



# CITY OF SCOTTS VALLEY

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## SCOTTS VALLEY PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

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July 16, 2020

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Update to the Scotts Valley General Plan

**To:** State Clearinghouse, State Responsible Agencies, State Trustee Agencies, Other Public Agencies, Interested Organizations

**Lead Agency / Sponsor:** City of Scotts Valley, Community Development Department

**Project Title:** City of Scotts Valley General Plan Update

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Scotts Valley will prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for the City of Scotts Valley General Plan Update (the project). The City is the lead agency for the project. The purpose of this notice is: (1) to serve as a Notice of Preparation of an EIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines § 15082; and (2) to advise and solicit comments and suggestions regarding the scope and content of the EIR to be prepared for the project.

The City determined that the project would require preparation of a full-scope EIR; thus, an Initial Study was not prepared in conjunction with this Notice of Preparation (NOP). Consistent with § 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City will prepare an EIR to address the environmental impacts associated with the project at a programmatic level. The project is a long-term plan consisting of policies that will guide future development activities and City actions. No specific development projects are proposed as part of this General Plan Update. However, the program EIR can serve to streamline environmental review of future projects.

**Notice of Preparation:** The City of Scotts Valley, as Lead Agency, requests that responsible and trustee agencies respond in a manner consistent with § 15082(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. Pursuant to CEQA § 21080.4, responsible agencies must submit any comments in response to this notice no later than 30 days after receipt. Comments in response to this notice must be submitted in writing at the address below at the close of the 30-day NOP review period, by 5:00 PM on August 17, 2020:

Taylor Bateman  
Community Development Director  
City of Scotts Valley  
One Civic Center Drive  
Scotts Valley, CA 95066  
[tbateman@scottsvalley.org](mailto:tbateman@scottsvalley.org)

This NOP and background documents associated with the General Plan update are available for review on the City's General Plan Update webpage at:

<http://www.scottsvalleygeneralplan.com/>

**Scoping Meeting:** Due to social distancing requirements as mandated by the County of Santa Cruz and the State of California, a scoping meeting will not be held. However, those persons who would like additional information about the project and scope of the Draft EIR are encouraged to contact the City of Scotts Valley for further information.

# Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Scotts Valley General Plan

## Introduction

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a project that an agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment, to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts, and to consider alternatives to the project.

The EIR for the project will be prepared and processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation measures;
- Alternatives to the project as proposed; and
- Environmental consequences, including (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; (c) the growth inducing impacts of the project; (d) effects found not to be significant; and (e) cumulative impacts.

## Project Location

The project site is comprised of the City of Scotts Valley and associated Planning Area as shown in [Figure I-1: Regional Location](#) and [Figure I-2: Planning Area](#). The City of Scotts Valley is a general law city located in the northern portion of the Santa Cruz County, CA and is approximately five (5) miles east of downtown Santa Cruz and approximately 25 miles west of San Jose.

## Project Background

Incorporated in 1966, Scotts Valley's current population is over 11,600. Scotts Valley consists predominantly of single-family neighborhoods constructed in the 1950's and 60's, 70's with typical lot sizes of 7,000-10,000 square feet. The remaining dwelling units consist of multiple-family residences at a density between 5-20 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Commercial districts are found on Mount Hermon Road and Scotts Valley Drive, Land zoned for Light Industrial and Research and Development uses are mainly located off of Scotts Valley Drive that provides opportunity for more intense business activity.

The City's existing General Plan was last updated in 1994. Per the City's General Plan Land Use designations, the City includes residential, commercial, industrial, open space, and civic

(government) uses. A large majority (72%) of Scotts Valley is designated residential, followed by commercial (4%) and industrial (7%). Per the current General Plan map, commercial land makes up a small portion of the City (about 4%). Uses include retail, office, warehouse/light industrial, and research & development. Most of these uses are located along Scotts Valley Drive and Mount Hermon Road.

## **Project Description**

The City of Scotts Valley is in the process of preparing an update to its existing General Plan. The update will guide the City's development and conservation for the next 20 + years.

