

Item 13. Written Communications

Donovan Arteaga

From: Jim Genes <jimgenes@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 25, 2025 8:37 AM
To: Donovan Arteaga
Subject: Comment on Proposed Apartment Complex on Soquel and Thurber Lane

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Mr. Arteaga,

I attended yesterday's public hearing on the proposed apartment complex at Soquel and Thurber Lane. I also attended the developer's presentation a number months ago at the Congregational Church in Soquel.

The project as proposed conflicts with the character and livability of the residential community on and around Thurber Lane. Currently, the area is composed of one- and two-story single family residences and two-story condominiums and apartments. Dropping-in a four-story plus apartment complex will not only ruin the area's architectural continuity but it will assuredly create an island that will not be integrated into the surrounding neighborhood. Rather, the apartment tower will be a gauntlet that must be driven through to get in/out of the neighborhood and avoided as much as possible. I don't think any city planner will take pride in this.

I suggest a complex similar to the one being completed now on Capitola Road and 44th Avenue. And ideally some or all of the units should be for sale. Owners take more pride and ownership in their neighborhood than do renters.

Thank you,
Jim Genes
313 Pestana Avenue
Santa Cruz Gardens
===

Donovan Arteaga

From: Miriam Stomblar <moonystom@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 25, 2025 11:54 PM
To: Donovan Arteaga
Subject: Support for Anton Solana project

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Dear Commissioners,

I am a long-time resident of Santa Cruz County. I write in support of the Anton Solana project, which will construct a 100-percent affordable rental housing development at the intersection of Soquel Drive and Thurber Lane in the Live Oak Planning Area.

This development would provide 173 residential units - plus commercial space, an outdoor area and 257 parking spaces. This is much needed in our county.

Many thanks for considering my comment.

Miriam Stomblar
Seabright resident

Donovan Arteaga

From: Linda Smith <ljs41@att.net>
Sent: Monday, September 29, 2025 11:54 AM
To: Donovan Arteaga
Subject: Hello- Thurber Lane

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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1. could the planning people take a field trip soon and drive around Santa Cruz Gardens and make note of this very large neighborhood and school and see the only good way out is Thurber Lane so they can see our worry for fire
2. Please do not put bus stop in front of Wells Fargo We can hardly turn right as it is now with all the traffic on Soquel
3. Can there be another meeting in the evening for all the working people that live up here, maybe at the school auditorium

your thoughts

Linda Smith

Request for Fire Safety Review: Thurber Lane and Soquel Drive Affordable Housing Project

September 30, 2025

Central Fire Department
Administration Office
Erin Collins, Fire Marshall
930 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Dear Fire Marshall Erin Collins:

Project Overview

The application for Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 025-351-19) will be submitted following the Planning Commission's approval of an affordable housing project on September 24, 2025. The proposed development will consist of five buildings, with heights ranging from 38 to 69 feet. These buildings are planned to provide a total of 173 homes, in addition to offering various services and commercial spaces for businesses.

Santa Cruz Gardens Neighbors' Concerns

At the most recent and previous meetings, numerous neighbors from Santa Cruz Gardens voiced several important concerns regarding the project. These concerns include:

- **Traffic Congestion on Soquel Drive:** Refer to traffic impact studies from the traffic engineering department, highlighting that Thurber Lane already experiences significant backups due to existing townhouses, condos, homes, retail establishments, and Santa Cruz Gardens residents." "At times, drivers may face waits of ten to fifteen minutes before being able to turn left onto Soquel Drive."
- **Possible Water Shortages:** There is apprehension about potential water shortages, especially during drought periods, that could affect all residents including proposed housing developments.
- **Evacuation Challenges in the Event of Wildfire:** Neighbors are worried about the feasibility of evacuating everyone, including children at Santa Cruz Gardens School, should a wildfire occur.

- Risks Associated with Tall Buildings Near Earthquake Faults: Concerns were expressed regarding the safety of constructing tall buildings within a few miles of known earthquake faults.

