



# County of Santa Cruz

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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August 12, 2022

Agenda: August 24, 2022

Planning Commission  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**SUBJECT: Public hearing on recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding the proposed Year 2023 Growth Goal.**

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- 1) Conduct a public hearing on the proposed Year 2023 Growth Goal;
- 2) Adopt the attached Resolution (Exhibit A) recommending a Year 2023 Growth Goal of 0.5% for the unincorporated portion of Santa Cruz County; and
- 3) Recommend the filing of the CEQA Notice of Exemption (Exhibit B) with the Clerk of the Board.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Each year, the County is required to establish an annual growth goal for the upcoming calendar year. Staff is required to prepare an annual growth goal report, which includes information on population trends, a status report on the current year's allocations, potential impacts of growth, and a recommendation for the following year's growth goal.

The Year 2023 Growth Goal Report recommends a 0.5% growth rate for 2023, which translates to 256 market rate residential building permit allocations. Including 90 unused allocations projected to carry over from 2022, an estimated total of 346 allocations would be available in 2023. Following the Planning Commission's recommendation, the growth goal will be brought to the Board for final action on September 20, 2022.

## **BACKGROUND**

Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC) Chapters 12.02, 17.01, and 17.04 set out a growth management system that implements Measure J, the Growth Management Referendum approved by County voters in 1978. The growth management system requires the Board of Supervisors to establish an annual population growth goal of an amount that represents Santa Cruz County's fair share of statewide population growth. Each year a growth rate is set and then converted into a maximum number of "allocations" to be granted to market rate residential building permits in the unincorporated area for the coming year. The Year 2023 Growth Goal Report is included as Exhibit C.

## **ANALYSIS**

### Population Trends

According to the Census and the State Department of Finance (DOF) population estimates, the unincorporated area had a growth rate of 1.6% in 2020. This growth is uncharacteristically high for our jurisdiction, and this population influx subsequently retracted in 2021 by an estimated -3.2%. However, US Census data from 2020 indicates that population in the unincorporated area has steadily increased over the last decade. By comparison, the County as a whole decreased by -1.6% in 2020 and remained stagnant at essentially 0% growth in 2021. The state population also decreased by -0.6% in 2020 and -0.3% in 2021. These rates reflect the recent decline in state population estimates since the COVID-19 pandemic began and mark a major shift in the state's historical trend of continued population growth.

Population estimates for cities and unincorporated counties are determined using the Housing Unit Method (HUM), which means the number of new units constructed each year plays a large part in determining annual population estimates. The DOF also notes that the state's unprecedented negative growth rate in 2021 is the result of four major factors: the continuing national trend of low birth rates compared to death rates as Baby Boomers age, continuing declines in immigration that have been accelerated by recent federal policy, federal delays in processing foreign migration, and increased deaths as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pandemic-driven shifts in college student populations related to UC Santa Cruz and Cabrillo College was likely a major contributor to recent population growth rates in our region as well. As deaths related to the pandemic decline and with federal policy changes, it is expected that the state will return to a positive annual growth rate in coming years.

### Potential Impacts from Population Growth

The County's growth management system (Measure J) was instituted to address resource and public services impacts of growth in the County. The most significant concern regarding resources and infrastructure has been the potential and actual water supply shortfall. However, as discussed in Section IV of the attached report, water agencies countywide are addressing this concern, including the water districts and groundwater agencies for the Santa Margarita, Mid-County, and Pajaro Valley groundwater basins.

Urban service impacts of existing and new development are also being addressed by a number of County initiatives to plan, finance, and construct capital improvements, particularly transportation improvements. Traffic congestion is a significant concern facing residents throughout the County and a number of efforts are underway to address this issue, including regional highway plans and improvements, a major Soquel Drive improvement project, implementation of a newly adopted County Active Transportation Plan, as well as analysis on potential future improvements as part of the Sustainability Update, the County’s comprehensive update to the General Plan.

Affordable Housing Goals

SCCC section 17.01.030 requires at least 15% of new housing units constructed each year to be affordable to moderate income and below moderate-income households. Over the 43 years since Measure J was first implemented, 16.3% of all new residential development has been constructed as affordable housing. Approximately 57% of new residential building permits approved so far this year are affordable, and more affordable units are expected as construction of housing projects continue.

In order to support affordable housing goals, the County continues to exempt affordable housing units and accessory dwelling units from the need to obtain permit allocations under the County’s growth management regulations. The development of affordable units would, therefore, not be affected by the adopted growth goal.

Density Bonus Report

As of July 1, three new density bonus project applications have been submitted this year, and three projects are in preliminary review. Three density bonus projects are currently in construction: the Habitat for Humanity project on Harper Street, which includes 11 for-sale affordable units, the MidPen Housing project on Capitola Road, a mixed-use project that includes 57 rental units, including 56 affordable units, and the Soquel Townhomes projects, which includes 15 townhomes, two of which are affordable.

Status of the 2022 Residential Building Permit Allocations

A total of 26 allocations have been granted this year as of July 1, which is higher than the 21 allocations granted at the same time last year. If demand continues at the current rate, approximately 52 allocations will be granted by the end of 2022. The table below shows market rate allocations granted in the first six months of 2022:

	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
Allocations set by Board <sup>(1)</sup>	98	32
Allocations Granted	20	6
<b>Remaining Allocations Available <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>78</b>	<b>26</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> Does not include 69 urban and 14 rural carryover units from 2021.

Due to low demand so far this year, sufficient allocations should be available to meet building permit needs in both urban and rural categories through the end of the year.

Although allocations remain low, a number of major residential projects are currently in construction, including the density bonus projects noted above as well as the 100% affordable residential housing project in south County known as Pippin Orchards II. These projects are reflected in Table 10 of the attached report, which shows that 219 housing units were issued building permits as of July 1 of this year, including 125 affordable units. Based on building permit trends from the last few years, residential development in our area is on the rise and increased demand for market rate permits may continue through next year.

Proposed 2023 Growth Goal

In past years, the County’s growth goal has been consistent with the State of California’s growth rate. As noted above, however, there were a number of anomalies in the state’s 2020 and 2021 growth rates that contributed to the population decline. In addition, permit activity related to an increasing number of density bonus projects in the County’s permit pipeline indicate a potentially high demand for market rate permits in the coming year. Moreover, the County of Santa Cruz is in the final few years of the 2014-2023 Regional Housing Needs Allocation cycle, but so far just over half of the units allocated to our region have been built, with 266 market rate permits allocated for the remaining two years of this planning period. In consideration of this information, analyzed further in the attached report (Exhibit C), staff recommends a 0.5% growth rate for calendar year 2023.

Each year the growth goal rate is translated into a maximum number of allocations for market rate residential building permits. The proposed 0.5% growth rate would result in 256 residential building permit allocations available for 2023. The 256 allocations available for 2023 will be distributed between urban and rural areas as shown below:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Allocations</b>	<b>Carryover*</b>	<b>Total 2023 Allocations*</b>
Urban	193	58	251
Rural	63	20	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>334</b>

\*Includes projected year-end allocations available based on continuation of allocation rate from first six months of 2022.

The 256 allocations established for 2023 is expected to be sufficient to address demand for residential building permits, and the projected 78 unused allocations that will carry over from 2022 will be available to address any unforeseen increase in demand in 2023.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The establishment of the Year 2023 Growth Goal is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA §15308 “Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment,” and §15061(b)(3) “where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the activity may have a significant effect on the environment.” A Notice of Exemption has been prepared for your consideration and recommendation (Exhibit B).

Sincerely,

Natisha Williams  
Planner IV

Stephanie Hansen  
Assistant Director –  
Policy, Housing & Code Compliance

Exhibits:

- A: Planning Commission Resolution
- B: CEQA Notice of Exemption
- C: Report on the Year 2023 Growth Goal

BEFORE THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

On the motion of Commissioner  
duly seconded by Commissioner  
the following is adopted:

**PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING  
ANNUAL GROWTH GOAL FOR THE YEAR 2023**

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WHEREAS, the County of Santa Cruz's ("County") Growth Management System, which implements provisions of Measure J approved by the voters of Santa Cruz County in 1978, requires the County to set an annual growth goal for the upcoming year; and

WHEREAS, as part of that process, staff prepares a Growth Goal Report for consideration by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors; and

WHEREAS, the County's Growth Management System is inclusionary of the needs of, and provides housing opportunities for, low- and moderate-income persons; and

WHEREAS, the County has exempted building permits for housing units that are affordable to average (moderate) or below average (lower) income households as defined in Santa Cruz County Code ("SCCC") Chapter 17.10 from the requirement to obtain a residential building permit allocation; and

WHEREAS, in most years the County has a carryover of unused market rate building permit allocations from the prior year that can be made available for use in the current year if needed; and

WHEREAS, rapid population growth could cause extremely serious adverse environmental and economic effects, some of which are specified below:

1. The County possesses significant agricultural lands, including prime agricultural lands, and agricultural lands which, while not defined as "prime," are economically productive or potentially economically productive. Such agricultural lands are a local, state, and national resource, which should be preserved.
2. Rapid population growth could also threaten the timber harvesting and mineral industries, which are significant contributors to the County's economy.

3. The County has other important natural resources, including wildlife, anadromous fish, and unique plant communities, which should be preserved, and which would also be endangered by rapid growth and inappropriate development.
4. Coastal lagoons and marine habitats, which should be preserved for their economic and biologic value, could be degraded or destroyed by rapid population growth and inappropriate development.
5. Rapid population growth could degrade the County's air and water quality and thereby threaten the health and well-being of present and future residents.
6. The scenic and aesthetic qualities of the County could be destroyed by inappropriately placed development.
7. The "safe yield" capacity of natural surface and groundwater sources is already being exceeded in many areas of the County, resulting in water supply and water quality problems, some of which will be irreversible or extremely expensive to correct and which may threaten future agricultural water supply and, consequently, the commercial agriculture in the County; and

WHEREAS, population growth and development has expanded the demand for government-provided services beyond the ability of the public to pay for and provide such services, including, in many parts of the County, the public is specifically challenged to pay for, provide, or adequately maintain the following services required by new development:

1. An adequate number of elementary and secondary school classrooms and teachers.
2. Adequate law enforcement and fire protection.
3. Adequate roads, and sewer and water service; and

WHEREAS, school overcrowding, traffic congestion, and increasingly inadequate water supplies, roads, and sewage facilities will be the result of rapid population growth and development, problems that are greatly aggravated when new development takes place in rural areas rather than in areas where urban services can be provided at less cost to taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, adoption of a 0.5 percent growth rate for 2023 and a continuing exemption of affordable units from the need for residential permit allocations is anticipated to accommodate the recent rate of housing development and should not restrict the production of housing in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Crisis Act of 2019 (“SB 330”) prevents local jurisdictions from establishing or implementing limits on population or permits for housing units within an “affected county” while this statute is in place, from January 1, 2020, to January 1, 2030; and

WHEREAS, per SB 330, “affected county” is defined as a Census Designated Place (“CDP”) that is wholly located within the boundaries of a Census-designated urbanized area; and

WHEREAS, in Santa Cruz County, affected county areas include the following CDPs: Live Oak, Pasatiempo, Paradise Park, and Amesti; and

WHEREAS, SCCC 12.02.020(9) states that building permits may be determined, consistent with SCCC 17.01 and 17.04, to be exempt from the residential permit allocation system by resolution or ordinance of the Board of Supervisors, and this subsection may be applied to homes damaged or destroyed by the CZU August Lightning Complex Fires that began in August 2020 for the following reasons:

