

### ***3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION***

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This chapter describes the proposed project, the Sonoma County General Plan (*Draft GP 2020*) that is analyzed in this EIR. It also describes the location, history, and objectives of the proposed project, as well as the relationship of the proposed project to other plans and regulations that are related to it.

### **3.1 PROJECT LOCATION**

Located along the Pacific coastline, Sonoma County is the most northerly and the largest of the nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area Region. The county is located about 40 miles north of San Francisco, along the western edge of San Francisco Bay (see **Exhibit 3.0-1**). Sonoma County encompasses almost 1,500 square miles, including the area within the county's incorporated cities. Sonoma County is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west, Marin County and San Pablo Bay to the south, Lake, Napa, and Solano counties to the east, and Mendocino County to the north. There are nine incorporated cities within the county: Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma, and Windsor. Highway 101 is the primary north-south route through the center of county, with Highway 1 following the coastline and Highway 116 traversing the county in a roughly east-west direction (see **Exhibit 3.0-2**).

#### **PLANNING AREAS**

All properties outside of the jurisdictional boundaries of the county's nine incorporated cities are in unincorporated Sonoma County, and constitute the geography to which the *GP 2020* would apply.

The *Draft GP 2020* continues the County's use of *planning areas* to delineate and plan for different regions of the county. **Exhibit 3.0-2** depicts the County's nine planning areas.

Following are the planning area descriptions:<sup>1</sup>

#### **Sonoma Coast / Gualala Basin Planning Area (Planning Area 1)**

The majority of this coastal and northwestern lightly populated planning area is designated Resources and Rural Development (in the north) and Land Extensive Agriculture (in the south). The area is not easily accessible to the Highway 101 transportation corridor and urban center of the county. Large areas of the coast are part of the State Park system. The coastal zone portion of the planning area is governed by the Sonoma County *Local Coastal Program*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Planning area descriptions are updated by Nichols • Berman from the *Draft EIR, Sonoma County General Plan*, Sonoma County Planning Department, 1986.

<sup>2</sup> *Local Coastal Program*, Sonoma County PRMD, certified by California Coastal Commission on December 21, 2001.

The 2000 Census population of this planning area is 8,417. Sea Ranch, Bodega Bay, and Occidental are the only unincorporated communities here with public water and sewer. Sea Ranch is a 5,000 acre planned community along the northern ten miles of the coast. It includes a public golf course, but limited commercial development. Bodega Bay located to the south is the largest coastal community and includes a commercial fishing harbor; an established residential and tourist community, and the Bodega Harbor subdivision. Another new residential development has been approved for the community. Occidental, located inland, supports a residential population and some commercial activities including well-known restaurants.

Annapolis is located inland in the center of the timber production area, historically with only local-serving commercial uses. Jenner, located at the mouth of the Russian River, is a small hillside residential community with some tourist-oriented commercial uses along Highway 1. Other tourist and commercial nodes occur along Highway 1, Highway 116, and the Bodega Highway at the small communities of Stewarts Point, Timber Cove, Fort Ross, Valley Ford, Duncan Mills, Cazadero, Freestone, and Bodega.

The local economy has been historically based on inn and second-home rental stays and park tourism, commercial fishing, grazing sheep and cattle, and timber production. Inland off the coast, a large portion of the land north of the Russian River is in timber preserve. In this area, some forest lands have been converted to vineyards, developed with five wineries. There are 7,000 acres of vineyard.<sup>3</sup> Other upscale resort and residential land uses have occurred nearby.

### ***Cloverdale / N.E. County Planning Area (Planning Area 2)***

The City of Cloverdale, with an Urban Service Area (USA) population of 7,052, is the northern-most city in the county along the Highway 101 corridor. The remaining unincorporated population in the Cloverdale planning area is 5,699. The unincorporated community of Geyserville includes residences, inns, restaurants, and commercial uses. Jimtown, nearby in the Alexander Valley, is home to an historic general store and other businesses. Several small pockets of Rural Residential land use occur, mainly outlying Cloverdale.

Vineyards and wineries, located on land designated Land Intensive Agriculture, are the dominant land uses in the Alexander Valley, with about 15,000 acres planted and 30 wineries. There also are 2,000 acres of vineyard and two wineries in the Knights Valley. Cattle grazing and forage crop production are Land Extensive Agriculture land uses outside of the city and vineyard areas.

Warm Springs Dam, located west of Highway 101 at the mouth of Dry Creek, is operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a recreation area. The almost 18,000 acres also provide a protected area for wildlife. Approximately 40,000 acres in the northeastern county are designated the Known Geothermal Resource Area. It contains the world's largest geothermal power development.

### ***Healdsburg and Environs Planning Area (Planning Area 3)***

Two cities are located within this planning area, Healdsburg and Windsor. The Healdsburg USA has a population of 11,253, while the Windsor USA is twice as large at 22,744. Healdsburg, an older population center developed around a town square, is a visitor focal point for Sonoma County's

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<sup>3</sup> *Sonoma County – The Official Visitor's Guide*, County of Sonoma, 2001.

northern wineries. Expensive homes have been built in the surrounding hillsides. Windsor developed initially as a series of subdivisions north of Santa Rosa and was the most recent city to incorporate. In recent years, the Town of Windsor has fostered development of a downtown core west of the freeway in the area near the Town Hall. Both cities have pockets of Rural Residential development on adjacent lands.

