
Baseline Conditions Report



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Introduction

Purpose of this Report

This Report is intended to define the existing conditions of the city in terms of land use, community character, economic development, mobility, circulation, natural and cultural resources, safety, hazards, and noise while also providing technical background information for public review as part of the overall planning process for the General Plan Update. The Report builds upon the City’s preliminary work for a focused technical update of the General Plan’s Land Use and Circulation Elements (LUCE) which started in 2021, and those efforts are continued through the General Plan Update process. The LUCE update process produced a draft 2021 Baseline Conditions Report, focused exclusively on Land Use and Circulation, which this report incorporates and expands upon.

What is the General Plan?

The General Plan is Buellton’s blueprint for future development. The General Plan documents the City’s long-range vision and establishes clear goals, objectives, and actions to guide the community through the next 10 to 20 years of change. A general plan is required for all cities in California by State law.

The General Plan must address the following elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety. Cities and counties that have disadvantaged communities must also address environmental justice in their general plans, including air quality. Many communities also choose to add additional elements or themes such as health and sustainability. General Plans typically include goals, policies, and implementation strategies.

The City must update its General Plan periodically to keep up with changing needs and conditions. The Housing Element portion of the General Plan is required to be updated every eight years per State law. The City’s Housing Element was updated and certified in 2023 and is not part of the General Plan update. The General Plan also should be updated to reflect new local, state and national laws. While General Plans are required to be updated “periodically”, there is no specific timetable.

Regional and Local Context

Population

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that as of 2020, Buellton had a population of 5,161 persons. The city has grown approximately 7% since the 2010 Census when there was a population of 4,828. According to the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) Regional Growth Forecast 2010-2040, the City's projected population will be approximately 7,400 people in the year 2040.

Major Roadways

Buellton is transitioning from a crossroads commercial center for automobile travelers to a unique community offering full services to its residents and visitors. Located within community distance to more populous coastal areas, Buellton is home to many commuters. The most important interregional roadways within the City of Buellton are US 101 and SR 246. US 101 is a north-south freeway and truck route that serves as the principal coastal route between northern and southern California. There are three freeway interchanges serving Buellton at: Santa Rosa Road, SR 246 and Rufus T. Buell Drive (formerly Damassa Road). There is also a southbound off-ramp that exits directly onto Avenue of Flags (at its northern end). State Route (SR) 246 is a major two- and four-lane east-west arterial highway that bisects the city and connects Buellton with the City of Lompoc and Vandenberg Space Force Base to the west, and the City of Solvang and upper Santa Ynez Valley to the east. SR 246 connects with Avenue of Flags at a 4-way signalized intersection.

Land Use Profile

When preparing a General Plan update, it is important to understand the current distribution of land uses throughout the city in order to plan for the future. Since 2008, the city's development has been led by the City of Buellton's General Plan 2025. After approximately 17 years of development, a new inventory must be taken and incorporated into the updated General Plan.

Regulatory Context

State law requires the General Plan to include a Land Use Element that designates the proposed general distribution, location, and extent of land uses for housing, business, industry, public facilities, open space, recreation, agriculture, and natural resources. The Land Use Element is then utilized to formulate local regulations within the City's Zoning Code which governs how land is used throughout the city.

Community Design Guidelines

In 2002, later updated in 2022, the City adopted Community Design Guidelines which describe desirable elements encouraged to be incorporated into new developments and redevelopment. The Guidelines focus on single-family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, mixed-use, and industrial land uses. The Guidelines are intended to aid property owners, designers, and decision-makers by providing a clear statement of the City's expectations for new development. Development should incorporate elements from Agrarian, Mission Revival, Ranch, Contemporary Ranch architectural styles, or Art Deco (if in the Avenue of Flags Specific Plan area). The elements include building form, roof forms and materials, building and accent materials, and windows and doors. All development applications are reviewed for consistency with the adopted Design Guidelines.

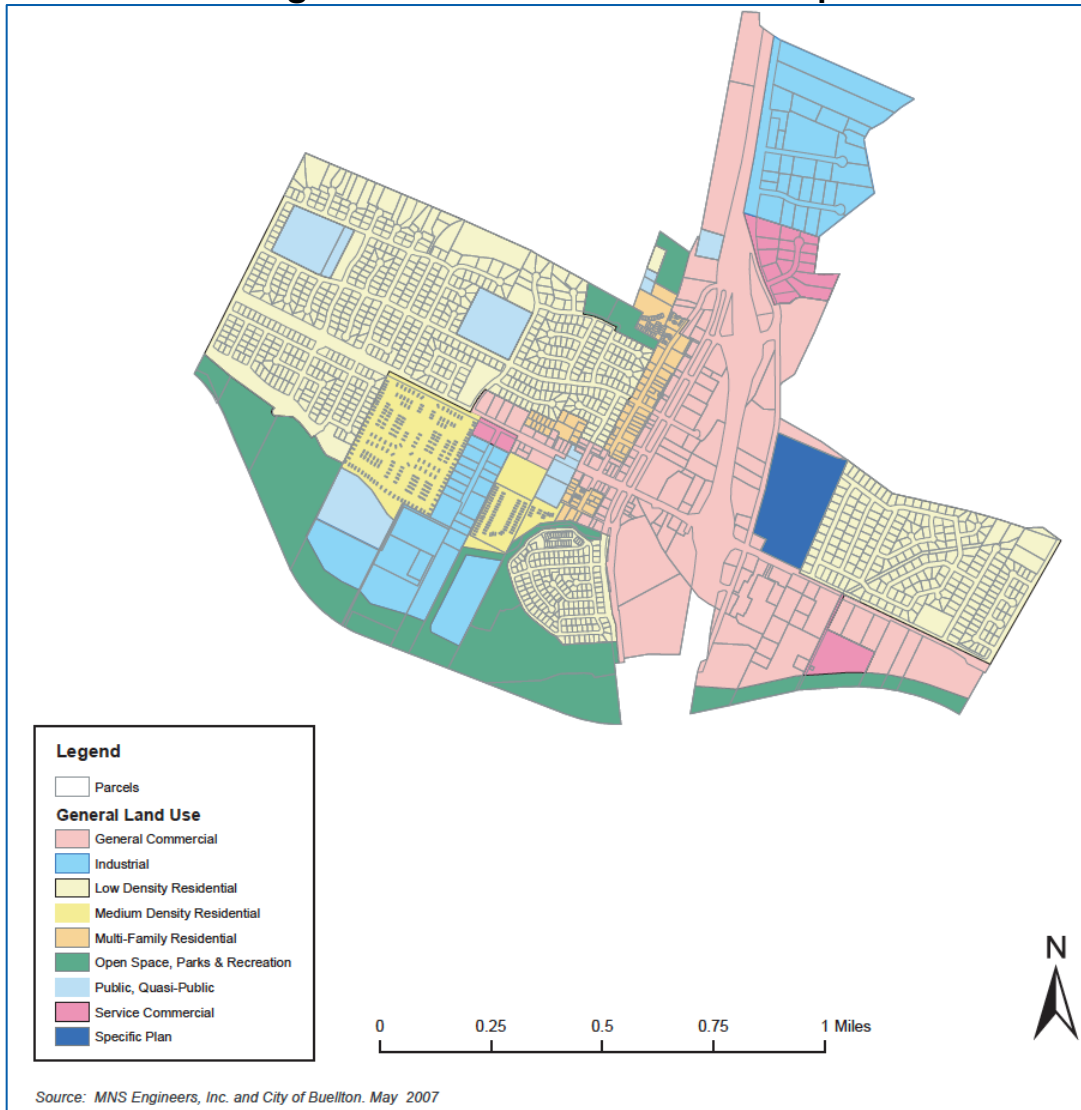
Existing Land Use Distribution

The city consists of approximately 1,025 acres with the following land use distribution listed below:

- Residential: 40%
 - Low Density: 33%
 - Medium Density: 5%
 - High Density: 2%
- Commercial: 30%
- Industrial: 12%
- Open Space/Parks and Recreation: 13%
- Public/Institutional: 4%

Figure 1 below displays the current General Plan Land Use Map, from the City's current General Plan (General Plan 2025).

