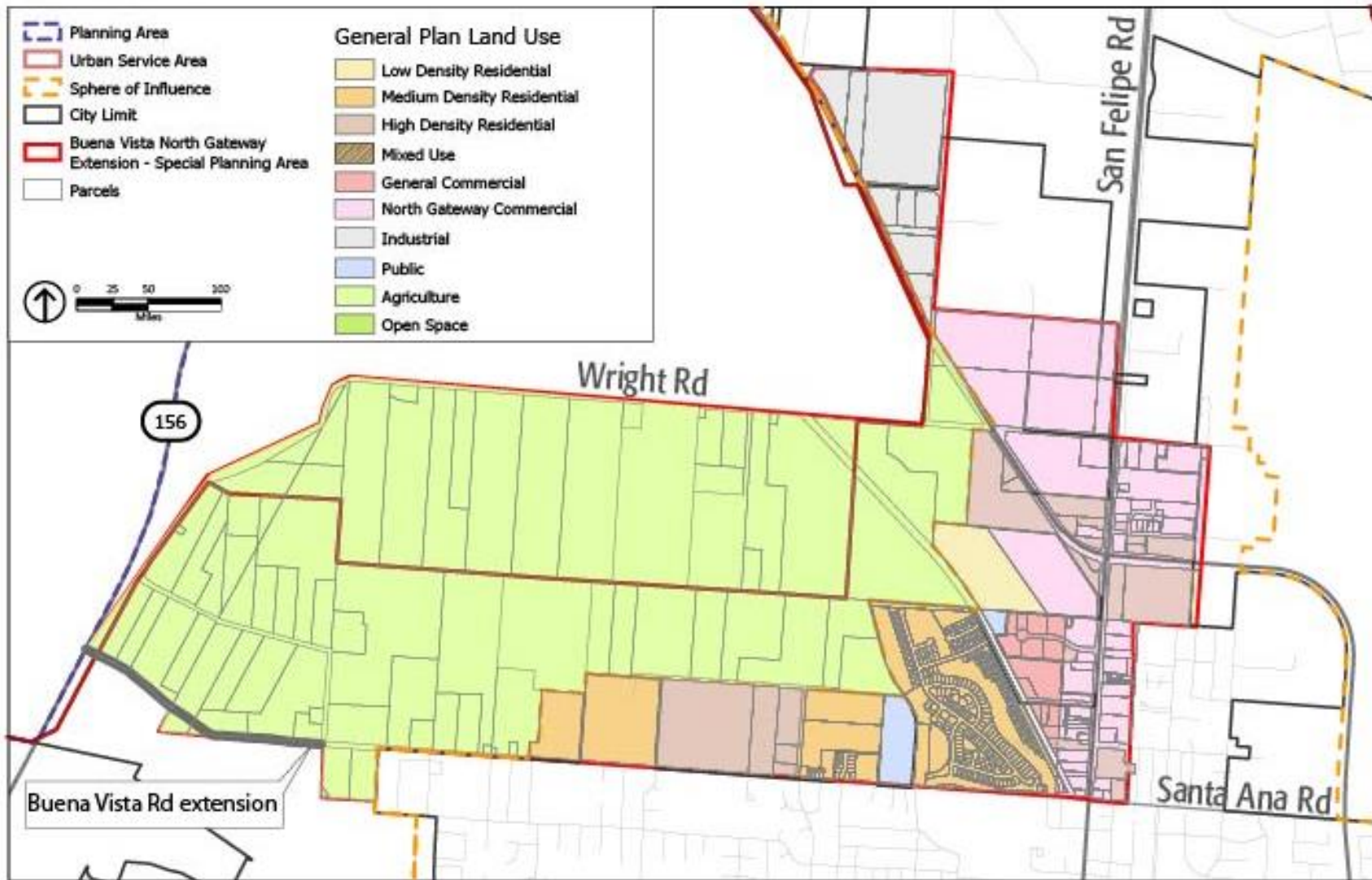


Figure 5 Meridian Road Special Planning Area GPAC Recommendation

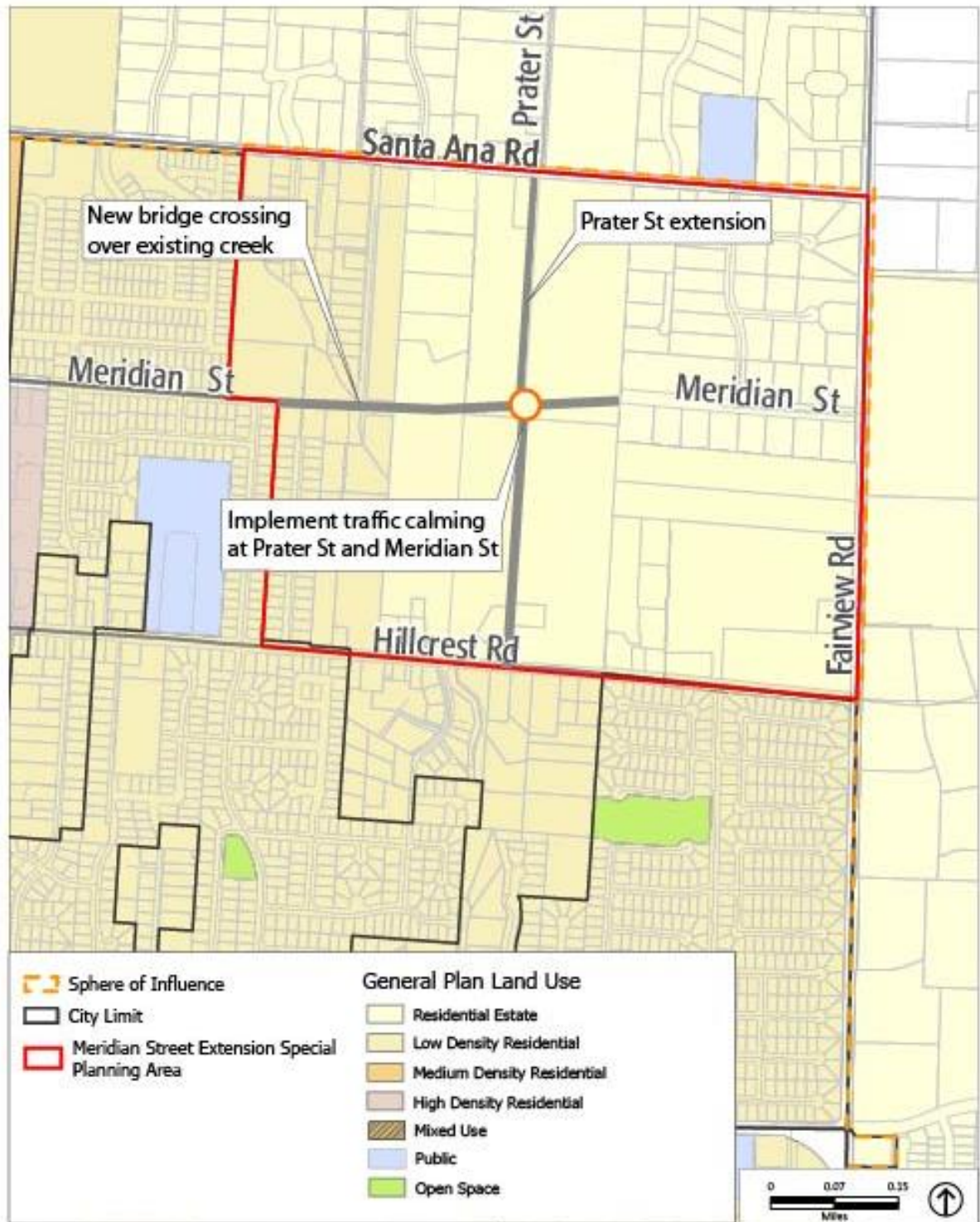
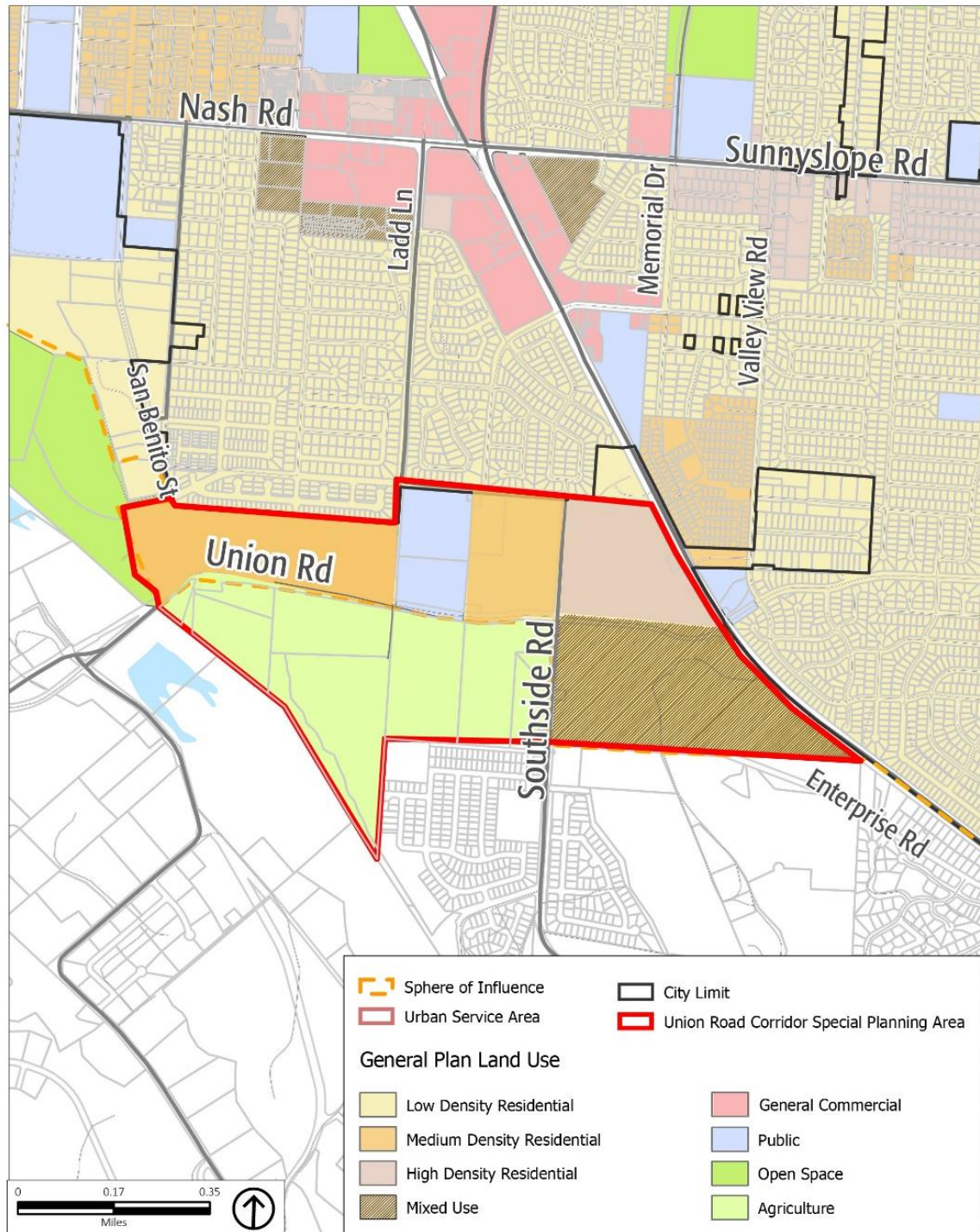




Figure 6 Union Road Special Planning Area GPAC Recommendation



## 17. Residential Land Use Designations

The 2005 General Plan establishes the minimum and maximum densities for the residential land use designations using net acres. This means the total allowed density of a parcel is calculated on the portion that could accommodate housing and excludes the portion that would accommodate roads and sidewalks. Other jurisdictions establish residential densities based on gross density. This means the total allowed density is based on the total area of the parcel.