Major viticulture development has occurred along the middle reach of the Russian River and within Dry Creek Valley. There are about 15,000 acres of vineyard and 90 wineries. Russian River gravel mining is being phased out in this area. The western part of the planning area, part of the Mendocino Highlands, provides wildlife habitat, areas for timber production, and grazing. Franz Valley and the Chalk Hill Road area, in the eastern part of this planning area, are also developed with vineyards and rural residential. There are about 1,000 acres of vineyard and five wineries.

#### ***Russian River Area Planning Area (Planning Area 4)***

There are no incorporated cities within the Russian River planning area. The existing population is 16,462, mainly located along the Russian River in the communities of Forestville, Guerneville, and Monte Rio. Historically developed as resort and second home areas, taking advantage of the river amenities, these communities are home to mostly permanent residents. These communities provide water and sewer services and support needed commercial land uses. Land use designations are Urban Residential, Rural Residential, Commercial (various), and Land Intensive Agriculture along the river corridor.

The Russian River area still attracts many visitors with its redwood trees, beaches, camps, inns, short-term rental homes, and other visitor-serving facilities. About 10,000 acres of vineyard and numerous wineries provide a major visitor attraction. Outlying areas primarily are designated Resources and Rural Development, providing wildlife habitat, watershed, and scenic resources. Some lands are designated Diverse Agriculture south of Forestville and support various farm crops.

#### ***Santa Rosa and Environs Planning Area (Planning Area 5)***

The Santa Rosa planning area is the county's major population center and provider of residential, commercial, office, and industrial land uses. The Santa Rosa USA contains 165,849 people, with 24,899 located in the unincorporated area. The South Santa Rosa and Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup USAs provide water and sewer services. The Charles Schultz Airport, operated by the County, is the largest in the county.

Surrounding Santa Rosa and the urban service areas are a mixture of lands designated Rural Residential, Agriculture (various), as well as Resources and Rural Development. Dairying and the production of forage crops are the predominant agricultural uses in the Laguna de Santa Rosa and south of the city. Vineyards are found along River Road and Bennett Valley. Northeast of Santa Rosa, large parcels provide watershed and wildlife habitat land. There are approximately 9,000 acres of State and County parklands.

#### ***Sebastopol and Environs Planning Area (Planning Area 6)***

The City of Sebastopol is home to less than half of the residents in this planning area, with 8,108 people within the Sebastopol USA. There are 21,090 residents outside of the Sebastopol USA. There is also a USA providing water and sewer service to the unincorporated community of Graton, north of Sebastopol. Bloomfield and Valley Ford are other unincorporated communities.

Commercial uses are focused within the city and along Highway 116. Rural Residential parcels ranging from two to ten acres house residents, along with interspersed Diverse Agriculture parcels ranging from ten to 40 acres.

An industrial area west of Sebastopol serves the area's existing agricultural activities, primarily apple processing and winery bottling. Vineyards have largely replaced the apple orchards in Green Valley, with about 1,200 acres of vineyard and ten wineries. There are also a large number of small family farms in this area, including apples, specialty vegetables and fruit, flowers, pumpkins, and Christmas trees. These farms are located both on Rural Residential and Diverse Agriculture parcels. The southern third of the planning area is designated Land Extensive Agriculture, used for dairy and grazing.

#### ***Rohnert Park – Cotati and Environs Planning Area (Planning Area 7)***

The majority of the population in this planning area resides in the Rohnert Park and Cotati USAs, with 42,236 and 7,279 respectively. Rohnert Park is a major commercial and industrial center, while Sonoma State University occupies about 200 acres east of Cotati.

Within the unincorporated area reside 4,059 people. The Penngrove USA, south of the cities, provides water and sewer service to parcels ranging from one to two acres and designated Urban Residential. Penngrove has some commercial uses on Main Street. The unincorporated area, more than half of the planning area, is further comprised of Rural Residential, Diverse Agriculture, and Land Extensive Agriculture parcels. Livestock grazing and forage crop production are predominate agricultural activities.

#### ***Petaluma and Environs Planning Area (Planning Area 8)***

The City of Petaluma USA is home to more than 80 percent of the planning area's residents, with 55,743 people. The unincorporated area houses 11,046 residents. There are no unincorporated communities; the county population here is concentrated in the Rural Residential area largely west of Petaluma.

Most of the land uses in the unincorporated area are devoted to agriculture, with the dairy industry dominating the planning area west of Highway 101, except for the Rural Residential area mentioned above. East of Highway 101, livestock grazing and forage crop production extend into the Sonoma Mountains. The Petaluma Marsh abuts San Pablo Bay and provides important wildlife habitat. The Port Sonoma marina is also located along the Petaluma River, close to the city. The Infineon Raceway occupies about 370 acres at the junction of Highways 37 and 128. The Coast Guard Training Center is located along the western Marin County border.

#### ***Sonoma Valley Planning Area (Planning Area 9)***

The Sonoma Valley planning area contains the City of Sonoma, where the USA contains about 25 percent of the area residents, or 9,754. The unincorporated area population is 30,125, the highest unincorporated area population of all planning areas.