Figure 1: General Plan Land Use Map



Existing Zoning Districts

As required by State law, the General Plan Land Use Map and the Zoning Map must be consistent with one another. The General Plan's Land Use Designations must be implemented with Zoning Districts reflected on the Zoning Map. The City's current Zoning Districts and their associated descriptions are stated below:

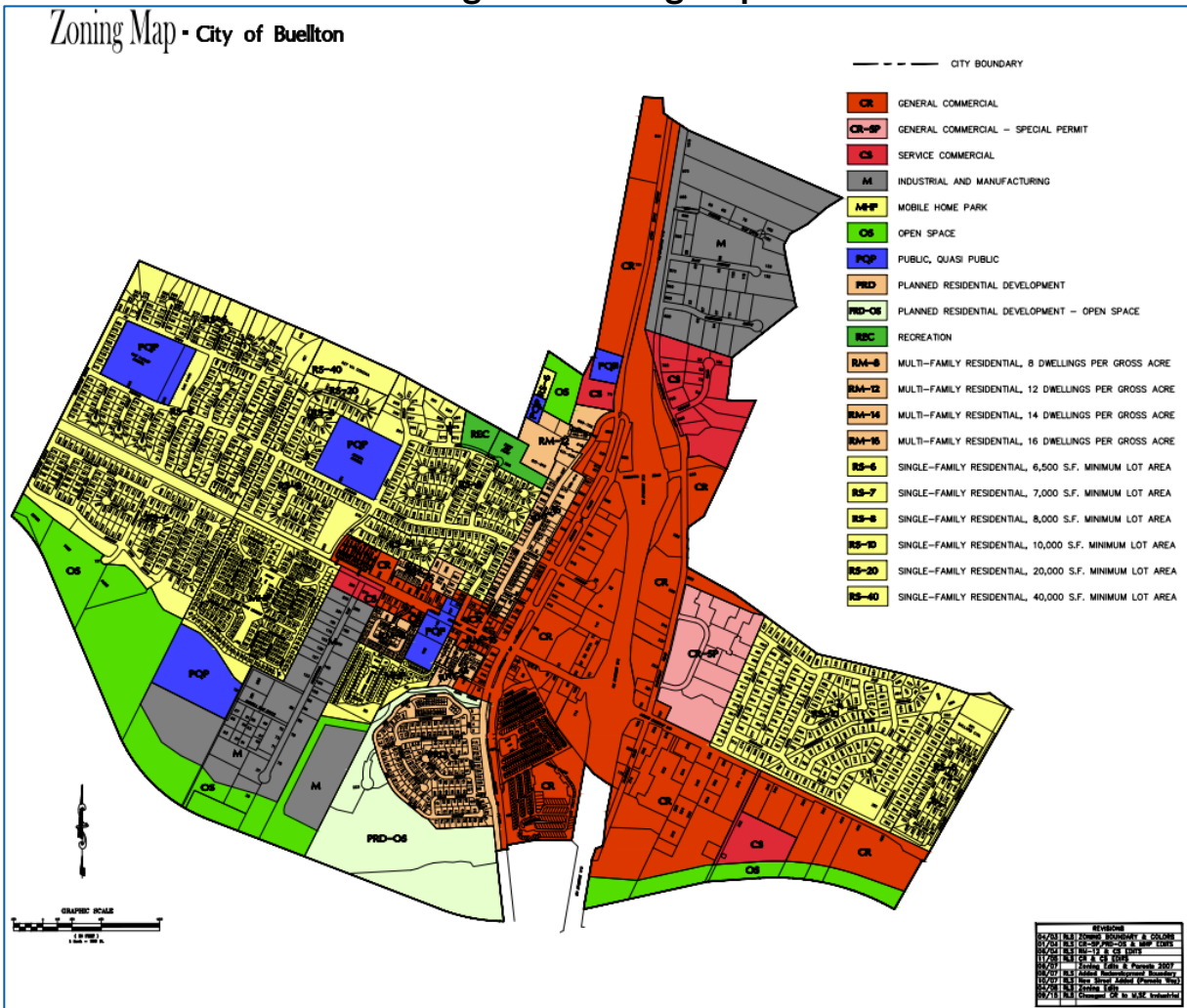
- **RS - Single-family Residential.** The RS zoning district is intended to reserve appropriately located areas for family living in detached dwelling units at a reasonable range of population densities, consistent with sound standards of public health, safety, and welfare. The RS zoning district is consistent with the low-density residential designation of the General Plan.
- **RM - Multifamily Residential.** The RM zoning district provides areas for duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, apartments, condominiums, other multiple-family dwellings, and detached single-family dwellings at higher densities than allowed in the RS zone and is intended to allow flexibility and encourage innovation and diversity in the design of residential developments. A wide range of densities and housing types are allowed, while requiring developments to incorporate substantial amounts of open space. The RM zoning district is consistent with the medium density residential and multifamily residential designations of the General Plan. Mixed-use projects with a commercial component are permitted subject to the regulations contained in Chapter 19.18 the City's Municipal Code.
- **PRD - Planned Residential Development.** The PRD zoning district is applied to areas designated by the general plan for residential use that have sensitive environmental, visual, or other characteristics which can be benefited by flexible and innovative design, so that a development can provide for desirable aesthetic and efficient use of space, and preserve significant natural, scenic, and cultural site resources. This district is also intended to encourage clustering of structures to preserve a maximum amount of open space; allow for a diversity of housing types; and provide recreational opportunities for both site residents and the public. The PRD zoning district is consistent with the low density residential, medium density residential, and multifamily residential designations of the General Plan.
- **MHP - Mobilehome Park.** The MHP district provides areas for mobilehomes on nonpermanent foundations in planned developments such as mobilehome rental parks and mobilehome condominiums. The intent is to provide affordable housing opportunities, and to ensure a safe and attractive residential environment by promoting high standards of site planning, architecture, and landscaping design. The MHP zoning district is consistent with the medium density residential designation of the General Plan.
- **CN - Neighborhood Commercial.** The CN zoning district provides areas for retail sales and personal services for the convenience of surrounding residential areas, and only secondarily to provide shopping opportunities for the city as a whole. This district is intended to accommodate the development of retail centers that are compatible with, and do not detract from, the character of surrounding residential neighborhoods. Typical land uses may include a small grocery or convenience store, drug store, laundromat, barber, or video rental store provided

that the maximum floor area of individual tenant spaces in a development does not exceed five thousand (5,000) square feet, as required by the general plan. The CN zoning district is consistent with the neighborhood commercial designation of the general plan. Mixed use projects with a residential and/or industrial component are permitted subject to the regulations contained in Chapter 19.18 of the City's Municipal Code.

- **CR - General Commercial.** The CR zoning district provides areas to serve community retail business and commercial needs including stores, shops, and offices on individual lots and in shopping centers, supplying commodities or performing services for the residents of the entire community. The CR zoning district is consistent with the general commercial designation of the General Plan. Mixed use projects with a residential and/or industrial component are permitted subject to the regulations contained in Chapter 19.18 of the City's Municipal Code.
- **CS - Service Commercial.** The CS zoning district provides areas for commercial establishments that involve extensive outdoor activities or the sale of large products. Such uses can include lumber yards and appliance sales, in addition to wholesale service and business facilities with ancillary offices and inside storage areas. The intent is to provide for more intensive commercial uses; while ensuring compatibility with and the protection of neighboring land uses from undesirable noise, odor, lighting, traffic, or visual impacts. The CS zoning district is consistent with the service commercial designation of the general plan. Mixed use projects with a residential and/or industrial component are permitted subject to the regulations contained in Chapter 19.18 of the City's Municipal Code.
- **M - Industrial/Manufacturing.** The M zoning district provides areas exclusively for light industrial and manufacturing uses. The intent is to encourage sound industrial development in appropriate areas and provide development standards to protect nearby residential, commercial, and industrial uses from hazards, noise, and other disturbances. The M zoning district is consistent with the industrial designation of the general plan. Mixed use projects with a residential and/or commercial component are permitted subject to the regulations contained in Chapter 19.18 of the City's Municipal Code.
- **REC - Recreation.** This district provides for publicly or privately-owned open space for various forms of outdoor recreation. The intent is to encourage outdoor recreational uses that will protect and enhance areas with both active and passive recreation potential because of their beauty and natural features. Development should offer recreational uses that complement and are appropriate to the area because of these features. The REC zoning district is consistent with the Open Space/Parks and Recreation designation of the General Plan, which sets a goal of providing a ratio of five acres of parkland per one thousand (1,000) population in Buellton.