In Hollister, using net density has obscured the project review process and has not produced the types of housing products envisioned by the General Plan. Project applicants cannot achieve the net density limits because the roadways and topography of a site reduce the area that could accommodate housing. Allowing projects to use gross density provides project applicants with certainty on what could be built and would accommodate a wider range of housing types. For example, although the Medium Density Residential designation allows for duplexes and triplexes at 8 to 12 units per net acre, Hollister developers can rarely propose projects that include these products because the net density has resulted in lower density projects at 5 to 9 dwelling units per gross acre. Basing the residential land use densities on gross acreage would provide project applicants with more certainty because densities would not change based on the roadway network. In addition, it could encourage new housing types in Hollister that would be affordable to lower incomes.

California Government Code Section 65583.2(c)(3)<sup>7</sup> requires housing elements to include an analysis of identified housing sites to demonstrate how the jurisdiction can accommodate their Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for lower-income households. The analysis must consider factors such as financial feasibility, market demand, and how the identified residential zones have previously accommodated housing for lower-income households. The City would need to demonstrate that proposed residential projects are built at the higher end of the allowed density range, which has not historically been the case in Hollister. In addition, although Hollister has enough vacant residential and mixed-use land to accommodate more than 2,000 residential units, more than half of the available land supply is designated as mixed-use. Since Hollister has had few mixed-use development projects in recent history, it is unlikely the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) would allow these sites to count toward the City's RHNA.

However, the State provides an option, known as the "default density option," to bypass this analysis if jurisdictions choose housing sites that meet the State's minimum density requirement. Per the State, Hollister would need to establish a minimum residential density of 20 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).

The 2005 General Plan includes a High-Density Residential land use designation that allows residential development at a density range of 12 to 35 du/ac. The HMC includes a High-Density Multifamily Residential (R4-20) zoning designation that allows multifamily residential development at 20 to 35 du/ac and a maximum building height of 45 feet. However, the R4-20 zoning designation is not currently applied to any parcels within the city. To meet the State's default density requirements, the City would need to establish a General Plan residential land use designation with a default density of 20 du/ac, which could be implemented by the R4-20 zoning designation.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=65583.2.&lawCode=GOV](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=65583.2.&lawCode=GOV)

Should the City Council want to pursue the default density option, the City would need to designate enough land at the 20 du/ac minimum density to cover 150 percent of the City's 5th Cycle Housing Element (the remaining need only<sup>8</sup>) and 6th Cycle Housing Element RHNA for the very low- and low-income allocations. Although the City will not know what the 6th Cycle RHNA will be until early 2022, the City can use the 5th Cycle allocation as a proxy since the 6th Cycle will likely be in that same range. As shown in the table below, the City would need to designate approximately 65.6 acres of land at the default minimum density of 20 du/ac. To be eligible as a Housing Element site, the parcels should be vacant and without an approved or pending development application.

**TOTAL ACRES OF LAND DESIGNATED AT 20 DU/AC NEEDED TO MEET STATE DEFAULT DENSITY OPTION**

Income Category	5 <sup>th</sup> Cycle Allocation (Housing Units)	Remaining 5 <sup>th</sup> Cycle Need (Housing Units)	Estimated 6 <sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA (Housing Units)	Remaining 5 <sup>th</sup> Cycle + Estimated 6 <sup>th</sup> Cycle (Housing Units)	Default Density Designation Need (Acres)
Very Low	312	266	312	578	43.3
Low	189	108	189	297	22.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>65.6</b>

Source: PlaceWorks, 2021.

To accommodate affordable housing options and a variety of housing types, the City could also reexamine the density limits for the Downtown Commercial and Mixed-Use Zone. Although developers are allowed to build 12 to 35 du/ac in the Downtown, the small parcels limit what can actually be built. Raising the maximum residential density to 125 du/ac per gross acre for mixed-use projects in the Downtown could potentially encourage developers to add residential components to their projects.

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policy recommendations:

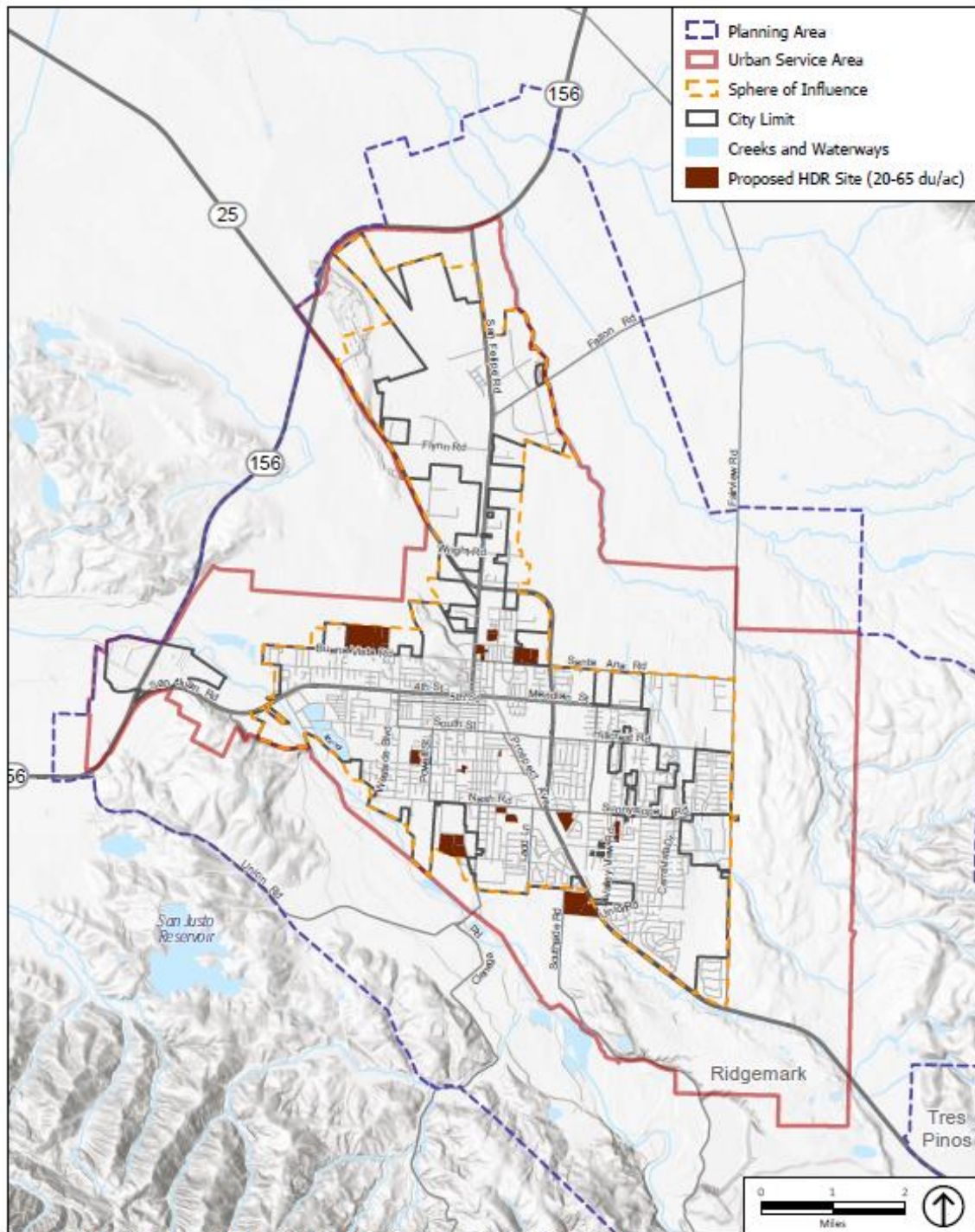
- Base the residential density limits on gross acreage and maintain the existing residential density ranges.
- Create a new residential designation that specifies a minimum density of 20 du/ac. The GPAC recommended that these sites be spread throughout the city. Figure 7 shows the potential HDR sites. These sites are all vacant or underutilized parcels without proposed or planned development projects.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The remaining housing need reflects the 5th Cycle RHNA minus the number of housing permits issued by the City for the very low- and low-income categories during the 5th Cycle.

<sup>9</sup> Note that the GPAC had originally requested the area bounded by State Route 25, Santa Ana Road, and North Chappell Road and some vacant parcels along Santa Ana Road be considered for High Density Residential uses. However, there are pending development applications for these parcels, so City staff does not recommend including these parcels



Figure 7 Proposed High Density Residential Sites with a Minimum Density of 20 du/ac



as part of the High Density Residential sites inventory since they would not be eligible for the Housing Element sites inventory.



- Increase the maximum density of the High Density Residential designation from 45 du/ac to 65 du/ac.
- Increase the maximum residential density in the Downtown from 35 du/ac to 125 du/ac.

## **18. Inclusionary Housing**

To address housing affordability and supply, many jurisdictions are adopting inclusionary housing policies. An inclusionary housing policy requires developers to allocate a percentage of new market-rate housing developments for low- and moderate-income families. Inclusionary housing policies provide a wide range of community benefits, including:

- Increasing housing affordability and equity by giving lower-income households more choices on where to live.
- Reducing housing segregation by spreading affordable housing throughout the community.
- Supporting the City's efforts to implement the State-mandated RHNA targets.

During community workshops, participants voiced the need for more affordable housing and a diversity of housing options to accommodate current residents and future generations. Hollister's existing housing stock is approximately 80 percent single-family residential, which limits the housing choices affordable to low-income residents.

However, developers and homebuilders often oppose inclusionary housing policies because it reduces the profit margin of the project. If an inclusionary housing policy does not include incentives to offset the cost, private developers and homebuilders could end up taking their housing development to an adjoining city or county without an inclusionary housing policy. Incentives such as in-lieu housing fees, allowing off-site construction of affordable units, or accepting an equivalent land donation from the developer for future affordable housing can help offset costs associated with providing the affordable units. California State law requires jurisdictions provide alternative ways to comply with the inclusionary housing policy for rental inclusionary housing.

To ensure that the inclusionary housing policy reflects the local market demand, jurisdictions will often undertake a feasibility study to help determine the appropriate inclusionary housing targets. The feasibility study will assess local residential development conditions, the economic tradeoffs of the potential requirements, and whether the proposed ordinance will produce the housing stock needed by the community.

Over the last few years, the City of Hollister has been laying the groundwork to create an inclusionary housing policy. The 2016 Housing Element includes a policy that calls for the City to create an inclusionary housing strategy that identifies standards by which additional density can be allowed when projects provide a defined percentage of units as affordable to low- and moderate-income households. In 2007, the HMC incorporated an inclusionary housing requirement for conversions of multifamily

rental units to market-rate multifamily units.<sup>10</sup> However, the City could expand this policy to be applied to new residential projects.