There are a number of unincorporated communities, including Kenwood, Glen Ellen, Agua Caliente, Feters Hot Springs, El Verano, and Boyes Hot Springs. The Sonoma Valley USA provides water and sewer service to these communities, except Kenwood. These communities contain predominantly Urban Residential parcels. Kenwood is served by its own water company; it has an historic tract of smaller parcels. Jack London State Park is in the hills to the west of Glen Ellen.

The other four communities have developed from resort areas with historic sulphur springs. Located on Highway 12 north of the City of Sonoma, Agua Caliente, Fetters Hot Springs, El Verano, and Boyes Hot Springs provide medium and low density residential housing and a mix of commercial uses. There are also several rural residential subdivisions surrounding Sonoma. There are small pockets of Industrial parcels along 8<sup>th</sup> Street East.

Much of the planning area is devoted to agriculture. The Sonoma Valley has about 13,000 acres of vineyard and 42 wineries. The Sonoma Mountain viticulture area has about 800 acres of vineyard and three wineries. The Carneros-Sonoma viticulture area is the location of about 8,000 acres of vineyard and 22 wineries.

The hillsides east and west of the Sonoma Valley are designated Resources and Rural Development, Rural Residential, and Diverse Agriculture. The lands south of Sonoma are predominantly Land Extensive Agriculture, used for dairy and forage production. There is a large area of marshland along the San Pablo Bay, where Skaggs Island is an adjacent federal military facility.

### **3.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND HISTORY**

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#### ***Project History***

The existing *General Plan* was adopted in 1989 after three and a half years of work and over two years of public hearings.<sup>4</sup> The plan established nine major planning goals as the basic framework of its goals, objectives, and policies. These nine major goals are contained in the Land Use Element of both the existing *General Plan* and the *Draft GP 2020*. They relate to the following subjects:

- Growth projections and growth policy;
- City and community centered growth;
- Compact city and community boundaries;
- Phasing of rural and urban growth with availability of adequate services;
- Open space separation between cities/communities;
- Opportunities for diverse rural and urban residential environments;
- Use of environmental suitability criteria to locate urban and rural growth;
- Protection of agricultural lands; and
- Preservation of scenic features and biotic resource areas.

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<sup>4</sup> *Sonoma County General Plan*, adopted by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on March 23, 1989, as amended.

In the 15 years since the existing *General Plan* was adopted Sonoma County has experienced a number of significant events that have affected and will continue to affect land use and development. These include: <sup>5</sup>

- The continued success and expansion of wine grapes as the dominant agricultural commodity;
- A booming economy in the late 1980s and late 1990s and population, housing, and job growth that exceeded projections during that period;
- The incorporation of the Town of Windsor;
- A sequence of major floods in the Russian and Petaluma River Basins;
- Listing of salmonids as endangered or threatened species;
- Litigation over the Housing Element;
- The successful creation of the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and accompanying funding measure;
- The temporary municipal water supply impairment and longer term questions regarding the availability of water from the Eel River and Russian River Basin;
- Regional and local wastewater system capacity problems; and
- Major reorganization of County Government, particularly the consolidation of permitting services at Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD).

In reviewing the status of the existing *General Plan* and establishing the scope of the General Plan update, the County decided not to conduct a major overhaul of the above policy framework. Instead, the work program for the *GP 2020* is limited to a “Policy Review” of selected issues approved by the Board of Supervisors after substantial input from County staff, the general public, and the appointed Citizen’s Advisory Committee. The scope of the update also limits the extent to which land use map changes would be considered, due to similarly strong support for maintaining the current land use designations and policies that concentrate future growth in the cities and county urban service areas. Only minor changes to land use maps are included, primarily to correct long-standing legal non-conforming uses and to implement changes necessitated by policy changes emanating from the selected issues.

### **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

The public participation program for the *GP 2020* included direct e-mail contact with the *GP 2020* County staff project team, community meetings, a Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) that held public meetings, as well as five subcommittees of the CAC (Water Resources, Circulation and Transit, Agricultural Tourism, Agricultural Processing, and Riparian Corridors / Biological Habitat). An

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<sup>5</sup> *Status Report on the 1989 General Plan*, Sonoma County PRMD, [online] available at <http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/gp2020/status.html>, August 10, 2004.

informational website was also maintained. The CAC process began with public community meetings and has continued throughout the process of formulating the *Draft GP 2020* analyzed in this EIR.

The CAC is composed of 15 citizen volunteers, three from each Supervisorial District, and two alternate members appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The CAC has served to represent the interests of the community at large, has held numerous meetings throughout the *GP 2020* process and has recommended the policy changes in the *Draft GP 2020*.

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## ***Project Objectives***

The overall objective of the *GP 2020* is to review and consider policy changes only on selected topics or issues. These policies and issues were established by the Board of Supervisors following extensive public input and recommendations of the Citizen's Advisory Committee, appointed by the Board. The community at large, and the Citizen's Advisory Committee, felt strongly that the existing General Plan was functioning well as the County's land use guide. As a result, the *Draft GP2020* continues to follow the existing General Plan land use maps and its major goals, so that the policies that are reviewed and revised are in keeping with these goals.