1. The CZU August Lightning Complex Fires (“Fires”) resulted in an unprecedented level of destroyed and damaged structures within unincorporated Santa Cruz County. Of the structures destroyed, an estimated 911 were single family homes, 3 were multi-family structures, and 148 were commercial or mixed-use structures. Approximately 90 of the damaged structures were residences.
2. Per SCCC 12.02.020(5), “An existing residential unit that has been destroyed, torn down, or damaged beyond 50 percent of its current market value may be replaced under an exempted permit provided the building is rebuilt on the same parcel or a contiguous parcel under the same ownership.”
3. Under normal circumstances, an unpermitted residential unit would receive a residential allocation when a replacement building permit is processed. The total number of unpermitted residential units impacted by the Fires is unknown at this time; however, it is likely that a significant number of unpermitted residential units may have been destroyed or damaged by the Fires.
4. Reconstruction of previously-unpermitted residential units destroyed or damaged by the Fires would not constitute new development because they would essentially replace existing residential units, even if the structures were not previously recognized by the County. These replacement permits would effectively maintain rather than increase population in areas of the County impacted by this disaster and, consequently, exempting these permits from the County’s residential building permit allocation system is consistent with the County’s Growth Management System and the Annual Population Growth Goal, established in SCCC 17.01 and

17.04, respectively; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and County environmental review guidelines, adoption of the 2023 Growth Goal has been found to be categorically exempt and a Notice of Exemption has been prepared;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Cruz County Planning Commission makes the following recommendations to the Board of Supervisors:

1. A population growth goal of 0.5% be established for 2023.
2. Building permit allocations for market rate units should be distributed as shown in Attachment A-1, with 75% of the 2023 growth in the urban portion of the unincorporated County, and 25% in the rural portion.
3. Unused 2022 market rate permit allocations shall be carried over to 2023.
4. In accordance with the Housing Crisis Act of 2019 (“SB 330”), Santa Cruz County will not enforce the Measure J Growth Goal limit on residential permit allocations within affected County areas while this statute is in place.
5. Pursuant to Santa Cruz County Code Section 12.02.020(5), all residential units impacted by the CZU August Lightning Complex Fires are exempt from the Measure J residential permit allocation system, including existing unpermitted residential units.
6. Adoption of the 2023 Growth Goal is categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 because establishing an annual growth goal is required by SCCC 17.04 to address the environmental impact of population growth in the County, and pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because no physical impact to the environment will occur as a result of this project; and a corresponding Notice of Exemption should be filed.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this 24th day of August 2022, by the following vote:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS  
NOES: COMMISSIONERS  
ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS  
ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

APPROVED AS TO FORM: \_\_\_\_\_  
County Counsel

Attachment A-1: Recommended 2023 Building Permit Allocation Distribution

**Attachment A-1**

**RECOMMENDED 2023 RESIDENTIAL ALLOCATION DISTRIBUTION  
(Market Rate Units Only)**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Allocations</b>	<b>Carryover*</b>	<b>Total 2023 Allocations*</b>
Urban	193	58	251
Rural	63	20	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>334</b>

\*Includes projected year-end allocations available based on continuation of rate for first six months of 2022.



# County of Santa Cruz

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PLANNING (831) 454-2580 PUBLIC WORKS (831) 454-2160  
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## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Clerk of the Board  
701 Ocean Street, Room 500  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**Project Name:** Establishment of the Year 2023 Growth Goal  
**Project Location:** Unincorporated area of the Santa Cruz County  
**Assessor Parcel No.:** N/A  
**Project Applicant:** County of Santa Cruz  
**Project Description:** Setting the Year 2023 Annual Growth Goal Rate at 0.5%

**Agency Approving Project:** County of Santa Cruz  
**County Contact:** Natisha Williams, Planner **Telephone No.** 831-454-3290  
**Date Completed:** 8/12/2022

This is to advise that the County of Santa Cruz has found the project to be exempt from CEQA under the following criteria:

Exempt status: *(check one)*

- The proposed activity is not a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.
- The proposed activity is not subject to CEQA as specified under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060 (c).
- The proposed activity is exempt from CEQA as specified under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).
- Ministerial Project** involving only the use of fixed standards or objective measurements without personal judgment.
- Statutory Exemption** other than a Ministerial Project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15260 to 15285).

Specify type:

- Categorical Exemption**

15308 Class 8. Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment

### Reasons why the project is exempt:

The project is intended only to meet the requirements set forth in Chapter 17.04 of the County Code, "Annual Population Growth Goal for Santa Cruz County." Establishment of the annual population growth goal is a requirement of Measure J, which was adopted in 1979 to address resource and public services impacts of population growth in the County and represents Santa Cruz County's fair share of statewide population growth for the upcoming year. No physical impact to the environment would occur.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Planner IV

**EXHIBIT B**

**EXHIBIT C**

***REPORT ON  
YEAR 2023 GROWTH GOAL***

***for***

***SANTA CRUZ COUNTY'S UNINCORPORATED AREA***

**Prepared by:**

**County of Santa Cruz  
Community Development and Infrastructure Department**

**Planning Division**

**August 12, 2022**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In 1978, Santa Cruz County voters adopted the growth management referendum known as Measure J. This legislation requires the County to establish an annual population growth goal of an amount that represents Santa Cruz County's fair share of statewide population growth. Each year a growth rate is set and then converted into a maximum number of "allocations" of market rate residential building permits that can be issued in the unincorporated area for the coming year. The process is defined in Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC) Chapter 17.01 (Growth Management), Chapter 17.04 (Annual Population Growth Goal for Santa Cruz County), and Chapter 12.02 (Residential Permit Allocation System). In September 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopted a 2022 growth rate of 0.25%. This report provides information for consideration by the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to determine the annual growth goal for calendar year 2023.

The County of Santa Cruz Planning Department determines the recommended annual growth goal based on a number of factors, including analysis of population growth trends, resource constraints, and the status of residential building permit allocations for the current year. These factors are examined under the following sections of this report: Section II, Population Trends, discusses the latest population estimates and population data projections; Section III, Building Permit Allocations, presents information on residential building permits that have been allocated, issued, and carried over since the adoption of Measure J, and the status of the 2022 allocation system; Section IV, Potential Growth Impacts, details countywide resource constraints and public service issues; Section V, Housing Needs, examines the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's (AMBAG's) regional housing needs planning process, the status of the County's General Plan Housing Element, the continued need for affordable housing in the County, and the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Annual Report; Section VI, Growth Goal Recommendation, presents this year's recommended growth rate and building permit allocation distribution and explains how recent state law (SB 330) will impact the County's growth management system; Section VII, Conclusion, summarizes the findings from Sections II through VI; and Section VIII, References, lists the sources referenced in this report.

## **II. POPULATION TRENDS**

### **Population Estimates**

The State of California Department of Finance (DOF) publishes annual population estimates for counties across the state in May of each year. Table 1 shows the DOF population estimates for Santa Cruz County in 2021 and provisional estimates for 2022. These population estimates indicate a countywide population of 266,564 (129,977 in the unincorporated area) as of January 1, 2022 (DOF, 2022). Table 1 also includes the annual population growth rates during 2020 and 2021 in each of the Santa Cruz County jurisdictions, as well as California as a whole.

The County Board of Supervisors adopted a population growth rate of 0.25% for the unincorporated area for 2020 and 2021. According to the Census and DOF population estimates, the unincorporated area had an actual growth rate of 1.6% in 2020, with an estimated increase of 2,080 people. Uncharacteristically high population growth was also seen in all other Santa Cruz County jurisdictions, except for the City of Santa Cruz, which had an estimated negative growth rate of 11%, largely caused by the COVID-19 pandemic-driven shift in college student population at UC Santa Cruz. With the reopening of schools, Santa Cruz population estimates have once again increased by 11.3% in 2021, while all other jurisdictions have seen marked decreases in population with a negative growth rate of approximately -3% across the board. Population growth for the County overall in 2021 has essentially remained stagnant. In comparison, neighboring counties grew as follows: Monterey County: 0.5%, San Benito County: 1.1%, and Santa Clara County: -0.7%. The State of California contracted at a rate of -0.3% in 2021.

<b>TABLE 1: POPULATION AND GROWTH RATES OF COUNTY JURISDICTIONS</b>					
<b>Area</b>	<b>4/1/2020 Population Estimate <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>1/1/2021 Population Estimate <sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>1/1/2022 Population Estimate <sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>2020 Population Growth Rate <sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>2021 Population Growth Rate</b>
City of Capitola	9,853	10,112	9,794	2.6%	-3.1%
City of Santa Cruz	64,731	57,594	64,075	-11.0%	11.3%
City of Scotts Valley	12,288	12,407	12,049	1.0%	-2.9%
City of Watsonville	51,776	52,147	50,669	0.7%	-2.8%
<b>Unincorporated Area</b>	<b>132,213</b>	<b>134,293</b>	<b>129,977</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>-3.2%</b>
County Total	270,861	266,553	266,564	-1.6%	0.0%
State of California	39,538,223	39,303,157	39,185,605	-0.6%	-0.3%

Source: California Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit, Report E-5: Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, January 2021-2022, with 2020 Benchmark (Released: May 2022)

<sup>(1)</sup> 2020 Census Population Data Benchmark

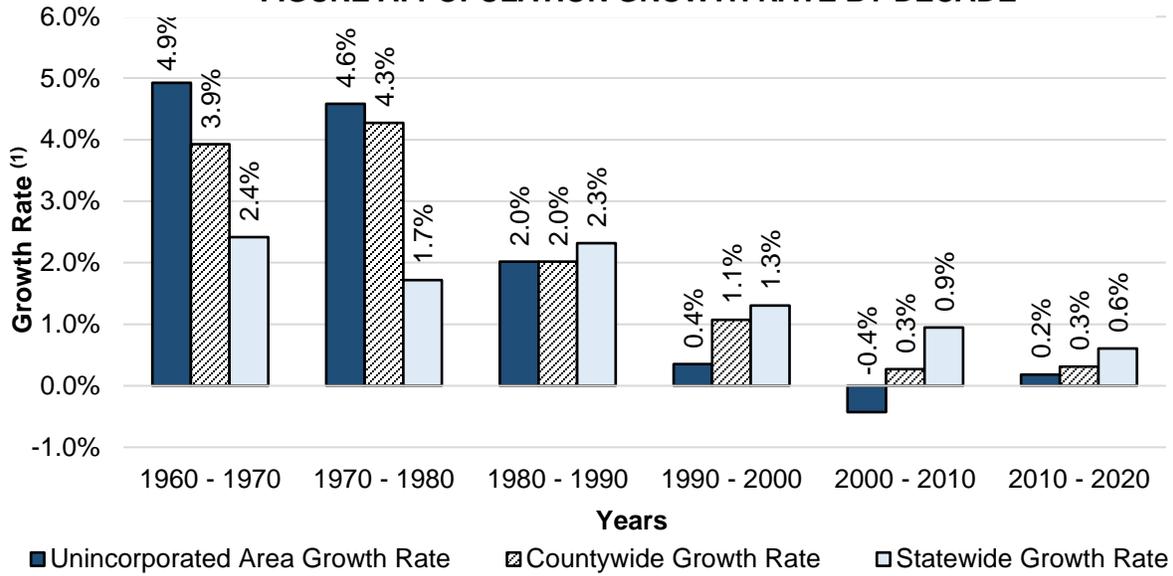
<sup>(2)</sup> Population estimates for previous years are updated based on the latest DOF E-5 data and may differ from last year's report

<sup>(3)</sup> 2022 data is provisional

The estimated 2021 population growth rate for the unincorporated area is -3.2%, a decrease of 4,316 people, which is considerably lower than the 0.25% growth rate set for that year. As a result, the building permit allocation derived from the 0.25% growth goal was more than sufficient to accommodate the demand for residential permits to construct market rate units in 2021.

