



CITY OF WATSONVILLE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
 250 MAIN STREET • WATSONVILLE, CA 95076
 TELEPHONE: (831) 768-3050 • www.watsonville.gov

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: Distribution (refer to attached list) **Date:** September 13, 2024

Subject: Notice of Preparation – Watsonville 2050 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Lead Agency:

Agency Name: City of Watsonville, Community Development Department
Street Address: 250 Main Street
City/State/Zip: Watsonville, California 95076
Contact: Justin Meek
 Assistant Community Development Director
Telephone: 831-768-3050

Consulting Firm:

Name: Circlepoint
Street Address: 42 S First Street, Suite D
City/State/Zip: San Jose, California 95113
Contact: Marco Mendoza
 Project Manager
Telephone: 657-208-6882

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is hereby given that the City of Watsonville (City) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Watsonville 2050 General Plan (project) (see **Attachment 1: Project Description**) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations Section 15060(d)). City staff is requesting comments from your agency on the scope and content of the project's environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), the City of Watsonville determined that an EIR would be required for this project and did not prepare an initial study. The EIR will address the potential physical environmental effects of the project for each of the environmental topics outlined in the CEQA Guidelines. As of the date of this NOP and based on currently available information, it is anticipated that the project may have potentially significant impacts in connection with aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services and utilities, population and housing, recreation, transportation/circulation, and wildfire. Cumulative impacts will consider impacts of relevant foreseeable projects in and around the plan area in combination with those of the project. An evaluation of project alternatives that could reduce significant impacts will be included in the EIR.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date and **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice. The review period for public comments pertaining to this NOP extends from September 13, 2024, to October 14, 2024. Please send your response to Justin Meek, AICP, Assistant Community Development Director at the address shown above. We will need the name of a contact person in your agency.

An EIR Scoping Meeting for this project will be held at the following date, time, and location:

When: Wednesday, October 9, 2024, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Where: One-Stop Conference Room
 250 Main Street
 Watsonville, CA 95076

Signature:

Justin Meek

Title:

Assistant Community Development Director
 City of Watsonville

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Project Description
 Attachment 2: Project Location Map
 Attachment 3: Planning Area Boundaries Map
 Attachment 4: Measure U/Q Development Planning Areas and Urban Limit Line Map
 Attachment 5: Areas of Projected Growth within the City's Sphere of Influence

ATTACHMENT 1 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Title: Watsonville 2050 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Project Location:

The City of Watsonville (City) is in the southern portion of Santa Cruz County, approximately 14 miles southeast of the city of Santa Cruz and 16 miles north of the city of Salinas (see *Attachment 2: Project Location Map*). Watsonville is bordered to the west, north, and east by unincorporated Santa Cruz County and to the south by the Town of Pajaro in unincorporated Monterey County. Major transportation routes that provide access to the City include Highway 1, which runs north-south along the western edge of the City; State Route (SR) 152, which begins at Highway 1 and passes through the City along Main Street and East Lake Avenue; and SR 129, which also begins at Highway 1 and heads eastward through the southern portion of the City along Riverside Drive to U.S. 101. The City is approximately 4,200 contiguous acres or 6.5 square miles in area, including 5 areas on noncontiguous land at the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Plant (0.03 acres), Buena Vista Landfill (0.08 acres), Pinto Lake (0.12 acres), Corralitos Water Filter Plant (0.02 acres), and Browns Valley Intake (0.05 acres).

Planning Area Boundaries:

Several boundary lines define the framework for this general plan update (see *Attachment 3: Planning Area Boundaries*) including:

- The existing City limits;
- The City's Sphere of Influence (SOI), which represents the Watsonville Planning Area Boundary and encompasses parcels served by existing City public services (e.g., water services) both within and outside City limits. The land use jurisdiction remains within Santa Cruz County outside City limits; and
- The Urban Limit Line (ULL), which was established in 2002 by a vote of residents through Measure U, to limit where new growth can occur and under certain conditions through 2027, and extended to 2040 via a 2022 vote of residents through Measure Q. Potential annexation areas projected to accommodate new growth within the ULL include Area A (Buena Vista) and Area B (Atkinson Lane). Annexation areas within the ULL that are already developed or largely developed include the Freedom Area (Phases I and II), Area E (Villages), Area F (Manabe/Burgstrom), Area G (West of Highway 1), and the South Manfre Road Area (see *Attachment 4: Measure U/Q Development Planning Areas and Existing Urban Limit Line*). Anticipated growth involves amending the ULL to include Area C and the Highway 1 Gateway and expanding Buena Vista to Freedom Boulevard (see *Attachment 5: Areas of Projected Growth within the City's Sphere of Influence*).

The proposed General Plan planning area (the planning area) is defined as those areas within the ULL and the existing City limits.

