

## 4.9 HAZARDS, HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND WILDFIRE

This section evaluates the potential effects of implementing the 2040 General Plan on hazards, hazardous materials and hazardous waste, and wildfire including the transportation and use of hazardous materials that could create a significant health risk, exposure to hazards as result of proximity to contaminated sites, emission of hazardous materials in proximity to schools, the creation of hazards in relation to a project's proximity to airports, and the exposure of people and property to wildfire hazards. Please see Section 4.11, "Noise and Vibration," of this draft EIR for a discussion of airport noise, including airport noise contours and development restrictions. As described in the "Approach to the Environmental Analysis" section, above, the following assessment of impacts is based on the characterization of existing environmental conditions and regulatory setting provided in the January 2020 Background Report (Appendix B). Where necessary, each section identifies changes (e.g., new information, regulatory changes) to the environmental and regulatory setting included in the Background Report that are relevant to understanding the 2040 General Plan's potential impacts.

Comments on the notice of preparation included concerns regarding the use of pesticides and herbicides, airport safety zones, hazardous materials sites, evacuation routes, and oil and gas extraction hazards. These comments are addressed in this section, as appropriate. The NOP and comments on the NOP are included in Appendix A.

### 4.9.1 Background Report Setting Updates

#### REGULATORY SETTING

In addition to the information provided in Section 3.9, "Other Agency Plans;" Section 6.5, "Goods Movement;" Section 6.6, "Aviation Facilities and Services;" Section 11.3, "Wildfire Hazards;" Section 11.4, "Aviation Hazards;" Section 11.5, "Hazardous Materials;" and Section 12.2, "Climate Change Effects," of the Background Report (Appendix B), the following regulatory setting information is relevant to understanding the potential hazards, hazardous materials, hazardous waste, and wildfire impacts of the 2040 General Plan:

- ▶ **Ventura County Emergency Operations Plan.** The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) addresses the County's planned response to extraordinary emergency situations and natural, human-caused or technological disasters (Ventura County 2016). The EOP does not address normal day-to-day emergencies, nor does it address the established and routine procedures used in coping with such emergencies. Instead, the operational concepts reflected in the EOP focus on potential large-scale disasters that can generate unique situations requiring unusual emergency responses. The EOP is a preparedness document, so it is designed to be read, understood, and exercised prior to an emergency. It designates the County as part of the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Each element of the emergency management organization is responsible for assuring the preparation and maintenance of appropriate and current Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) resource lists and checklists that detail how assigned responsibilities are performed to support implementation of the EOP and to ensure an effective response during a major disaster. Such SOPs should include the specific emergency authorities that designated officials and their successors can assume during emergency situations.

The EOP is to be updated tri-annually to ensure that plan elements are valid and current. Each responsible organization or agency will review and update its portion of the EOP and/or modify its SOP/EOP as required based on identified deficiencies experienced in drills, exercises or actual occurrences.

- ▶ Ventura County Fire Code. On October 15, 2019, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors adopted Ventura County Fire Protection District Ordinance No. 31 which repeals Fire District Ordinance No. 30, adopts by reference the 2019 California Fire Code (CFC), portions of the 2018 edition of the International Fire Code (IFC), and portions of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 19, and incorporates by reference Fire District Ordinance No. 29. Fire District Ordinance No. 31 is known as the Ventura County Fire Code.

Prior to adoption of Ordinance No. 31, the Ventura County Fire Code in effect was adopted pursuant to Fire District Ordinance No. 30, which incorporated the 2016 edition of the CFC and the 2015 edition of the IFC, as amended by the Board in 2016. The IFC was created in the late 1990s when the three national regional "legacy" codes (National Building Code, Uniform Building Code, and Standard Building Code) were merged into a single model code. This task took several years, and the first edition of the IFC was published in 2000. Since that time, a growing number of jurisdictions across the country have adopted, modified, and called it their own. The State of California recently adopted and published the 2019 CFC, which is based on the 2018 IFC and becomes effective on January 1, 2020. All provisions of the 2019 CFC will be automatically applicable throughout the State on January 1, 2020, unless local jurisdictions amend one or more sections of the CFC.

Fire District Ordinance No. 29, also known as the Ventura County Fire Apparatus Access Code, establishes the minimum and cumulative design and maintenance standards for emergency fire access roads. These provisions permit emergency resources to respond to an incident in a safe and effective manner. The ordinance applies to all Fire Apparatus Access Roads, whether public or private, located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Ventura County Fire Protection District. It includes road design, signage, and marking requirements and provisions for enforcement. Access roads subject to the requirements of Section 1270 of Title 14 of the CCR, as that section may be amended from time to time, shall comply with the most restrictive requirements.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

In addition to the information provided in Section 3.9, "Other Agency Plans;" Section 6.5, "Goods Movement," Section 6.6 "Aviation Facilities and Services," Section 11.3 "Wildfire Hazards;" Section 11.4, "Aviation Hazards;" Section 11.5, "Hazardous Materials;" and Section 12.2, "Climate Change Effects;" of the Background Report (Appendix B), the following information is relevant to understanding the potential hazards, hazardous materials, hazardous waste, and wildfire impacts of the 2040 General Plan:

- ▶ Thomas Fire. On December 4, 2017, the Thomas Fire was started by power lines coming into contact during a high wind event (VCFD 2019). The Thomas Fire burned a total of 281,893 acres in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, destroyed 1,063 structures (409 within unincorporated Ventura County), and resulted in one civilian and one firefighter fatality (VCFD 2019).

- ▶ Woolsey Fire. The Woolsey Fire started on November 8, 2018 and burned 96,949 acres in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties (CAL FIRE 2019). The Woolsey Fire began in the county shortly after the start of the Hill Fire, also in the county, located 15 miles to the west. The Woolsey Fire destroyed 1,643 structures (208 within unincorporated Ventura County) and resulted in three civilian deaths (LACFD 2018).
- ▶ Table 11-4 of the Background Report listed the ten largest fires in the county between 1965 and 2015. The Thomas Fire, at 281,893 acres, should be included as the largest and most destructive fire in county history. The Woolsey Fire, at 96,949 acres, should now be included as the fourth largest fire.

## 4.9.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

### METHODOLOGY

This analysis includes a program-level, qualitative assessment of impacts related to hazards, hazardous materials, and wildfire. Specific methodologies for hazardous materials and hazardous waste, aviation hazards, and wildfire hazards are discussed below.

#### Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste

The assessment evaluates whether the project could use or transport hazardous materials, require the use of existing or future underground storage tanks, produce hazardous waste, or be located in an area of known contamination. The analysis discusses the applicable regulations that would reduce environmental effects.

#### Aviation Hazards

The analysis evaluates whether the project could occur within the sphere of influence (SOI) of any airport. If development may occur within an airport SOI, the analysis evaluates the compatibility of the proposed land uses with the County's adopted Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Ventura County ALUC 2000).

#### Wildfire Hazards

Consistent with the recommended methodology in ISAG Section 18, "Fire Hazards," and Appendix G Section XX, "Wildfire," the analysis evaluates whether the project is located in or near an area designated as being at high risk for fire. Compliance with applicable building codes, including the fire code, would generally reduce potential effects, but site-specific constraints may require additional mitigation to reduce fire hazard risk.

In response to 2019 revisions to the State CEQA Guidelines (Public Resources Code Section 15126.2) and the 2015 California Supreme Court case, *California Building Industry Association v. Bay Area Air Quality Management District* (2015) 62 Cal.4<sup>th</sup> 369, impacts from exposure of a project to environmental hazards are not considered significant effects unless a project exacerbated the risks from such hazards. However, lead agencies retain the authority, separate and apart from CEQA, to include a review of potential impacts of the environment on a project when a project is undertaken by a lead agency, such as the 2040 General Plan. The 2040 General Plan is a comprehensive document that broadly establishes policy, not only related to the environment, but also related to public health and safety. Therefore, the analysis of hazards in this section considers whether the 2040 General Plan could cause or exacerbate hazards impacts and whether the 2040 General Plan could result in impacts from exposure to hazards. The discussion of potential impacts from exposure to geologic hazards is provided for information purposes only and is neither required by CEQA nor subject to its requirements.

## THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

As discussed in the “Approach to the Environmental Analysis” section, the thresholds used to determine the significance of the 2040 General Plan’s impacts are based on the County’s adopted ISAG, which include threshold criteria to assist in the evaluation of significant impacts for individual projects. Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines also provides considerations for determining the significance of a project’s impacts, in the form of initial study checklist questions.

To develop thresholds of significance for this section of the draft EIR, the County has deviated from the ISAG threshold criteria, where appropriate, to appropriately consider the programmatic nature of a general plan for the entire unincorporated area and to incorporate the 2019 revisions to the Appendix G checklist.

Specifically, the thresholds incorporate the following items: ISAG Section 18, “Fire Hazards;” ISAG Section 19, “Aviation Hazards;” ISAG Section 20a, “Hazardous Materials/Waste—Materials;” ISAG Section 20b, “Hazardous Materials/Waste—Waste;” ISAG Section 23, “Public Health;” Appendix G Section X, “Hazards and Hazardous Materials;” and Appendix G Section XX, “Wildfire.” Many of the thresholds contained in the ISAG require project-specific information, such as evaluation of whether a project meets applicable regulatory requirements (e.g., underground storage tanks compliant with California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.7 and the California Code of regulations Title 23, Division 3, Chapter 16). Because the 2040 General Plan is a program-level planning document, it would be too speculative to determine at this time the project-specific nature of future development that may occur under the 2040 General Plan. As such, where the thresholds included in the ISAG are inherently project-specific in nature, the Appendix G threshold is provided to allow for a programmatic analysis.

This draft EIR includes as thresholds the following questions from Appendix G: question IX(a) regarding routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, question IX(b) regarding upset or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials, question IX(c) regarding hazardous emissions or materials in close proximity to schools, and question IX(d) regarding sites included on a list of hazardous materials sites. In addition, this draft EIR includes as threshold ISAG Section 19 and Appendix G question IX(e) regarding noise and safety effects resulting from land uses incompatible with airports, and ISAG Section 18 and Appendix G questions XX(a-c) and IX(f-g) regarding impacts related to wildfire.

Note that ISAG Sections 20a, 20b, and 23 include thresholds that are project-specific in nature, and therefore not expressly included in the thresholds of significance developed for this analysis. However, the ISAG thresholds are covered within the thresholds derived from the Appendix G questions.

For the purpose of this draft EIR, implementation of the 2040 General Plan would have a significant impact on hazards, hazardous materials, and wildfire if it would:

- ▶ Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

- ▶ Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.
- ▶ Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school.
- ▶ Create a significant hazard due to location on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites.
- ▶ Locate inconsistent land uses within the sphere of influence of any airport, or otherwise result in excessive noise or a safety hazard for people residing or working near an airport.
- ▶ Expose people to risk of wildfire by locating development in a High Fire Hazard Area/Fire Hazard Severity Zone, substantially impairing an adopted emergency response plan or evacuation plan, exacerbate wildfire risk, expose people to pollutants from wildfire, or result in post-wildfire changes that could cause flooding, landslide, or drainage changes.

## ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

The Area Plans for communities of El Rio/Del Norte, Lake Sherwood, North Ventura, Oak Park, Ojai, Piru, and Thousand Oaks were reviewed for policies and implementation programs specific to these Area Plans that would potentially have impacts on the environment with respect to hazards, hazardous materials, hazardous waste, and wildfire. The 2040 General Plan would not result in substantive changes to Area Plan policies and implementation programs related to transportation and use of hazardous materials that could create a significant health risk, exposure to hazards as result of proximity to contaminated sites, emission of hazardous materials in proximity to schools, the creation of hazards in relation to a project's proximity to airports, and the exposure of people and property to wildfire hazards. The Area Plan policies and implementation programs related to these issues are consistent with the policies and implementation programs of the 2040 General Plan, which are addressed in the following discussions. Therefore, the environmental effects of the Area Plan policies and implementation programs are not addressed separately in this section.

## 2040 GENERAL PLAN POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policies and implementation programs in the 2040 General Plan related to hazards, hazardous materials, and wildfire and, specifically, the thresholds of significance identified above, include the following:

### Circulation, Transportation, and Mobility Element

- ▶ **Policy CTM-5.1: Airport Effects.** The County shall strive to minimize adverse environmental and safety effects of County airports on the surrounding communities. (RDR, SO) *[Source: Existing GPP Goal 4.2.1.14, modified]*
- ▶ **Policy CTM-5.3: Private Airstrips and Agricultural Landing Fields.** The County shall require private airstrips and agricultural landing fields to be sited to minimize conflicts with the flight paths of existing airports and other areas that would present significant hazards or nuisances. (SO, JP) *[Source: Existing GPP Goal 4.2.1.13]*

- ▶ **Policy CTM-5.5: Airport Land Use Compatibility.** Discretionary development that would endanger the efficient, safe operation of an airport or would result in significant land use incompatibility impact with an airport shall be prohibited. (RDR, SO) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 4.2.2.10, modified]*

Hazards and Safety Element

- ▶ **Policy HAZ-1.1: Fire Prevention Design and Practices.** The County shall continue to require development to incorporate design measures that enhance fire protection in areas of high fire risk. This shall include but is not limited to incorporation of fire-resistant structural design, use of fire-resistant landscaping, and fuel modification around the perimeter of structures. (RDR, PI) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.13.2.2]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-1.2: Defensible Space Clear Zones.** The County shall require adherence to defensible space standards, or vegetation “clear zones,” for all existing and new structures in areas that are designated as Hazardous Fire Areas by the Ventura County Fire Protection District and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. (IGC, PI, RDR) *[Source: New Policy]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-1.3: Controlled Burns and Other Fire Prevention Measures.** The County shall continue to recognize the role of fire in local ecosystems by supporting controlled burns and other fire prevention measures. (IGC) *[Source: Existing Ojai Valley Area Plan Goal 1.4.1.3, Ojai Valley Area Plan Goal 2.3.1.3, Ojai Valley Area Plan Program 2.3.3.1, Piru Area Plan Goal 2.3.1.3, and Thousand Oaks Area Plan Goal 1.3.1.8]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-1.4: Development in High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and Hazardous Fire Areas.** The County shall require the recordation of a Notice of Fire Hazard with the County Recorder for all new discretionary entitlements (including subdivisions and land use permits) within areas designated as Hazardous Fire Areas by the Ventura County Fire Department or High Fire Hazard Severity Zones by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). (RDR) *[Source: New Policy]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-1.5: Discouragement of Home-Building in Very High Fire Severity Zones.** The County shall discourage the building of homes in Very High Fire Severity Zones. (RDR) *[Source: New Policy]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-1.6: Wildfire Risk Education.** The County shall continue to develop and distribute educational materials and conduct educational outreach activities informing the public about wildfire risk and protection strategies. (PSR, IGC, PI) *[Source: New Policy]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-1.7: Post-Fire Community and Natural Resource Recovery.** The County shall assemble an interagency team as needed to maintain response plans and coordinate the management of resources following wildfire events. (PSR, IGC) *[Source: New Policy]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-1.8: Federal Fire Risk Management.** The County should collaborate with the federal agencies to better manage fuel loads on federally-owned or managed lands. (IGC) *[Source: New Policy]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-5.1: Hazardous Materials and Waste Management.** The County shall manage hazardous materials and wastes produced by County facilities and operations in such a way that waste reduction through alternative technology is the County’s first priority.

