

4.0 Environmental Impact Analysis

The following sections analyze the potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of implementation of the proposed Plan. The environmental issues subject to detailed analysis in the following sections include those identified as potentially significant by the County through preliminary review and by commenters responding to the Notice of Preparation or attending scoping meetings. As detailed in Chapter 1, Introduction, there are 13 sub-sections that comprise this chapter, in accordance with the County's 2010 Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 as amended.

Each issue analysis section is formatted to include a summary of existing conditions, including the environmental setting and the regulatory framework. Within the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the significance thresholds, which are those criteria adopted by the County, other agencies, universally recognized, or developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential impacts are significant are addressed within the context of the Plan buildout, rezones, ordinance amendments, and Plan goals, policies, and development standards. Plan buildout includes land use, zoning, and overlay map amendments. Land Use and Development Code/Coastal Zone ordinance amendments related to agricultural permitting will also be analyzed. Under this component, where applicable, growth allowed under the buildout of the Plan is quantified to analyze potential impacts.

The recreational elements of the Plan represent the most significant change that would occur under Plan implementation. Therefore, a separate section has been prepared in an effort to provide a consolidated analysis of the impacts associated with proposed trail alignments and other recreational amenities related to PRT Maps Amendments. This component amends the existing PRT map for the Gaviota Coast to reflect proposed trail alignments. PRT Maps Amendments are discussed within Section 4.13 for each environmental subject area.

Each section also takes into account proposed Plan policies, development standards, and implementing actions intended to regulate and guide future development. Where these policies and programs minimize potential adverse environmental effects, this is also discussed. To address potentially significant impacts that are not minimized to less than significant by the Plan components, additional mitigation measures are proposed that minimize, reduce, or avoid these adverse environmental effects. These measures, if adopted, would become additional Plan development standards.

All potential direct and indirect impacts in Chapter 4 are evaluated in relation to applicable County, state, and federal standards, as reflected in the County's Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (2008). Each impact under consideration for an issue area is separately listed in bold text, with the discussion of the impact and its significance following.

Following each environmental impact discussion is a listing of recommended mitigation measures (if required) and the residual effects or level of significance remaining after the implementation of the measures. In those cases where the mitigation measure for an impact could have a significant environmental impact on another issue area, this impact is discussed as a residual/secondary effect. Each residual impact listing also contains a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact as follows:

- Class I Impact. Significant unavoidable adverse impacts for which the decision maker must adopt findings and a statement of overriding considerations.
- Class II Impact. Significant environmental impacts that can be feasibly mitigated or avoided for which the decision maker must adopt Findings and recommended mitigation measures.
- Class III Impact. Adverse impacts found not to be significant for which the decision maker does not have to adopt findings under the California Environmental Quality Act.
- Class IV Impact. Impacts beneficial to the environment.

The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the Plan in conjunction with other adopted and pending projects.

This analysis is focused on land uses and policies, and the extent that implementation of the Plan would result in an environmental impact. A plan-to-plan analysis (comparison of the Plan to what is currently allowed) is included as the No Project Alternative and is discussed in Chapter 6, Alternatives.

Because this document provides a program-level analysis, future development plans would be required to provide project-level environmental analyses. This may include detailed site utilization plans, specific land uses and acreages, identification of detailed physical features and easements, standards for planned public and private streets, development standards and design guidelines, and detailed conformance with relevant guidelines and policies.