Therefore, the proposed project consists of the following issues as defined in the work program established through the community outreach process:

- Housing Element Implementation: Mixed Use, Single Room Occupancy Units, and Affordable Housing Sites/Overlay District;
- Agricultural Resource Issues: Agricultural Tourism, Agricultural Processing and other Support Uses, Organic Agriculture, Aquaculture, Local Food Supply, Equestrian Uses, and Rural Residential Lands as Agricultural;
- Timber Resource Issues: Timber Conversions and Timber Harvest Regulations;
- Biotic Resource Issues: Riparian Corridors and Biotic Habitat Areas;
- Public Safety Issues: Hazardous Materials, Geologic Hazards, Flood Hazards, and Fire Hazards;
- Water Resource Issues: Groundwater and Surface Water;
- Air Transportation Issues: conformance with the Airport Land Use Commission's Comprehensive Land Use Plan;
- Scenic Resource Issues: Lighting and Glare, Highway 116 Scenic Corridor, Rural Character, Urban Design, Mayacamas Development Guidelines, Community Separators, and Scenic Landscape Units;
- Sustainability Principles;
- Circulation and Transit Issues;

- Land Use Issues: Permanent Occupancy of RV Campgrounds, Land Use Requests, Recreation and Visitor Serving Uses in rural areas, Churches and Schools, Urban Service Boundaries, Certificates of Compliance, Public Uses, and re-use of public properties;
- Noise Issues;
- Energy Resource Issues;
- Population, Household, and Job Projections;
- Public Services and Facility Issues: Youth and Family Services, Public Water and Sewer System Capacities, Package Treatment Plants, and Solid Waste Plans; and
- Implementation: Indicators and Monitoring, and Specific and Area Plan Conformity.

It was not the intent of the work program to update all of the issues addressed in the existing *General Plan*. Examples of issues not addressed in this General Plan update include Bikeways, Recreational Facilities, Land Use categories and Development Criteria, Scenic Corridors, Mineral and Geothermal Resources, Archaeological/Historic Resources, and Education and Fire Protection Services.

As a result of the limitations on policy issues to be considered in the update, the proposed project assumes that policies related to all other issues would remain unchanged from those of the existing *General Plan*. This limitation is particularly important with respect to the land use map designations and changes in future land use and development potential in the unincorporated area. These limitations have a direct bearing on the range of alternatives that are available for consideration in this EIR, as the development potential being compared in the alternatives is essentially the same.

It is also important to note that for each of the policy issues being considered, there are a number of policy options that could be adopted. The proposed project identified as the *Public Hearing Draft GP 2020* is based upon the policy options recommended by the Citizen's Advisory Committee, but this EIR is also intended to inform decision makers about the environmental consequences of the range of options presented for each issue. The EIR uses the alternatives section to provide these impact comparisons.

The proposed project also includes amendments of other Specific and Area Plans needed to maintain consistency with the *GP 2020*. These include the Windsor Specific Plan and eight Area Plans (West Petaluma, Petaluma Dairy Belt, South Santa Rosa, Sonoma Mountain, Bennett Valley, Penngrove, Larkfield-Wikiup, and Franz Valley).

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### ***Relationship to Area and Regional Plans***

Since the existing *General Plan* was adopted in 1989, a number of programs providing more formal countywide coordination over land use issues have taken place. In addition to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), the Sonoma County Transportation Authority is another subregional body that is responsible for prioritizing transportation improvements. A Subregional Issues Report sponsored by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) was jointly prepared and adopted by the County and cities in 1995. Recently, a City of Santa Rosa initiative to conduct a countywide workforce housing study was joined by other cities and the County.

Both the existing *General Plan* and the *Draft GP 2020* have been coordinated with the general plans of the nine incorporated cities within Sonoma County. Areas for future expansion of the cities have been coordinated with the cities. Although the *Draft GP 2020* does not regulate development within the cities, it is applicable to lands within the unincorporated parts of the various city spheres of influence.

Sonoma County's adoption of the *GP 2020* may lead to revisions to the County's Development Code, including the Zoning Ordinance. It is possible that changes could be made to other existing County plans and programs as well, depending on the final adopted provisions of the *GP 2020*. A number of future actions may be based (in whole or part) on the environmental evaluation undertaken as part of the *Draft GP 2020* and this EIR. Review and approval of subsequent development projects may require review and approval by agencies including, but not limited to: Sonoma County, which has jurisdiction over General Plan amendments, zone changes, subdivisions, conditional use permits, and other discretionary development approvals; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which issues federal 404 permits for individual development projects and public works projects; the Regional Water Quality Control Boards, which issues state National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for individual private development projects and public projects; and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), which issues state Section 1600 *et seq.* permits for individual private development projects and public works projects.

Over the course of the last 15 years, a number of other federal, State, regional, and local plans and other laws have been adopted that will affect the land use and development consistent with the *Draft GP 2020*. In some cases, compliance with these plans / laws will provide additional reduction of the impacts of future land uses and development. In other cases, these plans / laws may pre-empt County jurisdiction, resulting in environmental impacts that may not occur in their absence.

### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

There are no federal plans that directly affect local land use decisions, but federal laws such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA) can affect individual land uses in a significant way. Whenever federal funding is involved regarding road and highway projects or other public infrastructure, the projects must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as well as the ESA. The US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development are examples of responsible agencies that exercise jurisdiction over many such projects.