While 2020 population data is provided by the US Census, DOF population estimates are calculated using the Housing Unit Method (HUM). This means that changes in housing unit data, including new construction, annexations, and demolitions, reported by local jurisdictions play a significant role in determining annual population estimates. The DOF also reported that the state's overall negative growth rate can be attributed to four main factors: continuing declines in natural increase as Baby Boomers age, additional deaths related to the COVID-19 pandemic, federal policies restricting immigration and continuing delays in processing foreign migration, and an increase in domestic out-migration. As deaths related to the pandemic decline and with federal policy changes, it is expected that the state will return to a positive annual growth rate in coming years.

**FIGURE A: POPULATION GROWTH RATE BY DECADE**



(1) Average annual growth rate; Source: U.S. Census

While population has steadily grown in the state of California and County as a whole since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, population growth in the unincorporated area has had a slightly different trajectory. As shown in Figure A, the unincorporated area’s population grew rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s, surpassing growth rates in the state and County as a whole. However, growth rates have declined in the decades since and population actually decreased in our area between the 2000 and 2010 Census years. According to 2020 Census data, the unincorporated area population was 132,213, up from 2010 when the population dropped down to 129,807. Since the last decade, population in unincorporated Santa Cruz County has grown at an average annual rate of 0.2%.

**Population Projections**

In June of 2022, AMBAG adopted its 2022 Regional Growth Forecast for all jurisdictions in the three-county AMBAG region to cover the time period 2015 through 2045. Table 2 presents the 2022 AMBAG projections for all Santa Cruz County jurisdictions. At the tri-county level, the AMBAG population forecast is based on employment and demographic population change models, taking into account historic trends. At the sub-county level, AMBAG disaggregated the County population projections to the local jurisdictions based on historic population trends, adjusting for anticipated housing developments and special population areas like UC Santa Cruz. The AMBAG forecasts are utilized in regional and County planning efforts, such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy (MTP/SCS), the regional Air Quality Management Plan, and transportation plans. The 2022 AMBAG forecast projects that the unincorporated area will grow by approximately 963 people between the years 2015 and 2045 to a total population of 135,953 (Source: AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS, Jun 15, 2022).

**TABLE 2: SANTA CRUZ COUNTY POPULATION FORECAST  
2022 AMBAG Adopted Forecast <sup>(1)</sup>**

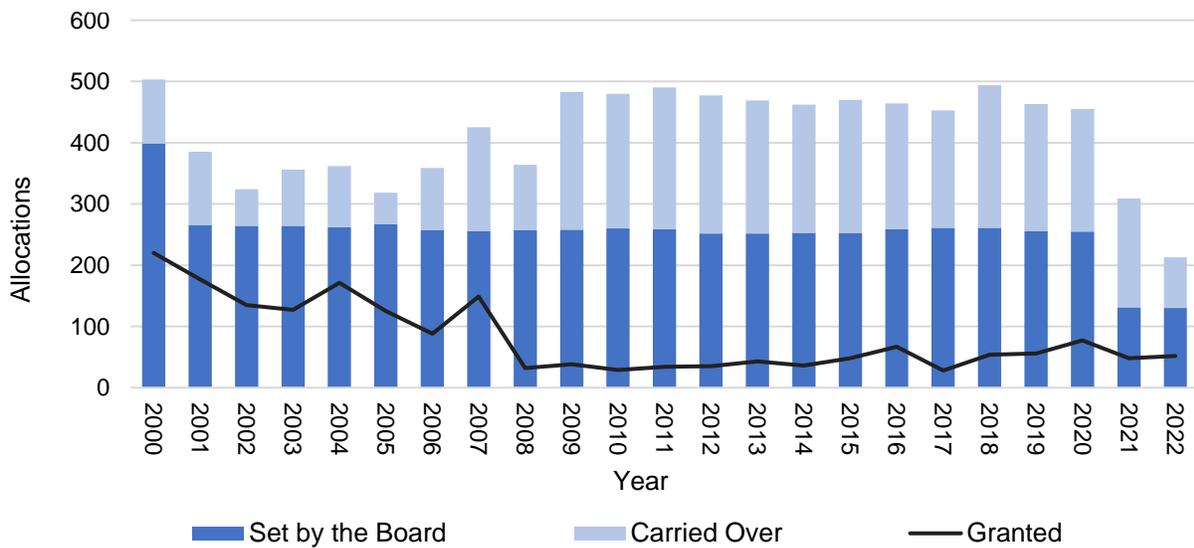
Area	2015	2020	2025 Forecast	2030 Forecast	2035 Forecast	2040 Forecast	2045 Forecast	% Change 2015-45
City of Capitola	10,224	10,108	10,485	10,794	10,957	11,049	11,126	9%
City of Santa Cruz	64,223	64,424	68,845	72,218	75,257	78,828	79,534	24%
City of Scotts Valley	11,946	11,693	11,718	11,837	11,867	11,868	12,010	1%
City of Watsonville	52,410	51,515	52,918	54,270	55,138	55,786	56,344	8%
<b>Unincorporated Area</b>	<b>134,990</b>	<b>133,493</b>	<b>134,675</b>	<b>135,027</b>	<b>135,304</b>	<b>135,625</b>	<b>135,953</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>273,793</b>	<b>271,233</b>	<b>278,641</b>	<b>284,146</b>	<b>288,523</b>	<b>293,156</b>	<b>294,967</b>	<b>8%</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> 2015 - 2020 data from DOF. Forecast years were prepared by AMBAG and Population Reference Bureau (PRB).

### III. BUILDING PERMIT ALLOCATIONS

Under the County’s Growth Management System, allocations are granted when building permit applications for new single family or multiple-family residences, mobile homes, or other dwelling units are submitted to the Planning Department for review. County Planning staff tracks the number of allocations granted every year. Replacement units, including housing units impacted by the CZU August Lightning Complex Fires, affordable units (since 1992), and ADUs are exempted from the allocation system and are not included in these figures. Figure B below shows building permit allocation from the past 20 years. Table 3 provides a more detailed look at the trends indicated in Figure B and includes data going back to 1979, when Measure J was first implemented.

**FIGURE B: MEASURE J RESIDENTIAL ALLOCATIONS SINCE 2000**



Note: The number of allocations granted for 2022 shown hereon is the projected annual total if the rate through July 1st continues through the end of the year.

**TABLE 3: MEASURE J RESIDENTIAL ALLOCATIONS SINCE 1979**

YEAR	ALLOCATIONS CARRIED OVER <sup>(1)</sup>	ALLOCATIONS SET BY THE BOARD	ALLOCATIONS SET BY THE BOARD (NOT INCLUDING EXEMPTED PERMITS) <sup>(2)</sup>	ALLOCATIONS GRANTED <sup>(1)(3)</sup>
1979	0	930	--	741
1980	189	1055	--	972
1981	272	937	--	934
1982	275	968	--	738
1983	505	972	--	619
1984	858	991	--	609
1985	1240	757	--	710
1986	1287	768	--	595
1987	1460	468	--	606 <sup>(4)</sup>
1988	1322	489	--	670 <sup>(4)</sup>
1989	1141	489 + 1384 <sup>(5)</sup>	--	420
1990	2594	487	--	267
1991	2814	495	--	173
1992	268	509	433	158
1993	275	512	435	109
1994	326	525	446	168
1995	278	528	449	131
1996	318	530	450	138
1997	312	531	451	197
1998	254	526	447	275
1999	172	396	337	216 <sup>(6)</sup>
2000	104	399	339	220
2001	119	266	227	177 <sup>(7)</sup>
2002	60	264	227	135
2003	92	264	227	127
2004	100	262	222	171
2005	51	267	227	125
2006	102	257	--	88
2007	169	256	--	149
2008	107	257	--	32
2009	225	258	--	38
2010	220	260	--	29
2011	231	259	--	34
2012	225	252	--	35
2013	217	252	--	43
2014	209	253	--	36
2015	217	470 <sup>(8)</sup>	--	48
2016	205	464 <sup>(8)</sup>	--	67
2017	192	453 <sup>(8)</sup>	--	28
2018	233	494 <sup>(8)</sup>	--	54
2019	207	463 <sup>(8)</sup>	--	56
2020	200	455 <sup>(8)</sup>	--	77 <sup>(9)</sup>
2021	178	309 <sup>(8)</sup>	--	48
2022	83	213 <sup>(8)</sup>	--	26 <sup>(10)</sup> /52 <sup>(11)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Totals are updated after year-end to reflect final allocation data and may differ from those recorded in previous years' final reports.  
<sup>(2)</sup> Prior to 1992, the allocation system included both market rate and affordable units. Beginning in 1992, affordable units were exempted from the allocation system, and in 2005, the allocation formula was updated to reflect that policy change and include only market rate units.  
<sup>(3)</sup> Allocations granted to market rate units only (affordable units, ADUs, and replacement units are exempted from the allocation system).  
<sup>(4)</sup> More building permits were issued than allocated that year due to issuance of permits from the carryover reservoir.  
<sup>(5)</sup> A special allocation of 1,384 additional affordable permits was approved to allow attainment of the regional housing goal for the 1980-90 decade.  
<sup>(6)</sup> 208 from the 1999 allocation and eight (rural) from the 1998 carryover.  
<sup>(7)</sup> Including 10 carryover allocations authorized by the Board of Supervisors in June 2001.  
<sup>(8)</sup> Including carryover allocations from the previous year.  
<sup>(9)</sup> Including 45 Permanent Room Housing (PRH) units: 22 urban and 23 rural units.  
<sup>(10)</sup> As of July 1, 2022. / <sup>(11)</sup> Projected annual total if current rate continues through end of year.

## Summary of Recent Allocations and Status of the 2022 Allocation System

Over the past decade, the number of allocations granted has been markedly lower than in previous years, beginning with the 2008-10 recession. In 2018 and 2019, allocations almost doubled compared to the previous year with 54 and 56 allocations, respectively, and the following year allocations were granted at a higher rate with a total of 77 allocations in 2020, including 45 Permanent Room Housing (PRH) units. Last year, 48 allocations were granted, and this year 26 allocations have been granted as of July 1. If the rate of the first six months continues, approximately 52 allocations will be granted in 2022.

Since 2001, the total number of available allocations derived from the growth rate each year has been sufficient to accommodate the demand for market rate residential building permits and result in a surplus of allocations to carry over to subsequent years. Carryover totals included in Table 4 show that the demand for market rate building permits has not come near the maximum allocated since the year 2004, when all rural allocations were granted, and only urban allocations were carried over.

<b>TABLE 4: UNUSED ALLOCATIONS CARRIED OVER</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Total</b>
2001	60	0	<b>60</b>
2002	82	10	<b>92</b>
2003	77	23	<b>100</b>
2004	51	0	<b>51</b>
2005	88	14	<b>102</b>
2006	116	53	<b>169</b>
2007	76	31	<b>107</b>
2008	159	66	<b>225</b>
2009	160	60	<b>220</b>
2010	164	67	<b>231</b>
2011	153	72	<b>225</b>
2012	152	65	<b>217</b>
2013	139	70	<b>209</b>
2014	155	62	<b>217</b>
2015	142	63	<b>205</b>
2016	129	63	<b>192</b>
2017	157	76	<b>233</b>
2018	146	61	<b>207</b>
2019	132	68	<b>200</b>
2020	147	31	<b>178</b>
2021	69	14	<b>83</b>

In addition to tracking annual Measure J allocations, staff also tracks the future demand for allocations that will result from approved and pending minor land divisions (two to four lots) and major projects (five or more lots/units) that will require allocations. While staff can estimate the demand for allocations that will come from the creation of new lots and upcoming projects, timing of actual unit construction is more difficult to estimate since it

may be influenced by a number of factors. Estimates of future demand for allocations are calculated in Tables 5 through 7, which track the status of approved and pending projects as of July 1, 2022.