When not possible, the County's priorities will progress from recycling and reuse, then on-site treatment, and finally disposal as the last resort. (SO) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.15.2.1, modified]

- ▶ **Policy HAZ-5.2: Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Facilities.** The County shall require discretionary development involving facilities and operations which may potentially utilize, store, and/or generate hazardous materials and/or wastes be located in areas that would not expose the public to a significant risk of injury, loss of life, or property damage and would not disproportionately impact Designated Disadvantaged Communities. (SO) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.15.1.2, modified]
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-5.3: Preventing Contamination of Natural Resources.** The County shall strive to locate and control sources of hazardous materials to prevent contamination of air, water, soil, and other natural resources. (SO) [Source: New Policy]
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-5.4: Household Hazardous Waste.** The County shall continue to develop and distribute educational materials and conduct educational outreach to inform the public about household hazardous waste and the proper disposal methods. (PI) [Source: New Policy]
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-5.5: Hazardous Waste Reduction at the Source.** The County shall, as part of the discretionary review process, require that hazardous wastes and hazardous materials be managed in such a way that waste reduction through alternative technology is the first priority, followed by recycling and on-site treatment, with disposal as the last resort. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.15.1.1, modified]
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-5.6: Hazardous Materials – County Regulatory Oversight.** The County shall continue to provide regulatory oversight for all facilities or activities that store, use, or handle hazardous materials. (SO) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.15.2.3, modified]
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-5.7: Presence of Hazardous Wastes.** Applicants shall provide a statement indicating the presence of any hazardous wastes on a site, prior to discretionary development. The applicant must demonstrate that the waste site is properly closed, or will be closed, pursuant to all applicable state and federal laws, before the project is inaugurated. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.15.2.4, modified]
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-5.8: Siting Criteria for Hazardous Waste Generators.** The County shall require commercial or industrial uses which generate, store, or handle hazardous waste and/or hazardous materials to locate, operate, and maintain hazardous waste and/or hazardous materials in a manner that does not endanger public health and safety and is located based on objective criteria that do not disproportionately impact Designated Disadvantaged Communities. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.15.2.5, modified]
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-6.1: Airport Land Use Plan.** The County shall regulate land use types, density, and intensity using guidance from the Ventura County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan, Point Mugu Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) study, State Aeronautics Act, and California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook guidelines. (RDR) [Source: New Policy]
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-6.2: Airport Safety Zones.** The County shall require density and allowed uses within the Airport Safety Zones to be as defined in the Ventura County Airport

Comprehensive Land Use Plan (ACLUP) and the current Point Mugu Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) study, as applicable to the project location. The County shall require any overrides of a determination of inconsistency with the ACLUP to be done in accordance with State law. (RDR) *[Source: New Policy]*

- ▶ **Policy HAZ-6.3: Airspace Protection.** The County shall use the current Ventura County Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan (ACLUP) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airport design standards and Part 77 surfaces to keep the airspace surrounding each airport or airfield free of objects affecting navigable airspace where required by the FAA or shall limit the height of objects as required by the FAA. The County shall also ensure obstruction clearance is provided for all enroute and terminal (airport) instrument procedures as per the United States Standard for Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) to avert modifications to any planned or published instrument approach or instrument departure procedures at the affected airport or airfield. (RDR) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.14.2.2(2), modified]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-6.4: Private Airstrips and Agricultural Landing Fields.** The County shall require private airstrips and agricultural landing fields be sited so as not to conflict with the flight paths of existing airports and outside of areas that would present significant hazard or an annoyance to existing or planned land uses. (RDR) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.14.2.2(3), modified]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-6.5: Review by Ventura County Transportation Commission.** The County shall require discretionary development within the Airport Safety Zones, as defined in the Ventura County Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan for (ACLUP), shall be reviewed by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) for consistency with the ACLUP. (RDR) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.14.2.2(4), modified]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-6.6: Recordation of a Notice of Aviation Hazard.** The County shall require the recordation of a Notice of Aviation Hazard with the County Recorder for new discretionary entitlements (including subdivisions and land use permits) within the Airport Safety Zones identified in the Ventura County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan. (RDR) *[Source: New Policy]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-6.7: Risk Reduction for Railroad and Trucking Hazards.** The County shall condition discretionary development to minimize, to the maximum extent practical through site design or setbacks, the risk for exposure to railroad and trucking hazards. (RDR) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.14.2.3]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-6.8: Airport Safety Zones.** The County shall designate land located within the Airport Safety Zones, as defined in the current Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan, as Agricultural or Open Space on the General Plan Land Use Diagram, and limit such land to the following uses:
  - Agriculture and agricultural operations;
  - Cemeteries;
  - Energy production from renewable resources;

- Mineral resource development;
  - Public utility facilities;
  - Temporary storage of building materials;
  - Waste treatment and disposal; or
  - Water production and distribution facilities. (RDR, MPSP) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.14.2.2(1), modified]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-7.1: Oil Spill Prevention.** The County shall review and analyze all proposed oil and gas exploration and production projects, and shall condition all County discretionary permits for such projects, to require compliance with local, State, and federal oil spill prevention regulations. The County shall also provide input and comments on permit applications that are under the purview of an outside agency. (RDR, IGC) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.14.2.4, modified]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-12.1: Access Points for New Subdivisions.** The County shall require new residential subdivisions to provide not less than two means of access for emergency vehicles and resident evacuation. A deviation from this policy is only allowed if a single proposed access road conforms to the County Road Standards, Ventura County Fire Department Access Standards, and when the County Fire Chief approves the proposed deviation. (RDR) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.13.2.3, modified]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-12.2: Countywide Hazard Mitigation Planning.** The County shall continue to maintain and periodically update the Ventura County Emergency Operations Plan and the Ventura County Hazard Mitigation Plan covering hazards in the county. (MPSP, IGC, PI) *[Source: Existing GPP Program 2.1.3.5, modified]*
- ▶ **Policy HAZ-12.3: Siting of Essential Facilities.** The County should not site essential facilities, public safety or emergency service facilities, special occupancy structures, or hazardous materials storage facilities in areas subject to the following hazard areas, as defined in the County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services), unless the structure is designed to mitigate the hazard:
- in tsunami hazard areas, as defined in the Operational Area Tsunami Evacuation Plan (Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services);
  - geologic or seismic hazard areas;
  - areas subject to liquefaction, landslide, or seiche hazards; and
  - subsidence or hydroconsolidation. (RDR) *[Source: Existing GPP Policy 2.6.2.1, Existing GPP Policy 2.9.2.3, modified]*

#### Implementation Programs

- ▶ **Implementation Program A: Develop and Implement Educational Programs for Wildfire Resilience.** In coordination with federal, State, and local partners (e.g., CAL FIRE), the County shall update and maintain educational programs related to such issues as:

- Learning how to recognize the first signs of fire and take appropriate action;
  - Living with the risks of fire within the wildland/urban interface; and
  - Methods of improving the resilience of homes and other structures. *[Source: New Program]*
- ▶ **Implementation Program B: Wildfire Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping.** In collaboration with the federal, State, and local partners (e.g., CAL FIRE), U.S. Forest Service, other agencies involved in wildfire response planning), the County shall update and map new locations that may be vulnerable to wildfire hazards including: damage to electrical, transportation, and communication infrastructure; increased rates of erosion, landslide, and water quality degradation; loss of residential, commercial, and industrial structures; and ecological disturbance. *[Source: New Program]*
  - ▶ **Implementation Program C: Post-Fire Assessments.** Directly following a wildfire disaster, the County shall conduct a post-fire assessment to identify vulnerabilities and projects that address vulnerabilities. The goal of the post-fire assessment shall be to protect public safety, enhance access and evacuation, and reestablish essential functional needs to communities and ecosystems to minimize flooding, protect water quality, reduce landslide and debris flow occurrence, and limit pollution. *[Source: New Program]*
  - ▶ **Implementation Program J: Hazardous Materials Business Plan and Hazardous Materials Response Plans.** The County shall continue to require Hazardous Materials Business Plans and Hazardous Materials Response Plans for any business which handles hazardous material to ensure that plans for emergency response to a release or threatened release of a hazardous material and/or waste are maintained and monitored. *[Source: New Program]*
  - ▶ **Implementation Program K: Marine Oil Spill Response Planning.** County facilities that could potentially be the source of a marine oil spill and onshore oil spill shall develop, exercise, review, and share their prevention and response plans with regulatory and emergency agencies. *[Source: Existing Program 2.14.3.5]*
  - ▶ **Implementation Program L: Marine Oil Spill Response Plan.** The Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services shall annually review the County's Marine Oil Spill Response Plan. The County shall continue to participate in the U.S. Coast Guard Area Contingency Plan process. *[Source: Existing Program 2.14.3.4]*
  - ▶ **Implementation Program O: Solar Concentration Restriction.** The County shall modify the NCZO and CZO, if necessary, to prohibit the placement and use of facilities that use solar concentration for generation of commercial power that could generate glare and potential to disable pilots and impact flight or test operations at Naval Base Ventura County. *[Source: JLUS Strategies ED-1A, LG-1A, and LG-1D]*
  - ▶ **Implementation Program X: Countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan.** The County Sheriff's Department Office of Emergency Services (OES) shall continue to maintain and update the Ventura County Hazard Mitigation Plan every five years and periodically update the Ventura County Emergency Operations Plan. Updates will include including mitigation measures and preparedness, response, and recovery strategies for hazards identified in this Element. To the extent feasible, County agencies shall, and other public agencies are encouraged to, participate in joint emergency planning and response training, and cooperatively respond to emergencies when they occur. *[Source: Existing GPP Program 2.1.3.5, modified]*