### **STATE AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT**

State and regional agencies also exert strong influence on local land use and development decisions. In some cases, these agencies have adopted plans. The State's influence is primarily accomplished through funding of public infrastructure. In some matters, however, direct control is wielded. An example is the requirement for certification of Housing Elements by the Department of Housing and Community Development. State law also dictates much of the content of General Plans and related zoning regulations.

The Coastal Commission also has jurisdiction over Local Coastal Plans and regulations within the Coastal Zone. The California Department of Fish and Game, Department of Conservation, and Department of Forestry and Fire Protection influence or directly regulate various future land uses and development in the county.

In addition, State requirements are often implemented through regional planning and regulatory agencies. Examples are:

- The Regional Water Quality Control Boards' Basin Plans and point and non-point water quality regulations;
- The Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Transportation Plans;
- The Association of Bay Area Government's distribution of Regional Housing Needs; and
- The Air Quality Management Districts' Clean Air Plans and permit regulations.

Three other quasi-regional agencies which influence local land use decisions and development project decisions are the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA). These are state-mandated bodies which exercise independent authority over particular types of projects or projects in particular locations. In these cases, though, the County is a non-majority participant in the decision making of the agency.

The ALUC is required to adopt a Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan that affects projects in the vicinity of the six public use airports in the county. LAFCo is responsible for decisions regarding the formation and organization of special districts which provide public services to county residents and regarding the geographical area served by special districts and cities through spheres of influence and annexation. Finally, the SCTA is a regional transportation planning agency that is influential in obtaining funding and prioritizing circulation projects.

## **CITY PLANS**

Each City in Sonoma County exercises complete authority over land use and development within its city limits. Cities will occasionally exercise authority over sewer, water, and other services outside of the city limits. An example is the South Park Sanitation District south of the City of Santa Rosa. Development in this area cannot be constructed on public water and sewer unless the City agrees to approve a "Utility Certificate" providing these services.

## **LOCAL COASTAL PLAN**

Sonoma County's planning regulations presently include both a General Plan (the existing *General Plan*) and a Local Coastal Plan (*LCP*).<sup>6</sup> The *Draft GP 2020* includes a proposed change that would result in the *LCP* being a standalone plan; albeit one that contains many of the same goals, objectives, and policies.<sup>7</sup> This approach is designed to make it easier for the public and property owners to understand the policies that would affect their properties and to make the *LCP* easier for the County and Commission staff to administer. At the same time, many of the countywide goals, objectives, and

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<sup>6</sup> *County of Sonoma Local Coastal Program, Part I Local Coastal Plan*. The LCP was amended to be consistent with the existing *General Plan* and certified by the California Coastal Commission on December 12, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> The preparation and adoption of a Local Coastal Plan is exempt from *CEQA*. Public Resources Code Section 21080.9.

policies of the *GP 2020* would be included in the *Draft LCP* that will be considered after the adoption of the *GP 2020*. This will allow, where appropriate and consistent with the Coastal Act, countywide policy consistency in areas such as Water Resources, Noise, Public Facilities and Services, Housing, Public Safety, etc.

### 3.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAFT GP 2020

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#### Overview of the Draft GP 2020

The *Draft GP 2020* is organized into the following ten elements: land use, housing, agricultural resources, open space and resource conservation, water resources, public safety, circulation and transit, air transportation, public services and facilities, and noise. The following is a brief description of each of the *Draft GP 2020* elements:

**Land Use Element:** The Land Use Element would provide for the distribution, location and extent of uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, agriculture, natural resources, recreation and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other uses. Where appropriate, it would include standards for population density and building intensity for individual land use categories.

The Land Use Element and its policies would guide growth and the development and use of land in the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County through 2020. The element would include a countywide land use policy framework, specific land use policies and a land use map for each of the nine planning areas and an implementation program.

The nine major goals of the *Draft GP 2020* are identified below, along with two major goals that are proposed addressing water resources and principles of sustainability. The goals are summarized as follows:

- Accommodate Sonoma County's fair share of future regional growth, consistent with environmental constraints, maintenance of quality of life, and the capacities of public facilities and services. Achieve a better balance between job opportunities and population growth;
- Accommodate most future growth within the incorporated cities and their Urban Growth Boundaries, and within unincorporated communities that have adequate water and sewer capacities in their Urban Service Areas;
- Locate future growth within the cities and urban service areas in a compact manner, using vacant infill parcels and lands adjacent to existing development;
- Maintain adequate public services to accommodate projected growth that will be able to provide any needed services;
- Identify and maintain open space between the county's cities and communities;
- Provide diverse housing types and densities, with urban densities in the cities and in some unincorporated communities, with lower density in rural communities;

- Protect people and property from environmental risks and hazards and limit development on sensitive environmental lands;
- Ensure that the County's water resources are protected on a sustainable yield basis which avoids long-term declines in available surface and groundwater resources or water quality;
- Protect lands in agricultural production, as well as lands potentially suitable for agricultural use. Retain large parcel sizes and avoid incompatible non-agricultural uses;
- Limit the uses and intensity of land development to be consistent with the preservation of important biotic resource areas and scenic features; and
- Promote a long-term sustainable future that balances environmental preservation with jobs, housing, infrastructure, and services.