Project Description:

The City is preparing a comprehensive update of the *Watsonville 2005 General Plan* in response to changes in conditions in the City and new state laws enacted since the preparation of the existing General Plan, including AB 1358 (Complete Streets), SB 99 (Evacuation Analysis), SB 379 (Climate Adaptation), SB 932 (Safe Systems), SB 1241 (Wildfire Hazards) and SB 1000 (Environmental Justice).

The proposed *2050 General Plan* will include updates of the following elements required by State Planning and Zoning Law: (1) Land Use and Community Character, including the Land Use Map; (2) Open Space; (3) Public Facilities and Services; (4) Mobility and Access; (5) Resource Conservation and Management; (6) Safety; and (7) Noise. In addition, the General Plan will include an Airport Land Use element. The updates to these elements will address environmental justice in accordance with California Government Code Section 65302. The City's 2023-2031 Housing Element is scheduled to be certified in Fall 2024. The City's Zoning Ordinance will be updated, as needed, to maintain consistency with the 2050 General Plan.

The *2050 General Plan* will include goals, policies, and implementation actions – developed with extensive community input – to advance the City's vision and community priorities, including: revitalizing Downtown Watsonville; introducing a range of new housing choices, both single-family and multi-family; attracting new employment and revenue-generating uses; maintaining the existing character of the City's residential neighborhoods, preserving the City's natural open spaces, especially the sloughs; improving the City's existing parks and community facilities, and introducing new ones; accommodating planned passenger rail service, including a station in Downtown Watsonville; implementing complete streets improvements; and rerouting truck routes around town.

Infill growth within the City Limits – primarily multi-family and mixed-use development – will be focused along the East Lake Avenue and Freedom Boulevard corridors and within Downtown Watsonville, which is governed by the recently adopted Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan per Ordinance no. 1457-23 (see *Attachment 5: Areas of Projected Growth within the City's Sphere of Influence*). New growth beyond existing City limits would be accommodated in the Buena Vista, Atkinson Lane, Area C, and the Highway 1 Gateway area. Growth within Buena Vista and Area C would consist of single-family and multi-family housing and small mixed-use neighborhood centers and may offer a significant number of new home ownership opportunities. Growth within the Highway 1 Gateway would consist of regional retail, community recreation, and visitor-serving uses. New development

0388

within Buena Vista and Atkinson Lane, which are already within the ULL, would require annexation into the City of Watsonville. New development within the planning area beyond the ULL – the parcels adjacent to Buena Vista, within Area C, and within the majority of the Highway 1 Gateway – would require approval via a Citywide referendum and subsequent annexation. If a Citywide referendum does not result in approval, these parcels will not be eligible for development until 2040. To further enable infill development along North Freedom Boulevard and within the Buena Vista new growth area, the Watsonville Municipal Airport crosswind runway (9-27) is anticipated to be closed. To further enable aviation activities at the Airport, including jet aircraft, the main runway (2-20) would be lengthened from 4,501 to 5,181 feet.

Project Growth:

The projected growth in the 2050 General Plan envisions the addition of up to 5,980 new residential units and 1.725 million square feet of non-residential development, as follows:

- 4,320 new residential units are projected to be developed within the existing City limits, primarily in Downtown Watsonville;
- 1,660 new residential units within the Buena Vista and/or Area C growth areas;
- 225,000 square feet of new non-residential development is anticipated to be developed within the existing City limits (Downtown Watsonville and along East Lake Avenue and Freedom Boulevard); and
- up to 1.5 million square feet of non-residential development within the Highway 1 Gateway new growth area including regional retail, community recreation, and visitor-serving uses.

Project Alternatives:

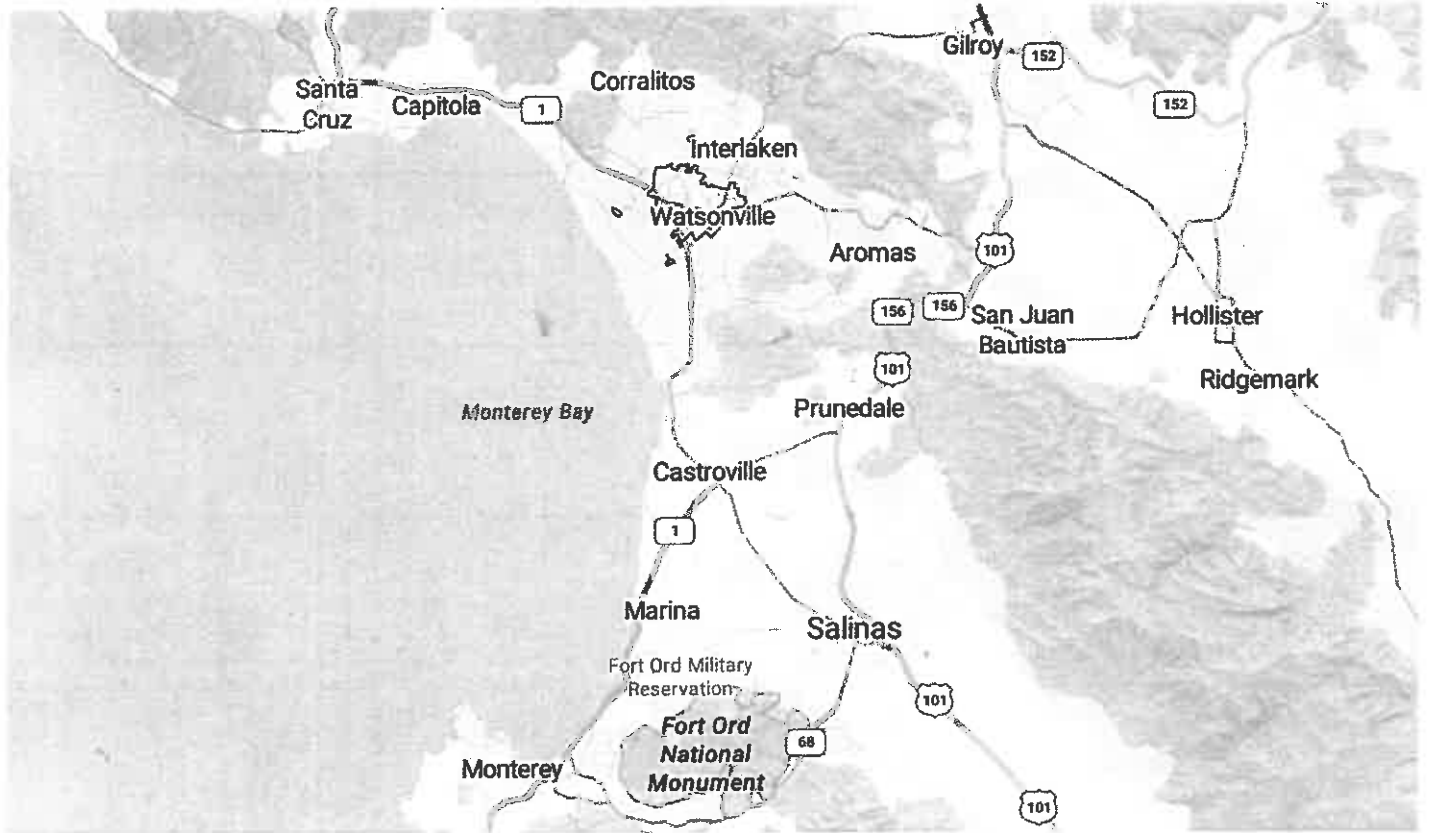
The EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of project alternatives that, consistent with CEQA, meet most of the project objectives and reduce or avoid potential environmental effects, including a No Project Alternative.

When a draft of the EIR is completed, it will be available for review at the City's offices located at 250 Main Street, Watsonville, California 95076 and online at: <https://www.cityofwatsonville.org/2440/General-Plan-Update>. The City will issue a Notice of Availability of the draft EIR at that time to inform the public and interested agencies, groups, and individuals on how to access the draft EIR and provide comments on the adequacy of the document.

If you have questions regarding this NOP, please contact Justin Meek, AICP, Assistant Community Development Director at (831) 768-3050 or via email at general.plan@watsonville.gov.

