1. Introduction

1.1. General Plan Overview

California State law requires each city and county in the state to adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning.” A general plan serves as the jurisdiction’s “constitution” or “blueprint” for future decisions concerning a variety of issues, including land use, health and safety, and resource conservation. All specific plans, area plans, subdivisions, public works projects, and zoning decisions must be consistent with the local jurisdiction’s general plan. The Ventura County General Plan contains the goals and policies upon which decision-makers base their land use decisions. Typically, the time horizon for a general plan ranges from 15 to 25 years. The horizon year for Ventura County’s General Plan Update is 2040, resulting in a planning horizon of 20 years.

1.2. Alternatives Process

The alternatives phase of the General Plan Update program will develop and explore different options for how the county could grow in the future and how the General Plan Update could address major policy issues. This phase provides an opportunity to facilitate discussions with community members, stakeholders, and decision-makers about these land use alternatives and policy options. This provides the community with an opportunity to discuss pros and cons of different options, decide the best way to achieve the vision, and build consensus for a Preferred Alternative that will be used to develop the General Plan Update and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This phase will provide the framework for future growth and resource protection and establish the basis for the updated goals, policies, and implementation programs that will be proposed with the General Plan Update.
1.3. Purpose of Alternatives Concept Report

This Alternatives Concept Report is a first step in the evaluation of alternatives. The report is designed to provide community members, stakeholders, and decision-makers with an annotated outline of the topics to be covered as part of the full Alternatives Report (scheduled for the Summer of 2018). The report also provides an opportunity to gain public input and direction from the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors regarding the scope and analysis to be conducted as part of the alternatives assessment.

1.4. Vision and Guiding Principles

The General Plan’s vision and guiding principles provide direction for the future and introduce key themes to be addressed in the General Plan. Specifically, the guiding principles serve as touchstones to determine consistency of goals, policies, and implementation programs with the overarching vision.

The draft Vision and Guiding Principles were reviewed by the Board of Supervisors at their meeting on January 23, 2018. The following represents the guidance provided at that meeting.

Vision Statement

A vision statement reflects what community members value most about the county and their shared aspirations for the future. The vision statement is designed to be inspirational and set the direction for the General Plan’s goals, policies, and implementation programs. The visioning process is valuable in identifying issues important to the community and in providing early direction for alternatives development and analysis. Our Vision Statement is:

Ventura County will remain a remarkable place to live, work, and play. Our exceptional quality of life and economic vitality is rooted in the stewardship of our multi-cultural resources, rich natural resources including our world class beaches, fertile agricultural soils/lands, scenic mountains and open space, and our talented residents. The General Plan reflects the County’s ongoing commitment to collaborate with Ventura County’s residents, cities, businesses, and non-profit organizations to address our environmental, social, and economic needs in a sustainable manner, address climate change, and allow our safe, healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities to thrive.

Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles are central ideas that articulate the County’s commitment to achieving the Vision of the General Plan. They establish the framework for the ideas and concepts behind the General Plan and serve as a touchstone during the process to develop and refine goals, policies, and programs. Our Guiding Principles are:

**Land Use and Community Character**

Direct urban growth away from agricultural, rural, and open space lands, in favor of locating it in cities and unincorporated communities where public facilities, services, and infrastructure are available or can be provided.
Economic Vitality
Foster economic and job growth that is responsive to the evolving needs and opportunities of the County’s economy and preserves land use compatibility with Naval Base Ventura County, while enhancing our quality of life and promoting environmental sustainability.

Agriculture
Promote the economic vitality and environmental sustainability of Ventura County’s agricultural economy by conserving soils/land while supporting a diverse and globally-competitive agricultural industry that depends on the availability of water, land, and farmworker housing.

Circulation/Transportation/Mobility
Support the development of a balanced, efficient, and coordinated multi-modal transportation network that meets the mobility and accessibility needs of all residents, businesses, and visitors.

Housing
Support the development of affordable and equitable housing opportunities by preserving and enhancing the existing housing supply and supporting diverse new housing types consistent with the Guidelines for Orderly Development.

Conservation and Open Space
Conserve and manage the County's open spaces and natural resources, including soils, water, air quality, minerals, biological resources, and scenic resources, as well as historic and cultural resources.