- **OS - Open Space.** The purpose of this district is to ensure protection of lands that are unsuited for intensive development and have slopes in excess of forty (40) percent, and/or areas with outstanding resource values, such as environmentally sensitive habitat areas, creeks, and hillsides. The OS zoning district is consistent with the Open Space/Parks and Recreation designation of the General Plan.
- **PQP - Public/Quasi-Public.** This district is intended to accommodate public service facilities operated by government agencies, or quasi-public entities such as school districts and churches. This zoning district can accommodate a wide range of educational, office, storage, maintenance, and infrastructure operating facilities. The PQP zoning district is consistent with the public/quasi-public designation of the General Plan.
- **Mixed Use Ordinance.** In 2008, a Mixed Use Ordinance was approved which greatly added to the flexibility of uses for developments based on market conditions. This also translates to a greater potential for housing, as multi-family units and live-work units can be added to second stories while commercial and industrial typically are developed as 1 story. The Ordinance allows mixed-use development with a combination of multi-family residential, live-work units, commercial, and industrial, depending on the zone. The primary use (occupying at least half of the total floor space) must be the same as the underlying zoning designation. For example, a commercial and multi-family mixed use project could be developed in the General Commercial zone with at least half of the floor space being dedicated to commercial uses. Amendments to the Mixed Use Ordinance were made in 2011, adding an incentive program for potential fee reductions for mixed-use developments. The permitted residential density is 8 units per acre in the Neighborhood Commercial, Service Commercial, and Industrial zones (live-work only in Service Commercial and Industrial) and up to 10 or 12 in the General Commercial zone, outside of Specific Plan areas.

Figure 2: Zoning Map



Source: City of Buellton

Specific Plans and Overlays

Village Specific Plan

The Oak Springs Village Specific Plan was originally adopted in 2003. After several revisions, it was renamed the Village Specific Plan in 2007. The most recent revision was finalized in March 2013. This document is a tool to implement the General Plan, and applies a more detailed, site-specific level of planning to the property. The site is 23.86 acres, located at the northeast quadrant of the McMurray Road and SR 246 intersection, and was undeveloped at the time of specific plan preparation. The plan objectives include enhancing and supporting the City's long-range transportation goals, providing a mixture of housing types that support the need for more affordable housing options for Buellton's diversifying population,

establishing well-connected, pedestrian-oriented development and creating a unique, inviting, commercial village to draw local and regional visitors.

The Village Specific Plan subdivides the property into 5 acres of commercial (retail and office), 4.2 acres for hotel, 11.3 acres for residential (single family, multi-family, and assisted living), and 1.8 acres for parks and open space. These land uses were selected to promote interaction and cohesion among the uses on-site and with the surrounding community, with further consideration given to vehicular and pedestrian safety and access. The majority of projects identified in the Village Specific Plan, including the Vineyard Village Townhomes, Village Park, and Crossroads Shopping Center, are completed as of August 2020. The Village Senior Apartments have received entitlements for 50 multi-family units and are currently under construction with an anticipated completion date of October 2025. A development plan to construct two hotels was approved in 2018; however, a timeline for construction of the project is yet to be determined.

Avenue of Flags Specific Plan

The Avenue of Flags Specific Plan was adopted in 2017 to guide the transformation of Avenue of Flags into a vibrant downtown core. The Specific Plan identified that a critical shift was required to transition the automobile-oriented thoroughfare to a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly destination for residents and visitors. Goals and policies encourage this development by activating the medians, calming traffic, enhancing safety for pedestrian via crosswalks and pathways, strategic building massing, providing park-like improvements, and creating destination places on the medians and along the adjacent roadway frontages. The Avenue of Flags Specific Plan designates the intersection of Avenue of Flags and 2nd Street as the main town plaza area.

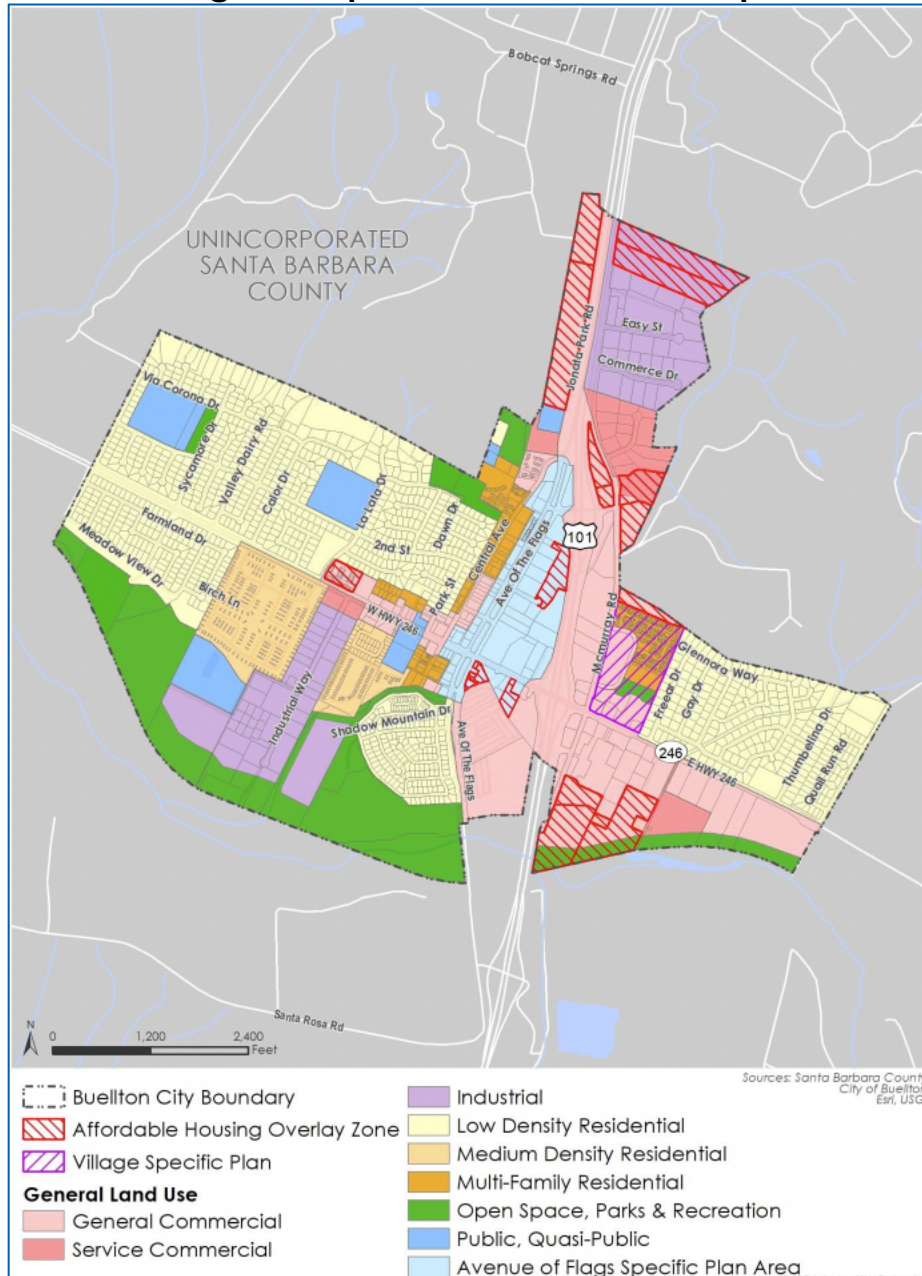
The Specific Plan draws its authority from the General Plan and is intended to build upon Land Use, Circulation, Economic Development, Housing, and Parks and Recreation Elements of the General Plan. Goals, policies, and programs included in the Avenue of Flags Specific Plan are consistent with the General Plan. The Avenue of Flags Specific Plan implements a form-based code that replaces the standards of the City's Zoning Ordinance in the Buellton Municipal Code, and the standards of the Specific Plan take precedence in case of potential conflict with the existing Municipal Code.

Affordable Housing Overlay Zone

The Affordable Housing Overlay Zone (AHOZ) consists of nine Key Development sites in Buellton that are zoned for commercial or industrial development. The AHOZ allows these sites to be developed for exclusive residential use, instead of what the underlying zone district permits. Although, all AHOZ sites can also be developed per the underlying zoning district as well. If these sites are developed for exclusive residential use, 20% of the units must be affordable units. Affordable units are available for people with very low, low, and

moderate incomes. The incomes are based on the Area Median Income of Santa Barbara County.