Request for Fire Safety Review

I respectfully request that the Central Fire Department conduct a careful and thorough review of the building plans for the new affordable housing project at Thurber Lane and Soquel Drive. Because these buildings are located within the fifty-foot setback of the riparian woodland, it is especially important that all fire safety and “fire wise” considerations are addressed in detail.

In the event of wildfire, Thurber Lane could become a bottleneck if residents from the development attempt to evacuate at the same time. To ensure the safety of the Santa Cruz Gardens community, it is crucial that neighbors have reliable access to alternate evacuation routes, enabling timely and efficient evacuation for everyone.

Emergency Exits

During the Planning Commission meeting, John Swift, the land consultant, indicated that if Thurber Lane and Soquel Drive are blocked during an evacuation, there are three to five backup routes available. He also noted that the fire department reviews all plans and, so far, has not identified any issues. Despite this, many residents remain concerned because these alternate routes are currently gated and not maintained for rapid use in an emergency. Therefore, I request that permit conditions require all existing evacuation routes to be well maintained and that all gates can be opened quickly if an emergency arises, possibly by equipping them with special gate opening devices.

“Reflecting on a recent incident involving a locked gate at the top of Benson during a fire road emergency caused by a storm, it became clear that emergency access can be problematic. On that occasion, a neighbor had to intervene to have the gate unlocked after a wait, then directed traffic onto Benson and assisted cars as they navigated the muddy road one by one. Some vehicles became stuck in the mud, depending on their tires, but with effort, cars were eventually able to get in and out, albeit very slowly.”

Safe Intersections

I also recommend implementing a setback at the intersection of Thurber Lane and Soquel Drive. Ensuring that buildings and landscaping are set back far enough would improve visibility for drivers turning right, making the intersection safer for all, including cyclists.

Conclusion

Thank you for your consideration of these requests as you review the building permit application for the development at Thurber Lane and Soquel Drive.

Sincerely,

Ruth Owen

635 Cabrillo Ave.

Santa Cruz, CA 95065

831-476-6294

Gary3641@comcast.net

CC: Planning Commission

701 Ocean Street

Santa Cruz, CA 95065

Attachments:

Proposed Thurber Ln./Soquel Dr. Development Plot Plan

And building side view

Fault Zone Hazard Areas in County of Santa Cruz

Liquefaction Zones

Santa Cruz County Aquifer

And City of Santa Cruz water sources



A site plan shows five proposed buildings at Soquel Drive and Thurber Lane. Building A would be four stories, Buildings B and C five stories, Building D three stories and Building E two stories. (Architecture Design Collaborative)

Community concerns

Monday's meeting at the Congregational Church of Soquel was planned as an open house, but many neighbors circled Green and some demanded a presentation. Green addressed the crowd and answered questions about the project.

"I would like to know what we can do as a community to stop this," an attendee said.

Newsletter

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First name:

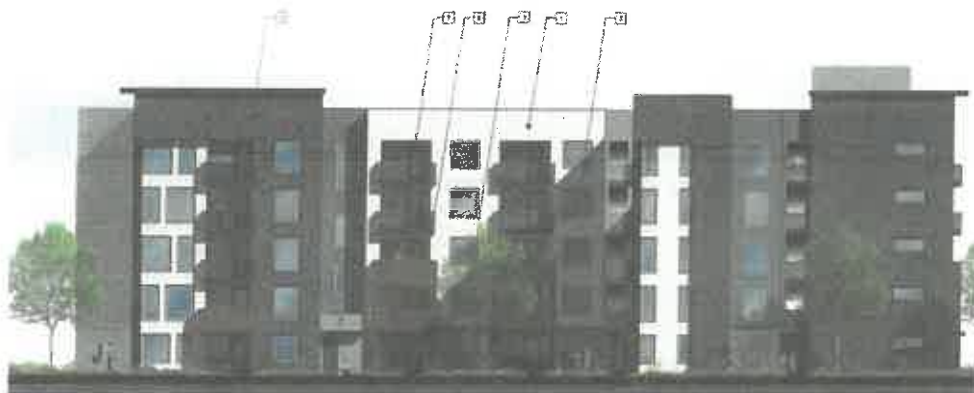
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A proposed Live Oak housing complex includes four- and five-story buildings that would face Thurber Lane. (Architecture Design Collaborative)

Approval process

Developers expect to submit an application in May. The approval process depends on how the developer files the application. Various state laws create different requirements for affordable housing approval, said county spokesperson Jason Hoppin.