Water Resources
Develop and manage water resources in a manner that addresses current demand without compromising the ability to meet future demand, while balancing the needs of urban and agricultural uses, and healthy ecosystems.

Public Facilities, Infrastructure, and Services
Invest in facilities, infrastructure, and services, including renewable energy, to promote efficiency and economic vitality, ensure public safety, and improve our quality of life.

Hazards and Safety
Minimize health and safety impacts to residents, businesses, and visitors from human-caused hazards such as hazardous materials, noise, air, sea level rise, and water pollution, as well as managing lands to reduce the impacts of natural hazards such as flooding, wildland fires, and geologic events.

Climate Change and Resilience
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve all adopted targets, proactively anticipate and mitigate the impacts of climate change, promote employment opportunities in renewable energy and reducing greenhouse gases, and increase resilience to the effects of climate change.

Healthy Communities
Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by investing in infrastructure that promotes physical activity and access to healthy foods, supporting the arts and integrating Health in All Policies into the built environment.
**Environmental Justice**
Commit to the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies, protect disadvantaged communities from a disproportionate burden posed by toxic exposure and risk, and continue to promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process.

2. **General Plan Organization**

The current County General Plan (2005) consists of the following documents:

- **Countywide Goals, Policies, and Programs (GPP).** This document contains four chapters: Resources, Hazards, Land Use, and Public Facilities and Services. The GPP also identifies 22 unincorporated Existing Communities (located outside of Area Plans) which identify existing urban residential, commercial, or industrial enclaves located outside Urban designated areas.

- **General Plan Appendices.** The General Plan includes four appendices (Resources, Hazards, Land Use, and Public Facilities and Services), each of which contain background information and data in support of the Countywide Goals, Policies, and Programs.

- **Area Plans.** There are ten area plans that contain specific goals, policies, and programs for defined geographic areas of the county. Two of these area plans, the Coastal Area Plan, which is part of the County’s Local Coastal Program, and the Ahmanson Ranch Area Plan, which will expire in September 2018, are not included as part of this General Plan Update Work Program.

This section of the Alternatives Report will explore ways to restructure the General Plan and specific components to better address the needs of the County. The organization items to be addressed in the Alternatives Report are defined in the following subsections.

2.1. **Element Structure**

As noted above, the General Plan currently consists of four chapters that collectively address the statutory content requirements of State law, which outlines these requirements according to “elements.” The General Plan Update Work Program calls for the addition of three new elements covering economic development, agriculture, and water. Additionally, new policy topics (Climate Action Plan and health and well-being), as well as new content required to address changes in State law (e.g., environmental justice, incorporate climate resilience and adaptation) will be incorporated into the updated General Plan. Finally, the Work Program includes consistency analysis, reformatting, and integrating Area Plans into the General Plan Update. The Alternatives Report will describe and evaluate different approaches to organizing the General Plan Policy Document to achieve compliance with State law, while addressing the County’s unique needs and interests.

The Alternatives Report will discuss the organization options available, including incorporation of new policy topics, and describe a recommended organization.
2.2. Land Use Designations

The County currently uses two sets of land use designations to specify planned land use. The Countywide General Plan has a simplified set of six designations (Existing Community, Rural, Agricultural, Open Space, State or Federal Facility, Urban), as well as an Urban Reserve Overlay designation. The Area Plans rely on more detailed designations that specify planned uses by type (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial). While there is some overlap in the resource-related designations (e.g., agriculture, open space), the designations that cover development are not well correlated.

The Alternatives Report will consider ways to more closely align the countywide designations and the Area Plan designations. This could include a set of generalized countywide designations (by land use type) within which the Area Plan designations would “nest.” For instance, collectively, the Area Plans have over 15 residential designations, ranging from rural residential to urban residential, permitting up to 20 dwelling units per acre. These could be grouped under four countywide residential designations (rural, low-density, medium-density, high-density). The Alternatives Report would also include a diagram/map that shows how the countywide designations would appear based on existing planned uses (as detailed in Area Plans and/or zoning).

2.3. Land Use Density and Intensity Standards

State law requires that general plans include “a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan.” While the Countywide General Plan includes “building intensity/population density” tables for each of the county’s existing communities (by zoning category) and the Area Plans have similar tables, the standards are not presented as clearly or directly as they could be.