State law requires that a general plan contain eight elements: land use, circulation, housing, open space, noise, safety, environmental justice, and conservation. The contents of these elements are outlined in state law. The City of Scotts Valley General Plan Update would bring the General Plan into compliance with recently enacted state laws and reflect current data as well as public and staff participation. The project would organize all elements into five broad categories, namely:

- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Mobility
- Open Space & Conservation
- Safety & Noise
- Community Services & Facilities

The General Plan Update addresses the current needs and preferences of the community. The General Plan update identifies and prioritizes opportunities to preserve the character of the community, conserve natural resources, and direct land use policies that enable sustainable growth in and around Scotts Valley.

The General Plan is the long-range plan or roadmap for the City as a whole. Updates to the General Plan include changes to various policies directing land use amendments, addressing land use compatibility and development intensities, establishing impact thresholds for future development projects, and implementing various programs that will help meet its goals.

### ***General Plan Buildout Assumptions***

State law requires that a General Plan include “an estimate of the total amount of development that may be built in an area under a certain set of assumptions, including applicable land use laws and policies (e.g., zoning), environmental constraints, etc.”

The 1994 General Plan was prepared during a period of rapid and sustained growth that was assumed to continue to the Plan's horizon year of 2015. Indeed, between 1960 and 1990, the annualized growth rate for Scotts Valley averaged 3.11%, which is a very high rate of growth.

Employment growth was even more rapid, growing at an annualized rate of 7.7% between 1982 and 1990. Since that time, annual growth has slowed significantly due to limited amounts of vacant land and economic conditions.

If all the residential land shown on the existing 1994 General Plan Land Use Map were built out, Scotts Valley would contain approximately 6,500 housing units, supporting a population of about 16,000. If all the industrial, commercial, office, and other employment generating land were built out, Scotts Valley would contain approximately 6.2 million square feet of building floor area, or enough to support about 12,000 jobs.

As shown in **Table 1: General Plan Buildout Summary**, the General Plan Update assumes a more moderate growth rate that is less than the previous (1994) General Plan, and more consistent with actual growth trends over the past 20 + years, as well as projections as identified by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG).

**Table 1: General Plan Buildout Summary**

	Households	Population	Employment
Existing General Plan (1994)	6,500	16,000	12,000
General Plan Update	5,600	15,400	8,400 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>(900)</b>	<b>(600)</b>	<b>(3,600)</b>

Notes:

1. Per AMBAG 2018 Regional Growth Forecast (2015-2040)

Apart from minor updates to reflect past City approvals, the land use designations in the City of Scotts Valley and the Planning Area will remain the same as designated under the 1994 General Plan (as amended). These land use designations are shown in **Figure LU-1: General Plan Land Use Designations**.

For the GP EIR, the development capacity will provide a reference point for how and where such growth will be accommodated, and how the City and other public agencies will accommodate such growth, particularly with respect to infrastructure requirements (e.g. roads, water, sewer), and public services (e.g. police, fire, and parks & recreation).

## Public Agency Approvals

The project would require adoption by the Scotts Valley City Council. The Planning Commission and other decision-making bodies would review the project and make recommendations to City Council. While other agencies may be consulted during the General Plan Update process, their approval is not required for adoption of the General Plan Update. However, subsequent development under the General Plan Update may require approval of state, federal and responsible trustee agencies that may rely on the programmatic EIR for decisions in their areas of expertise.

## Potential Environmental Impacts of the Project

The EIR for the project will focus on the resource areas/issues germane to this particular project. The EIR will evaluate the potentially significant environmental impacts of the project and will evaluate whether there are feasible mitigation measures that may lessen or avoid such impacts. As the project does not include any specific construction or development, but rather the potential for land use changes or development to be constructed in the future, the impact analysis will be programmatic and cumulative in nature. The EIR will also identify and evaluate alternatives to the project. The EIR will evaluate potentially significant environmental effects related to the following environmental issues:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources & Tribal Cultural Resources
- Geology & Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology & Water Quality
- Land Use & Planning
- Noise
- Population & Housing
- Public Services & Recreation
- Transportation & Traffic
- Utilities & Service Systems

### **Attachments:**

Figure 1: Regional Location

Figure LU-1: General Plan Land Use Designations