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended establishing an inclusionary housing program that would apply to single-family and multi-family projects with the following parameters:

- Require 20 percent of the units be affordable for moderate, low- and very low-incomes. Note State law allows jurisdictions to establish a 15 percent affordable requirement by right. Should the Council confirm an inclusionary housing program with a target above 15 percent, the City would need undertake a feasibility study to determine the program will not be an impediment for housing production.
- Do not allow alternative compliance to the inclusionary housing program for “for sale” projects such as payment of an in-lieu housing fee, land dedication, or allowing the off-site construction of affordable units.

As part of this discussion, the GPAC also recommended the following policy for new single family subdivisions:

- Require single-family subdivisions of 40 units or greater to include 10 percent of the units as multi-family family buildings of four units or more.

## **19. Historic and Cultural Resources**

At the 2020 General Plan visioning workshops and GPAC meetings, community members identified the preservation of historic and cultural resources as a key issue the General Plan Update should address. The Draft General Plan Vision also recognizes the community’s desire to preserve its historical past.

There are federal and State regulations that provide for the protection of historic and cultural resources such as the National Historic Preservation Act, California Register of Historic Resources, and CEQA. In the General Plan Planning Area, a search of the California Built Environment Resources Directory identified 363 non-archeological cultural resources.<sup>11</sup> There are two recognized historic districts, the Downtown Hollister Historic District and Monterey Street Historic District. The Downtown Hollister Historic District is concentrated along San Benito Street, between 4th and South Streets, and it became listed on the National Register of Historic Places in January 1993. The Monterey Street Historic District is primarily composed of single-family residences built between 1875 to 1941 and is located near Monterey Street. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in December 1992.

The 2005 General Plan includes four policies that focus on preservation of historic and cultural resources in Hollister. Policy LU 1.2 encourages supplementing the existing historic preservation

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<sup>10</sup> [https://library.municode.com/ca/hollister/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT16SU\\_CH16.17COMUREUN\\_16.17.080INHORECOMUREHO](https://library.municode.com/ca/hollister/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT16SU_CH16.17COMUREUN_16.17.080INHORECOMUREHO)

<sup>11</sup> Office of Historic Preservation, March 2020. *Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD)*, <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1068/files/San%20Benito.csv>, accessed on May 6, 2020.

ordinance with an inventory of potential sites and structures with architectural, historic, archaeological, and cultural significance. Policy LU 5.2 promotes mixed-use development types that preserve the cultural and historical significance in Downtown Hollister. Policy LU 1.4 encourages adoption of a historical building code that exceeds State standards and Policy LU 8.2 helps ensure existing historical neighborhoods remain intact by prohibiting incompatible uses and development types. In addition to these policies, the 2005 General Plan includes an implementation measure to consider listing Hollister's most significant structures or sites in the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places.

Chapter 15.16 of the HMC, Historic Resources, ensures that the character and history of Hollister are reflected in its cultural, historical, and architectural heritage and includes the following:

- Requirements for a historic resources commission should one be formed in the future.
- Procedures for establishing or changing a historic resource designation.
- Provisions for maintenance and repair of historic resources.
- Outlines the appeal process and penalties for any person who constructs, alters, removes, or demolishes a historic resource in violation of the code.
- A performance standard which requires cessation of construction activity if archaeological or historic resources are discovered during construction activities.

The General Plan Update could bolster existing policy direction to support the formation of a historic resources committee. In addition, community members suggested that the San Benito County Historical Society be consulted when a project could affect a historic or cultural resource.

The City could also consider offering incentives to preserve historic and cultural resources. Development incentives can encourage property owners to invest in a historic property by increasing the cost effectiveness of the project. Potential incentives include:

- Expediting the permitting process.
- Waiving or reducing City development fees.
- Reducing parking requirements.

Sometimes it may not be feasible to preserve a historic building in its original state because the building no longer meets modern needs. Some jurisdictions allow the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, which generally preserves the exterior of the building but modernizes the interior to improve the building's function. Adaptive reuse can make it financially feasible to preserve historic buildings and could be a useful tool for Hollister, particularly because many historic buildings in the Downtown need costly seismic upgrades.

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to support tribal and cultural resources:

- Form a historic resources commission whose function would be to evaluate the proposed demolition or alteration of historic buildings or cultural resources to minimize development impact.
- Establish incentives for property owners to preserve historic and cultural resources, such as expediting the permitting process, waiving or reducing City development

fees, reducing parking requirements, and/or encouraging the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

- Support the development of a comprehensive inventory of cultural and historic resources.
- Educate the public about Hollister’s historic and cultural resources.
- Encourage interpretive signage and education for known tribal and cultural resource sites.

## **20. Coordination with Local Tribes**

The State requires lead agencies, often cities and counties, to consult with local tribes on development projects to understand whether a project could impact tribal cultural resources (TCRs). A TCR is defined as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes (must be geographically defined in terms of size and scope), sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe. TCRs may differ from what the scientific or archaeological communities define as cultural resources.

Early and ongoing dialogue between tribes and lead agencies is central to successful tribal consultation efforts, and it is beneficial to build trust and relationships with tribes that may be interested in projects in and around Hollister. As trust is built, tribe members may feel more comfortable disclosing the location and nature of TCRs. As required by AB 52, the City must consult with the local tribes when a potential planning or development project is initiated to understand what Native Americans consider important and why; and to determine mutually acceptable mitigation measures, if needed. Not all tribes hold the same beliefs, so the City won’t know what a tribe values until it establishes a relationship with them. Through the General Plan Update outreach process, GPAC members and meeting participants expressed support for strengthened tribal coordination policies in the General Plan Update.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed for the General Plan Update:

- Acknowledge the importance of TCRs (as distinct from listed archeological or historic sites).
- State the City’s intention to take concrete steps to preserve TCRs.
- Support the tribal consultation process, relationship building, and respect for TCRs.
- Require a pre-construction investigation of potential TCRs if they are found on development sites.