Figure 3: Specific Plans + AHOZ Map



Public Parks

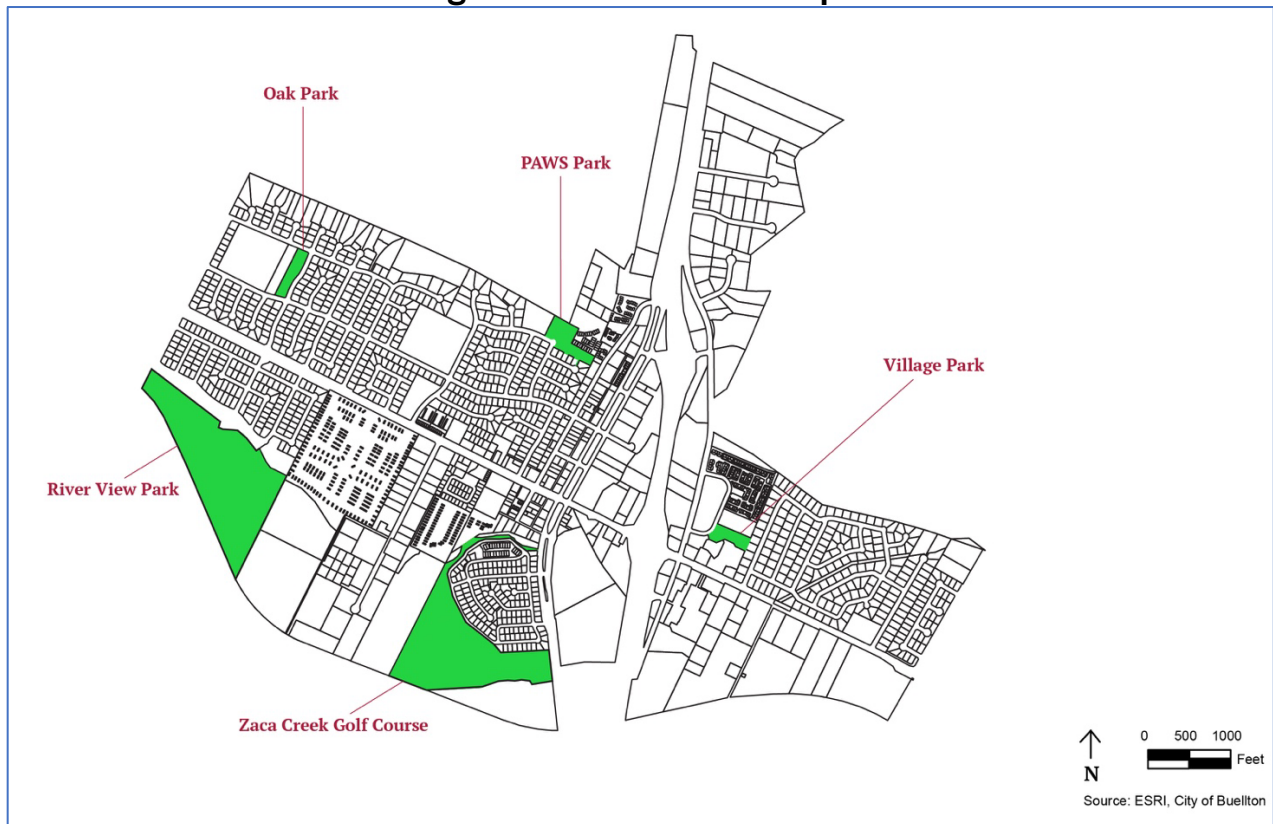
Buellton currently designates 127.9 acres (approximately 13% of the City's land) for open space, parks, and recreation. The City's current standard for park provision is five acres of park

area per 1,000 residents (General Plan Parks & Recreation Element, 2007). Not including the Zaca Creek Golf Course, existing conditions provide 17.85 acres of useable park land, which falls short of the minimum park standard. The City of Buellton has identified the following locations of parks facilities in the city:

- **Oak Park** – Oak Park is located at the northwest corner of Sycamore Drive and Second Street, adjacent to the Oak Valley Elementary playing field. Oak Park consists of 1.75 acres of gently sloping lawn with several picnic tables, individual barbecue grills, play structure and tot lot, restroom, trees, and light landscaping. The current Land Use Designation of the park is Low Density Residential, as it was constructed as part of the Sycamore Ranch subdivision and zoned as Single-Family Residential.
- **PAWS Park** – PAWS Park is located at the corner of Dawn Drive and La Pita Place. PAWS Park consists of 3.35 acres of open space for an off-leash dog park. The Park contains 1.03 acres for medium/large breed dogs and 0.25 acres for small breeds along with fencing, natural paths, water fountains, benches, trash cans, and accessible improvements. The current Land Use Designation of the park is Open Space, Parks, and Recreation and zoned as Recreation.
- **River View Park** – Dedicated in 2005, River View Park located at 151 Sycamore Drive consists of approximately 11 usable acres with extensive landscaping. Amenities include a ceremonial pavilion, walking pathways, individual and group picnic areas, barbecue grills, a large play structure, a smaller tot lot, two basketball courts, bike skills course/pump track, horseshoe pits, two restrooms, and a large grassy playing field. At the western edge of the park, an approximately 2-acre area has been developed into the Santa Ynez Botanic Garden in conjunction with a local non-profit foundation. The park and botanic garden are currently designated as Open Space, Parks and Recreation in the Land Use Map and zoned as Open Space on the Zoning Map.
- **Zaca Creek Golf Course** - The Zaca Creek Golf Course is part of the Rancho de Maria residential development. The course is City-owned and open to the public for commercial recreation. The Rancho de Maria subdivision homeowners' association also owns and maintains an approximately 6.35-acre park on Shadow Mountain Drive adjacent to the Zaca Creek Golf Course. The park amenities include play equipment and picnic areas; however, Rancho de Maria Park is a privately owned park administered by the homeowner's association and intended for the use of its residents. It is currently designated as Open Space, Parks and Recreation and zoned as Planned Residential Development-Open Space (PRD_OS).
- **Village Park** – Dedicated in 2019, Village Park is the only park on the east side of Buellton. It is 1.8 acres and includes a gazebo, play structure, picnic table, benches, restrooms, and a looped walking path surrounding a grassy area with trees and

landscaping along the outside edges. It is currently designated as General Commercial with a Specific Plan overlay and zoned as General Commercial.

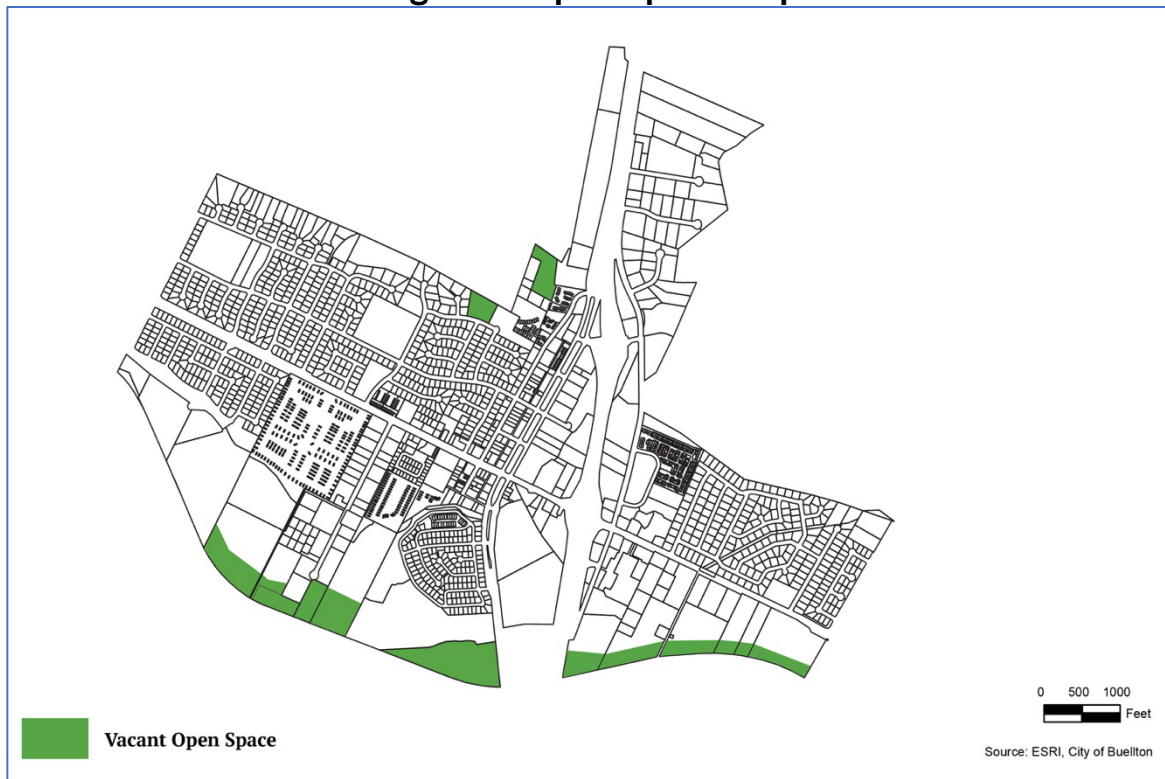
Figure 4: Public Parks Map



Open Space

The majority of the remaining vacant open space within the City limits is located along the edge of Santa Ynez River. An approximately two-mile section of the Santa Ynez River is located along the southern boundary of the city. All of the open space areas along the Santa Ynez River are located within the regulatory floodway according to June 2024 FEMA flood maps. None of the open space is improved with official trails or facilities. Figure 5 below displays the remaining designated open space areas in the city.