The proposal takes advantage of a state law that gives a “density bonus” to projects that include affordable housing. The bonus allows projects to exceed local height and density limits, and loosens other standards, such as a building’s setback from the street.

The 6-acre site is slated for affordable housing in the [county's Housing Element](#), a state-mandated plan to allow for more housing. The plan approved by county supervisors last year calls for 4,634 new homes in unincorporated Santa Cruz County over the next eight years.

If the project is considered by the board of supervisors, it likely won’t be rejected outright, Koenig said. That’s partly because state laws restrict the ability of local governments to deny new housing.

Koenig said if he voted against the project’s approval, he’d likely be outvoted by the rest of the supervisors.

Read more

- [Two Live Oak housing proposals could be approved without public input](#) – April 26, 2024
- [Housing plans approved for Live Oak, Aptos, Soquel](#) – Nov. 17, 2023
- [Thousands of homes planned for Aptos, Live Oak, Soquel in county's Housing Element](#) – Sept. 21, 2023
- [Santa Cruz Local's Housing and Construction page](#)

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San Gregorio Fault mapping Source:
 Earthquake Probabilities in the San Francisco Bay Region:
 2000 to 2030 A Summary of Findings
 By Working Group on California Earthquake Probabilities
 USGS Open-File Report 99-517 (1999)