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### **Impact 4.9-1: Create a Significant Hazard to the Public or the Environment Through the Routine Transport, Use, or Disposal of Hazardous Materials or Hazardous Waste**

A hazardous material (hazmat) is any solid, liquid, or gas that can harm people, other living organisms, property, or the environment (FEMA 2007). Chemicals that are considered hazardous materials are widely used in daily activities. They purify drinking water, increase crop production, and simplify household chores. Hazards can occur during production, storage, transportation, use, or disposal. Hazardous materials in various forms can cause death, serious injury, long-lasting health effects, and damage to buildings, homes, and other property. Many products containing hazardous chemicals are also routinely used and stored in homes. These products are also shipped daily on highways, railroads, waterways, and pipelines. Chemical manufacturers are one source of hazardous materials, but there are many others, including service stations, hospitals, and hazardous materials waste sites. Varying quantities of hazardous materials are manufactured, used, or stored at facilities in unincorporated Ventura County, including local dry-cleaning establishments and gardening supply stores. Hazardous materials come in the form of explosives, corrosives, flammable and combustible substances, poisons, and radioactive materials.

A hazardous waste is a waste with properties that make it dangerous or capable of having a harmful effect on human health or the environment (US EPA 2019). Hazardous waste is generated from many sources, ranging from industrial manufacturing process wastes to batteries and may come in many forms, including liquids, solids gases, and sludges.

The land use diagram of the 2040 General Plan would accommodate future development of relatively higher intensity residential, commercial, mixed use, and industrial land uses within the Existing Community area designation (boundary) and the Urban area designation (boundary). These are areas with existing residential, commercial, and/or industrial uses developed with urban building intensities generally located adjacent to the boundaries of incorporated cities or along highway corridors such as SR 33, SR 118, SR 126, and Highway 101. The residential, commercial, mixed use, and industrial land use designations of the 2040 General Plan would apply to approximately 1.2 percent of land in the unincorporated county. Potential uses within these designations include small- and large-lot detached single-family homes, one- to three-story attached single-family dwellings and lower density multifamily developments, mixes of commercial, office, residential, civic, and/or recreational uses, one- to two-story structures for retail and commercial services, and industrial employment-generating uses, such as production, assembly, warehousing, and distribution.

The Rural land use designation would allow for low-density and low-intensity land uses such as residential e States and other rural uses which are maintained in conjunction with agricultural and horticultural uses or in conjunction with the keeping of farm animals for recreational purposes, such as greenhouses, principal and accessory structures related to agriculture, and also oil and gas wells, and would apply to approximately 0.9 percent of land in the unincorporated county.

Approximately 97.1 percent of the unincorporated county would remain designated as either Open Space (approximately 88 percent) or Agriculture (approximately 9 percent) under the 2040 General Plan. The Open Space land use designation would allow low intensity development with a minimum parcel size of 10 acres and 1 dwelling unit per parcel. Other uses could include composting operations, greenhouses, correctional institutions, fire stations, and oil and gas wells.

The Agriculture land use designation would allow for development of one dwelling unit per parcel and a minimum parcel size of 40 acres. Other uses could include greenhouses, principal and accessory structures related to agriculture, and composting operations. Proposed policies of the 2040 General Plan addressing flaring and trucking associated with new discretionary oil and gas wells could result in the construction and operation of new pipelines for the conveyance of oil, gas, or produced water.

Implementation of the 2040 General Plan would accommodate future development that could involve the use, storage, disposal and transportation of hazardous materials or hazardous waste. Although hazardous materials and hazardous waste can be associated with activities allowed to occur in all land use designations, those that are more likely to regularly use, store, dispose of, or transport hazardous materials or generate hazardous waste include agricultural, industrial, and commercial. Industrial land uses would likely have the highest potential to use, transport, store and dispose of hazardous materials or hazardous waste in quantities that could pose a significant risk to humans or the environment.

Additionally, the transportation of hazardous materials and hazardous waste may increase as a direct result of increased hazardous materials usage within the county. As described in Section 11.5, "Hazardous Materials," of the Background Report, there are over 2,600 facilities within the county that store and use hazardous materials or generate hazardous waste (Appendix B:11-64). The transportation of hazardous materials waste occurs mostly along major roadways; however, because hazardous material usage could occur anywhere in the county, potentially any roadway could be used to transport hazardous materials or waste. Therefore, it is likely that the transportation of hazardous materials or wastes would cross through or pass by all land use types in the county, including residential and other sensitive land uses.

In addition to existing State and federal laws and permitting processes, the 2040 General Plan would include several policies and implementation programs that would reduce potential impacts related to hazardous materials and hazardous waste. For example, Policies HAZ-5.1, HAZ-5.3, HAZ-5.4, HAZ-5.6, and HAZ-12.3 address hazardous materials by directing the County to manage its own hazardous materials and provide regulatory oversight for discretionary projects and all facilities that store, use, or handle hazardous materials. Policies HAZ-5.2, HAZ-5.5, HAZ-5.8, and HAZ-7.1 provide guidance for the location, operation, and management of discretionary developments, including oil and gas exploration and production sites such that future development would reduce potential impacts to public health and the environment. Implementation Program J protects people and the environment from hazardous materials and waste by requiring all businesses that handle hazardous materials to prepare Hazardous Materials Business Plans and Hazardous Materials Response Plans to ensure that emergency response plans for potential inadvertent release of hazardous materials or waste are maintained and monitored. Implementation Programs K and L require County facilities that could be the source of a marine or onshore oil spill to share their prevention and response plans with regulatory and emergency agencies.

Future development under the 2040 General Plan may result in the routine use, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials or hazardous waste. However, County activities and discretionary development would be required to comply with State law, federal law, and 2040 General Plan policies and implementation programs that would substantially lessen potential impacts related to the use, storage, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials or hazardous waste. Therefore, implementation of the 2040 General Plan would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environments related to the use, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials or hazardous waste. This impact would be **less than significant**.

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for this impact.

### **Impact 4.9-2: Create a Significant Hazard to the Public or the Environment Through the Reasonably Foreseeable Upset and Accident Conditions Involving the Release of Hazardous Materials or Hazardous Waste into the Environment**

As described in Impact 4.9-1 above, hazardous materials and hazardous waste are regularly used and transported in the county. Although such activities involve strict regulations under State and federal law regarding monitoring and handling, accidental release of hazardous materials or hazardous waste due to natural disasters, human error or misuse is possible. Future development under the 2040 General Plan could accommodate activities in the agricultural, industrial, commercial and other land use designations that typically involve the use and storage of hazardous materials or generation of hazardous waste. Additionally, forecasted growth that would be accommodated by the 2040 General Plan could result in increased demand for existing goods and services, such as industrial manufacturing or drycleaners, which involve the use of hazardous materials and generation of hazardous waste,. Therefore, the number of facilities that use, store, or generate hazardous materials or hazardous waste, and/or the total amount of hazardous materials or waste that is used, stored, disposed of or generated, which may have the potential to result in a reasonably foreseeable upset or accident condition involving the release of hazardous materials or hazardous waste into the environment, could increase under the 2040 General Plan.