## **21. Environmental Justice**

SB 1000 requires General Plans address environmental justice by including goals, policies, and actions that:

- Reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by reducing pollution exposure and promoting public improvements, public services, community amenities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.

- Promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process.
- Prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

SB 1000 only applies if there are disadvantaged communities (DAC) in the jurisdiction. A DAC is defined as low-income areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation. Although Hollister does not have DACs that meet the State definition, given the significant farmworker community, specific attention should be given to assess and address the needs of underserved communities in the city.

Under SB 1000, the General Plan Update process must address specific topics in the new/updated goals, policies, and actions, including:

- Promoting projects that would improve access to affordable and nutritious food in disadvantaged or underserved communities.
- Creating safer and more comfortable streetscapes for pedestrians and bicyclists to increase physical activity.
- Reducing exposure to pollution and air quality.
- Promoting public participation in planning processes.
- Prioritizing improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged or underserved communities.
- Ensuring equal access to public facilities.

Through the 2020 visioning workshops and GPAC meetings, the community has cited key issues in Hollister concerning their natural environment, safe and walkable neighborhoods promoting physical activity, access to healthy food, and reducing long commutes. The Draft General Plan Vision introduces equity as one of Hollister's four key values, stating that the City will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, there is equal access to City services and infrastructure, and the effects of future decisions are shared by the entire community.

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the General Plan include a standalone Environmental Justice Element and policies that:

- Encourage the development of complete neighborhoods that provide for the basic needs of daily life, such as access to employment, fresh food, transit options, spaces for physical activity, and social connection, and for the health, safety, and mental well-being of residents.
- Promote projects that would improve access to affordable and nutritious food in disadvantaged or underserved communities.
- Reduce exposure to pollutants in disadvantaged or underserved communities by prohibiting the co-location of incompatible land uses (e.g., childcare centers and industrial uses) and restricting truck routes to commercial corridors to the extent feasible.

- Establish a public participation process in City planning projects that targets disadvantaged or underserved communities.
- Prioritize infrastructure improvements and City recreational programs that serve disadvantaged and underserved communities.

## ARTS AND CULTURE ELEMENT

This section presents the GPAC policy recommendations related to arts and culture, which is a new element incorporated as part of the General Plan Update.

Arts and culture can be one of the Hollister's most dynamic aspects, drawing on the leadership, resources and creative energy of community members, businesses, non-profits and public agencies. Arts and culture can also be one of Hollister's most unique aspects, as diverse as the creative traditions and voices of the people who live and work in the city. Arts and culture can be a pillar of economic development, uniquely rooted in the City's historic, agricultural and tourism resources.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

Through the General Plan Update outreach process, community members expressed interest in focusing and expanding efforts to support the city's creative life. The input received during this process can be summarized in six key goals as recommended by the GPAC:

1. **Leadership:** Cultivate strong, cooperative and diverse and culture arts leadership in government, educational, private and non-profit sectors.
2. **Cultural Environment:** Recognize and support the diverse creative voices and practices of people and organizations in the city to sustain a vibrant and authentic cultural environment.
3. **Arts Every Day:** Support broad access to and participation in the arts for everyone in the city.
4. **Creative Identity:** Develop a distinct identity for Hollister as a regional destination for arts, culture and creative enterprises, within the greater San José region and within the San Benito, Santa Cruz and Monterey County sub-region.
5. **Place:** Pursue physical planning and design strategies that support and give visual presence to the city's creative life, culture and history. Ensure there are adequate facilities for the production, presentation and sale of art in the city.
6. **Arts Ecosystem:** Facilitate the creation, delivery and enjoyment of the arts and encourage the growth of creative industries, through strategic public and private actions; seek linkages to the city's tourism strategies.
7. **Sustainability.** Develop ongoing funding streams for both arts programming and long-term capital investments related to arts and culture.

To improve the capacity to expand and foster Hollister's arts and culture sector, the GPAC recommended the following policies be developed:

- Support Arts and Culture Commission leadership on advising the City Council on priorities for arts and culture planning, programming and investments.
- Provide a City to liaison to arts, culture and creative enterprises and organizations, prioritizing matters such as funding and event coordination.
- Support the creation or designation of a non-profit entity that can serve as a fiscal agent for individual artists and arts organizations that have not formally incorporated but would like to seek grants.
- Ensure that arts and culture leadership is reflective of the city's diversity.
- Support shared-use agreements between arts organizations with a need for space and non-profits, public agencies and private entities with available space.
- Support pipeline to work programs linking secondary school students to creative careers.
- Support the development of a strategic plan for the San Benito Arts Council.

To guide the funding and expansion of arts and cultural programs in Hollister, the GPAC recommended the following policies be developed:

- Explore sustainable public funding streams for arts and culture events, program and activities from ongoing sources.
- Explore funding streams for physical arts and culture investments, including impact fees.
- Incorporate public art into major new private developments, especially Downtown projects and civic / institutional projects elsewhere in the city.
- Incorporate art and culture actions into Downtown revitalization efforts.
- Work collaboratively with arts and culture organizations to obtain arts and culture grants from national funders.

To include the development of arts and cultural plans, facilities and programming, the GPAC recommended the following policies be developed:

- Undertake a placemaking plan that considers both public art and other place activation strategies.
- Examine the need for a community arts center, considering its mission, audience, function, operating entity and funding and determine whether to move forward. [As part of this study, consider the potential for the arts center to include historical displays and exhibits.](#)
- Evaluate the potential for an arts and culture district in Hollister, considering both downtown and a naturally occurring cultural district outside downtown, building consensus on needs, goals and actions.