Figure 5: Open Space Map



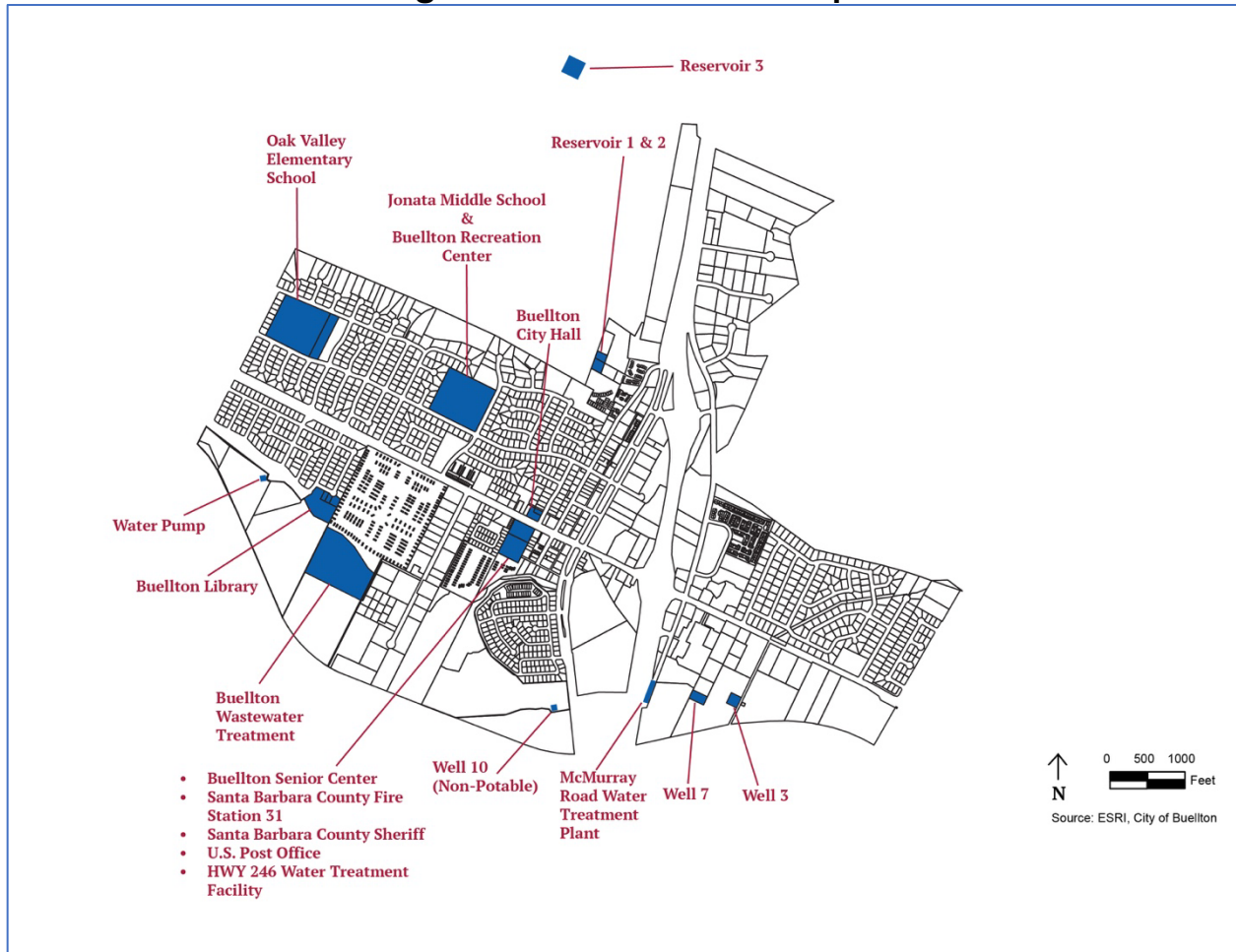
Public Facilities

Buellton contains a range of public facilities, managed by various jurisdictions including the City, County, and Federal governments as well as the Buellton Union School District. The amount and type of public facilities within the City limits has remained unchanged for approximately two decades.

- Buellton Senior Center
- Buellton City Hall
- Buellton Library
- Buellton Wastewater Treatment
- Santa Barbara County Fire Station 31
- Santa Barbara County Sheriff
- U.S. Post Office
- Oak Valley Elementary School
- Buellton Recreation Center
- Jonata Middle School

Figure 6 below displays the public facilities and their locations within Buellton.

Figure 6: Public Facilities Map

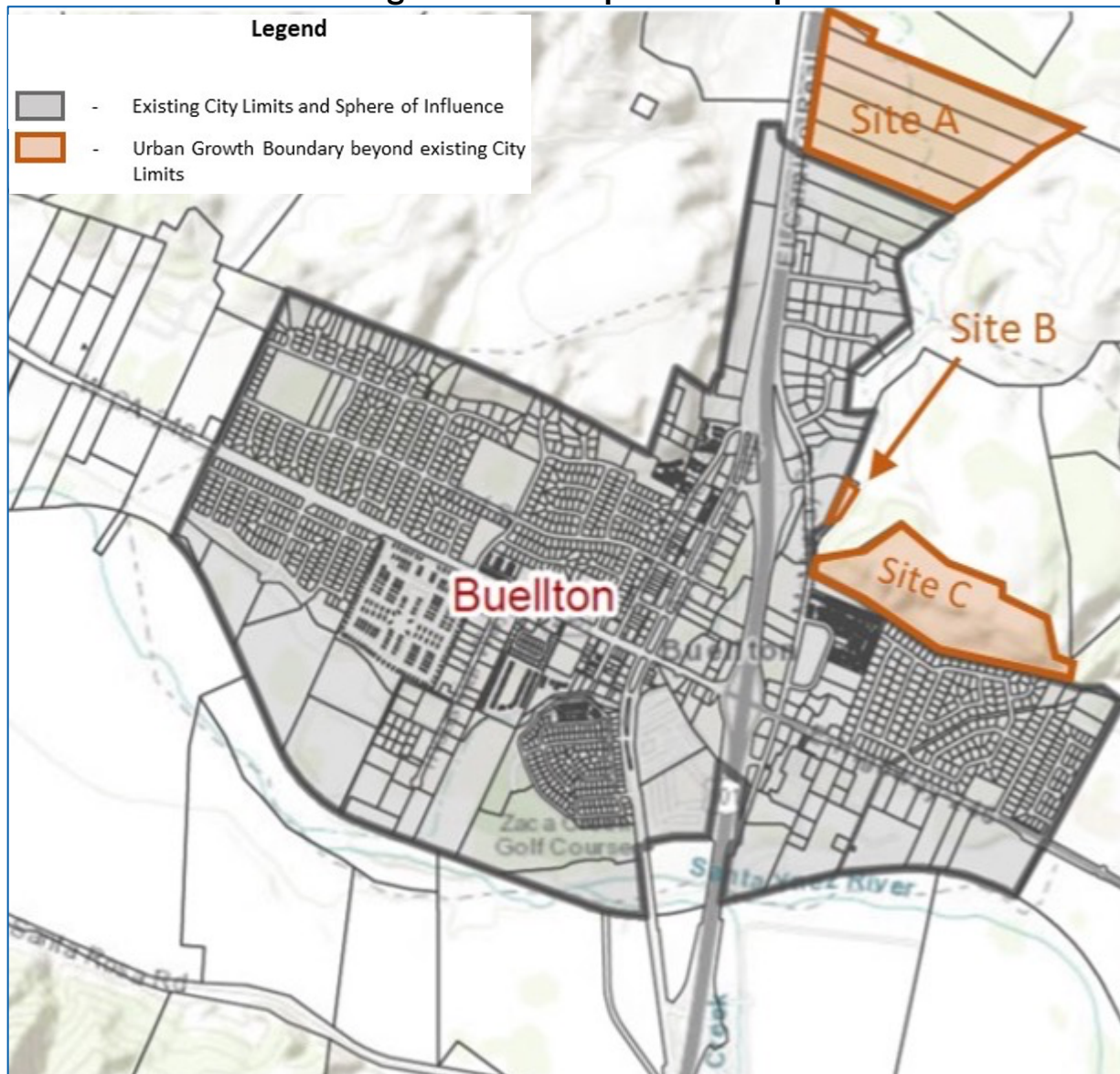


Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Expansion

In 2008, the voters of Buellton adopted an urban growth boundary (UGB) that amended the City’s General Plan to prohibit the provision of municipal services (water and sewer) outside of the UGB. The UGB was set coterminous with the city’s jurisdictional boundary or city limits. As a result of no services being able to be provided outside the city limits, all growth since 2008 has occurred within the city limits. The UGB was set to expire in 2025.