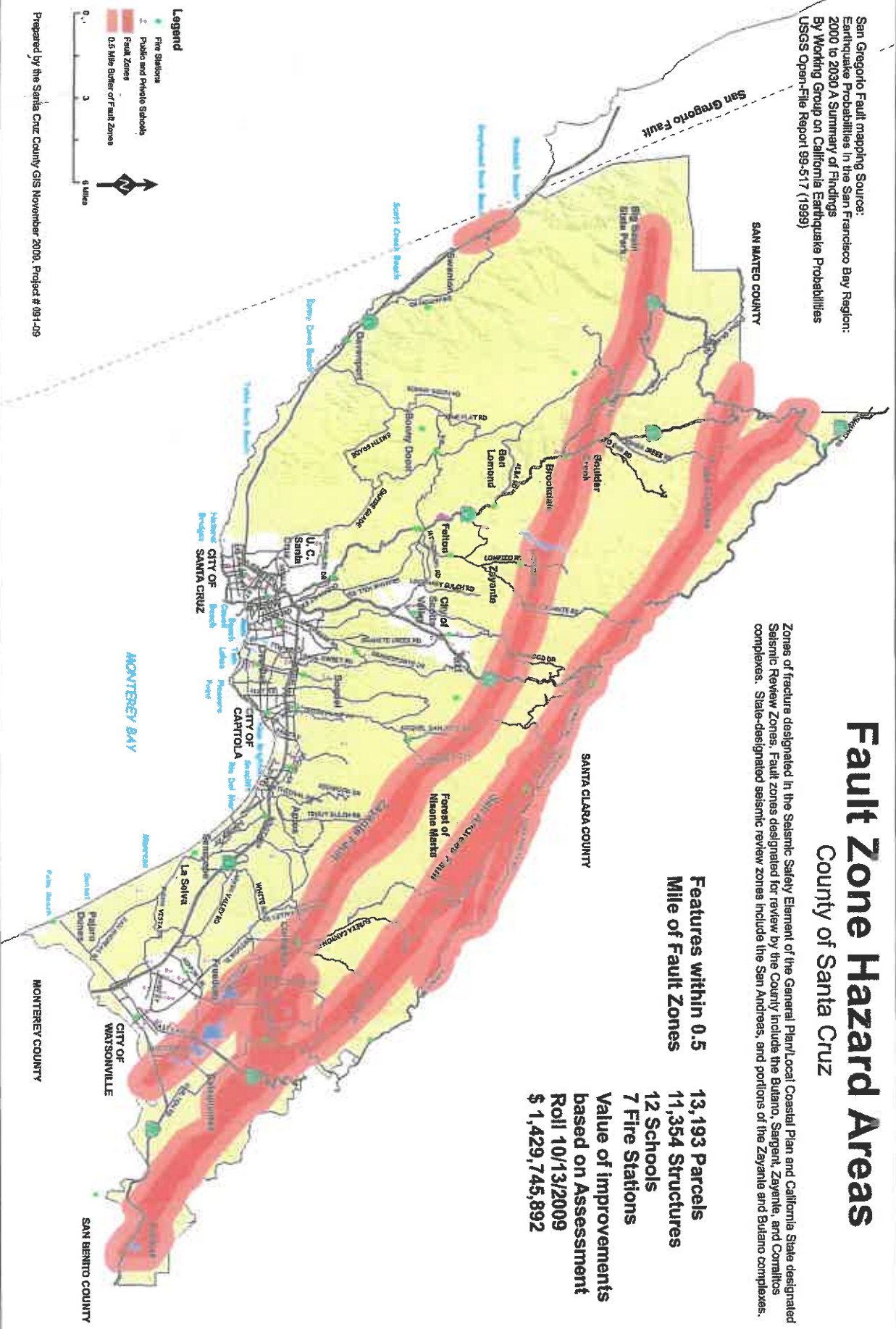
Fault Zone Hazard Areas

County of Santa Cruz

Zones of fracture designated in the Seismic Safety Element of the General Plan/Local Coastal Plan and California State designated Seismic Review Zones, Fault zones designated for review by the County include the Buiano, Sargent, Zayante, and Corralitos complexes. State-designated seismic review zones include the San Andreas, and portions of the Zayante and Buiano complexes.

Features within 0.5
 Mile of Fault Zones

13,193 Parcels
 11,354 Structures
 12 Schools
 7 Fire Stations
 Value of improvements
 based on Assessment
 Roll 10/13/2009
 \$ 1,429,745,892



Prepared by the Santa Cruz County GIS November 2009, Project # 091-09

Also available at

[SearchWorks](#)

Item belongs to a collection

 [Santa Cruz County, California GIS Maps & Data](#)

Liquefaction Zones: Santa Cruz County, California, 2015

 POLYGON  STANFORD  PUBLIC

Creator

[Garcia, Paul](#) and [Price, Matt](#)

Description

This polygon shapefile contains liquefaction zones in the County of Santa Cruz, California. According to the United States Geological Survey, liquefaction is the ability of materials, such as clay, sand and gravel, to momentarily lose their ability to support surface structures, including roads, in the event of an earthquake. This coverage was compiled using the data based on map titled "Geology and Liquefaction Potential of Quaternary Deposits in Santa Cruz County" by William R. Dupre, 1975. This layer is part of a collection of GIS data created for Santa Cruz County, California.