The Alternatives Report would describe ways to more effectively establish and communicate standards of population density and building intensity for all land use designations described in the Countywide General Plan and Area Plans.

3. Holding Capacity/Development Potential Analysis

This section will identify development constraints which generally indicate areas where development opportunities may be limited and identify areas of the county that are potentially suitable to accommodate future growth.

The analysis will consider three types of constraints:

- **Physical Constraints.** These are the most easily identifiable limitations to development. They can include rivers, lakes, steep slopes, and flood prone areas. While most physical constraints are not absolute, they can pose major safety risks or significantly increase the cost to develop land. Physically constrained lands often have value in that they may provide habitat for endangered species, offer access to open spaces and views, or preserve historic resources.

- **Infrastructure Constraints.** These constraints will consider the availability of infrastructure to areas in the county (e.g., roadways, availability of water). These constraints can include service availability as well as overall system capacity. For wastewater, in areas served by septic, lot size minimums can also play a role in developability of a parcel.
Regulatory and Policy Constraints. Laws and regulations can constrain development in several ways. Federal and State laws and regulations can limit development (or can increase costs) and require significant mitigation to offset development impacts (e.g., wetland and endangered species protection). For example, the Los Padres National Forest accounts for approximately 574,000 acres, or 47 percent of the county’s total land area. The State of California owns approximately 27,000 acres of land designated as Open Space, and various local government entities own approximately 30,000 acres. Local regulations, such as Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources (SOAR), limit specific changes to Rural, Agricultural, and Open Space designated lands unless approved by a majority of county voters. Local regulations also constrain development in areas that pose a threat to the safety and well-being of residents. Agricultural and wildlife conservation easements, while not strictly regulations, similarly limit or eliminate development potential.

3.1. Refined Development Potential Analysis

When evaluating the future development that could occur in the county under the current General Plan and as part of any land use alternatives developed for the General Plan Update, there are two measures commonly discussed:

- **Holding Capacity.** Holding capacity is the theoretical amount of development that could occur in the county (or community area) based on “build-out” of the adopted plans (or zoning) on lands that are vacant or underutilized.

- **Development Potential.** Development potential is the amount of development that could occur in the county (or community area) based on “build-out” of adopted plans (or zoning) on lands that are vacant or underutilized and accounting for constraints to future development.

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**EXAMPLE (numbers created for example only and do not reflect an actual circumstance)**

In Area Plan X, assume there are 10 acres of vacant land available that is designated as Urban Residential 2-4 dwelling units/acre (du/ac), which allows for single-family residential with densities up to 4.0 du/ac.

**HOLDING CAPACITY**

Acreage (10) \* allowed maximum density (4.0 du/ac) = holding capacity

\[
10 \text{ acres available} \times 4.0 \text{ du/ac} = 40 \text{ residential units}
\]

**DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

Development potential considers available property, but applies physical, infrastructure, and regulatory and policy constraints that may reduce the full development potential that may be possible. For development potential, the allowed density may also be tailored to the average building density typical in an area instead of assuming the maximum density allowed. This is considered a more realistic look at the development that may occur in the county.

10 acres total
5 of the 10 acres are constrained by physical site issues (like slope)

\[(\text{Acreage (10)} - \text{acreage constrained (5)}) \times \text{typical density (3.5 du/ac)} = \text{development potential}\]

5 acres remaining available \(\times 3.5 \text{ du/ac} = 17\) residential units (rounded down)

The development potential of the unincorporated county areas is the theoretical amount of development that could occur in the county based on the “build-out” of adopted plans (or zoning) or alternatives proposed and as constrained by physical, infrastructure, and regulatory and policy considerations. As part of the Draft General Plan Background Report, the County documented the holding capacity and remaining development potential of the current General Plan. This was based on a combination of the tabulations included in the County’s 2014 Housing Element (for residential uses) and calculations based on Assessor-provided information concerning the status of land, and specifically land classified by the Assessor as vacant. While this was sufficient for the purposes of characterizing existing conditions for the Background Report, a more thorough evaluation of development is required to inform land use decisions and support the environmental analysis in subsequent phases of the General Plan Update.

In the Alternatives Report, development potential will be used to evaluate the existing General Plan as well as land use alternatives that may be developed. Development potential provides a more accurate look at development that could occur in the county based on known constraints. Holding capacity will not be reevaluated in the Alternatives Report.