In late 2024, a voter-approved ballot measure (Measure C) increased the size of the UGB. Measure C added 123 acres for potential development in three areas near the northeastern section of the city and creates the opportunity for services to be provided in those areas as well as annexation. Provisions of services, development, and annexation of all or a portion of any of the three areas would be subject to the City’s normal planning processes, including public hearings before the City Council. Unless further extended, the UGB as amended by Measure C would expire in 2036. Figure 7 below displays the existing city limits and the new sites representing the 123-acre UGB increase.

Figure 7: UGB Expansion Map



Source: City of Buellton

Findings and Next Steps

Since the City's General Plan Land Use Element was last comprehensively updated in 2005 with revisions in 2008, and the associated 2021 LUCE update began laying the foundation for Land Use Element updates, there are a range of Land Use Element updates to consider as part of the comprehensive General Plan Update including the following:

- Incorporate the two adopted Specific Plans: The Village Specific Plan (2007 and amended in 2013) and The Avenue of Flags Specific Plan (2017) into the Land Use Element and their existing/anticipated development.

- Analyze the potential zoning and development implications of the Urban Growth Boundary expansion areas.
- Analyze updated FEMA flood maps in relation to development areas.
- Align new development with Circulation Element updates (ex. Transit Oriented Development).
- Ensure all policies and programs for new development creates a safe, walkable city with a vibrant downtown and a strong sense of place.

Mobility and Circulation

The purpose of this section is to review the current transportation landscape within Buellton and the associated policies, regulations, and agencies that support the mobility of residents, employees, and visitors. This includes reviewing the current regulatory environment, travel characteristics, the roadway network, public transit services, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, safety concerns, and emerging trends. Through this process, the community can identify key issues and opportunities for potential policy response as part of the General Plan Update process.

Regulatory and Policy Context

The State, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), and the City of Buellton have enacted the following policies that pertain to aspects of transportation, circulation and mobility that will be addressed in the Circulation Element update.

California Transportation Plan

The California State Transportation Agency prepares the California Transportation Plan every five years to provide a long-range policy framework to meet the State's future mobility needs and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to goals set by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill [AB] 32) and implementing legislation Senate Bill (SB) 375 (discussed below). The most recent California Transportation Plan was adopted in 2016. The California Transportation Plan defines goals, performance-based policies, and strategies to achieve the State's collective vision for California's future statewide, integrated, multimodal transportation system by envisioning a sustainable system that improves mobility and enhances quality of life. The Plan is developed in collaboration with transportation stakeholders such as the SBCAG Transportation Planning Agency.

Complete Streets Act (Assembly Bill (AB) 1358)

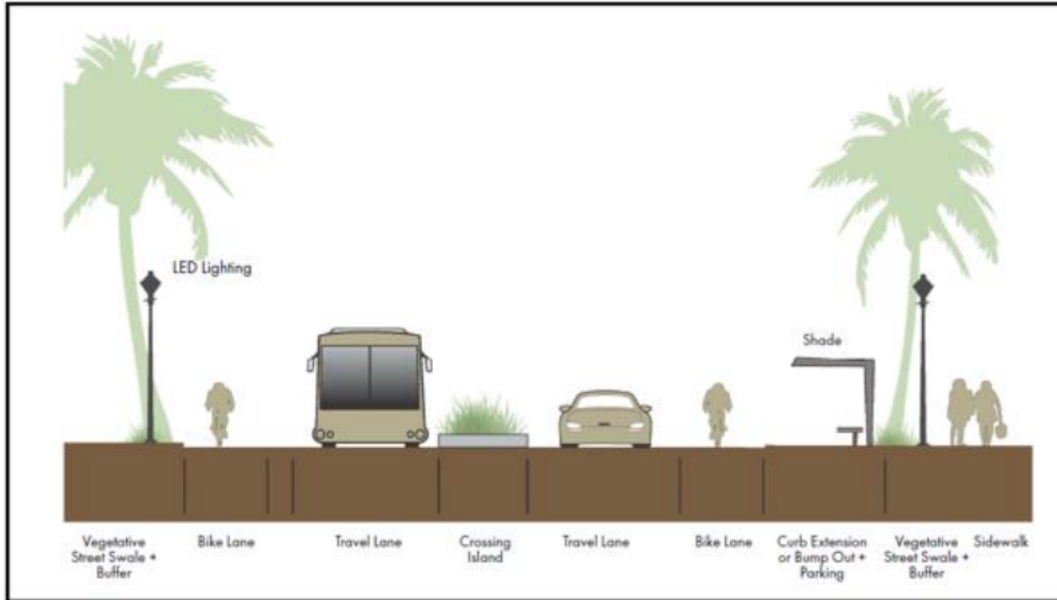
The California Complete Streets Act (AB 1358) was signed into law in 2008. AB 1358 requires any substantive revision of the circulation element of a City or County's general plan to identify how the jurisdiction will safely accommodate the circulation of all users of the roadway including pedestrians, bicyclists, children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and transit riders, as well as motorists. The law applies to all local streets and roads, with the goal of ultimately developing a "balanced, multimodal transportation network" that meets the needs of the local context.

As defined by Caltrans, a complete street is a transportation facility that is planned, designed, operated, and maintained to provide safe mobility for all users. Complete streets can take many different forms and are uniquely developed to fit in the context of an individual community. The overarching goal of a complete street is to provide a seamless, interconnected transportation system that considers all users.

The benefits of complete streets include the following:

- Support increased physical activity and improve public health and safety;
- Provide mobility options and access for non-drivers;
- Decrease vehicle trips and associated air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Improve livability, revitalize communities, and decrease transportation costs.

Figure 8: Example Complete Street



Source: City of Buellton

Assembly Bill 747

This legislation requires that the Safety Element be reviewed and updated to identify evacuation routes and their capacity, safety, and viability under a range of emergency scenarios. Additionally, the law encourages cities to develop a local hazard mitigation plan which details safety procedures in the event of various emergency scenarios and acts as a supplement to the Safety Element.

Assembly Bill 1409

Complementing AB 747, Assembly Bill 1409 requires the Safety Element to be reviewed and updated to identify evacuation locations. Furthermore, these routes must be evaluated by their capacity, safety, and viability, ensuring there are high-quality evacuation routes available for small- and large-scale evacuations.

Senate Bill (SB) 375

SB 375 was signed in 2008 and directs the state Air Resources Board to set regional targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions. The law requires jurisdictions to consider regional transportation planning to achieve the reductions and to coordinate housing needs and land use planning with transportation planning. SB 375 also requires metropolitan planning organizations to include a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) component that demonstrates how transportation development will stay within the emissions targets, and how transportation funding allocation will be consistent with the SCS. The state's goal for Sustainable Communities implementation is to encourage development that promotes walking, biking, and clean transit options rather than personal vehicles.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Analysis (SB 743)

Signed into law in 2013, SB 743 is intended to ensure that traffic-related environmental impacts such as noise, air pollution, and safety continue to be properly addressed and mitigated through CEQA, while balancing the needs of congestion management with statewide goals to promote infill development and active transportation, and the reduction of GHG emissions (California Department of Transportation 2020). SB 743 eliminates level of service (LOS)/delay measurements from CEQA transportation analyses and establishes vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the new metric for measuring transportation impacts. Revisions to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines were published in December 2018, along with a Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA intended to assist planners and officials in implementing the changes. Full compliance went into effect on January 1, 2020, when the CEQA Guidelines became applicable statewide. VMT analyses are required during preparation of CEQA documents as of July 1, 2020 (Office of Planning and Research 2018). The incorporation of VMT analysis into the environmental review process is intended to demonstrate the holistic impact of a project on factors associated with vehicle miles, such as emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gasses. Assessing a project's impact on VMT would also indicate the need for potential mitigation to reduce the amount of vehicle miles it generates.

Senate Bill (SB) 932

SB 932 was signed in 2022 and establishes required components of a General Plan Circulation Element in California for any updates after January 1, 2025. The bill requires Circulation Elements to consider aspects of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Safe System Approach. This includes identifying a set of safety corridors in the jurisdiction that generate high concentrations of bicyclists or pedestrians and identifying evidence-based safety measures intended to eliminate traffic fatalities.