Implementation of the 2040 General Plan would have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the public and environment from an unplanned accidental release of hazardous materials or hazardous waste. Within the county, there are 300 hazardous materials sites, including permitted underground storage tanks, 273 sites that have undergone or are undergoing remediation, and one leaking underground storage tank designated for site assessment (Appendix B:11-64). Additionally, the public or environment could also inadvertently be exposed to hazardous materials or hazardous waste through construction activities which involve material removal such as asbestos, lead or underground storage tanks; during construction on properties with existing contamination; during transportation from facilities within the county to facilities outside the county; or in areas where established populations are located near facilities that use, store or dispose of hazardous materials or hazardous waste.

As noted in ISAG Section 23, two constituents associated with rocket engine testing, perchlorate and trichloroethylene (TCE), have been detected in southeast Ventura County at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site. Due to these results, applicants for development projects within two miles of former or current rocket engine testing are required to test for the constituents perchlorate and TCE. Also, applicants for all discretionary projects proposing to utilize groundwater in any capacity that are located within two miles of the boundary of a former or current test site for rocket engines are required to test the groundwater for perchlorate and TCE. The degree of potential threat of off-site contamination of soil has not been established, therefore, applicants for discretionary development consisting of residential general plan amendments, zone changes and subdivisions that increase density are required to test the soil for perchlorate and TCE. If the constituents are found to be present in soil and/or groundwater, appropriate remediation actions would be required consistent with regulatory requirements for the land uses proposed.

Numerous federal, State, and local regulations exist to protect people and the environment from potential accidental release of hazardous materials or hazardous waste. Additionally, 2040 General Plan policies and implementation programs would also help protect people and the environment from accidental upset of hazardous materials or hazardous waste. For example, Policies HAZ-5.1, HAZ-5.3, HAZ-5.4, HAZ-5.6, and HAZ-12.3 address hazardous materials by directing the County to manage its own hazardous materials and provide regulatory oversight for discretionary development and all facilities that store, use, or handle hazardous materials, thus reducing the potential for accidental upset or spill. Policies HAZ-5.2, HAZ-5.5, HAZ-5.8, and HAZ-7.1 provide guidance for the location, operation, and management of discretionary developments, including oil and gas exploration and production sites, so as to minimize the potential for adverse effects to people and the environment in the event of accidental spills. Implementation Program J protects people and the environment from hazardous materials and waste by requiring all businesses that handle hazardous materials to prepare Hazardous Materials Business Plans and Hazardous Materials Response Plans to ensure that emergency response plans for potential inadvertent release of hazardous materials or waste are maintained and monitored. Implementation Programs K and L require County facilities that could be the source of a marine or onshore oil spill to share their prevention and response plans with regulatory and emergency agencies.

Implementation of the 2040 General Plan could accommodate an increase in activities that commonly store, use, and dispose of hazardous materials and hazardous waste, such as in the agricultural, industrial, open space, and commercial land use designations. Additionally, existing industries and businesses that use hazardous materials or generate hazardous waste may expand or increase in response to the forecasted growth accommodated by the 2040 General Plan. However, future development accommodated by the land use designations of the 2040 General Plan would be required to comply with applicable federal, State and local regulations, and 2040 General Plan policies related to the transportation, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and hazardous waste. Compliance with such regulations would minimize the potential for an accidental release to occur and provide planning mechanisms for prompt and effective cleanup if an accidental release did occur. Therefore, the impact related to an accidental hazardous materials or waste release would be **less than significant**.

#### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for this impact.

#### **Impact 4.9-3: Emit Hazardous Emissions or Handle Hazardous Materials Within One-Quarter Mile of an Existing or Proposed School**

As described in Impacts 4.9-1 and 4.9-2 above, hazardous materials are regularly used and transported in the county, and activities allowed to occur under each land use designation of the 2040 General Plan have the potential to use, store, transport and dispose of hazardous materials or hazardous waste. Schools use, store, transport, and dispose of hazardous materials or hazardous waste, such as cleaning products and laboratory chemicals, that potentially pose a risk to people or the environment if not properly used, stored, disposed of or transported. Implementation of the 2040 General Plan could result in the use, storage, disposal, or transport of hazardous materials within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school.

Although hazardous materials can be associated with activities allowed to occur under all 2040 General Plan land use designations, those that are more likely to regularly use high quantities of hazardous materials include agricultural, industrial, and commercial. As noted in Section 11.5 of the Background Report, the county contains 231 schools divided among 21 school districts (Appendix B:7-97, 7-98). In addition, new schools could be constructed in the future under the 2040 General Plan, and their potential locations are not known at this time. Therefore, implementation of the 2040 General Plan could result in agricultural, commercial, or industrial uses, or the transport of hazardous materials to and from these uses, within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school. Federal and State regulations exist to protect public health and the environment from hazardous emissions and hazardous materials handling within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school. In the county, discretionary development projects are reviewed for potential hazardous emissions or substances under using the ISAG. Section 15186 of the State CEQA Guidelines establishes requirements for school projects, as well as projects near schools, to ensure that potential health impacts resulting from exposure to hazardous materials, wastes, and substances are examined and disclosed in an environmental document. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15186 also states that hazardous materials that must be considered a risk are those which may impose a health or safety hazard to persons who would attend or would be employed at the school. Specifically, when a project located within 0.25 mile of a school involves the construction or alteration of a facility that might emit or handle acutely hazardous materials in a quantity equal to or greater than that specified in Section 25536(a) of the Health and Safety Code, the lead agency must consult with the affected school district regarding the potential impact of the project when circulating the environmental document and notify the affected school district in writing prior to approval and certification of the environmental document. Moreover, all County permits that include storage, handling, transport, emission and disposal of hazardous substances must be in full compliance with local, State, and federal regulations. Hazardous materials are governed by regulations that require proper storage and handling, business and environmental management plans, spill contingency plans, employee and public noticing, and other emergency preventive and response measures to minimize the risk of accidental releases and related environmental effects. California Government Code Section 65850.2 requires that a final certificate of occupancy or its substantial equivalent cannot be issued unless there is verification that the owner or authorized agent has met, or is meeting, the applicable requirements of the Health and Safety Code Sections 25500 through 25520.

Additionally, 2040 General Plan policies and implementation programs would also help protect schools from hazardous emissions or the effects of hazardous materials. For example, Policies HAZ-5.1, HAZ-5.4, HAZ-5.6, and HAZ-12.3 protect schools from the effects of hazardous materials by directing the County to manage its own hazardous materials and provide regulatory oversight for discretionary development projects and all facilities that store, use, or handle hazardous materials. Policies HAZ-5.2, HAZ-5.5, HAZ-5.8, and HAZ-7.1 provide guidance for the location, operation, and management of discretionary developments, including oil and gas exploration and production sites to minimize the potential for affecting existing or future schools. Implementation Program J protects people and the environment from hazardous materials and waste by requiring all businesses that handle hazardous materials to prepare Hazardous Materials Business Plans and Hazardous Materials Response Plans to ensure that emergency response plans for potential inadvertent release of hazardous materials or waste are maintained and monitored. Implementation Programs K and L require County facilities that could be the source of a marine or onshore oil spill to share their prevention and response plans with regulatory and emergency agencies.

While the 2040 General Plan could accommodate future development with potential for hazardous materials usage or handling to be located within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school, compliance with federal and State regulations pertaining to hazardous wastes, as well as 2040 General Plan policies and implementation programs discussed above, would substantially lessen adverse public health and safety impacts. This impact would be **less than significant**.

#### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for this impact.

#### **Impact 4.9-4: Create a Significant Hazard Due to Location on a Site Which is Included on a List of Hazardous Materials Sites**

Sites contaminated with hazardous substances can potentially result in adverse human or environmental effects. Potential pathways of exposure to contaminants include direct ingestion of contaminated soils and/or ground water, inhalation of volatiles and fugitive dusts, potential explosion hazards associated with landfill gas, ingestion of contaminated groundwater caused by migration of chemicals through soil to an underlying potable aquifer, dermal absorption, ingestion of homegrown produce that has been contaminated via plant uptake, and migration of volatiles into basements and slabs. Potential exposure to contaminants could also occur to construction workers during site development and to the residents or workers that occupy the ultimate land use approved on the site.