As part of the Alternatives Report, development potential (for unincorporated areas of the county) will be assessed using the following steps.

1. **Vacant Land Analysis.** This will consist of validating or updating the assumptions cited in the Housing Element and Background Report, including virtual (via aerial photography) ground-truthing of the vacancy status of land identified as vacant on parcel-by-parcel basis. The initial data for the analysis used in the Background Report was the existing land use data/tax records data provided by the Ventura County Assessor.

   The result of this step will be the preparation of a geographic information system (GIS) dataset of vacant land. Map(s) of vacant land will be prepared.

2. **Underutilized Land Analysis.** This will consist of identifying land that is currently “underutilized.” The determination of underutilized lands will be assessed based on an initial evaluation of improvement-to-land (I/L) value, with I/L values being equalized for each Existing Community and Area Plan. For each area, a look at improvement values in general will also be conducted, with land with low improvement values also identified. These valuation assessments will only identify potential sites for further investigation, as judging underutilization from simple value assessments is difficult in a diverse, county setting. Sites that are identified will be reviewed using virtual (via aerial photography) ground-truthing. Sites to be included will be those that demonstrate underutilization, such as locations where only a portion of the parcel is developed.
This analysis will also include an evaluation of the potential residential capacity allowed by the County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance (NCZO) for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), residential, and farmworker dwelling units on parcels with a General Plan land use designation of Rural, Agricultural, or Open Space.

The result of this step will be the preparation of three GIS datasets. The first will be the identification of underutilized parcels. The second will be to identify locations with potential for ADUs, and the third will be to identify potential residential and farmworker dwelling units on parcels with a land use designation of Rural, Agricultural, or Open Space. Maps of results will be prepared.

3. Unincorporated Area, Available Land. Based on the analyses described above in Steps 1 and 2, the remaining residential and non-residential areas with development potential (unconstrained) in the unincorporated area will be identified.

The result of this step will be the preparation of a GIS dataset of lands to be included in the development potential analysis.

4. Development Constraints Analysis. The Housing Element and the Background Report both included some assessment of constraints on the “developability” of land. This included physical constraints (e.g., floodplains, slope), infrastructure constraints (e.g., water availability, wastewater treatment capacity), and regulatory and policy constraints (e.g., SOAR, and Guidelines for Orderly Development). Under this task, the Consultant and County staff will assess constraints to determine land available for development. The updated analysis will also consider “remainder” potential. This is where only a portion of a parcel is constrained and the assessment will include calculations of the development potential on viable, unconstrained remainder lands.

The results from this step will fall into three primary categories of deliverables:

a) The preparation of GIS datasets and maps for each of the physical, infrastructure, and regulatory and policy constraints found to constrain land development potential;

b) Combining the constraints information into a single GIS dataset and map(s) to reflect areas with constraints and areas with development potential; and

c) Applying average area densities (residential development) and intensities (non-residential development) to land identified with development potential to determine total development potential. This will yield potential for housing units and resulting population (residential development) and potential square footage for non-residential development.

If parcels/contiguous areas are identified that are large enough to support subdivision development, the area available will be adjusted from gross acreage to net acreage to account for rights-of-way and other common improvements using a standard factor.
5. **City Remaining Development Potential.** The Draft Background Report includes a general description of the remaining development potential in the ten cities in the county based on each city’s adopted general plan. Under this task, the Consultants and County staff will refine this analysis by conferring with representatives of the cities to validate or update the assumptions and update the remaining development potential estimates. In combination with the results of Step 4, this will provide a snapshot of the total development capacity in the county, including both unincorporated and incorporated areas.

6. **Comparison of Development Potential with Forecasts/Projections.** To provide a frame of reference, the Draft Background Report includes a comparison of remaining development potential with projected growth to understand (at a general level) how well the land (identified in Step 4) in the unincorporated area might accommodate projected growth in the unincorporated area. Under this task, the Background Report comparison analysis would be updated. This analysis will provide the basis for developing the land use alternatives, if any, as described in Section 4, including how they would affect the supply-demand relationship, both within the unincorporated area and countywide.