<b>TABLE 5: 2022 ALLOCATION STATUS OF APPROVED MAJOR PROJECTS (5 OR MORE LOTS/UNITS) AS OF JULY 1, 2022</b>				
<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Market Rate Units in Project</b>	<b>Units from Previous Allocations</b>	<b>Units from 2022 Allocation</b>	<b>Remaining Units to be Allocated</b>
Aptos Village	59	49	0	10
Avila Estates	6	5	0	1
Capitola Road Extension*	5	0	0	5
Forest and Meadows	50	49	0	1
Maplethorpe Lane	10	10	0	0
2740 Mattison Lane	10	0	0	10
3212 Mission Drive*	18	0	0	18
Paul Minnie*	13	0	0	13
Pleasure Point Plaza*	29	0	0	29
The Roadhouse	11	10	0	1
Santa Cruz Gardens #8	12	11	0	1
Seascape Uplands	107	101	0	6
Seaview Terrace	9	4	0	5
Soquel Townhomes*	13	0	13	0
Tan Heights/Seacrest	30	29	0	1
Woods Cove/Graham Hill Estates	60	56	0	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>105</b>

\*Indicates density bonus used

Table 5 lists the major projects that were approved in recent years and the status of their Measure J allocations. This table indicates a future demand of 105 allocations. Table 6 shows the status of pending major projects currently in the development review process and indicates a potential future demand of 49 allocations. Table 7 shows the status of approved and pending minor land division applications and indicates a potential future demand of 14 allocations. Tables 5 through 7 estimate a combined potential demand for 168 allocations associated with both approved and pending housing development projects in unincorporated Santa Cruz County.

<b>TABLE 6: 2022 PENDING MAJOR PROJECTS (5 OR MORE LOTS/UNITS) AS OF JULY 1, 2022</b>	
<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Market Rate Units to be Allocated</b>
3800 Portola Drive (Lumberyard)*	16
Lakeview Estates	7
2450 Mattison Ln*	21
Monterey Ave/Lorraine Ln*	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>
*Indicates density bonus used	

<b>TABLE 7: 2022 APPROVED AND PENDING MINOR LAND DIVISIONS (2-4 LOTS) AS OF JULY 1, 2022</b>		
<b>Project Location</b>	<b>Approved Number of Lots <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Pending Number of Lots <sup>(1)</sup></b>
Urban	2	12
Rural	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>
<sup>(1)</sup> The number indicated counts the subject lot(s) being subdivided, which may already contain existing residences. Therefore, the number shown is a maximum and does not necessarily directly translate into the number of new residential building permits that will eventually be needed for buildout of these minor land divisions.		

<b>TABLE 8: 2022 MEASURE J RESIDENTIAL ALLOCATION STATUS AS OF JULY 1, 2022</b>			
	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Total</b>
Allocations Set by Board of Supervisors <sup>(1)</sup>	98+69 = 167	32+14 = 46	130+83 = 213
Allocations Granted	20	6	26
<b>Remaining Allocations Available <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>78 +69 = 147</b>	<b>26 +14 = 40</b>	<b>104+83 = 187</b>
<sup>(1)</sup> Carryover of 69 urban units and 14 rural units from 2021.			

Table 8 summarizes the status of the Measure J residential allocation system for 2022. As of July 1, a total of 26 allocations have been granted, which is higher than last year when the County had granted 21 allocations as of July 1.

Despite this slight increase, this year's allocation rate continues the trend of relatively low building permit activity over the last decade, particularly since the 2008-10 recession. The continued slowdown of development throughout the County in the past year and a half is likely also a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, local and state public safety requirements, such as stay-at-home orders and social distancing, as well as related economic impacts may have significantly reduced demand for residential building permits over the past year and a half. With only 26 allocations granted out of the 213 allocations available for 2022, 187 allocations are still available for this year. Staff anticipates that

this will provide ample allocations for the remainder of 2022 in both the rural and urban areas of unincorporated Santa Cruz County.

#### **IV. POTENTIAL GROWTH IMPACTS**

The County's growth management system was instituted to address the impacts of growth on natural resources and public services. The following discussion highlights recent impact issues and steps being taken to ensure adequate resource protection and to ensure that proposed growth can be accommodated with adequate urban services.

##### **Resource Protection**

The County General Plan and County Code include numerous measures to mitigate impacts on natural resources from increased development. These policies and ordinances address watershed protection, protection of biotic resources, protection of agricultural lands, erosion control, stormwater runoff quality and quantity management, and maintenance of groundwater recharge. The most pressing resource impacted by growth in the County is currently water supply, including timing and availability of new supplies.

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##### *Water Supply Constraints:*

All County water purveyors are continuing to experience challenges in sustainable water supply due to groundwater overdraft, lack of storage, seawater intrusion, and/or diminished availability of streamflow from persistent drought conditions. Because of this, coordinated water resource management has been of primary concern to the County and to the various water agencies. As required by state law, each of the County's water agencies serving more than 3,000 connections must update their Urban Water Management Plans every five years. The most recent update was due in 2021 and includes the addition of a Water Shortage Contingency Plan to help agencies prepare for drought.

All the main aquifers in this County, the primary sources of the County's potable water, are in some degree of overdraft. Overdraft is manifested in several ways including 1) declining groundwater levels, 2) degradation of water quality, 3) diminished stream base flow, and/or 4) seawater intrusion. Surface water supplies, which are the primary source of supply for the northern third of the County, are inadequate during drought periods and will be further diminished as a result of the need to increase stream baseflows to restore habitat for endangered salmonid populations. The latest climate change projections for

the region indicate that in the future, there will be longer drought periods and a shorter rainy season, which will lead to a further reduction in surface flow and groundwater recharge. This will be exacerbated by increased evapotranspiration due to warmer weather.

County staff are working with the water agencies on various regional programs to provide for sustainable water supply and protection of the environment. Effective water conservation programs by the water agencies have reduced overall water demand in the past 20 years, despite ongoing population growth. Other efforts underway include stormwater management, groundwater recharge enhancement, increased wastewater reuse, and transfer of water among agencies to provide for more efficient and reliable use. The County is also working closely with the groundwater agencies to implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014, which requires all high- and medium-priority groundwater basins in California to develop groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) that achieve sustainability within 20 years of implementation. The County is also leading an effort in response to Senate Bill 552 to plan for and provide drought assistance to private wells and small water systems throughout the County that could be impacted by lowered groundwater levels and water quality challenges.

County staff are actively engaged in the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) programs for both Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro watershed. Water Resources staff continued to work with water agencies to conduct annual sampling of juvenile salmonids and stream habitat in four watersheds: San Lorenzo, Soquel, Aptos, and Pajaro. Water Staff also continue to work with other County departments and partner organizations to implement the Stream Wood Program and conduct fish passage and habitat restoration projects throughout the County. The Water Quality program continues to sample the beaches and creeks to monitor water quality and is expanding their capabilities to implement microbial source tracking to identify the cause of water quality impairments.

The following sections describe the localized water supply efforts broken out by geographic area:

*City of Santa Cruz and Live Oak:* The City of Santa Cruz and surrounding unincorporated urban areas, as well as UCSC, are supplied by the City of Santa Cruz Water Department (SCWD), primarily utilizing surface water from the San Lorenzo River, Loch Lomond and north coast watersheds. During normal years, there is adequate supply, but during drought years, water use reductions are required.

In 2014, the SCWD formed the Water Supply Advisory Committee (WSAC) to evaluate their water supply needs and to develop recommendations for projects to address those needs. Staff turned the recommendations from the WSAC into a Water Supply Augmentation Strategy (WSAS), which includes the evaluation and pursuit of multiple projects to meet those needs. The SCWD is pursuing changes to their existing water rights which will allow for flexibility in how the water system is operated, making it feasible to pursue all of their water management goals.

The SCWD is now actively evaluating the feasibility and pursuing several projects outlined in their WSAS, that would provide adequate water supplies to meet dry year demand. In December 2018, the SCWD began a water transfer pilot project to customers of the Soquel Creek Water District. In 2019, they began testing the ability of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin to store excess winter surface water underground through a process known as Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR). In 2022, water that was injected into the Basin in the winter was recovered during the dry season and distributed to customers as part of a pilot study. Other strategies include further transfers, ASR in the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin, and the use of wastewater recycling for irrigation, or injection into one of the groundwater basins. Desalination, while not a priority, is still a possibility for future investigation.

*San Lorenzo Valley and Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin:* Water supply in the San Lorenzo Valley is provided through a combination of surface water intakes and groundwater wells that extract from the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin. Private wells and the Scotts Valley Water District (SVWD) rely entirely on the Basin. The San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) was severely impacted by the CZU fire in 2020 and has been relying more on groundwater while burned surface water intakes get replaced.

Overdraft in the Santa Margarita Basin underlying parts of San Lorenzo Valley and Scotts Valley has been manifested by a significant decline in groundwater levels and reduction in stream base flow over the past 40 years. Cooperative efforts by County staff, consultants, SLVWD, and the SVWD over the past several years have led to a better understanding of the water resources in the Santa Margarita Basin. Recent reductions in pumping due to successful water conservation programs have resulted in stabilized groundwater levels, which, despite showing some increase in 2019, are still 250 feet lower than they were in 1980 in some parts of the Basin.

In 2017, the two water districts and the County adopted a Joint Powers Agreement to form the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) which is tasked with developing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to manage the basin pursuant to the SGMA. The City of Santa Cruz, Mount Hermon Association, City of Scotts Valley, and representatives of private well owners also have a seat on the Board that governs SMGWA. The SMGWA engaged a consultant to help with the development of the plan, including extensive modeling and technical analysis of groundwater levels and quality in the Basin. The GSP was submitted to the Department of Water Resources in December 2021.

The overdraft of this basin is currently being addressed in several ways. SVWD built a non-potable wastewater recycling plant in 2002 and has been working to expand the number of users of that reclaimed wastewater for irrigation. The use of treated wastewater for irrigation and landscaping offsets an equivalent amount of potable water pumping and therefore is a valuable component in the water supply portfolio. The County and SLVWD have recently completed a project to evaluate ways to improve the efficiency of the SLVWD's system by using both surface and groundwater resources throughout their service area. SLVWD is in the process of developing an Environmental Impact Report to pursue these changes. SVWD and the County have also implemented projects

to restore groundwater recharge lost as a result of paving over the groundwater recharge areas. Three projects have been completed to capture and infiltrate stormwater from streets, roofs, and parking lots, recharging 22.43 acre-feet of water in 2018.

Water quality in the Santa Margarita Basin has been impacted by various contaminant sources including gas stations, dry cleaners, and septic systems. The occurrence of these contaminants in the groundwater supply puts some constraints on both the use of the impacted water as well as efforts to enhance groundwater storage. Most of the contaminated sites have been successfully remediated.