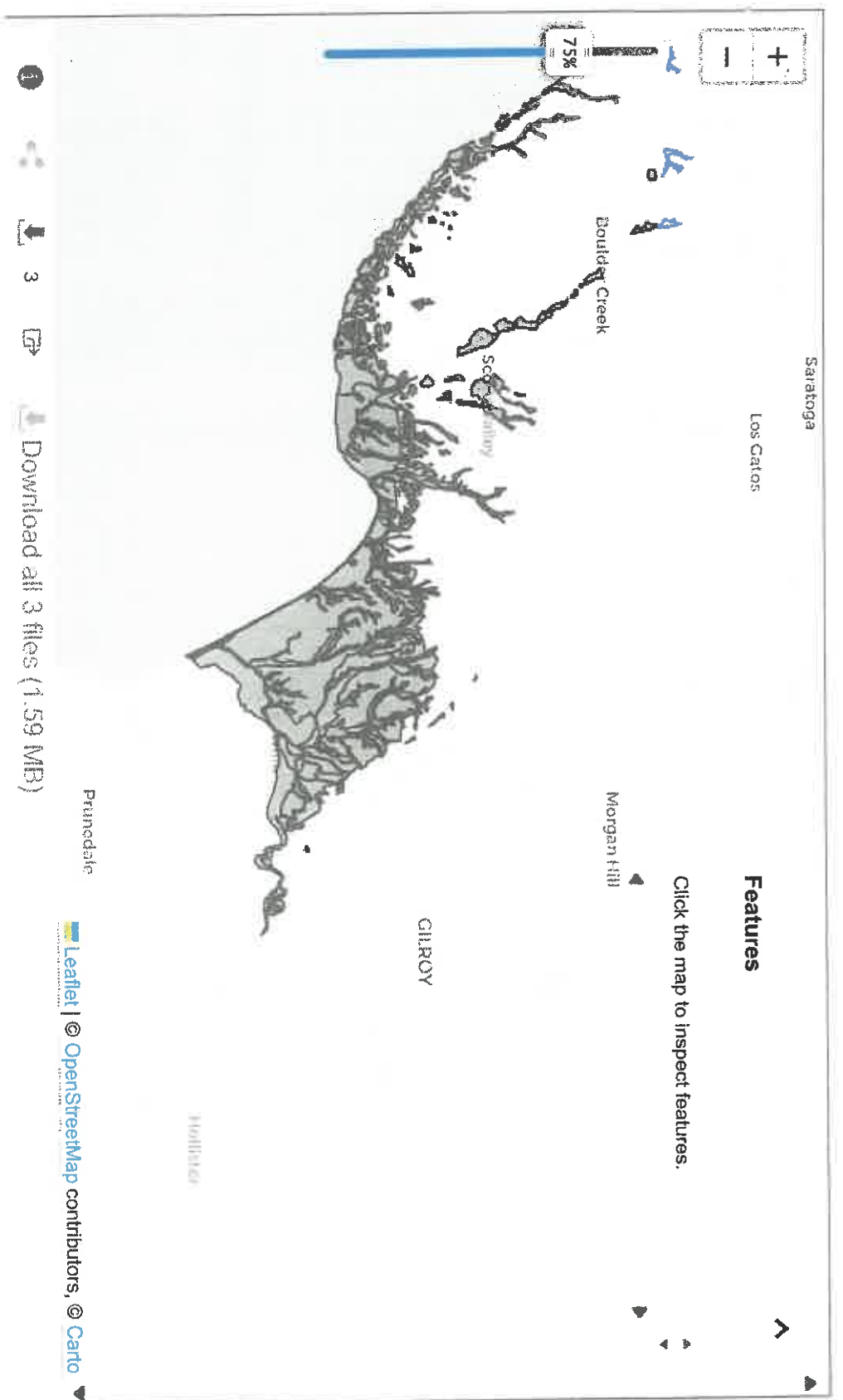
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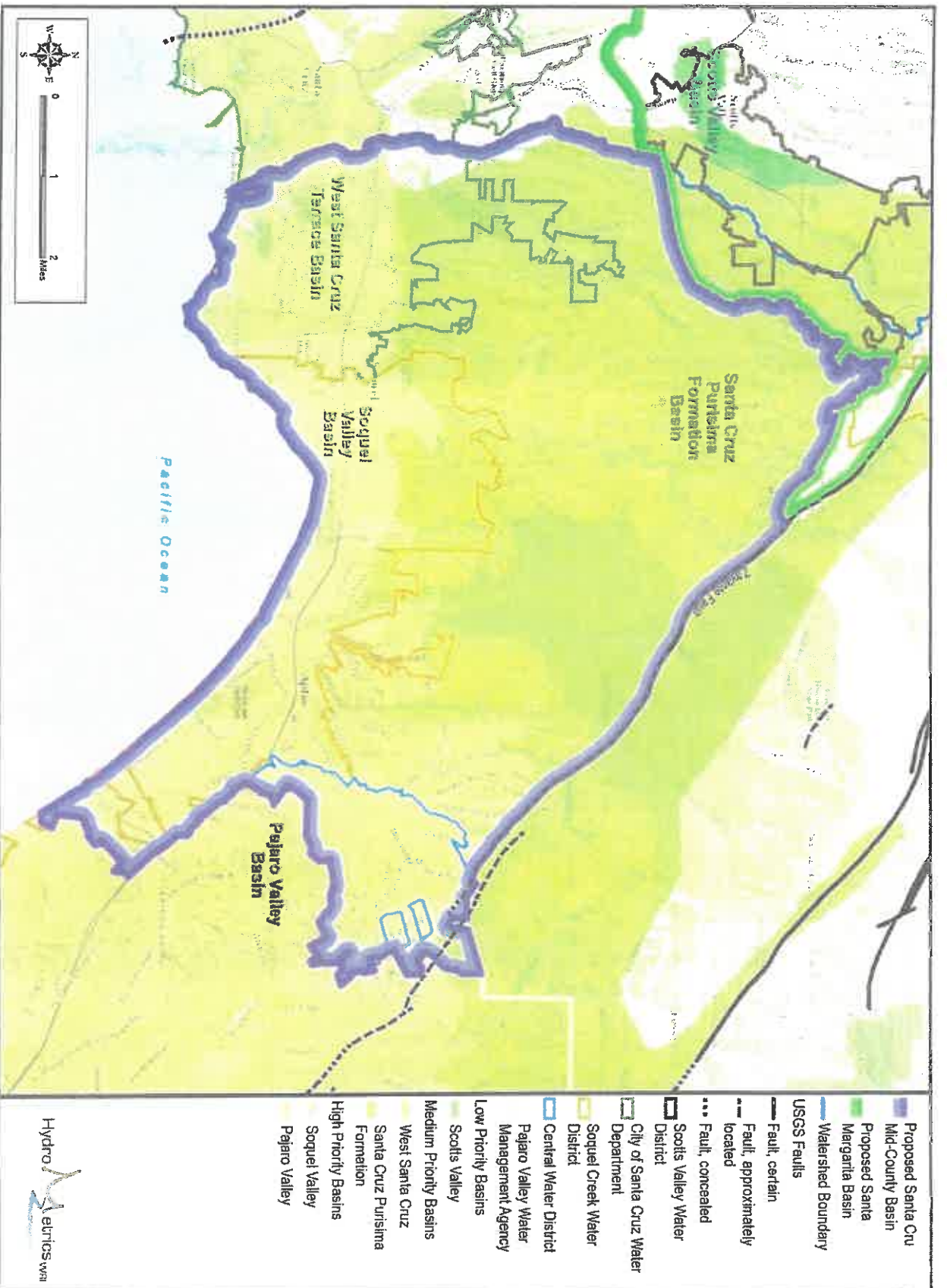
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Place

[Santa Cruz County_\(Calif.\)](#)





Hydro
Mentis
water

Unlike other areas in California that receive imported water from the Sierras or through the California Aqueduct System, all of our water is local and underground. That's right: 100% of the water in the mid-Santa Cruz county region comes from rainfall that percolates under the ground and eventually becomes groundwater. The Basin includes two primary aquifers: the Purisima Aquifer Formation and the Aromas Red Sands Aquifer. The Basin is shared with other pumpers throughout our area including Soquel Creek Water District, City of Santa Cruz, Central Water District, small mutual water companies, and private well owners.



San Lorenzo River and Tait Wells