As discussed in Chapter 2 of the Draft Background Report, projected growth in the unincorporated area includes an estimated population increase of 11,600 individuals, 3,000 jobs/employees, and the need for a potential 5,670-residential dwelling unit between 2020 to 2040. Table 1 presents the historic unincorporated population growth between 1988 (the date of adoption of the current General Plan) to 1998 and historic growth between 1998 (the year in which the SOAR Ordinance was adopted) to 2016. This information is presented with projected population growth estimated to occur between 2020 to 2040.

**Table 1. Population – Unincorporated Ventura County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/Period</th>
<th>Population Growth</th>
<th>Average Change in Population/Year</th>
<th>Change in Annual Growth Rate</th>
<th>Source Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988(^1) - 1998 (10 years)</td>
<td>8,292</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>0.97%</td>
<td>Historic Growth (Pre-SOAR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999(^2) - 2016 (17 years)</td>
<td>8,228</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>Historic Growth (Post SOAR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 - 2040 (20 years)</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
<td>Growth Projection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. 1988, General Plan adopted;
2. Includes the unincorporated community of Montalvo which was annexed to the City of Ventura in 2012 (499 dwelling units and approximately 1,352 people were removed from the unincorporated population).

4. **Land Use Alternatives**

The Section 3 analysis will result in findings concerning the relationship between the remaining development potential in the county, based on the existing General Plan and Area Plans, in comparison
with current population and employment forecasts. Section 3 will distinguish the countywide potential (including cities) from the unincorporated area potential to provide the backdrop for consideration of land use changes in the unincorporated area.

4.1. Potential Alternatives

For land use alternatives, the range and scope of the alternatives to be assessed in the Alternatives Report will be driven by the results reported in Section 3. While it is possible that these alternatives can be broad, thematic alternatives that would influence the entire county (e.g., focus growth within Existing Communities or Area Plans), it is also likely that the alternatives proposed will be a collection of small area revisions. These could include changes in Area Plan land use designations to address local needs or more global adjustments that may come from changes in the land use designations used in the county.

Two alternatives that are likely for inclusion are described below. Additional alternatives will be derived from the results of the development capacity steps described in Section 3.

The GPU Work Program includes amending Area Plans, where necessary, to comply with new State laws, eliminate redundancy, and ensure consistency with the updated General Plan. The Alternatives Concepts Report proposes to include focused analysis of select Area Plans (e.g., those that have vacant or underutilized parcels) to identify potential land available for the 2021-2029 Housing Element update as well as to accommodate potential projected growth through 2040. In addition, focused analysis of policy themes which may serve to achieve the Vision and Guiding Principles (discussed above) of the General Plan will also be considered for select Area Plans.

1. **Existing Land Use Framework (Baseline):** This alternative would reflect the composite of existing land use policies from the County’s existing General Plan (2005), including the Guidelines for Orderly Development, which encourage urban development within incorporated cities, and SOAR.

2. **Existing Community and Area Plan Land Use Alternative:** This alternative would include analysis of parcels within some or all of the 22 designated existing communities (located outside of Area Plans) and which have been developed with urban building intensities and urban land uses (see Appendix A – Existing Community and Area Plan Maps). Additionally, focused analysis of parcels within the eight Area Plans to identify available land and policy themes which may serve to achieve the Vision, Guiding Principles, and projected growth of the GPU will also be completed.

While the GPU Work Program is limited to amending Area Plans to comply with State law, eliminate redundancy, and ensure consistency; this alternative includes Area Plans which allow for greater consideration of land use and policy options. The analysis may identify recommended strategic adjustments in land use designations within the above areas, which are currently planned for development, to result in greater capacity. Strategies to achieve this greater capacity may include an increase in planned density or intensity, as well as proposed changes in planned uses (e.g., residential to commercial or vice versa). For instance, there are low-density residential areas within El Rio that could transition to more intensive residential uses. This alternative would describe how this transition might occur, including what would be necessary to enable the increased development (e.g., infrastructure enhancements).
This analysis would also include consideration of areas where potential expansion into Rural, Agricultural, or Open Space areas may be needed to support future residential, commercial, or industrial uses. For example, there are some parcels within the North Ventura Area Plan and along North Ventura Avenue that are designated for agricultural uses that could be suitable for development with commercial or residential uses. This alternative would describe the potential for the new uses and the policy changes necessary (e.g., SOAR, LOS policy). It would also estimate the associated change in development potential. This information would be mapped to highlight areas of potential change.