Future development that could be accommodated under the land use designations of the 2040 General Plan is described in Impact 4.9-1. Some land use designations under the 2040 General Plan would be more likely to allow for activities that disturb existing hazardous material sites and increase potential pathways of exposure than others. For example, residential designations would have the potential to introduce human populations into areas that could have a history of contamination from nearby landfills, historic agricultural use, or other existing hazards. Construction activities could uncover buried underground storage tanks or other buried hazards.

As described in Section 11.5, "Hazardous Materials," of the Background Report, there were 300 hazardous materials sites in the county, as of November 2016 (Appendix B:11-64). Of that number, 27 were permitted underground storage tanks, 273 have undergone or are undergoing hazardous materials remediation, and one site contains a leaking underground storage tank (LUST) and is undergoing assessment (Appendix B 2018:11-64). Of the 273 sites that have or may undergo remediation, 162 have been designated as "Completed-Case Closed," including landfill sites and LUST sites (Appendix B:11-64). The Background Report also discusses ongoing hazardous waste cleanup sites in the county, including the Halaco Superfund site, Santa Susana Field Lab, USA Petrochem, and the Talley facility (Appendix B:11-69, 11-70).

As described in Section 23 of the ISAG, two constituents associated with rocket engine testing, perchlorate and TCE, have been detected in the southeast of the county at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory site. In August 2004, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors determined that to ensure consistent and complete assessment of specified development projects within two miles of former or current rocket engine testing facilities, applicants would be required to test for the constituents perchlorate and TCE.

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors further determined that groundwater is a more likely conduit for the spread of the identified toxic contaminants. As such, applicants for future discretionary development projects proposing to utilize groundwater in any capacity would be required to test the groundwater for perchlorate and TCE. The degree of potential threat of off-site contamination of soil has not been established, therefore, applicants for discretionary development consisting of residential general plan amendments, zone changes and subdivisions that increase density would be required to test the soil for perchlorate and TCE. If the constituents are found to be present in soil and/or groundwater, appropriate remediation actions would be required consistent with regulatory requirements for the land uses proposed.

Implementation of the 2040 General Plan could result in future development on or near a site identified in one of the regulatory databases, compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, including those sites discussed above and identified in Section 11.5, "Hazardous Materials," of the Background Report. Federal and state regulations exist that prevent or reduce hazards to the public and environment from existing hazardous waste sites or hazardous substances release sites. These regulations include the Occupational Safety and Health Act; the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act; the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act Title III; the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; and the Toxic Substances Control Act. These regulations protect people and the environment through guidelines that require proper storage and handling, business and environmental management plans, spill contingency plans, employee and public noticing, and other emergency preventive and response measures to minimize the risk of accidental releases and related environmental effects. 2040 General Plan Policy HAZ-5.7 requires project applicants to indicate the presence of any hazardous wastes on a project site and demonstrate that the waste site is properly closed, pursuant to all applicable state and federal laws. Policies HAZ-5.2, HAZ-5.5, HAZ-5.8, and HAZ-7.1 provide guidance for the location, operation, and management of discretionary developments, including oil and gas exploration and production sites to minimize the potential for affecting people and the environment. While implementation of the 2040 General Plan could potentially accommodate future development on or near sites included on a list of hazardous waste sites or hazardous substances release sites, compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, as well as 2040 General Plan policies, would ensure that development would occur on sites that have been properly closed and remediated such that no remaining hazards from past contamination would remain. This impact would be **less than significant**.

#### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for this impact.

#### **Impact 4.9-5: Locate Inconsistent Land Uses Within the Sphere of Influence of Any Airport, or Otherwise Result in a Safety Hazard to People Residing or Working Near an Airport**

On the ground, aircraft hazards are generally produced by aircraft mishaps, either incident or accidents, which are associated with the operation of an aircraft. Ground-related incidents or accidents generally occur during take-off or landing. The most common type of take-off or landing accident is a runway incursion. A runway incursion is defined as an occurrence along the airport runway that creates a collision hazard or prevents an aircraft from taking off or landing. It can involve an aircraft, vehicle, person, or any other object that impacts an aircraft's ability to land or take-off. Hazards in the air jeopardize the safety of an airborne aircraft and expose passengers, pilots, and crews to danger.

Examples of hazards that interfere with air safety include tall structures, birds, glare-producing objects, or radio waves from communication centers. Essentially, there are two types of aviation-related safety concerns that affect land use near airports. The first is minimizing the severity of an aircraft accident by limiting the number of people and amount of property within airport hazard zones. The second is minimizing hazards in the air through restrictions on building heights and on uses that produce electronic or visual impairments to navigation or attract large numbers of birds.

As discussed in the Background Report, there are four airports in the county: two County-owned and operated airports at Camarillo and Oxnard, a private airport open to the public in Santa Paula, and the federally-operated Navy Base Ventura County (NBVC) Point Mugu (Appendix B:11-54). The *Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Ventura County* (ALUCP) is intended to protect and promote the safety and welfare of people near the airports, as well as airport users, and applies to all four airports. The ALUCP includes noise compatibility standards, identifies safety zones and compatibility standards, and protects airspace through building height restrictions that guide nearby property owners and local jurisdictions in determining what types of proposed new land uses are appropriate around airports. Airport safety zones are any areas upon which an airport hazard might be created or established, if not prevented by regulations prohibiting certain uses or characteristics. The zones are based on Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77 (FAR Part 77), which provides guidance for the safe, efficient use and preservation of the navigable airspace. Airport safety zones identified in the ALUCP include Runway Protection Zone (RPZ), Outer Safety Zone (OSZ), Height Restriction Zone (HRZ), Traffic Pattern Zone (TPZ), and Extended Traffic pattern Zone (ETPZ). The ALUCP includes a table of uses and identifies whether they are acceptable, conditionally acceptable, or unacceptable land uses for each airport safety zone (Ventura County ALUC 2000:Table 6B).

The goal of the NBVC JLUS is to protect the viability of current and future operations, while simultaneously guiding community growth, sustaining the environmental and economic health of the region, and protecting public health, safety, and welfare (VCTC 2015:1-3). The JLUS includes the Air Installation Compatibility Use Zones (AICUZ) program, which is designed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of civilians and military personnel by encouraging land uses compatible with aircraft operations while protecting the public investment in the installation. The AICUZ program recommends compatibility measures for both the Navy and surrounding communities, and recommends land uses that are compatible with elevated sound level, accident potential zones, and obstruction clearance criteria associated with military airfield operations.

Future development that could be accommodated under the land use designations of the 2040 General Plan is described in Impact 4.9-1. The proposed land use designations of the 2040 General Plan would not introduce incompatible land uses within the airport safety zones. Some activities allowed to occur under the land use designations of the 2040 General Plan, such as future residential, commercial, and industrial development, would increase the number of people residing or working near an airport, who in turn could be exposed to aircraft hazards.

Federal and state regulations exist that prevent hazards to the public and environment near airports. These include FAA regulations, which establish safety standards for civil aviation, and the State Aeronautics Act, which establishes air safety standards (Caltrans 2011). The 2040 General Plan includes several policies aimed at reducing hazards associated with airports. For example, Policies CMT-5.1, CMT-5.3, CMT-5.5, and HAZ-6.4 direct the location of public or

private airports or airstrips to be located to minimize adverse safety effects on surrounding communities. Several policies require consistency with the ALUCP, including Policies HAZ-6.1, HAZ-6.2, HAZ-6.3, HAZ-6.5, and HAZ-6.8. Consistency with the ALUCP protects the public from adverse effects of aircraft noise, ensures that people and structures are not concentrated in areas susceptible to aircraft accidents, and ensures that no structures or activities encroach upon or adversely affect the use of navigable airspace (Ventura County ALUC 2000:1-2). For development within the Airport Safety Zones as identified in the ALUCP, Policy HAZ-6.6 requires recordation of a Notice of Aviation Hazard, which requires the grantor (i.e., property owner) to acknowledge the close proximity of the airport, present and future aircraft overflights, and aircraft noise such that the grantor accepts the present and future conditions.