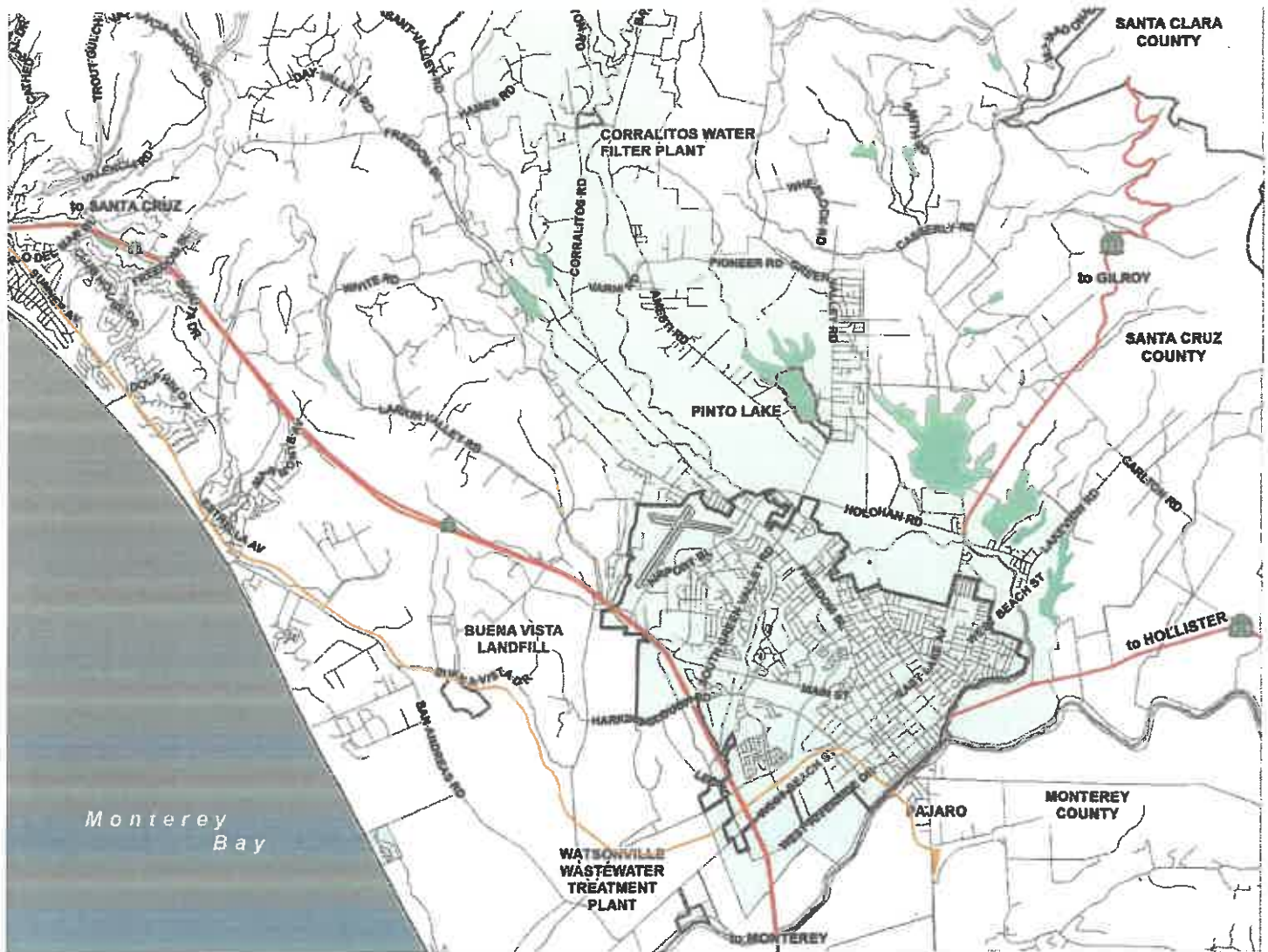
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ATTACHMENT 2 – PROJECT LOCATION



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ATTACHMENT 3 – PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES

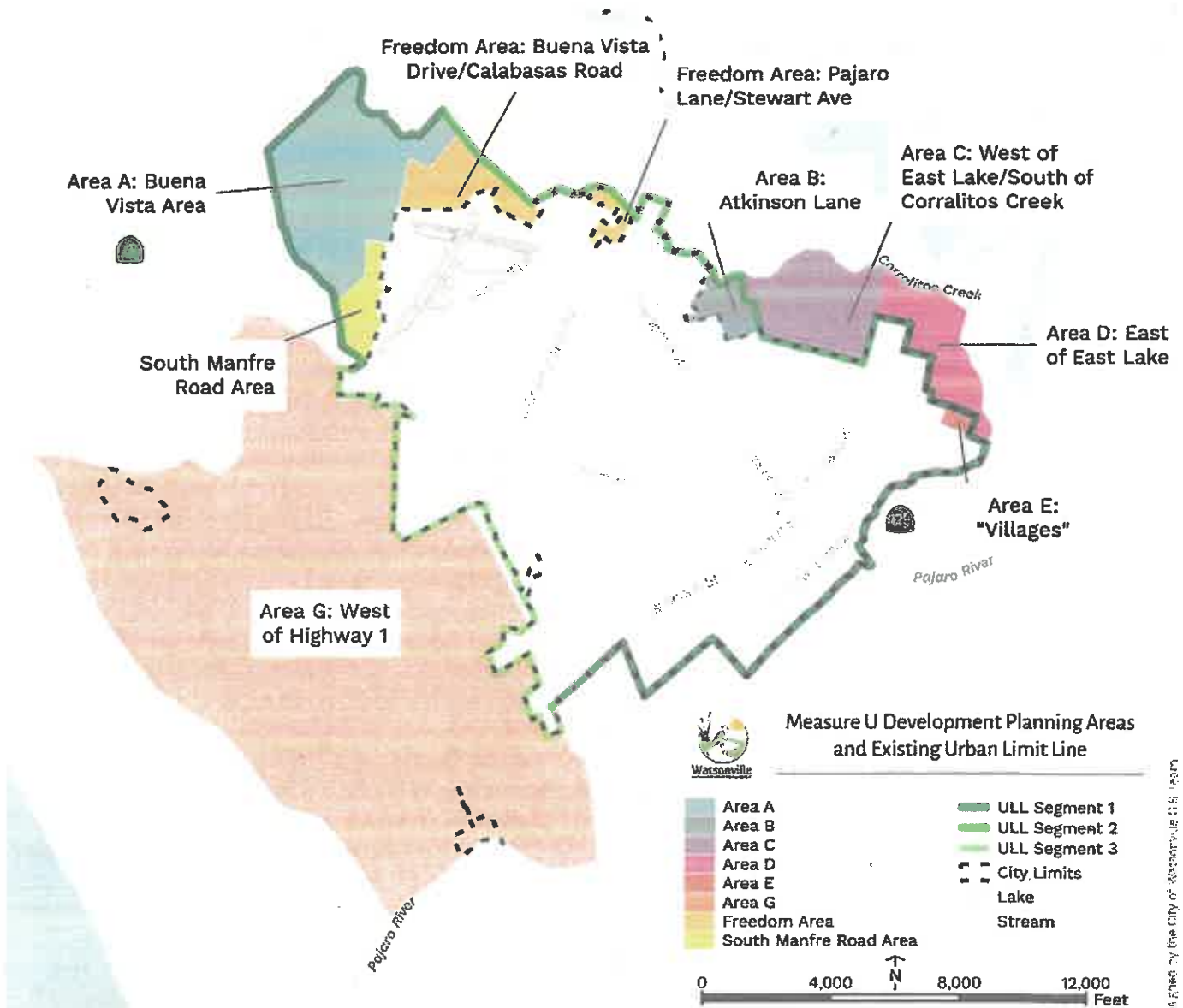


Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  City Limit |  ULL Segment 1 |  Street |  Stream |
|  County Boundary |  ULL Segment 2 |  Highway |  Lakes |
|  Sphere of Influence |  ULL Segment 3 |  Railroad | |

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ATTACHMENT 4 – MEASURE U/Q DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AREAS AND EXISTING URBAN LIMIT LINE