4.2. Alternatives Evaluation Criteria and Comparison

The Alternatives Report will rely upon a set of criteria to evaluate and compare land use alternatives. Figure 1. Preliminary Alternatives Evaluation Criteria (below) presents a list of 26 proposed evaluation criteria that may be considered for the alternatives analysis. Based on public input, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors direction, this list will be further refined to identify up to 16 evaluation criteria for use in the Alternatives Report.

**Figure 1. Preliminary Alternatives Evaluation Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote land use efficiency</td>
<td>Develop Additional Sources of Water</td>
<td>Reduce traffic congestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimize agricultural land conversion</td>
<td>Plan for Existing and Future Water Demand</td>
<td>Promote transit service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase range of housing types</td>
<td>Protect water quality</td>
<td>Promote bicycle/pedestrian facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote environmental justice</td>
<td>Plan for climate change and resilience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain community identity</td>
<td>Protect biological resources (wetlands, endangered species, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote affordable and workforce housing</td>
<td>Protect scenic resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote healthy communities</td>
<td>Protect air quality</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Reduce traffic hazards (e.g., aircraft, rail, trucking)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic &amp; Fiscal Health</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage economic and job growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve data and communication infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote tourism and hospitality</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce flood risks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce wildland fire risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote airport safety and military compatibility</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Facilities &amp; Services</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan for adequate capacity/demand/maintenance for infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan for adequate police and fire services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan for adequate parks/recreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Consideration of Area Plan Updates

On September 22, 2015, the Board of Supervisors approved the General Plan Update Work Program/Scope of Work (SOW), which presented limited Area Plan amendments (discussed above). The Board letter indicated that if the GPU process found that additional land may be needed to be rezoned (to accomplish the goals and policies of the General Plan), such a focused land use alternative would likely require an update to an Area Plan. Depending upon the Preferred Alternative selected for the General Plan Update (following review of the full Alternatives Report, Summer 2018), some changes to existing Area Plans may be warranted. If the County were to choose to defer Area Plan amendments, the General Plan Update process could identify where changes in Area Plans would be required but would explicitly defer to later, more focused Area Plan updates to effectuate these changes. In doing so, the County might establish as future priorities Area Plan updates within the General Plan Update Implementation Program.

5. Policy Topics

As described in the General Plan Update Scope of Work, the Alternatives Report will identify policy options to address key programmatic issues and opportunities. A series of policy questions addressing key policy topics have been developed based on community input as documented in the Assets, Issues, and Opportunities Summary Report (March 2017), Public Opinion Survey results, input from the Planning Commission and GPU Technical Advisory Committee, direction from the Board of Supervisors, and technical input by County staff and the consulting team. Combined, these policy questions will be used in the Alternatives Report to help identify policy options that will assist the County in achieving the Vision established as part of the General Plan Update. The below policy questions will be considered in the Alternatives Report.

1. To help address the need for affordable housing, should alternative housing types be considered, and residential building heights and densities be increased?
2. What infrastructure improvements will be vital to meeting future growth, development, and public safety needs?

3. Should increases in building lot coverage standards for smaller agriculture parcels be considered as a strategy to increase the economic viability of agriculture?

4. Is there a need to clarify uses for open space lands and explore creation of open space zones for parklands and public lands?

5. Should the County plan for continued water quantity challenges by exploring the feasibility of connecting to the State Water Project? Supporting consolidation of small mutual water companies? Increasing water conservation and efficiency standards (e.g. increasing use of recycled water)?

6. Are there land use changes needed to address the increasing risks of developing within hazard-prone areas (e.g. urban/wildland interface areas)?

7. To support implementation of “Health in all Policies” what policies are needed that integrate health themes such as physical activity, healthy food access, and housing for various stages of life with planning concepts such as land use, transportation, community facilities, and parks.

8. What key policies, such as support of business incubators, upgraded internet infrastructure and high-tech and clean-energy industries, should the County focus on to help foster economic and job growth?

9. What policies are needed to support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, increased use of alternative energy, and reduction in vehicles miles traveled?

10. What policies will serve to reduce pollution exposure, including the improvement of air quality, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity within identified disadvantaged communities?