Implementation of the 2040 General Plan could result in residential, commercial, or industrial development that is located near an airport. Because all future development would be required to comply with the land use and development standards, including the restrictions on uses within the airport safety zones, established in the adopted ALUCP, development within the immediate vicinity of an airport would not substantially increase the risk of people living or working in these areas to hazards associated with airport operations because incompatible uses would be restricted within the various airport safety zones. Further, compliance with federal and State laws and regulations regarding airport operations, as well as 2040 General Plan policies restricting incompatible land uses near airports, would ensure no land use compatibility impacts would occur. This impact would be **less than significant**.

#### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for this impact.

#### **Impact 4.9-6: Expose People to Risk of Wildfire by Locating Development in a High Fire Hazard Area/Fire Hazard Severity Zone or Substantially Impairing an Adopted Emergency Response Plan or Evacuation Plan or Exacerbate Wildfire Risk**

As discussed in Section 11.3, “Wildfire Hazards,” of the Background Report, there are over 80 square miles of the county that are within the high fire hazard severity zone (FHSV) of State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands and more than 500 square miles in the very high FHSZ of Local Responsibility Area (LRA) lands (Appendix B:11-45). As part of the Ventura County Fire Code adopted on October 15, 2019, the County also defines Hazardous Fire Areas (HFAs) as a location within 500 feet of forest or brush, grass, or grain covered land, exclusive of small individual lots or parcels of land located outside of a brush, forest, or grass covered area. Also relevant to this discussion are areas of where wildlands are directly adjacent to urban development, known as wildland urban interface (WUI). Because high and very high FHSZs, HFAs, and WUIs generally overlap throughout the county, they are collectively referred to as “fire hazard areas” and all are considered in this analysis.

Although wildfires are natural processes necessary to the functioning of many ecosystems, a wildfire’s aftermath typically leaves land scorched and exposed. Until the land rehabilitates, the exposed soils may contribute to adverse environmental impacts including air and water pollution and unstable soils conditions such as mudslides, erosion, and debris flows. The end result of uncontrolled wildfire also includes debris from burned homes, some of which can be highly toxic, and can adversely affect the environment by polluting local waterways such as streams and rivers. Although natural conditions make wildfires common in the county, locating development adjacent to or within fire hazard areas could result in increased fire related risk to people and structures.

In addition to being located within fire hazard areas, economic and environmental barriers exist within the county that may challenge an adequate response to wildland fire events, such as was experienced during the Thomas Fire in December 2017 and the Hill and Woolsey Fires in November 2018. In the event of a major or multiple wildland fire events, adequate fire response staff may not be available within the county, requiring the need to enlist established mutual aid agreements with other neighboring fire agencies and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Additionally, response times for a wildland fire event may be inadequate due to insufficient access because of limited lane roads, inadequately maintained roads, and remote areas that need to be accessed. Fire response and access is discussed in Section 4.15, “Public Services and Recreation,” And as described therein, adequate fire facilities and personnel would be provided to meet increased demand for services as future development occurs. However, these services would likely be concentrated in the urban areas or developed communities of the county, where residents are located. Similarly, while sufficient water supplies and infrastructure, see Section 4.17, “Utilities,” would be in place to meet increased demand, these services and infrastructure would also be concentrated in urban and developed communities. Therefore, if a wildland fire were to occur in a more remote area of the county or at the urban-wildland interface, response times and infrastructure to combat the fires may be delayed.

The *2015 Ventura County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan* (MHMP) evaluates risks associated with agricultural, biological, climate change, dam failure inundation, drought, earthquake, flood, landslide, levee failure inundation, post-fire debris flow, tsunami, wildfire, and winter storm hazards. The MHMP also identifies mitigation strategies. Implementation of the 2040 General Plan does not propose to change the plans or policies of the MHMP or any other emergency plan, although it is possible that future development implemented under the 2040 General Plan may require the updating of emergency plans. Construction activities associated with development occurring under the 2040 General Plan would not interfere with emergency plans and procedures as authorities would be notified in advance of construction and emergency routes would be maintained throughout construction activities.

Regarding wildfire hazards, mitigation strategies included in the MHMP include implementation of the following:

- ▶ a new vegetation management program that provides vegetation management services to elderly, disabled, or low-income property owners who lack the resources to remove flammable vegetation from around their homes;
- ▶ a fuel modification program for new construction by requiring builders and developers to submit their plans, complete with proposed fuel modification zones, to the local fire department for review and approval prior to beginning construction;
- ▶ a hazards fuel treatment program for areas that have been identified with overgrown/dead brush/trees to reduce the potential for tree-to-tree ignition. Ensure that a “maintenance now” component to provide continued fire resistance is part of the program; and
- ▶ post-fire debris flow hillslope and channel treatments.

The *Ventura County 2015 Emergency Operations Plan* (EOP) addresses the County's planned response to extraordinary situations and natural, human-cause, or technological disasters (Ventura County 2016). The EOP does not address normal day-to-day emergencies, nor does it address the established and routine procedures used in coping with such emergencies. Instead, the operational concepts reflected in the EOP focus on potential large-scale disasters that can generate unique situations requiring unusual emergency responses. The EOP is to be updated tri-annually to ensure that plan elements are valid and current. Implementation of the 2040 General Plan does not propose to change the plans or policies of the EOP or any other emergency plan, although it is anticipated that future development implemented under the 2040 General Plan would be reflected in the updating of the EOP. As the EOP provides structure for the handling of large-scale emergencies, it does not include specific guidance for wildfire events. Instead, the EOP provides guidance for the activation of various agencies and plans and describes the myriad mutual aid agreements.

Future development that could be accommodated under the land use designations of the 2040 General Plan is described in Impact 4.9-1. Where future development could interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan, such as the MHMP or EOP, it would result in an adverse physical effect to people or the environment by potentially increasing the loss of life and property in the event of a disaster. Development that includes large concentrations of people or special needs individuals, such as stadiums or hospitals, in an area with increased hazards, such as in fire hazard areas, could cause adverse effects related to the implementation of the MHMP. Failure to provide reasonable access for emergency equipment and evacuation of civilians can also result in the major loss of life, property, and natural resources. Additionally, certain tall structures can physically interfere with the implementation of an emergency response if the height of the structure or tower interferes with the ability of emergency air support services to carry out missions associated with an emergency response.

Federal, State, and local plans and regulations would reduce the risk of wildfire in the plan area by requiring vegetation management and compliance with applicable building codes that require access to adequate fire suppression infrastructure and specify the materials and construction methods for protection against exterior wildfire exposure. For example, pursuant to the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (Public Law 108–148), the Ventura County Fire Department has prepared and adopted the *Ventura County Community Wildfire Protection Plan*. This plan is intended to be used by communities to prioritize fuel reduction projects and reduce structural ignitability in at-risk communities. The Strategic Fire Plan for California establishes the levels of Statewide fire protection services for State Responsibility Area lands located in the county. These levels of service recognize other fire protection resources at the federal and local level that collectively provide a regional and Statewide emergency response capability. The State's Vegetation Management Program allows private landowners to enter into a contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to use prescribed fire to accomplish a combination of fire protection and resource management goals. The main goals of the program are the reduction of conflagration fires, the optimization of soil and water productivity, and the protection and improvement of intrinsic floral and faunal values. Public Resources Code Section 4291 and Government Code Section 51182 require property owners in mountainous areas, forest-covered lands, or any land that is covered with flammable material to create, at minimum, a 100-foot defensible space (or to the property line) around their homes and other structures. Pursuant to VCFPD Ordinance 31, the Ventura County Fire Protection District Fire Hazard Reduction Program requires mandatory 100-feet of brush clearance around structures located in or adjacent to Hazardous Fire Areas.

Chapter 7A of the CFC, which was adopted with minor revisions as part of the Ventura County Fire Code, establishes minimum standards for the protection of life and property by increasing the ability of a building located in any FHSZ within SRAs or any WUI area to resist the intrusion of flames or burning embers projected by a vegetation fire and contributes to a systematic reduction in conflagration losses. Requirements of Chapter 7A include the use of noncombustible or ignition-resistant materials, ventilation, and the use of materials with specified minimum fire rating.