The GSP outlines a framework to evaluate additional projects and management actions to improve the sustainability and resiliency of the Basin. These include efforts to expand surface water supplies utilized in the Basin to include a 300 acre-foot allotment that the SLVWD has a contract to access, to evaluate ASR, and to investigate large scale wastewater purification. These projects are being pursued by the water agencies who will be pursuing state grant funds in Fall 2022.

*Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin:* In the mid-County area, overdraft is manifested by groundwater levels below protective elevations necessary to prevent seawater intrusion, indications of seawater intrusion into parts of the aquifer systems, and the probable decline in stream base flows. Water is extracted from the mid-County area aquifers by SCWD, the Soquel Creek Water District (SqCWD), Central Water District (CWD), small public water systems (serving between five and 199 water connections), and individual users. Only the smaller CWD, located in the recharge area of one of these aquifers, appears to have sustainable groundwater supplies for its current customer base. Successful water conservation measures have improved groundwater elevations along the coast in recent years, despite persistent drought conditions.

In 2016, the SqCWD, CWD, County, and City of Santa Cruz adopted a Joint Powers Agreement to form the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) for management of the Mid-County Basin under SGMA. Pursuant to SGMA, a GSP was submitted to the State Department of Water Resources in January 2020, which outlines how the basin will reach sustainability by 2040. The GSP was approved in June 2021. The agency expects to reach sustainability through ongoing water conservation and implementation of several projects by the partner agencies. There is no current plan to curtail pumping in the basin. The County and water agencies have done numerous outreach activities to engage small public water systems and private well owners that also extract water from the basin.

One of the projects in the GSP is the Pure Water Soquel Project. This project will capture approximately 25% of the existing treated wastewater that is being discharged out into the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and recycle it for beneficial reuse, providing 1,500 acre-feet of water per year. The project includes a tertiary treatment facility at the Santa Cruz Wastewater Treatment Facility, an advanced water purification center in Live Oak, over 8 miles of pipelines, and three seawater intrusion prevention wells. The purified water will replenish the groundwater basin, raise groundwater levels to create a seawater intrusion barrier, and protect further seawater contamination from

occurring. Construction of the project commenced in July 2020 with the injection wells and May 2021 with the pipelines; the goal is for the project to be operational by the end of 2023.

The MGA applied for, and received, a \$7.6 million grant from the Department of Water Resources to pursue objectives in the GSP. Funding from this grant will be used to support groundwater management planning in the Basin including modeling and will provide support to both the Pure Water Soquel and SCWD ASR projects.

Groundwater quality impacts from contaminants have been minimal in the mid-County area. There are several gas station leaks in this region, but none of the leaks has impacted major water supply wells. Groundwater from wells in the Aromas aquifer has been found to contain naturally occurring hexavalent chromium, a suspected carcinogen, sometimes in excess of drinking water standards. SqCWD has addressed this issue by blending the affected water to bring it within drinking water standards. The state is expected to formally lower the chromium standard, making continued use of this source potentially much more expensive due to treatment costs. This is going to have the greatest impact on small public water systems, which will be impacted by the standards but do not have a large rate-base to pay for treatment.

*Pajaro Valley Basin:* Overdraft in the south County aquifers is manifested by depressed water levels, and seawater intrusion. Water levels are below sea level under more than 60% of the basin, elevated chloride levels have been detected in wells near the Pajaro River more than two miles inland from the coast, and segments of Corralitos Creek are drying up earlier in the summer than in previous years. Eighty-five percent of the water use in the Pajaro Valley is by the agricultural industry.

The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water) and the City of Watsonville (CoW) completed construction of an advanced tertiary treatment facility that has been providing recycled water for irrigation in coastal areas since spring of 2009. There are expansion plans for the pipeline that will bring the recycled water up further north of the current service area, which will potentially benefit groundwater levels in the Mid-County basin as well as in the Pajaro basin. PV Water operates a project at Harkins Slough that provides groundwater storage and recovery in the shallow aquifer in that area.

PV Water completed its Basin Management Plan update in 2014. The plan provides for reducing overall groundwater use by about 12,000 acre-feet through conservation, increased recycled water use, and implementation of several local projects to optimize existing resources and provide increased supply. The Basin Management Plan was approved as an alternative to a GSP by the Department of Water Resources in July 2019, and PV Water worked with an advisory committee to submit a required update in December 2021.

Several of the projects outlined in the Plan have undergone environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The next project planned for implementation is the College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project. The project will develop facilities to use the lake water as an alternative to groundwater for

agricultural irrigation. To do this, the proposed project would increase the storage capacity of the lake to approximately 1,700 acre-feet. On average, the Project will supply approximately 1,800 to 2,300 acre-feet per year of water to growers in the Pajaro Valley. The community is actively engaged in supporting these efforts. In addition to College Lake, the Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery Project is moving forward as well.

The CoW provides municipal supply for the city and residential areas outside the city limits. The CoW has increased their water conservation programs and charges an impact fee for all new development to support those programs. The CoW also obtained a grant to upgrade treatment facilities to increase winter use of surface water from Corralitos Creek. The City's objective is to meet future development demands without increasing groundwater use.

Water quality in the south County area suffers from seawater intrusion and areas of nitrate contamination from agricultural practices, animal facilities, some areas of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination, and septic systems.

*Conclusion:* County staff will continue to monitor and provide input to these various water supply and watershed enhancement efforts being carried out throughout the County and will keep the Board of Supervisors updated regarding their status when appropriate including the annual Water Status Reports. County staff also continues to implement and enforce the water efficient landscape ordinance, water conservation ordinance, and well ordinance, and implement new State requirements including SB 552.

## **Urban Services**

The County continues to pursue a number of activities to improve its ability to provide services throughout the urbanized portions of the unincorporated area:

- Yearly adoption of the Capital Improvement Program, which identifies scheduled public service improvements (such as road, roadside, drainage, and park improvements) and provides a basis for development of the necessary financing programs.
- Street plan lines and route design concepts for arterial and collector streets in the urban areas, particularly in the Aptos, Live Oak, Soquel, and San Lorenzo Valley planning areas, which require an on-going effort to provide needed information for roadway design, capital improvement programming, and the review and conditioning of new projects.

In addition, the various County sanitation districts have made numerous sewer-related improvements over the years, including the projects described below:

- The Davenport Recycled Water Project was completed in 2018. The Davenport County Sanitation District upgraded the existing wastewater treatment plant and constructed a recycled water storage pond. The improvements make it possible

for farmers, contractors, business owners, and residents to access disinfected tertiary-treated recycled water that can be used on crops, landscaping, construction sites, and other approved uses. The recycled water can be used to reduce use of potable water benefitting both the community and the environment.

- In 2019, the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District completed a study regarding sewer line infiltration and inflow (I&I). The District has also video inspected over 90% of its sewer collection mains to identify deficiencies. The District is using the I&I study and video assessments to address areas where sewer lines are deteriorating and where stormwater and groundwater may be entering through cracks in the sewer lines. Recently completed projects to rehabilitate sewer mains with these issues include the 2019 Soquel Village Rehabilitation, Capitola Jewel Box Sewer Replacement, Capitola Avenue Sewer Rehabilitation, East Santa Cruz Harbor Sewer Rehabilitation, Rio Del Mar Sewer Rehabilitation, Cliff Drive Area Sewer Rehabilitation, 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Soquel Drive Sewer Rehabilitation, and Cabrillo Park Sewer Replacement Phase 1, 2021 Sewer Pipe Rehabilitation projects were done to specifically address these issues. Upcoming projects to improve sewer infrastructure include the East Cliff Drive Sewer Rehabilitation, Arana Trunkline Replacement, Valencia Creek Sewer Replacement, and multiple smaller-scale rehabilitation projects. Addressing I&I and deteriorated sewer pipes benefit the environment as it reduces the amount of energy required to pump and treat wastewater, improves the environment in areas where wastewater may be leaking out of pipes and reduces the risks of sanitary sewer overflows.
- The Santa Cruz County Sanitation District has completed the Soquel Pump Station Force Main Replacement project which replaced a 40+ year-old sewer force main under Soquel Creek and upgraded the pump station. This project helps improve the water quality at Capitola Beach and increases the operational reliability of the pump station.
- A sewer connection moratorium exists for the Rodeo Gulch sewer basin. The Santa Cruz County Sanitation District is working with a consultant on plans for a project that will upgrade the trunk line and pump station to make it possible to lift the moratorium. Dependent on funding and environmental clearances, the District anticipates this project to be completed in the next couple of years.
- The Freedom County Sanitation District upgraded the Trembley Pump Station in 2019. The pump station is now more efficient and has more capacity to hold wastewater in the event that power is lost to the pumps.
- The Freedom County Sanitation District completed the Freedom Sewer Rehabilitation Phase 1 project which rehabilitated manholes and nearly 14,000 linear feet of sewer mains in the neighborhoods north of the Watsonville Airport, and at the northern end of Green Valley Drive. The District is seeking grant funding to complete a second phase of sewer main improvements in Freedom.
- Outside the Urban Services Line, but within the Rural Services Line, the

Department of Public Works completed sewer improvements in County Service Area (CSA) 2, Place De Mer. The CSA's septic system was failing, and an advance treatment septic system was required by the State Water Resources Control Board. The new system has been installed and will protect ground water quality in this coastal community.

- Outside the Urban Services Line, but within the Rural Services Area, the Department of Public Works worked with a contractor to finalize reconstruction of the Boulder Creek wastewater treatment plant in County Service Area 7. The facility was damaged during the 2020 CZU Fire. Required improvements included repair or replacement of destroyed PG&E transformers, electrical power poles, electrical control panels, motor control center, blowers, generators, office building, piping, valves, and equipment to remotely monitor the wastewater system.

There has been a significant investment in new and expanded urban services infrastructure in the unincorporated area over the last 20 years, particularly through the former County Redevelopment Agency. However, fully addressing the County's remaining urban service needs will require additional construction of infrastructure capital improvement projects throughout the urban area over an extended period of time. There are also ongoing challenges to maintaining existing roadway and bridge infrastructure, especially in light of the 2017 winter storms that resulted in extensive damage to over 200 locations along County roadways. The infusion of state Senate Bill (SB) 1 funds and local Measure D funds will continue to help the County make progress on improving its pavement condition on publicly maintained roads.

Traffic congestion is a significant concern facing residents throughout the County. A number of planning efforts focused on improving the County's transportation infrastructure are currently underway. In 2018, the Board of Supervisors accepted the Portola Drive Streetscape Concepts, as a component of the Pleasure Point Commercial Corridor Vision and Guiding Design Principles. The Streetscape Concepts propose potential near-term and long-term improvements to a portion of the Portola Drive public right-of-way that is intended to benefit all users in the Pleasure Point Commercial Corridor, including pedestrians and bicyclists, local business owners, and residents. As a planning level document, the Streetscape Concepts would need to undergo design and engineering. The plan has been analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report for the Sustainability Policy and Regulatory Update (Sustainability Update).

The draft documents included in the Sustainability Update include a new Access + Mobility Element as well as a modernized code that includes a new Parking and Circulation Chapter in the Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC). The new Access + Mobility Element includes policies and programs that enhance multi-modal transportation infrastructure in order to implement the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan and address the County's current transportation challenges, as well as a list of transportation projects that can be incorporated into upcoming Capital Improvement Programs.

The County adopted an Active Transportation Plan that replaces the 2011 Bicycle Plan and provides a roadmap for future improvements for walking and bicycling in unincorporated Santa Cruz County. Following the public input phase in fall 2020, the planning team developed a robust list of infrastructure and program recommendations to improve safety and encourage walking and bicycling. The County's previously adopted Safe Routes to Schools Plans which covers 13 County schools, and projects from the Safe Routes to Schools Plan are included in the Active Transportation Plan.