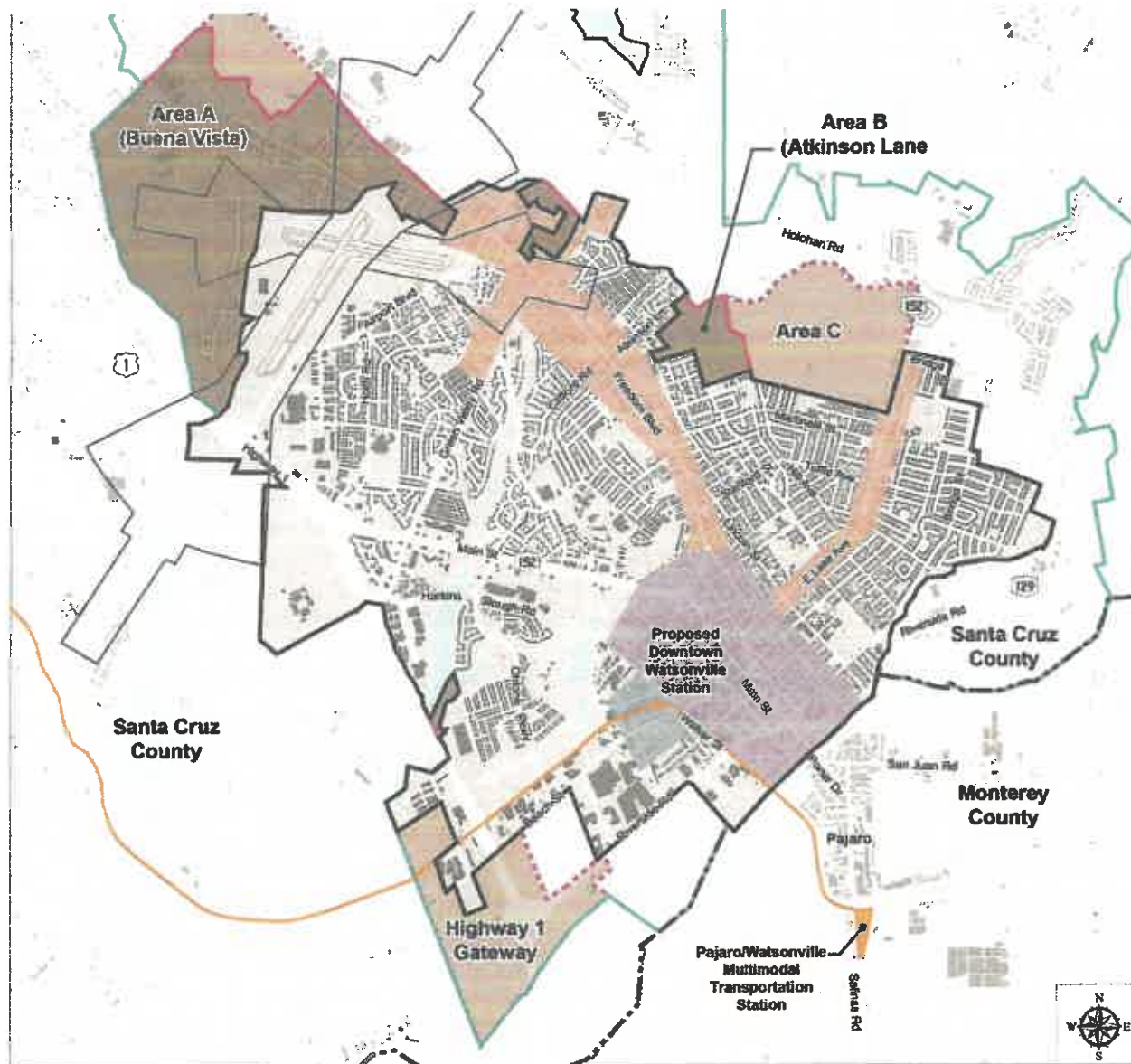


This document is a graphic representation using the best currently available sources. The City of Watsonville assumes no responsibility for any errors. || Project 24-428 General Plan 2050 Update

Map Created by the City of Watsonville GIS Team

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ATTACHMENT 5 – AREAS OF PROJECTED GROWTH WITHIN THE CITY'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| — City Limit | ■ Downtown Infill | — Main Runway Airport Safety Zones 1-5 |
| - - - County Boundary | ■ Station Area Infill | - - - Crosswind Runway Airport Safety Zones 1-5 |
| — Sphere of Influence (SOI) | ■ Corridor Infill | — Proposed Passenger Rail Line and Station |
| — Existing Urban Limit Line (ULL) | ■ New Growth Area within ULL | |
| - - - Proposed Urban Limit Line (ULL) | ■ New Growth Area outside ULL | |

0393



Treasurer - Tax Collector

Parcel/Account # 052-271-04

Situs Address 320 LEE RD, WATSONVILLE

Prior Year Taxes defaulted.

2025 - 2026 Annual Tax Bill			See Details
Installment	Due Date	Paid Date	Amount
First Installment	3/31/2026	Past Due	\$9,525.52
Second Installment	4/10/2026	Past Due	\$9,580.52
Both Installment			\$19,106.04

2024 - 2025 Annual Tax Bill			See Details
Installment	Due Date	Paid Date	Amount
First Installment	12/10/2024	Past Due	Defaulted
Second Installment	4/10/2025	Past Due	Defaulted

2023 - 2024 Annual Tax Bill			See Details
Installment	Due Date	Paid Date	Amount
First Installment	12/10/2023	Past Due	Defaulted
Second Installment	4/10/2024	Past Due	Defaulted

2022 - 2023 Annual Tax Bill			See Details
Installment	Due Date	Paid Date	Amount
First Installment	12/10/2022	Past Due	Defaulted
Second Installment	4/10/2023	Past Due	Defaulted

*Hand-delivered
5/12/26 Becky Steinbruner*

RE: Thank You for Your Interview on "Community Matters" Yesterday to Discuss the City of Vacaville BESS Ordinance

From: Albert Enault (albert.enault@cityofvacaville.gov)

To: ki6tkb@yahoo.com

Date: Monday, May 11, 2026 at 03:51 PM PDT

Hi Becky,

The draft ordinance is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 15061 (b)(3) since there is no possibility that the addition of regulations for BESS Facilities will have a significant effect on the environment. Proposed future BESS facilities will be reviewed in compliance with the provisions of CEQA at the time of application to determine appropriate environmental review.

Albert Enault
Senior Planner
(707) 449-5364

From: Becky Steinbruner <ki6tkb@yahoo.com>

Sent: Saturday, May 9, 2026 6:31 PM

To: Albert Enault <Albert.Enault@CityofVacaville.gov>

Subject: Thank You for Your Interview on "Community Matters" Yesterday to Discuss the City of Vacaville BESS Ordinance

CAUTION: This Email is from an EXTERNAL source. Ensure you trust this sender before clicking on any links or attachments.

Dear Mr. Enault,

Thank you very much for your time interviewing yesterday on KSCO Radio to discuss the City of Vacaville's BESS Ordinance.

Your information was very helpful and of great interest to the listeners.

One question a listener wrote me about later was whether the City of Vacaville had to do any environmental review of the Ordinance before adopting it? If so, was that review done in-house or via a consultant?

Thank you once again for your time and excellent work.

Sincerely,

Hand-delivered
5/13/26 Becky Steinbruner

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Thank you once again for your time and excellent work.