- Evaluate the need, opportunities and strategies for creating artist living and work space.
- Support the provision of mini-grants for small-scale creative activations, such as activities in public spaces, murals and exhibitions in interior spaces that are open to the general public (such as coffee shops, libraries and recreation centers).
- Establish a yearly arts festival.
- Incorporate public art into city infrastructure and public space projects, including small-scale enhancements of existing infrastructure.

Develop strategies for maintaining public art that the city owns.

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to provide the regulatory framework for arts and cultural programming in Hollister:

- Create land-use policies that support destination creative enterprises.
- Explore and resolve permitting, zoning and licensing issues to support the arts, culture and entertainment uses downtown, including indoor and outdoor business spaces, public spaces and vacant spaces.
- Explore and resolve permitting, zoning and licensing issues to support low-impact creative enterprises in neighborhoods.
- Affirm Hollister's commitment to allowing free expression of murals on private property, while protecting against using murals for advertising.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY ELEMENT**

The existing 2005 General Plan does not include goals explicitly related to climate change, the potential changes to known natural hazards, or the potential for new hazards which occur as a result of climate change. The City of Hollister will plan for the effects of climate change through preparation of its first Climate Action Plan (CAP) as part of the General Plan Update. The CAP is a strategic planning document that will provide policies and actions which will help the City and the community at large to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improve community resilience to hazardous conditions associated with climate change. The City of Hollister CAP will be prepared concurrent with the General Plan Update process.

### **22. Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

GHG emissions are generated by various activities that are largely commonplace in daily life. The Hollister CAP will assess recent and projected future levels of GHGs, establish GHG emission reduction targets, and set forward policies and a roadmap to help meet the city's GHG reduction goals.

The first step in preparing a CAP is the preparation of assessments called GHG inventories to quantify the amount of GHG emissions that the Hollister community generates and to set targets for reducing such emissions. The inventories will assess emissions that are attributed to the community through the activities of residents, businesses, and visitors. Some daily activities release emissions in the location of the activity, such as gases released anytime a car is driven. On the other hand, some activities cause



emissions to be released elsewhere, such as someone using electricity to power their home, which generates emissions in the location of the power plant that supplies the power, and not in the home itself.

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) Energy Watch program prepares GHG inventories for all member jurisdictions, including the City of Hollister. To date, AMBAG has assisted the City with preparation of their 2005, 2010, 2015, 2017, and 2018 community-wide GHG emissions inventories. The community-wide GHG inventory evaluates emissions released from several sectors, including residential, nonresidential (commercial and industrial), transportation, solid waste, and wastewater. The Hollister community emitted 105,001 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2018. Of these emissions, approximately 45 percent came from the transportation sector, 25 percent from the residential sector, 14 percent from the nonresidential (commercial and industrial) sector, 16 percent from the solid waste sector, and less than one percent from the wastewater sector. Within the residential and the nonresidential (commercial and industrial) sectors, emissions are broken down into two subsectors: electricity and natural gas use. Among the residential sector, approximately 14 percent of emissions came from electricity and 86 percent from natural gas. Similarly, among the nonresidential sector, approximately 24 percent of emissions came from electricity and 76 percent from natural gas.

The AMBAG GHG inventories show that Hollister reduced their annual community-wide GHG emissions by 16 percent between 2005 and 2018, while continuing to add jobs, new homes, businesses, and residents to the community. Most of the GHG emission reductions occurred in the residential and the commercial and industrial sectors, particularly the electricity subsector. These sectors were largely successful in such a dramatic reduction due to increased renewable energy sources provided through Central Coast Community Energy (3CE), previously known as Monterey Bay Community Power. While emissions from transportation and solid waste activities increased from 2005 to 2018, the decreases in emissions associated with energy use were enough to offset this change.

Central Coast Community Energy (3CE), previously known as Monterey Bay Community Power, is the default electricity provider in Hollister. Local governments in the region created 3CE to provide greater choice over sources and prices of electricity, as well as providing increased access to certain funding sources. Central Coast Community Energy will provide 100 percent clean and renewable energy by 2030 – 15 years ahead of California’s requirement of 100 percent zero-carbon energy by 2045. The State’s current goals and targets are as follows:

- Reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020
- Reduce GHG emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030
- Net carbon neutral emissions by 2045
- Reduce GHG emissions 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050

#### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the General Plan develop the following policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions:

- Become a carbon neutral community before 2045.
- Meet the State’s GHG reduction goals.

- Reduce energy use through use of energy efficient appliances, lighting, and materials in our homes, businesses, and City facilities and use education and incentives to promote and sustain energy conserving design and practices.
- Transition to carbon free energy sources in new and existing development.
- Increase local renewable energy and energy storage facilities.
- Promote sustainable infill and mixed-use development.
- Transition to low or no-carbon transportation, which could include installation electric vehicle charging stations at public and private facilities, expansion of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and conversion to zero emissions fleets and buses.
- Become a zero-waste community by working to reduce and ultimately eliminate single-use materials, like plastic cups, Styrofoam containers, and similar disposable items, from our landfills, and to support reuse of materials and products, repair and sharing of items, and relying on sustainable materials to build our homes and businesses.
- Reduce water use by encouraging low water landscaping, using greywater, installing water-efficient appliances, and encouraging conservation efforts.

## 23. Natural Hazards and Climate Change Susceptibility

The General Plan Planning Area is susceptible to several climate hazards, including flooding, extreme heat, drought, and wildfire as described below.

### *Flooding*

Potential flooding in the General Plan Planning Area is most likely to occur adjacent to waterways, largely around the San Benito River to the southwest and Santa Ana Creek to the northeast of the General Plan Planning Area. Both the San Benito River and the Santa Ana Creek are principal drainage basins for the region and all water drainage in the General Plan Planning Area ends up in one of these two basins. Flooding events in the region are known to occur every four to five years. Climate change is projected to increase the occurrence of severe weather events, including intense atmospheric river storms during winter, which could increase the frequency of locally significant rainfall events.<sup>12</sup> Such events could increase the frequency of rain beyond the capacity of the San Benito River and Santa Ana Creek basins, resulting in greater flooding.