The Coastal Rail Trail is the County's largest active transportation project. When complete, it will provide a continuous 32-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail that runs the length of the County. Several segments of the trail have been completed and more are under development by various jurisdictions. In 2019, the City of Santa Cruz replaced the old pedestrian bridge over the San Lorenzo River with a 10-foot-wide new bicycle and pedestrian bridge. Segment 7 Phase 1 (Natural Bridges Dr to Bay St) was completed in 2021. Segment 7 Phase 2 (Bay St to Pacific Ave) started construction in Summer 2022 and is expected to be complete in 2023. The City of Watsonville completed Segment 18 Phase 1 (Ohlone Parkway to Watsonville Slough Trail) in 2021. Phase 2 (Lee Rd to Walker St) is expected to be complete in 2023. Segment 5, the North Coast Rail Trail, led by the RTC, will finish design and permitting in 2022 and is scheduled to start construction in 2024. Segment 8 and 9 (Pacific Ave to 17<sup>th</sup> Ave), led by the City of Santa Cruz, will complete final design and environmental review in 2023. If construction funding is secured, the project will start construction in 2024. Segments 10 and 11 (17<sup>th</sup> Ave to State Park Dr), led by the County, is scheduled to complete preliminary design and environmental review in 2023. If the project is awarded additional funding, final design will be complete in 2024, and construction could start in 2025. Segment 12 (State Park Dr to Rio del Mar), led by the RTC, is scheduled to complete final design and environmental review in 2023. If construction funding is secured, the project could start construction in 2025.

The County also received a grant along with its partner agencies, the City of Watsonville and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) from Caltrans to develop and implement a regional Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) mitigation bank. The bank would provide developers a means of mitigating their development with contributions to offsite projects that reduce VMT such as active transportation or transit projects. The grant project is in the early stages of activity and is expected to be completed by 2024.

In 2021 the County was successful in procuring \$16.5 mil state grant funds (Solutions for Congested Corridors Program) to construct the Soquel Drive Buffered Bike Lane and Congestion Mitigation Project. This project was identified as a high priority in the SCCRTC's Unified Corridor Investment Study. Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in 2023 and will provide multi-modal improvements to nearly 5.6 miles of Soquel Avenue and Soquel Drive between La Fonda Avenue and State Park Drive. Significant elements of this project include the installation of 10+ miles of continuous protected or buffered bike lanes, 22 signal detection system upgrades including adaptive traffic

management software and transit signal priority, ½ mile of sidewalk infill, 100 ADA ramp upgrades, 5.6 miles of pavement resurfacing and 10 mid-block crosswalk upgrades with flashing beacons.

SCCRTC is also continuing its program for improvements to State Highway 1. The next phase of these improvements includes construction of northbound and southbound auxiliary lanes between Soquel Drive and 41st Avenue and a bike/pedestrian overcrossing at Chanticleer Avenue. Design for this work is complete and construction for this phase is expected to commence within the next year. Future work also includes the construction of an additional bike/pedestrian overcrossing at Mar Vista Drive, which is in the final design phase.

## V. HOUSING NEEDS

### Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan

Under California law, all cities and counties must adopt a housing element as part of their local general plan. Each housing element must ensure land is zoned and available to accommodate the jurisdiction’s share of the projected regional housing need, or Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The locality’s share of housing need is divided into distinct household income levels or categories based on detailed estimates of household growth within each income level estimated to occur in that locality during the housing element’s time horizon, which is at least eight years long.

The State Department of Housing and Community Development develops and distributes the RHNA at a regional level; AMBAG then allocates the housing units among the jurisdictions in this area. The current RHNA Plan for the Monterey Bay region was adopted in June 2014. It allocates a goal of 1,314 new housing units to the unincorporated area of the County for the planning period starting January 1, 2014 and ending December 31, 2023. These units are distributed between four income categories, as shown in Table 9 below.

<b>TABLE 9: HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION FOR UNINCORPORATED AREA</b>	
<b>Income Category</b>	<b>2014 – 2023 RHNA</b>
Very Low Income (< 50% of County median)	317 units
Lower Income (50%-80% of County median)	207 units
Moderate Income (80%-120% of County median)	240 units
Above-Moderate Income (>120% of County median)	550 units
<b>Total Housing Needs</b>	<b>1,314 units</b>

As reported in this year’s Housing Element Annual Progress Report, Santa Cruz County completed its seventh year of the current RHNA cycle in 2020. So far, the County has permitted a total of 744 housing units. These units were issued at the following affordability levels: 72 very low, 119 low, 269 moderate, and 284 above moderate income.

With two more years left in this nine-year planning period, a total of 570 units remain for this RHNA cycle including 266 market rate units.

In April 2022, the AMBAG Board of Directors adopted the final RHNA methodology for the 6<sup>th</sup> cycle, which would cover the years 2023 to 2031 and authorized staff to release the Draft RHNA Plan. In this Plan, the unincorporated county area has been allocated 4,634 units to accommodate in the 6<sup>th</sup> cycle. County Planning staff is beginning the update of the Housing Element to incorporate the 6<sup>th</sup> cycle RHNA allocation this year.

### **Affordable Housing**

Chapter 17.01, the Growth Management provisions of the County Code, requires that “at least 15 percent of those housing units newly constructed for sale or rental each year shall be capable of purchase or rental by persons with average or below average incomes.” Chapter 17.10 of the County Code, “Affordable Housing Requirements” is the County’s inclusionary zoning code. It implements the 15% affordable requirement in the Growth Management chapter by establishing standard requirements and procedures for new residential projects of seven or more homes for sale to meet the 15% affordable housing goal. It also requires developers of new rental projects to either pay an impact fee or provide affordable rental units as an alternative to the fee. Chapter 17.12 includes the County’s residential density bonus program, which also helps generate affordable units toward the County’s 15% goal.

Table 10 shows the number and percentage of affordable housing units issued building permits in the unincorporated area since 1979 when Measure J was first implemented. Several of the affordable units in Table 10 were in publicly subsidized developments sponsored by the former County Redevelopment Agency, the Housing Authority, or in some cases after the 1989 earthquake, affordable projects built with FEMA and Red Cross disaster relief funds. While these are not called out separately, generally whenever the percentage of affordable units permitted in a given year is greater than 15%, this most likely reflects permits issued for one or more of these subsidized affordable projects (sometimes referred to as 100% affordable projects).

The County completed a review of its Affordable Housing Policies and Guidelines in 2014, and as a result of that study, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to create an Affordable Housing Impact Fee (AHIF) program, which went into effect in August of 2015. The AHIF is applied to most types of new construction (except for public facilities such as schools and hospitals, and parking structures), including new commercial, industrial, and agricultural structures and additions, market-rate rental housing, new homes, and residential additions and/or replacements greater than 500 square feet) and is calculated on a per-square foot basis.

Residential subdivision or condominium projects of seven or more new units or lots must include 15% of the units as deed-restricted affordable units. As an alternative, developers of such projects may seek Board approval to pay the AHIF or pursue one of the other alternatives to providing on-site units set forth in Chapter 17.10. In late 2018, the Board

<b>TABLE 10: AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRODUCTION</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Units Issued Building Permits <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Affordable Units Issued Building Permits</b>	<b>ADUs Issued Building Permits</b>	<b>% Affordable (Including ADUs) <sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>% Affordable (Does Not Include ADUs)</b>
1979	741	0	--	--	--
1980	972	62	--	6.4	6.4
1981	934	251	--	26.9	26.9
1982	738	235	--	31.8	31.8
1983	619	52	--	8.4	8.4
1984	609	129	--	21.2	21.2
1985	710	61	--	8.6	8.6
1986	595	98	1	16.6	16.5
1987	606	75	0	12.4	12.4
1988	710	23	3	3.7	3.2
1989	420	14	0	3.3	3.3
1990	267	9	1	3.7	3.4
1991	173	20	1	12.1	11.6
1992	367	209	0	56.9	56.9
1993	149	30	1	20.8	20.1
1994	192	24	2	13.5	12.5
1995	152	21	8	19.1	13.8
1996	145	7	6	9.0	4.8
1997	203	6	14	9.9	3.0
1998	304	29	28	18.8	9.5
1999	217	8	26	15.7	3.7
2000	287	80	21	35.2	27.9
2001	190	8	15	12.1	4.2
2002	163	79	36	70.6	48.5
2003	231	81	17	42.4	35.1
2004	249	28	52	32.1	11.2
2005	261	40	56	36.8	15.3
2006	209	71	38	52.2	34.0
2007	110	0	40	36.4	0.0
2008	97	3	30	34.0	3.1
2009	60	1	22	38.3	1.7
2010	59	0	24	40.7	0.0
2011	141	89	18	75.9	63.1
2012	138	64	19	60.1	46.4
2013	75	4	29	44.0	5.3
2014	82	2	19	25.6	2.4
2015	60	1	29	50.0	1.7
2016	117	66	19	72.6	56.4
2017	104	0	28	26.9	0.0
2018	74	1	37	51.4	1.4
2019	78	2	29	39.7	2.6
2020	142	16	37	37.3	11.3
2021	133	9	63	54.1	6.8
2022 <sup>(3)</sup>	219	125	27	69.4	57.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,102</b>	<b>2,133</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>16.3</b>

Note: Data shown only includes the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County

<sup>(1)</sup> Total number of market rate units, affordable/inclusionary units, and ADUs issued building permits (does not include replacement units).

<sup>(2)</sup> Includes affordable units plus ADUs as a percent of total number of new units.

<sup>(3)</sup> As of July 1, 2022.

adopted Ordinance 5286 amending Chapters 13.01, 13.10, 17.10 and 17.12 to better facilitate development of affordable housing through a number of programs, as part of the policy update known as the “Near Term Housing Amendments.” These amendments included changes to existing programs, including R-Combining District regulations, a new discretionary approval requirement for applicants who want to utilize the AHIF program, and a new enhanced density bonus process that expanded existing density bonus regulations.

In late 2019, the Board adopted and obtained Coastal Commission approval of several ordinances and General Plan/LCP amendments to update County policies related to development of workforce rental housing for farmworkers, school employees, and others on properties in agricultural and public facility zones. These actions implemented several objectives in the Housing Element and in the County’s Operational Plan.

In the 43 years since Measure J was first implemented, 22.4% of new housing units constructed in the unincorporated portion of the County, when ADUs are included, have been affordable to lower and moderate income households (household incomes of 120% or less of the County’s Area Median Income or “AMI”). When ADUs are not counted, 16.3% of the new housing constructed in the unincorporated portion of the County since 1979 has been affordable to households of moderate income or below.

In order to facilitate the attainment of affordable housing goals, the County continues to exempt affordable housing units (including ADUs) from the need to obtain permit allocations under the County’s growth management regulations. The development of affordable units would, therefore, not be affected by the adopted growth goal.

### Demolition Permits

Table 10 provides a detailed look at the production of new housing units in Santa Cruz County since Measure J was enacted; however, this table does not address the demolition of existing housing, which also plays an important role in the County’s housing market. Demolition rates are particularly relevant to affordable housing options since demolished units are often older and likely to be more affordable compared to newly built housing. In 2019, staff began tracking demolition rates within the unincorporated area to provide a more complete picture of the County’s current housing stock.