Sincerely,

Riley Rhodes

From: Paul Statchen <paulstatchen10@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2026 1:41 PM
To: Riley Rhodes
Cc: PLN Policy Staff
Subject: Written Public Correspondence: Open-Source Infrastructure Mandate & Environmental Protections for Large-Scale Compute Loads
Attachments: PROJECT PHOENIX_ TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

******CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Members of the Santa Cruz County Planning Commission,

I am submitting this technical advisory statement for entry into the official public record regarding written communications and upcoming land-use policy reviews. As the County continuously updates its local codes, zoning parameters, and guidelines for industrial or technology assets, it is critical that our local oversight protects public utility access, regional aquifers, and coastal ecosystems from corporate technological extraction.

The attached protocol, Project Phoenix, establishes a verified, non-poisonous engineering baseline for high-density computing infrastructure. This framework replaces high-impact evaporative water consumption with closed supercritical CO2 cooling loops, utilizes cryogenic freeze-crystallization to process local wastewater into pure ice thermal matrices for watershed rehydration, implements active phase-inversion networks to nullify structural EMF signatures, and utilizes an Isolated Single-Point Star Ground reference point to prevent harmful common-mode grid electrical leakage from bleeding into our local soils.

To preserve the sovereignty of Santa Cruz County and ensure our local communities are not forced to subsidize private utility strain, I urge the Planning Commission to integrate the following structural permitting condition into all future discretionary zoning reviews and local area plans for technology or utility infrastructure exceeding a 20-Megawatt operational baseline:

"Any localized zoning approval or land-use permit for a high-density data infrastructure asset must condition its approval upon the deployment of an Open-Source Utility Interface. The public utility and local regulatory authority shall retain exclusive, sovereign ownership over physical Solid-State Transformer (SST) boundaries and public, immutable environmental telemetry arrays. Proprietary software-locking or subscription-based licensing of core utility interactions by private operators is strictly prohibited within this jurisdiction."

This blueprint is open-source and published under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-SA 4.0), making it immediately available for local codification.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Brian Statchen

Systems Architect and Independent Researcher

Seabright, Santa Cruz, California

Open-Source Architecture Archive: https://github.com/paulstatchen10-ux/project_phoenix/blob/main/README.md

PROJECT PHOENIX: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Framework: Mega-Principle Integration & Sovereign Civil Data **Licensing:** Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0) **Author:** Paul Brian Statchen, Systems Architect & Independent Researcher

CONTEXT & ETHICAL FOUNDATION

This manual serves as an open-source blueprint to re-engineer data centers from extractive entities into ecological restorers. Project Phoenix operates on the principle of Right Relations (Mitakuye Oyasin). Under the Mega-Principle of Material Sovereignty, every component must possess a clear, verified end-of-life breakdown pathway that returns safely to the earth without generating hazardous waste sites.

PACKAGE 1: THERMODYNAMIC CLOSED-LOOP & WATER LOGISTICS

1. Primary Fluid Loop: Supercritical CO₂ (sCO₂) To eliminate erosion, scaling, and chemical treatments, the primary heat transfer layer utilizes a closed-loop supercritical carbon dioxide (sCO₂) network directly touching the computation matrices. Maintained above its critical point (31.1 degrees Celsius and 7.39 MPa), it provides total isolation of hardware from external water with zero mineral buildup.

2. Cryogenic Freeze-Crystallization The high-heat sCO₂ fluid runs through an expansion heat-exchanger driving a low-temperature Organic Rankine Cycle or mechanical heat pump. This cycle pulls heat out of regional wastewater or agricultural runoff, driving temperatures below freezing. As polluted water freezes into ice, the water molecules form a rigid, pure crystalline lattice that naturally rejects salts, nitrates, and heavy metals. The ice blocks function as a high-density thermal storage matrix (334 kJ/kg), eliminating the need for chemical lithium-ion batteries.

3. Modular Logistics & Watershed Rehydration Automated, low-impact electric transit platforms (such as the modular Glide platform systems running along local rail corridors like the Santa Cruz Branch Line) pick up the purified ice blocks directly from the automated loading docks. Ice blocks are delivered directly to regional agricultural properties or stacked methodically at high-elevation headwaters. As the ice stacks slowly melt via ambient solar heat, they act as time-released, ultra-pure water sources that recharge depleted valley aquifers, rebuild natural river flows, and lower local water temperatures for native fish migration.

4. Eco-Component Standardization (ISO 14040/14044) All hardware must follow standardized components analyzed under ISO 14040/14044 circular pathways:

- Primary Fluid Conduits: Instrument-grade Red Copper or Structural Ceramic sleeves (100% infinitely recyclable, zero synthetic breakdown).
- Heat Exchanger Matrices: Brazed Stainless Steel (sCO₂ rated for clean mechanical separation and melt-remanufacture).
- Structural Frame: Dense Timber Composites & Natural Algae-binders (fully biodegradable matching the Mega-Principle).