Damage as a result of flooding in and around the General Plan Planning Area would largely occur on agricultural lands in the form of agricultural losses, field work delays, and crop damages or loss. Flooding in urban areas can damage buildings, streets, bridges, and utility infrastructure.

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<sup>12</sup> Langridge, Ruth. (University of California, Santa Cruz). 2018. Central Coast Summary Report. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment. Publication number: SUM-CCCA4-2018-006. Page 6.

## *Drought*

A drought is defined as a period of drier-than-normal conditions that reduces water supplies. Droughts are becoming increasingly common throughout California. In urban areas, drought conditions can cause a decrease in available water supplies, which may lead to water conservation, water-use restrictions, and increases in water rates. Agriculture may also be affected by decreased water supplies or increases in prices, which may cause a decrease in agricultural production and create economic hardships for owners and agricultural workers. Depending on the length and severity of a drought incident, some communities may need to seek alternative water supplies, which can be a costly and lengthy process. In addition, prolonged drought conditions can change soil conditions, leading to increased flooding and increased amounts of dry vegetation, which could exacerbate wildfire risk. The longest and most recent drought in California lasted between approximately 2011 and 2017. This drought was among the most severe in the state's history, initiating widespread restrictions on water use.

The Central Coast region is particularly susceptible to severe drought because the area relies heavily on annual precipitation to restore water aquifers. However, precipitation in the Central Coast region is becoming less frequent and consistent, sparking concerns that annual precipitation will not sustain annual water needs.<sup>13</sup> Droughts are also the most frequent of the natural hazards to occur in the General Plan Planning Area, with the most recent major drought lasting from 2011 to 2017.

Scientific studies indicate that extended drought conditions will become more frequent and more severe because of climate change. Warmer temperatures, greater swings in precipitation events, decreased levels of snowfall in the Sierra Nevada, and faster melting of snow are likely to lead to increased frequency and intensity of drought events, including an increase in severe, long-lasting “mega-drought” events.<sup>14</sup> This increase in the number and intensity of drought years, along with an increase in extreme heat events, is additionally anticipated to increase the frequency and severity of wildfire events.

## *Extreme Heat*

Extreme heat events are days where high temperatures significantly exceed normal levels. In Hollister, an extreme heat day is one with a high temperature above approximately 97 °F. Such events occur on average four times a year, but are projected to increase to 15 to 24 times a year by the end of the century.<sup>15</sup> During extreme heat events, temperatures can reach dangerously high levels, which can lead to heat stroke and death. Some populations are more prone to extreme heat exposure, such as outdoor workers, athletes, and children. Prolonged exposure to extreme heat can also impact plants and animals, such as farm animals in outdoor pens or fields, and outdoor plants ranging from small gardens

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<sup>13</sup> Escriva-Bou, Alvar, Public Policy Institute of California, April 10, 2018, 3 Things to Know about California Drought, <https://www.ppic.org/blog/3-things-know-california-droughts/>, accessed on June 25, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Langridge, Ruth. (University of California, Santa Cruz). 2018. Central Coast Summary Report. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment. Publication number: SUM-CCCA4-2018-006. Page 16.

<sup>15</sup> State of California Energy Commission, Cal-Adapt, Extreme Heat Days & Warm Nights tool, <https://cal-adapt.org/tools/extreme-heat/#:~:text=What%20is%20an%20extreme%20heat,1990%20between%20April%20and%20October.>, accessed on June 29, 2020.

to large agricultural fields. These plants and animals are particularly vulnerable in the absence of adequate shelter or water. A future increase in temperatures is expected to contribute to longer and more severe California droughts, which could create significant challenges for water supplies, natural ecosystems, and agricultural operations.

### *Wildfire*

Warm and dry conditions, winds, an abundant supply of dry brush that serves as fuel, and topography are all among the factors which contribute to wildfires. The General Plan Planning Area is known to have dry conditions and high winds that are anticipated to increase the frequency and severity of wildfire events.<sup>16</sup> However, the topography in the General Plan Planning Area is relatively flat and the Planning Area is only considered to have a moderate fire hazard risk. While the threat of wildfires in the General Plan Planning Area are not as high as in other areas in the region, increased temperatures, dryer conditions, and more severe wind events caused by climate change is anticipated to increase the frequency and severity of local wildfire events. The General Plan Planning Area would also be susceptible to air quality issues from smoke generated by nearby wildfires and fires occurring in the wider region.

### *GPAC Recommendation(s)*

The GPAC recommended the following policies be developed to reduce the impacts of natural hazards related to climate change:

- Promote tree planting to help shade and cool the community.
- Establish a network of equitably located Community Resilience Hubs, which are community resource centers to support education and information, tools and resources, pilot projects, and examples of sustainability and resilience. This Hubs can also be cooling centers and places of refuge during extreme events or disasters and centers for resource sharing after emergencies.
- Provide disaster preparedness education opportunities and materials in English and Spanish, and other relevant languages in the community.
- Promote vegetation management and fire-resistant site design on residential properties and businesses.
- Coordinate with local medical providers to ensure that low-cost medical and emergency medical services are available to all residents in the city.
- Encourage existing residences and businesses to transition to drought--resistant plants.
- Advertise water conservation efforts year-round and work to promote the many benefits of reducing water use, which could include cost savings and incentives.

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<sup>16</sup> Langridge, Ruth. (University of California, Santa Cruz). 2018. Central Coast Summary Report. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment. Publication number: SUM-CCCA4-2018-006. Page 167.