The Land Use Element includes a set of proposed land use maps (one for each of nine planning areas) that depict existing and proposed land use designations in the unincorporated county area. For the most part, these designations are identical to those in the existing *General Plan*. The Land Use Maps also depict the location of all of the proposed Urban Service Areas as well as those particular Urban Service Areas where new affordable housing sites are proposed for rezoning. A more detailed description of the proposed changes that are being considered as part of the *Draft GP 2020* are shown in *Section 4.1 Land Use, Population and Housing*.

### **POPULATION AND HOUSING PROJECTIONS**

This EIR evaluates policies and programs in the *Draft GP 2020* that would lead to alterations in the physical environment. The evaluation includes changes in population, housing, and land use patterns that would occur in Sonoma County as the *GP 2020* is implemented. The project encompasses all of the future land uses and development that are projected to occur, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and other land uses and development, as well as the entire foreseeable public infrastructure that is necessary to serve the projected uses. The *Draft GP 2020* is based upon a projected amount of growth, and does not assume that all properties would be fully developed. The *Build Out* alternative, on the other hand, would assume construction of the maximum amount of development allowed under the Land Use Element.

### **Historical Growth and Existing Conditions**

Sonoma County is the sixth most populous of the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties and largest in the North Bay region. In 2000, Sonoma County had a total population of 458,614 with approximately 28 percent, or 128,596 persons, residing in the county's unincorporated area outside of the City Urban Service Areas.<sup>8</sup> These population totals are generally consistent with those contained in the existing *General Plan* that projected a 2005 countywide population of 468,540 of which 151,040 would reside in unincorporated areas.

Population growth in Sonoma County since 1980 has been driven primarily by economic booms in both the late 1980's and late 1990's. Table LU-2 in the Land Use Element of the *Draft GP 2020*

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<sup>8</sup> *Quick Facts for Sonoma County*, US Census Bureau, [online] available <http://quickfacts.census.gov>, February 24, 2004.

shows the population growth in each planning area and for the entire county from 1980. Starting in 1980 at a population of 299,684, the county grew at an annual rate of 2.62 percent to 388,222 residents by 1990 - an increase of 88,538 residents. From 1990 to 2000 the county grew at an annual rate of 1.68 percent to a population of 458,614 - an increase of 70,392 residents. The unincorporated area of Sonoma County, outside of the City Urban Service Areas, grew from 97,631 in 1980 at an annual rate of 2.28 percent to 122,377 by 1990, and again from 1990 to 2000 at an annual rate of 0.50 percent to 128,596. The net population change in the unincorporated areas reflects losses due to annexation of land as well as growth attributable to new residential development.<sup>9</sup> Since the adoption of the existing *General Plan* in 1989, significant changes to the population in and amount of unincorporated land resulted from the incorporation of the Town of Windsor in 1992 and annexation of land by the county's nine cities.

### **Draft GP 2020 Projected Growth**

**Exhibit 3.0-4** shows 2000 and projected 2020 population and housing growth for the county, including unincorporated areas and the nine cities. In the nine cities, growth is the result of both new residential development and annexations of existing residential development at the edges of the cities. Net population changes in unincorporated areas include losses due to these annexations as well as growth attributable to new residential development.

The *Draft GP 2020* projects that the population in Sonoma County would increase from 458,614 in 2000 at an annual rate of 0.88 percent to 546,030 residents in 2020, an increase of 87,416 residents. This would place 73 percent of Sonoma County's total population in the nine cities. In the unincorporated area of Sonoma County population would increase from 128,596 in 2000 at an annual rate of 0.69 percent to 147,660 residents in 2020, an increase of 19,064 residents accounting for 27 percent of the total county population.

The *Draft GP 2020* projects the number of housing units in Sonoma County would increase from 183,153 in 2000 to 221,640 in 2020, an increase of 38,487 housing units. Of this growth, the *Draft GP 2020* projects a housing unit increase in the nine cities from 2000 to 2020 of 31,143 to 157,851. This would place 71 percent of Sonoma County's housing units in cities. Growth in the unincorporated area from 2000 to 2020 is projected to reach 63,789 housing units, an addition of 7,344 housing units accounting for 29 percent of the total number of county housing units.<sup>10</sup>

Projected *Draft GP 2020* population and housing growth for each of the nine planning areas is discussed below. These projections are based upon the assumption that the City Urban Service Areas would be annexed during the time frame of the General Plan.

### **Sonoma Coast / Gualala Basin Planning Area**

In this planning area population would increase from 8,417 in 2000 to 11,700 in 2020, an increase of 3,283 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 6,131 in 2000 to 7,508 in 2020, an increase of 1,377 housing units.