The 2040 General Plan also includes several policies related to wildfire and emergency response. For example, Policy HAZ-1.8 requires the County to collaborate with federal agencies to manage fuel lands on federally-owned or managed lands within the county. Policy HAZ-1.6 requires the County to develop and implement programs to educate the public about wildfire risk and protection strategies. Policies HAZ-1.1, HAZ-1.2, and HAZ-1.3 focus on wildfire prevention, including fire-resistant design and landscaping, defensible space clear zones, and controlled burning. Policies HAZ-1.4 and HAZ-1.5 discourage development of homes in very high FHSZs and requires recordation of a Notice of Fire Hazard for new discretionary entitlements in fire hazard areas, whether designated by Ventura County or CAL FIRE. Policy HAZ-1.7 requires Ventura County to maintain response plans and coordinate the management of resources following wildfire events. Policy HAZ-12.1 requires all new subdivisions to provide at least two points of access for emergency vehicles and resident evacuation.

Policy HAZ-12.2 requires the County to maintain and periodically update the Ventura County Emergency Operations Plan and the Ventura County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Independent of the 2040 General Plan the EOP is required to be updated every three years and MHMP every five years. In the event of a wildfire, people in the area of the wildfire would be subject to pollutant emissions. The size and location of the area in which people would be subject to pollutant emissions would depend on multiple factors such as the location and size of the wildfire, prevailing winds, and weather patterns. While smoke in the air is an obvious effect on people, wildfires emit substantial amounts of volatile and semi-volatile organic materials and nitrogen oxides that form ozone and organic particulate matter (NOAA 2019). Direct emissions of toxic pollutants could also affect first responders and local residents. In addition, the formation of other pollutants as the air is transported can lead to harmful exposures for populations in regions far away from the wildfires. One of the goals of the MHMP is to minimize loss of life and injury from wildfire through emergency preparedness, response, and recovery actions. As discussed above, Policy HAZ-12.2 requires periodic updates to the MHMP and EOP; which would help protect people from pollutant emissions during a wildfire event through prevention and quick, efficient response to wildfire events.

Implementation of the 2040 General Plan could accommodate future development in areas not currently developed. Future development in these areas would require new or upgraded roads and utility infrastructure. For future development in areas vulnerable to wildfire hazards, the installation of new or expanded roads in areas that are currently undeveloped would increase access and thereby human activities in these areas, which increase would exacerbate the risk of wildfire. The addition of more human activity, vehicles, and new utility infrastructure, such as overhead electrical lines, could exacerbate the risk of wildfire in currently undeveloped areas. Policies that would lessen the exacerbation of wildfire risk of from introducing human activity, new development, and new infrastructure to an area include Policy HAZ-1.6, which requires the County to develop and implement programs to educate the public about wildfire risk and

protection strategies. This policy is related to Implementation Program A, which directs the County to develop and implement education programs for wildfire resilience. By educating the public regarding wildfire risks and protection strategies, the County seeks to reduce the incidence of wildfire and mitigate wildfire impacts.

Policy HAZ-1.8 requires the County to collaborate with federal agencies to manage fuel lands on federally-owned or managed lands within the county. Managing fuel through activities such as vegetation removal and controlled burns, the County and other agencies would be directly reducing the chance of wildfire as well as fuels that would feed wildfires. Policies HAZ-1.1, HAZ-1.2, and HAZ-1.3 focus on wildfire prevention, including fire-resistant design and landscaping, defensible space clear zones, and controlled burning. The use of fire-resistant structural design, fire-resistant landscaping, and fuels modification helps reduce the risk of wildfire ignition as well as decrease the amount of fuels that feed wildfires. Defensible space requirements protect people and the environment by making structures less vulnerable to wildfire ignition and effects. Controlled burns reduce wildfire fuels, which can reduce the risk for wildfire ignition. These policies feed into Implementation Program B, which directs the County to collaborate with federal, State, and local agencies to identify areas vulnerable to wildfire hazards.

Policy HAZ 1.4 requires the County to require the recordation of a Notice of Fire Hazard for all new discretionary entitlements within fire hazard areas. By requiring this notice, prospective property owners would be informed that their property is in an area of wildfire danger and can make informed decisions regarding a purchase and the risks associated with the property. Pursuant to Policy HAZ 1.5, the County shall discourage the building of homes in very high fire severity zones. By discouraging development in these areas, the County seeks to reduce the incidence of wildfire and minimize wildfire effects. Policy HAZ 12.1 requires new residential subdivisions to have at least two access points for emergency vehicles. By ensuring adequate access for emergency vehicles, responders would be able to reach emergency areas in a timely manner, which could be critical in limiting the damage caused by emergent situations.

The aftermath of a wildfire could include conditions that could create downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Policy HAZ-1.7 requires the County to maintain response plans and coordinate the management of resources following wildfire events. One of the goals of the MHMP is to minimize loss of life and injury from wildfire through emergency preparedness, response, and recovery actions. As discussed above, Policy HAZ-12.2 requires periodic updates to the MHMP and EOP, which would help reduce post-wildfire hazards by ensuring that the County's plans for handling large emergencies reflects current conditions to allow for efficient and safe operations during hazard or emergency events. These policies are related to Implementation Programs C and X which require the County to conduct post-wildfire assessments to identify vulnerabilities and periodically update emergency plans, respectively.

Implementation of the 2040 General Plan would expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, and exacerbate wildfire risk, because it would accommodate future development in or adjacent to high and very high FHSZs or Hazardous Fire Areas. By their designation, these areas are prone to wildland fires and have a higher potential for severe fire events. The County has adopted the MHMP, which identifies mitigation strategies to minimize fire hazard risks, has adopted the EOP that provides guidance for handling large-scale emergencies, discourages development in fire hazard areas, and requires development to implement a variety of best management practices and design

standards to ensure development is fire resistant. Nevertheless, future development would be allowed to occur at the urban-wildland interface, to increase access, human activity, and infrastructure in undeveloped areas of the county occurs and could result in the exacerbation of the potential for wildfires to occur. While Policy HAZ-12.2 requires periodic updates of emergency plans, there may be a gap between new development and plan update. Because implementation of the 2040 General Plan could result in development that exacerbates the potential for wildfires to occur and the resulting adverse environmental effects that are associated with these events, this impact would be **potentially significant**.

### Mitigation Measures

The County has adopted and implemented programs to minimize wildfire risks including the MHMP. In addition, the *Ventura County CWPP* reduces hazardous fuels throughout the County and provide measures to reduce structural ignitability in at-risk communities. The Fire Hazard Reduction Program requires mandatory 100-feet of brush clearance around structures located in or adjacent to Hazardous Fire Areas. Many communities also have adopted their own emergency response plans. The 2040 General Plan includes a suite of policies and implementation programs that address a full spectrum of wildfire prevention standards for new development including vegetation management, fire suppression equipment, discouraging development in fire hazard areas, and education programs to prevent wildfires. Finally, existing federal and State building code standards, including the recently-adopted 2019 fire code, would require future development to be designed to minimize fire risk. Because the effects of a wildfire are not limited to development within high FHSZs but can easily spread to adjacent communities, any development in or adjacent to a designated FHSZs or near wildland areas is at risk for wildfire. While compliance with federal, State, and local requirements would limit risk, this risk cannot be completely eliminated. No other additional policies or programs are available that could eliminate the potential for wildfires or their environmental effects to occur because the only way to fully mitigate additional exposure of people to wildfire or exacerbation of wildfire risk is to prohibit all development in or near any areas that are at risk for wildfire. Based on the topography and vegetation characteristics of the county, very few if any such areas exist. Further, many existing developed areas already pose a wildfire risk because of their proximity to wildland areas. The County has undertaken a substantial effort to implement policies and implementation programs that would protect people and structures from the risk of wildfires while at the same time promoting the economic growth of the County. No additional feasible policies or implementation programs are available to reduce the risk of wildfire exposure, exacerbation, or resulting adverse environmental effects to less than significant.

### Significance after Mitigation

This impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.