PACKAGE 2: ACTIVE EMF CANCELATION & GROUNDING PURITY

5. Active Electromagnetic Cancellation Network (AECN) Instead of relying solely on heavy passive metal shielding, the facility deploys an active attenuation system modeled on differential sound engineering phase-inversion. A localized array of high-speed RF and EMF sensors continuously scans the boundary of the computer chassis to map escaping emissions. The network calculates the precise inverse waveform (180 degrees out of phase) of the radiating frequency bands and emits these anti-phase fields, forcing destructive interference to nullify the signature before it exits the facility containment zone. The system dynamically adjusts its geometry around passing humans or animals to ensure biological fields remain completely unaltered.

6. Power Quality, Residual Harmonics, & Grounding Purity To optimize computing efficiency and protect local soil, incoming power undergoes online double-conversion isolation (converting AC to DC, then back to a reconstructed AC sine wave), electrostatic ultra-isolation, and active harmonic filtering (AHF) to keep the power factor at a clean, near-perfect 1.0. All internal component grounds converge at an Isolated Single-Point Star Ground reference point within the facility, completely decoupled from the external ecosystem to prevent structural electrical leakage into the surrounding earth.

PACKAGE 3: HYDROGEN BACKUP & HARDWARE SOURCING

7. Zero-Emission Backup Power To maintain 99.999% uptime without a single drop of diesel, backup power is split into vacuum-sealed magnetic-bearing kinetic flywheels for immediate 15-to-30-second bridging ride-through, and modular hydrogen fuel cell banks (PEM or Solid Oxide) supplied by onsite green hydrogen for continuous long-term backup. The only exhaust emitted is hot, pure water vapor.

8. Solid-State Transformers & Grid Peak-Shaving Instead of legacy oil-filled transformers, the facility utilizes American-made Medium-Voltage Solid-State Transformers (SSTs) incorporating high-power semiconductor circuits. This allows active grid buffering: during peak civic energy demand, the facility cuts its grid draw and runs entirely on internal thermal and fuel-cell storage, acting as a stabilizing shock absorber for the municipal grid.

9. Closed-Loop Sourcing & E-Waste Reclamation Server chassis utilize non-composite, mechanically demountable designs that snap into place for clean physical separation of copper, silicon, and aluminum at end-of-life. Circuit substrates must utilize water-soluble or natural

resin-based compositions that safely dissolve in hot water, allowing 100% recovery of precious metals without toxic chemical burning or acid washing, fully verified under ISO 14044 tracking.

PACKAGE 4: DOMESTIC SOURCING DIRECTORY & ROI ANALYSIS

1. Domestic Hardware Suppliers (100% US-Based)

- Primary Fluid Loop (sCO₂ Systems): Barber-Nichols (CO), Echogen Power Systems (OH), or Southwest Research Institute / SwRI (TX).
- Grid Shock Absorber (Solid-State Transformers): Eaton Corporation (OH), General Electric / GE Vernova (MA), or GridBridge / ERMCO (NC).
- Zero-Emission Backup (Hydrogen Fuel Cells): Plug Power (NY), FuelCell Energy (CT), or Bloom Energy (CA).
- Power Purity Stack (Active Filters): Schneider Electric US (MA), ABB USA (NC Hubs), or MTE Corporation (WI).

2. Financial Investment Analysis (50-MW Model Baseline)

- Legacy Design CapEx (Water Towers + Diesel Gen-Sets): \$45,000,000
- Phoenix Protocol CapEx (sCO₂ + SST + Hydrogen Backup + Ice): \$68,000,000
- Upfront Capital Premium: \$23,000,000

Annual Operational Expenditure (OpEx) Savings:

- Water Elimination Savings: \$1,200,000/year
- Active Peak-Shaving Grid Deflection: \$2,800,000/year
- Power Purity Efficiency Gains (2.5% PUE recovery): \$900,000/year
- Underwriting & Insurance Liability Relief: \$1,000,000/year
- **TOTAL ANNUAL OPEX SAVINGS: \$5,900,000/year**

Financial Recovery: Simple Payback Period = Upfront CapEx Premium divided by Annual OpEx Savings = \$23,000,000 / \$5,900,000 = **3.9 Years**. Over a standard 10-year facility lifecycle, this infrastructure design converts the initial premium into a net operational surplus of **\$59,000,000** in cumulative savings.

3. Legal Shield Framework Because the Aegis public sensor ledger continuously logs immutable evidence of zero toxic discharge, zero common-mode ground pollution, and active EMF destructive interference, the operator possesses an ironclad defense against environmental tort lawsuits. Upon decommissioning, the ISO 14044 demountable server architecture guarantees that structures can be repurposed without creating a federal superfund site, leaving the surrounding land fully rehydrated.