Table 11 details demolition permits issued from January 1, 2018 to July 1 of this year. This year, 18 units were issued demolition permits as of July 1, including 12 single family dwellings (SFD), three ADUs, one mobile home (MH), and two multifamily units (MF). The demolished units included an illegal fourth unit at an existing triplex, an unpermitted ADU, three structures damaged by fire (including two SFDs and one apartment units), and seven abandoned SFDs that were in a state of complete disrepair. Overall, demolition rates in the County remain relatively low compared to the construction of new housing, and about half of all demolished units are subsequently replaced with new units.

This year, three units have been issued demolition permits as of July 1, including one SFD and

two ADUs. The SFD unit was issued a replacement building permit, resulting in a net loss of two units. Overall, demolition rates in the County remain relatively low compared to the construction of new housing, and just over half of all demolished units are immediately replaced with new units.

<b>TABLE 11: RESIDENTIAL DEMOLITION RATE</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Units Issued Demolition Permits <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Demolition Unit Types</b>				
		<b>SFD</b>	<b>SFA</b>	<b>ADU</b>	<b>MH</b>	<b>MF</b>
2018	26	26	0	0	0	0
2019	19	19	0	0	0	0
2020	5	4	0	1	0	0
2021	4	2	0	2	0	0
2022 <sup>(2)</sup>	18	12	0	3	1	2
<sup>(1)</sup> Data shown includes demolition permits issued for previously permitted residential units in the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County. Demolition of unpermitted units not included.						
<sup>(2)</sup> As of July 1, 2022.						

### Current Pipeline of Subsidized Affordable Projects

In 2022, several new County affordable housing projects were awarded new State and/or federal subsidies to support their development. These projects, some of which are also listed in other tables in this report, are currently either under construction or scheduled to begin construction within several months. These projects and awards are listed in Table 12 below.

All of these projects include extremely low-income units, while the two tax credit projects also include some very low and low income units. The [Homekey](#) program is a new State program launched in 2021 to rapidly develop housing for homeless and at-risk households, either through new construction, acquisition/rehabilitation of existing structures, and/or conversion of hotels, motels, or other types of non-residential structures to rental housing. The conversion project option is similar in form to the County’s Permanent Room Housing concept, but without requiring rezoning to PRH, or discretionary review. Homekey projects are exempted from local discretionary review by statute, although the two projects listed below voluntarily submitted preliminary Development Review Group (DRG) applications to assist with their design, cost estimating, and other predevelopment tasks. Both are scheduled to apply for ministerial permits and start construction in the third quarter of 2022. The Homekey funding requires the projects to be completed within a year of the award date, so they should both be completed in 2023.

<b>TABLE 12: SUBSIDIZED AFFORDABLE PROJECTS</b>			
<b>Project / Sponsor</b>	<b>Recent Funding Award</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b># of Units</b>
1500 Capitola Rd. / MidPen Housing	2021 Federal Disaster Tax Credits	Under Construction	57
“Pippin II” 78 Atkinson Ln. / MidPen Housing	2021 Federal Disaster Tax Credits	Under Construction	80

8705 Hwy 9 / Santa Cruz County Veterans Hall Board of Trustees	State of CA Homekey Round 2	Design	20 (11 Rehab + 9 New)
2838 Park Ave. / 2838 Park Ave. L.P.	State of CA Homekey Round 2	Design	36

Permanent Room Housing (PRH) Projects

In 2020, the County created the Permanent Room Housing (PRH) Combining District to recognize the conversion of obsolete visitor accommodations and care facilities to housing units that are “affordable by design” due to their small unit size. The PRH Combining District creates a pathway for permanent housing to be legalized and upgraded as necessary to meet health and safety criteria. The district is available to any parcel in the County that meets district eligibility criteria. Eight PRH applications were approved in 2020, with a total of 66 housing units. While no PRH project applications were received in 2021 or 2022 to date, the Homekey project located at 8705 Highway 9 would have been a PRH project, if not for the review streamlining provided by the Homekey statute.

Density Bonus Annual Report

In Fiscal Year 2021/22, three new discretionary applications were received for density bonus projects (2450 Mattison, Lorraine Lane, and the revised Lumberyard project), as well as three preliminary review applications (Maciel, Park Ave., and 841 Capitola Rd.), as indicated Table 13 below. Two other projects were in preliminary review in 2021 but have not yet submitted discretionary applications (East Cliff Village and 1574 Seventh Ave.).

To date, since the density bonus code update in 2018, a total of 7 density bonus projects have been approved: 4 in 2019, 2 in 2020, and 1 in 2021. These 7 projects provide a total of 160 units, including 80 affordable units and 35 density bonus units.

One additional project, the Homekey project at Park Avenue, is exempt from discretionary review due to its Homekey award as well as the AB 2162 ministerial processing requirement for supportive housing projects in qualifying locations. Both of these statutes allow a density bonus to be included as part of a ministerial review process, therefore the project, which completed a DRG review in early 2022, will next proceed to the ministerial permitting stage. When this project is included with the other 7 projects approved to date, the total comes to 196 units, including 115 affordable and 51 bonus units. If the preliminary review proposals are included, a total of 450 units have been proposed in density bonus projects since 2019, with 147 affordable units (one third of the total) and 122 bonus units.

TABLE 13: DENSITY BONUS PROJECTS							
Project	Approval Date	Project Type	Total Dwelling Units Proposed	Affordable Units		Additional Units with Density Bonus	Status
				No.	Level		
Habitat for Humanity, Harper St.	Jan-19	For-Sale	11	11	Low	1	In construction
Paul Minnie	Apr-19	Rental / Mixed Use	15	2	Very Low	4	Plan Check
MidPen Housing, 1500 Capitola Rd	Nov-19	Rental / Mixed Use	57	56	Extr. Low to Low	9	In construction
Pleasure Point Plaza	Dec-19	Rental / Mixed Use	33	4	Very Low	12	Entitled
Soquel Townhomes	Jan-20	For-Sale	15	2	Mod	2	In construction
432 Capitola Rd. Ext.	Aug-20	Rental	7	2	Low	2	Plan Check
3212 Mission Dr.	Apr-21	For-Sale	21	3	2 Mod, 1 Very Low	5	Demo / Plan Check
2450 Mattison Ln	--	For-Sale	25	4	Mod	1	Discretionary Review
Monterey Ave/ Lorraine Ln.	--	For Sale	6	1	Mod	1	Discretionary Review
3800 Portola Dr (Lumberyard)	--	Rental / Mixed Use	18	1	Very Low	3	Discretionary Review
East Cliff Village	--	Rental / Mixed Use	161	19	Very Low	54	Preliminary Review
2838 Park Ave. (Homekey)	--	Rental	36	35	Extr. Low	16	Preliminary Review
1574 7th Ave	--	Rental / Mixed Use	9	2	Very Low	3	Preliminary Review
1960 Maciel Avenue	--	For Sale	21	3	Mod	4	Preliminary Review
841 Capitola Road	--	For Sale	15	2	Mod	5	Preliminary Review
<b>TOTAL *</b>	--	--	<b>450</b>	<b>147</b>		<b>122</b>	--

\* The Pippin II project, an 80-unit affordable subsidized project, is not included on this list because it did not require a density bonus, due in part to the R-Combining Zone added to that site in 2007 which allows 20 units per acre.

Since the County last updated Chapter 17.12 in late 2018, the State has enacted multiple new laws making further amendments to density bonus law, which in most cases preempt local codes if in conflict. Staff plans to develop updates to Chapter 17.12 where necessary to ensure consistency with these recent state laws, which include AB 1763 of 2020, four bills chaptered in 2019, and other recently enacted density bonus legislation, as well as some other code amendments related to supportive housing and related matters. This policy project was delayed last year due to the dual disasters of the COVID-19 pandemic and CZU Fire, which caused reprioritization of workload. Staff will bring the draft ordinance forward for adoption when it is ready for review sometime after the Sustainability Update has been adopted.

### **Accessory Dwelling Unit Annual Report**

As a condition of the Coastal Commission's certification of the amendments to the County's ADU ordinance in 2009 (SCCC 13.10.681[K]), the County is required to prepare an annual report evaluating the cumulative impacts associated with ADUs in each planning area, particularly within the Coastal Zone. This analysis has traditionally been included as part of the annual Growth Report and is intended to provide a brief assessment of the cumulative impact of ADUs on traffic, water, public views, and environmentally sensitive areas.

The County first created a "second unit" (ADU) ordinance in 1983. In 1997, the Board of Supervisors adopted revisions to the ADU ordinance that included increased unit size limits in rural areas. In 2004, the Board adopted amendments to the ordinance to implement Assembly Bill (AB) 1866, eliminating the need for discretionary permits for ADUs in most cases. In 2008, the affordability restriction was lifted outside the Coastal Zone, and in 2009 this restriction was lifted inside the Coastal Zone, meaning that new and existing ADUs are no longer required to be rented at restricted rent levels. In 2016, the County undertook a study to understand the function of ADUs in the local housing market and to identify barriers that discourage new ADUs. In 2018, the ordinance was updated to incorporate recommendations from the study and also to comply with several state laws (SB 1069, AB 2299, AB 2406, SB 229, and AB 494). Additional state laws passed in 2019 (SB 13, AB 68, AB 587, AB 881) led to additional updates to local regulations in 2020 and 2021. Updates have included allowing ADUs anywhere single- or multifamily residential land use is allowed; removing discretionary requirements for ADUs; shortening the ADU building permit review period to 60 days; establishing regulations for Junior ADUs; easing development standards such as unit size, setbacks and parking; revising the owner occupancy requirement; removing the requirement for fire sprinklers for many cases; reducing fees for ADUs; allowing for separate sale of ADUs by non-profit organizations, and introducing a five-year ADU code enforcement amnesty program.

<b>TABLE 14: TOTAL ADUs ISSUED BUILDING PERMITS IN UNINCORPORATED COUNTY BY PLANNING AREA SINCE 2010</b>														
	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Aptos	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	3	8	4	18	4	<b>47</b>
Aptos Hills	6	2	4	8	1	4	2	6	6	0	1	1	0	<b>41</b>
Bonny Doon	3	1	2	1	0	2	0	1	2	2	1	4	2	<b>21</b>
Carbonera	2	6	3	2	1	6	0	4	3	3	1	6	3	<b>40</b>
Eureka Canyon	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	3	1	0	<b>19</b>
La Selva	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
Live Oak	2	2	0	5	6	6	7	10	4	8	19	22	8	<b>99</b>
North Coast	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	<b>3</b>
Pajaro Valley	3	0	1	1	2	1	2	0	4	1	0	3	3	<b>21</b>
Salsipuedes	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	<b>9</b>
San Andreas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	<b>3</b>
San Lorenzo Valley	1	1	0	0	1	2	4	1	4	2	4	3	3	<b>26</b>
Skyline	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	<b>6</b>
Soquel	0	1	2	4	2	1	1	0	3	1	2	2	1	<b>20</b>
Summit	5	0	2	1	1	4	1	1	3	0	1	0	2	<b>21</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>351</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> As of July 1, 2022

Major barriers to ADU construction include permit and construction costs as well as property owner unfamiliarity with the project planning, design and construction process. Over the years, the County has developed various programs to address these barriers, including the ADU Forgivable Loan Program, the three year My House My Home partnership with Habitat for Humanity, reduced ADU permit fees and a fee waiver program for small ADUs beyond what is required by state law. Staff has also prepared a suite of resources on the County’s user-friendly ADU website. In 2022, the Board of Supervisors decided to end the ADU Forgivable Loan Program due to low performance, and in its place the County is developing a technical assistance program to aid property owners with ADU project planning, design and construction.