The Safe System Approach is based on principles that:

- Traffic fatalities and serious injuries are unacceptable.

- Humans inevitably make mistakes.
- Humans have physical vulnerabilities to traffic collisions.
- Responsibility is shared, including government at all levels, industry, and the public.
- Safety measures should be proactive.
- Redundancy is critical.

The FHWA defines five objectives of a Safe System Approach: Safer People, Safer Roads, Safer Vehicles, Safer Speeds, and Post-Crash Care.

SB 932 also requires tangible goal-setting, which includes initiation of these measures by a date no later than 2 years from the date of the General Plan adoption, and completion of the measures by a date no later than 25 years from the General Plan adoption.

Senate Bill 99

This regulation relates to the Safety Element of the General Plan, requiring the review and identification of residential developments in hazard areas that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes.

Senate Bill 1216

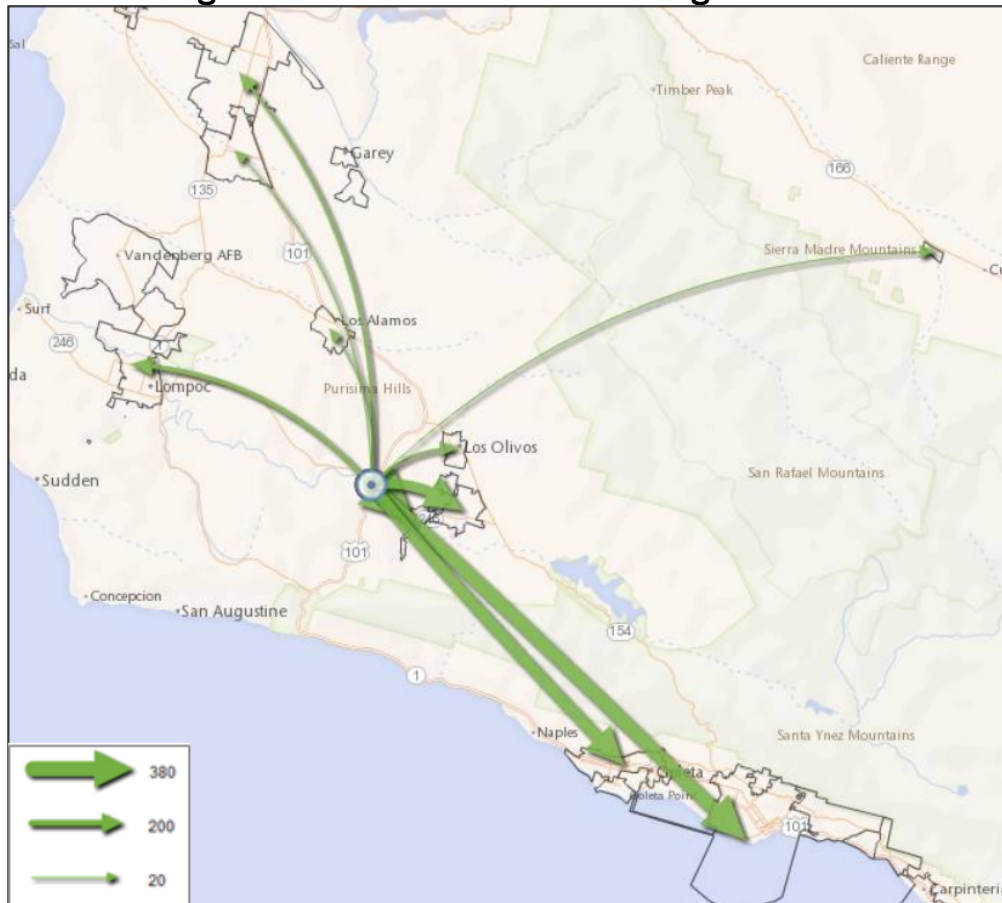
This bill prohibits an agency, on or after January 1, 2025, from installing a Class III Bikeway or Sharrow on a highway that has a posted speed limit greater than 30 mph and would prohibit funds appropriated for the Active Transportation program from being allocated to a project that creates a Class III Bikeway on a highway with a design speed greater than 25 mph.

North County Transit Plan

The North County Transit Plan for Santa Barbara County, prepared in 2016, makes recommendations for improvements to transit services, agency coordination, and organizational structures in the northern region of Santa Barbara County. Among the various transit agencies involved in the effort is Santa Ynez Valley Transit, which serves Buellton, as well as other services that include Breeze and Clean Air Express.

The Plan notes that Santa Ynez Valley has a particularly low transit mode share of 0.6%, and in the City of Buellton, 1.5% of households report having no vehicles, compared to the total North County in which 6.1% of households report having no vehicles.

Figure 9: Commute Flows Leaving Buellton



Source: SBCAG North County Transit Plan

Figure 9 shows commute flows leaving Buellton from the North County Transit Plan. It identifies a strong regional pattern towards Santa Barbara and Goleta.

The Plan recommends that Santa Ynez Valley Transit consider a merger with City of Lompoc Transit (COLT). It also makes broad recommendations for the region such as Transportation Network Company partnerships (i.e. Uber, Lyft), Smart Fare Media (electronic/digital means of paying for public transportation fees), Bike Share Systems, and Real-Time Next Bus Displays.

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-SCS)

The 2040 RTP-SCS was adopted in August 2013 and updated in 2017, as a holistic long-range transportation plan that included the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) component required by SB 375. Santa Barbara County must show no increase in greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles and light trucks in both 2020 and 2035, compared with 2005 emissions. To achieve these goals, transportation, housing and land use planning

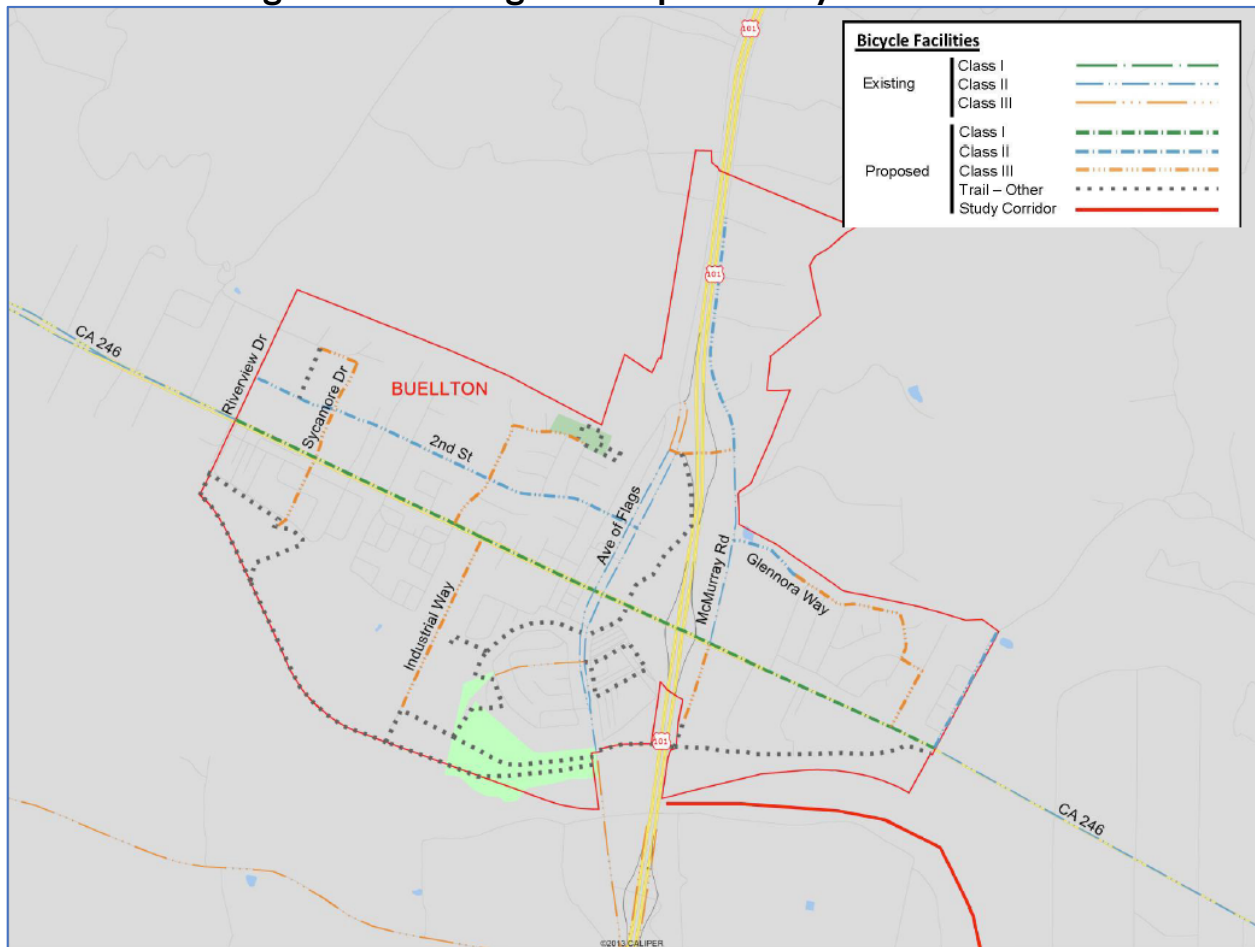
must be integrated in the SCS development forecast. The RTP-SCS states, “The region’s preferred scenario is the Transit Oriented Development (TOD)/Infill with Enhanced Transit Strategy. It has three core land use approaches for reducing emissions: (1) to identify infill areas near transit to intensify growth, (2) to better balance jobs with housing by planning for job growth in the county’s northern subregional area and compact housing in the jobs-rich southern subregional area, (3) to protect the natural and agricultural resource lands identified in their regional greenprint.”