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<sup>9</sup> *Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Public hearing Draft, PRMD, October 28, 2004.*

<sup>10</sup> *Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Public hearing Draft, PRMD, October 28, 2004.*

**Exhibit 3.0-4**  
**Housing and Population Growth 2000 – 2020**

Planning Area	Housing Units			Population		
	2000	2020	Change	2000	2020	Change
Sonoma Coast	6,131	7,508	1,377	8,417	11,700	3,283
Cloverdale	5,004	7,085	2,081	12,751	18,460	5,709
<i>Cloverdale USA</i>	2,782	4,264	1,482	7,052	11,200	4,148
<i>Unincorporated</i>	2,222	2,821	599	5,699	7,260	1,561
Healdsburg	14,883	18,773	3,890	40,796	51,460	10,664
<i>Healdsburg USA</i>	4,589	5,288	699	11,253	13,160	1,907
<i>Windsor USA</i>	7,733	10,444	2,711	22,744	30,300	7,556
<i>Unincorporated</i>	2,561	3,041	480	6,799	8,000	1,201
Russian River	9,345	10,343	998	16,462	18,960	2,498
Santa Rosa	73,200	90,267	17,067	190,748	223,400	32,652
<i>Santa Rosa USA</i>	63,077	78,961	15,884	165,849	195,300	29,451
<i>Unincorporated</i>	10,123	11,306	1,183	24,899	28,100	3,201
Sebastopol	11,915	12,725	810	29,198	31,720	2,522
<i>Sebastopol USA</i>	3,953	4,447	494	8,108	9,620	1,512
<i>Unincorporated</i>	7,962	8,278	316	21,090	22,100	1,010
Rohnert Park	20,649	26,074	5,425	53,574	65,040	11,466
<i>Rohnert Park USA</i>	16,013	20,120	4,107	42,236	50,400	8,164
<i>Cotati USA</i>	3,015	3,936	921	7,279	9,600	2,321
<i>Unincorporated</i>	1,621	2,018	397	4,059	5,040	981
Petaluma	24,506	27,814	3,308	66,789	76,300	9,511
<i>Petaluma USA</i>	20,754	23,728	2,974	55,743	64,200	8,457
<i>Unincorporated</i>	3,752	4,086	334	11,046	12,100	1,054
Sonoma Valley	17,520	21,051	3,531	39,879	48,990	9,111
<i>Sonoma USA</i>	4,792	6,663	1,871	9,754	14,590	4,836
<i>Unincorporated</i>	12,728	14,388	1,660	30,125	34,400	4,275
<b>County Total</b>	183,153	221,640	38,487	458,614	546,030	87,416
<b>City</b>	126,708	157,851	31,143	330,018	398,370	68,352
<b>Unincorporated</b>	56,445	63,789	7,344	128,596	147,660	19,064

Source: Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Public Hearing Draft, PRMD, October 28, 2004.

**Cloverdale / NE County Planning Area**

In this planning area population would increase from 12,751 in 2000 to 18,460 in 2020, an increase of 5,709 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 5,004 in 2000 to 7,085 in 2020, an increase of 2,081 housing units.

In the unincorporated area population would increase from 5,699 in 2000 to 7,260 in 2020, an increase of 1,561 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 2,222 in 2000 to 2,821 in 2020, an increase of 599 housing units.

***Healdsburg and Environs Planning Area***

In this planning area population would increase from 40,796 in 2000 to 51,460 in 2020, an increase of 10,664 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 14,883 in 2000 to 18,773 in 2020, an increase of 3,890 housing units.

In the unincorporated area population would increase from 6,799 in 2000 to 8,000 in 2020, an increase of 1,201 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 2,561 in 2000 to 3,041 in 2020, an increase of 480 housing units.

***Russian River Planning Area***

In this planning area population increase from 16,462 in 2000 to 18,960 in 2020, an increase of 2,498 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 9,345 in 2000 to 10,343 in 2020, an increase of 998 housing units.

***Santa Rosa and Environs Planning Area***

In this planning area population would increase from 190,748 in 2000 to 223,400 in 2020, an increase of 32,652 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 73,200 in 2000 to 90,267 in 2020, an increase of 17,067 housing units.

In the unincorporated area population would increase from 24,899 in 2000 to 28,100 in 2020, an increase of 3,201 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 10,123 in 2000 to 11,306 in 2020, an increase of 1,183 housing units.

***Sebastopol and Environs Planning Area***

In this planning area population would increase from 29,198 in 2000 to 31,720 in 2020, an increase of 2,522 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 11,915 in 2000 to 12,725 in 2020, an increase of 810 housing units.

In the unincorporated area population would increase from 21,090 in 2000 to 22,100 in 2020, an increase of 1,010 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 7,962 in 2000 to 8,278 in 2020, an increase of 316 housing units.

***Rohnert Park – Cotati and Environs Planning Area***

In this planning area population would increase from 53,574 in 2000 to 65,040 in 2020, an increase of 11,466 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 20,649 in 2000 to 26,074 in 2020, an increase of 5,425 housing units.

In the unincorporated area population would increase from 4,059 in 2000 to 5,040 in 2020, an increase of 981 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 1,621 in 2000 to 2,018 in 2020, an increase of 397 housing units.

***Petaluma and Environs Planning Area***

In this planning area population would increase from 66,789 in 2000 to 76,300 in 2020, an increase of 9,511 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 24,506 in 2000 to 27,814 in 2020, an increase of 3,308 housing units.

In the unincorporated area population would increase from 11,046 in 2000 to 12,100 in 2020, an increase of 1,054 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 3,752 in 2000 to 4,086 in 2020, an increase of 334 housing units.

**Sonoma Valley Planning Area**

In this planning area population would increase from 39,879 in 2000 to 48,990 in 2020, an increase of 9,111 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 17,520 in 2000 to 21,051 in 2020, an increase of 3,531 housing units.