Updates to the County’s ADU ordinance and incentive programs are expected to make ADUs more feasible and appealing to County homeowners, and County staff are already seeing an uptick in ADU applications. As Table 14 indicates, after a decrease in permit applications following the 2008-10 recession, application rates for ADUs have steadily increased in recent years, including a significant jump in 2021 with 63 building permits issued for ADUs in the unincorporated area. As of July 1 of this year, 27 ADU permits have already been issued, which is down from 37 at the same time last year, but still up from 2020 when only 16 ADU permits had been issued.

In order to further reduce barriers to ADU production, the Planning Department is currently partnering with a design consultant to create three pre-approved sets of ADU architectural plans that will be available to applicants on the ADU website free of charge. Also, designers and pre-fabrication manufacturers will soon have the option to obtain pre-approval for ADU designs that they intend to use for multiple projects. Additionally, staff is preparing on an ordinance that would address the use of tiny homes on wheels as ADUs.

ADUs in the Coastal Zone:

The data indicate that ADUs have been built primarily in rural, non-coastal areas. The recently revised regulations, particularly the removal of a minimum parcel size for an ADU permit and the reduction in required parking in certain cases, could contribute to increased production overall and within the Coastal Zone. Future ADU permit data will indicate what type of latent demand exists for ADUs inside the Coastal Zone and might show a change in development trends.

<b>TABLE 15: COASTAL ZONE ADUs ISSUED BUILDING PERMITS IN UNINCORPORATED COUNTY BY PLANNING AREA SINCE 2005</b>														
	10	11 <sup>(1)</sup>	12 <sup>(1)</sup>	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22 <sup>(2)</sup>	TOTAL (1)
Aptos	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	6	2	12	3	28
Aptos Hills	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bonny Doon	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	2	0	12
Carbonera	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eureka Canyon	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
La Selva	0	--	--	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Live Oak	0	1	--	3	4	3	4	2	2	4	9	11	5	48
North Coast	0	1	--	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Pajaro Valley	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salsipuedes	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
San Andreas	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
San Lorenzo Valley	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skyline	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Soquel	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Summit	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>99</b>
<sup>(1)</sup> Unknown Planning Area for one ADU in 2011 and two ADUs in 2012. ADU total by year is accurate but Planning Area totals are incomplete for these years.														
<sup>(2)</sup> As of July 1, 2022														

Since 2010, a total of 99 building permits have been issued for ADUs within the Coastal Zone of the unincorporated area. Last year saw a significant jump of ADU permits overall, including 27 in the Coastal Zone, and the County has seen a gradual increase in the development of ADUs near the coast in recent years, with approximately 28% of all ADU permits issued in the County were in the Coastal Zone in the past 12 years. Given the relatively minimal number of building permits issued for ADUs in the Coastal Zone, it is likely that there have been limited cumulative impacts to traffic, water, public views, and environmentally sensitive areas, if any, in the Coastal Zone. Some of these potential impacts have been analyzed in aggregate in Section IV, Potential Growth Impacts above. County staff will continue maintain a close review of ADUs in the Coastal Zone, particularly as we continue to see local and state regulations encourage greater development of ADUs throughout the County.

**VI. GROWTH GOAL RECOMMENDATION**

## **Growth Goal**

The Board of Supervisors adopted a 0.25% growth rate for 2022 and 2021. An annual growth rate of 0.5% was adopted in each of the years from 2001-2020, and a rate of 0.75% was adopted for 1999 and 2000 during the “dot-com” boom period of the late 1990s.

Table 10 provides insight into the overall building permit activity in the unincorporated area. Building permit activity of all types remained at a fairly high annual rate until late 2006, when there was a slowdown that continued through 2007 and became much slower during the 2008-10 recession and its aftermath. Between 2011 and 2012, and again in 2016, increases in residential building permit activity occurred primarily as a result of permits for affordable units. Market rate permit activity (not including permits for ADUs and affordable units) remained consistently low from 2007 to 2016.

Since 2020, permit activity has been steadily increasing, with 142 total units issued residential permits, including 45 PRH units, up from 78 units the year before. Last year, high permit rates continued, with 133 units were issued permits, including 63 ADUs. Even with the increase in permit activity in 2020 and 2021, the growth rate still provided an ample number of allocations, resulting in an unused surplus of 83 allocations carried over to 2022. Since 2004, the number of available allocations derived from the established growth rate has been more than sufficient to accommodate the demand for residential building permits.

As of July 1, 2022, there have been a total of 219 permits issued for new housing units this year, including 67 market rate units, 27 ADUs, and 125 affordable units from several recently approved affordable housing and density bonus projects. This year’s building permit rate is significantly higher than the 51 total units issued permits at the same time last year; however, most of this year’s permit activity can be attributed to two recently approved affordable housing projects that are that are now in the construction phase. As the pipeline of subsidized affordable projects and density bonus projects continues to progress, we may continue to see more construction of both market rate and affordable housing units at rates higher than we’ve seen in the last decade.

In consideration of the information analyzed in the above sections of this report, staff recommends that the population growth rate be set at 0.5% for calendar year 2023. Aside from the uncharacteristically high population growth in 2020, recent population estimates have shown a negative growth rate for the unincorporated area. However, DOF population estimates between Census years are derived primarily from new housing construction reported by the County annually. Census data indicates that the County’s population has actually grown over the past decade, and AMBAG projections show this steady increase is likely to continue. In addition, the number of housing projects currently in the County’s permitting pipeline, as well as the elevated permit activity seen in recent years, point to a potentially increased demand for market rate permits that may continue through next year. Therefore, setting a growth rate of 0.5% for the year 2023 would allow for Santa Cruz County to continue to provide its fair share of statewide population growth.

Housing Crisis Act of 2019

In October 2019, Governor Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 330. This bill establishes a statewide housing emergency and creates new state laws focused on the production and preservation of housing. SB 330 also adds Section 66300: Housing Crisis Act of 2019 to the Government Code to help address the statewide housing shortfall. These laws will be in effect from January 1, 2020 to January 1, 2030 (extended from 2025 per the recently adopted SB 8).

The Housing Crisis Act of 2019 implements new protections for existing housing as well as new restrictions on local government actions that may reduce the availability of housing. A key provision of this law prevents jurisdictions from limiting the number of housing permits or population within “affected county areas.” Affected county areas are defined as Census Designated Places (CDPs) that lie wholly within Census-defined urbanized areas. In Santa Cruz County, this includes the following CDPs: Live Oak, Pasatiempo, Paradise Park, and Amesti.

In accordance with the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, Santa Cruz County will continue to not enforce the Measure J growth goal limit on residential permit allocations within affected county areas while this temporary statute is in place. Other aspects of Measure J unrelated to limiting residential building permit allocations will not be impacted by this bill, and staff will continue to track Measure J allocations and subsequent building permit issuance in these areas for reporting purposes.

CZU Lightning Complex

The CZU August Lightning Complex Fires that began in August 2020 resulted in an unprecedented level of destroyed and damaged structures within unincorporated Santa Cruz County. The total number of unpermitted residential units impacted by the fires remains unknown; however, it is likely that a significant number of unpermitted housing units may have been destroyed or damaged by the fires. All residential units impacted by the CZU August Lightning Complex Fires continue to be exempt from the Measure J residential permit allocation system to ensure that the County’s growth management measures do not unnecessarily burden County residents who were impacted by this disaster. Note that issued building permits for CZU impacted properties may be included in the total number of new units shown in Table 10 if no existing permit was found in the County’s records. However, similar to affordable units and ADUs, issued permits for CZU properties remain exempt from the allocation system and are recorded in Table 10 for reporting purposes only.

**TABLE 16: BUILDING PERMIT ALLOCATION CALCULATION  
BASED ON A 0.5% ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH RATE FOR 2023**

Estimated Total Household Population 1/1/22 <sup>(1)</sup>	127,875
Estimated Group Quarters Population 1/1/22 <sup>(1)</sup>	2,102
Estimated Total Population 1/1/22 <sup>(1)</sup>	129,977
Approved 2022 Growth Goal	0.25%
Projected 1/1/23 Household Population (based on a 0.25% growth rate from 1/1/22)	128,195
Proposed 2023 Growth Goal	0.50%
Projected 1/1/24 Household Population (based on the proposed 0.5% growth rate from projected 1/1/23 population)	128,836
Projected Household Population Increase During 2023	641
Estimated Persons Per Household (1/1/22) <sup>(1)</sup>	2.50
Projected New Housing Units (market rate) during 2023	256
(1) Source: DOF E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, 1/1/2022 for unincorporated Santa Cruz County (May 2022)	

### Building Permit Allocations

Each year, the population growth rate established for the coming year is converted into a maximum number of available allocations to be granted to residential building permits in the unincorporated area for that year. This number is based on the coming year’s projected demand for new housing units. Table 16 shows the methodology by which the recommended 0.5% population growth rate for 2023 would be converted into a total of 256 residential building permit allocations.

### Allocation Carryover

In the Housing Element of the Santa Cruz County General Plan, Policy 3.2 directs any unused allocations from one year to “roll forward” and be made available for the following year in order to remove unnecessary constraints to the development of housing. Pursuant to this policy, the total number of available allocations in 2023 will be 256 plus the carryover from 2022, which will not be known until the end of the year but is projected to be 78, for a total of 334 allocations for 2023.

<b>TABLE 17: RECOMMENDED 2023 ALLOCATION DISTRIBUTION</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>2023 Market Rate Unit Allocations</b>	<b>2022 Carryover Allocations <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Total 2023 Allocations <sup>(1)</sup></b>
Urban	193	58	251
Rural	63	20	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>334</b>
Note: Per the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, the Measure J growth management system will not be enforced in affected county areas for the years 2020-2030. (See Housing Crisis Act of 2019 section above for more information.)			
<sup>(1)</sup> Projected year-end allocations available based on continuation of rate for first six months.			

In past few years, allocations were divided on a 75-25% ratio to recognize the potential for greater infill development in the urban area. Staff recommends continuing this ratio for

2022, as illustrated in Table 17. This division implements the ordinance requirement of encouraging growth in urban areas and discouraging growth in the rural areas.

### **Rural Land Divisions**

County Code Chapter 14.04 limits the number of new residential parcels that can be created in the rural portion of the County to 35% of the number of rural residential allocations granted each year. Based on the recommended 63 rural allocations, a limit of 22 new rural residential parcels could be created. No new rural lots have been approved in 2022 as of July 1. As the number of new rural residential parcels has not exceeded the yearly limitation for more than a decade, no further action is recommended for the control of rural land divisions.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Since 1979, when Measure J was first implemented, the County has established an annual population growth goal that represents Santa Cruz County's fair share of statewide population growth. Each year a growth rate is set and then converted into a maximum number of residential building permit allocations to be granted for the coming year. Given the population growth trends estimated for the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County in recent years, the potential increase in demand for residential building permits, County Planning staff recommends that the growth rate be set at 0.5% for calendar year 2023.

Under the 0.5% growth rate recommended for 2023, a maximum of 256 residential building permits could be allocated in the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County: 193 in the urban area and 63 in the rural area. As stated previously, in accordance with the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, Santa Cruz County will not enforce the Measure J growth goal limit on residential permit allocations within the following CDPs while the statute is in place: Live Oak, Pasatiempo, Paradise Park, and Amesti.

Consistent with the County General Plan, the unused allocations from 2022 will be carried over and added to the 2023 allocation. Based on the number of allocations that have been granted as of July 1 of this year, it is projected that a total of 78 unused allocations will carry over. The combined new and carryover allocations will result in 334 total market rate allocations, which is expected to be sufficient to accommodate the demand for residential building permits in the coming year.

## VIII. REFERENCES

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