In the unincorporated area population would increase from 30,125 in 2000 to 34,400 in 2020, an increase of 4,275 residents. The number of housing units would increase from 12,728 in 2000 to 14,388 in 2020, an increase of 1,660 housing units.

**Housing Element:** This element presents goals, objectives, policies, and supporting information related to the provision of housing for existing and future residents of the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County. The purpose of the Housing Element is twofold:

- To present specific policies and actions for housing development in the contents of the Land Use Element; and
- To meet regional standards and achieve State certification, pursuant to statutory requirements, which in turn will help the County qualify for State and federal housing aids and grants.

The Housing Element was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 11, 2001, amended in January 2002, and certified as in compliance by the State Department of Housing and Community Development on February 11, 2002. No revisions to the Housing Element are proposed as a part of *GP 2020*. However, some programs in the Housing Element are proposed to be implemented as part of the *GP 2020*, including selection of future affordable housing sites and the addition of policies supporting Mixed Use, Single Room Occupancy Units, and Occupancy in RV Parks and Campgrounds.

**Agricultural Resources Element:** This element promotes and encourages agricultural land uses and continues to define agriculture as an industry which produces and processes food, fiber, plant materials, and which includes the raising and maintaining of livestock and farm animals, including horses. The element would provide guidelines for land use decisions in agricultural areas including policies and programs that promote and protect the current and future needs of the agricultural industry. The *Draft GP 2020* would continue the use of three agricultural land use categories – diverse agriculture, land extensive agriculture, and land intensive agriculture.

Policies would address marketing of agricultural products, stabilization of agricultural use at the edge of urban areas, limitations on intrusion of residential uses, minimizing conflicts between agricultural and nonagricultural uses, the location of agricultural services and visitor-serving uses, provision of farm worker housing, protecting aquaculture and the commercial fishing industry plus the horse industry, and the streamlining of permit procedures for agricultural uses.

**Open Space and Resource Conservation Element:** This element is a consolidation of the previously separate Open Space Element and Resource Conservation Element. It provides for the conservation and preservation of open space lands and includes a set of nine maps, one for each planning area, that depict areas subject to open space and resource conservation policies. It also includes an implementation program.

There are four classifications of open space – scenic resources, biotic resources, outdoor recreation, and archaeological/historical resources. The scenic resources component would include three open space categories, community separators, scenic landscape units, and scenic highway corridors. In regard to biotic resources, the element would include policies for four critical habitat areas (special-status species habitat, marshes and wetlands, sensitive natural communities, and habitat connectivity corridors) plus policies for riparian corridors. The element would also include policies in regard to soil resources, timber resources, mineral resources, energy resources, air resources, outdoor recreation, and archaeological/historical resources.

**Water Resources Element:** This element is a new element which is designed to address Sonoma County’s water resource issues in a comprehensive manner. Policies would address water quality, groundwater, public water systems, the conservation and re-use of water, importing and exporting of water, and watershed management.

**Public Safety Element:** This element would include special limitations and procedures for review of development projects located in areas subject to natural hazards. The hazards addressed would include seismic and other geologic hazards, flooding, and susceptibility to wildland fires. Hazardous materials would also be included in this element.

**Circulation and Transit Element:** This element addresses the location and extent of planned transportation routes and facilities in Sonoma County. It is correlated with the land use element to assure that the transportation system services the future travel demand and helps attain the desired land use plan plus helps achieve a sustainable circulation and transit system. In addition to supporting a highway system that would serve projected highway travel demand at acceptable levels of service the element supports development of the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) between Cloverdale and a San Francisco bound ferry terminal in Marin County.

**Air Transportation Element:** This element would express policies related to the public use airports in the county, including compatibility of land uses in adjacent areas. The plan would focus on the Sonoma County Airport and express policies related to the types and amounts of aviation activities to be accommodated and facilities needed to serve them.

**Public Facilities and Services Element:** The various public services which may affect the future development of land would be included in this element. The public services are: water, wastewater, public education, parks and recreation, fire protection, solid waste management, utilities, and youth and family services. The element’s purposes would be to establish policy regarding the provision of these services and to integrate public service concerns into land use decision making.

**Noise Element:** This element would evaluate existing and projected future noise conditions related to highways, airports, and other sources and expresses policies and standards to assure noise compatibility with future land use development.

### **ZONING CODE REVISIONS**

Adoption of the *GP 2020* would also affect the County's Zoning Code and zoning applied to selected properties. Code changes are proposed concurrently with the *GP 2020* that would apply to the following issues:

- **Air Transportation Element** – An Overlay Zoning District is proposed to be created and applied to properties surrounding the public use airports in the county for the purpose of increased protection of the airport environs from incompatible uses.
- **Affordable Housing Sites** – An Overlay Zoning District is proposed to be created and applied to selected properties in Urban Service Areas in order to implement a program in the adopted Housing Element.
- **Land Use Changes** – Zoning is proposed to be changed on certain properties to conform to any land use map amendments that are approved as part of *GP 2020*.
- **Zoning Code and map changes** would also be required following the adoption of the *GP 2020* in order for the Code to be consistent with the updated General Plan. Designation of Community Separators, Scenic Landscape Units, Biotic Resource Areas, and text amendment to implement policies regarding energy resources, rural and urban development guidelines, siting of churches and schools, etc. are examples.