The projects prioritized for the Buellton area included SR 246 passing lanes, circulation improvements, alternative transportation enhancements, and regional transit support. Programmed projects in collaboration with Caltrans include bike/pedestrian safety enhancements at the intersection of SR 246 and Sycamore Drive (completed 2020) as well as Avenue of Flags improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians. Planned projects for the future include the Santa Ynez River Trail and other bicycle and pedestrian projects identified in the Regional Active Transportation Plan.

SBCAG Regional Active Transportation Plan

The SBCAG Regional Active Transportation Plan, adopted in 2015, creates a regional vision for improving the bicycle and pedestrian network by integrating the bicycle and pedestrian planning of the region’s nine member governments. It is guided by four goals: enhance mobility, increase connectivity, promote equity for all users in all communities, and improve safety and public health. Figure 7 below shows the existing and proposed bicycle network for Buellton as shown in the Plan.

Figure 10: Existing and Proposed Bicycle Network



Source: SBCAG Regional Active Transportation Plan

Major projects named in the Plan to take place in Buellton include a Class I and II bike lane on CA-246 for the length of the segment within City limits (a total of 1.9 miles), Class II and III bicycle facilities along 2nd Street between Riverview Drive and Avenue of Flags, and sidewalk improvements on the south side of CA-246 east of Thumbelina Creek. These three projects are the three highest-cost projects named in the Plan.

Santa Ynez Bicycle Master Plan

In 2019, the City of Buellton collaborated with the City of Solvang, the County of Santa Barbara, and SBCAG to develop the Santa Ynez Valley Bicycle Master Plan (SYVBMP) to address bicycle connectivity within the Valley. The Plan was intended to improve the subregional bicycle network for both transportation and recreational purposes. Overall goals of the Plan included improved safety, expanded infrastructure, greater connectivity, increased equity, and economic development.

The City of Buellton has multiple types of bicycle infrastructure. Avenue of Flags has a Class II bike lane which utilizes green pavement treatment and sharrows for additional safety. Class II Bikeways also exist along SR 246 within City limits and along McMurray Road. Class III bike routes utilizing sharrows exist on Second Street and Shadow Mountain Drive. This connects Avenue of Flags to residential neighborhoods. No bicycle infrastructure exists to connect Buellton with Solvang. The SYVBMP addresses bicycle connectivity within the Valley and removal of barriers to cycling for riders of all ages and abilities. Major multijurisdictional projects prioritized for completion before the next Plan update in 2029 included a river trail connecting Buellton with Santa Ynez and the Jonata Park Road Path. Other City projects include local highway crossings and school routes (eastbound bike lane along the east side of SR 246). Lastly, the pump track at River View Park was proposed as a safer space for children to ride bikes and was widely supported by families living in the community. Installation of the pump track was completed in 2020.

Under Measure A, a transportation sales tax measure approved by SB County voters in 2008, a portion of the funding is allocated toward Local Street and Transportation Improvement (LSTI) projects each year. Buellton must spend 5% of its annual allocation on alternative transportation projects, which can include bicycle facilities, Safe Routes to School improvements, and transit support.

Santa Ynez River Trail Alignment Study

Building on the Santa Ynez Valley Bicycle Master Plan of 2019, a study was undertaken in 2020 by SBCAG to evaluate options for a multi-modal trail connection between the cities of Buellton and Solvang. The ideal multi-modal trail would accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians using land along the State Route 246 corridor and Santa Ynez River. Mapping of potential routes was conducted through a partnership between SBCAG, the cities of Buellton and Solvang, and the County of Santa Barbara. The suitability of various trail alignments was assessed by a technical advisory committee, and the results were presented for a public review process throughout the summer using an interactive story map website. Study findings will be used by elected officials in the future to select the final trail alignment.

Santa Ynez Valley Traffic, Safety, and Circulation Study

The results of the Santa Ynez Valley Traffic, Safety, and Circulation Study (SYVTSCS) study, undertaken by SBCAG, were published in May of 2020. The Study was requested by local jurisdictions to address traffic circulation and safety issues observed locally that have regional issues through shared transportation corridors. The study intended to identify and assess circulation and safety improvements required to meet anticipated quality of life and sustainability needs of local residents. In particular, the study took the opportunity to work with the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians and disadvantaged communities to ensure that the input and experience of these groups was incorporated into any proposed solutions. Major conclusions of the study included ideas for managing and directing vehicle traffic in

ways that improve congestion while also enhancing the accessibility and safety of downtown areas for bicyclists and pedestrians. These findings will be used to prioritize future local and regional transportation safety and improvement projects.

City of Buellton Local Roadway Safety Plan

Adopted in November 2024, the City of Buellton Local Roadway Safety Plan is a road safety planning document that provides a holistic analysis of vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle crash data, and provides a roadmap for implementation of safety improvements. The Plan was developed using the process outlined by Caltrans to provide a systematic approach to providing safety improvements and guide the City to look at ways to set goals and measures that encourage a safe, well-connected transportation network for people using all modes of transportation, and prioritizes safe travel of people over expeditious travel of motor vehicles and aims to achieve significant declines in roadway fatalities and serious injuries by the year 2050.

City of Buellton Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Adopted in 2012, the City of Buellton Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was intended to encourage biking and pedestrian activities by making them more safe, convenient, and enjoyable. Bicycle facilities in particular were highlighted as requiring further development. It was also intended to fulfill the requirements of the California Streets and Highways Code Section 891.2 and qualify the City of Buellton for California Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) grant funding. The Master Plan highlighted the need to coordinate with Caltrans due to the two state highways bisecting the city. A series of public meetings and workshops identified five key locations to prioritize for safety and accessibility improvements – SR 246, Second Street, Avenue of Flags, McMurray Road, and Sycamore Drive.

City of Buellton Safe Routes to School Plan

The City of Buellton adopted a Safe Routes to School Plan (SRTS) in 2011. The purpose of the SRTS is to increase the safety for walking and bicycling to/from school and to reduce traffic congestion around school.

School locations in Buellton that are featured in the Plan consist of Oak Valley Elementary School and Jonata Middle School, both located west of US-101 and north of SR-246, on 2nd Street. The Plan notes that SR-246 and 2nd Street are hot spots for collisions. The Plan makes the following engineering recommendations:

- Ensure all intersections have handicap access ramps.
 - Completed
- Routine/regular traffic survey to evaluate accidents/speed.
 - On-going. New traffic survey is currently under review.

- Evaluate potential/need/benefit of “School Speed Zone” on local street and Highway 246.
 - Pavement markings for “school zone” have been installed on local streets.
- Install lighted/flashing “School Crossing” Sign at Highway 246/Sycamore Drive.
 - Completed.
- Evaluate potential for designated bike routes (Class II) or sharrows.
 - Sharrows have been installed on 2nd Street.
- Install additional Bike racks/equipment for student/teacher use.
 - Completed. Bike racks installed at both the Elementary and Middle school.
- Install/retrofit uniform school signage and pavement markings on local roads.
 - Completed.
- Ensure that City ordinances emphasize pedestrian and bicycle safety.
 - On-going.

City of Buellton Community Design Guidelines

The City of Buellton Community Design Guidelines were developed in 2005 and updated in 2022 to provide a series of “desirable elements encouraged to be incorporated into new developments and redevelopment community-wide”. The following guidelines relate to circulation and access to sites:

- Residences should have side loading, detached, or rear garages or the garage should be set back from the main house.
- An opportunity to provide alley access should be explored on lots under 10,000 square feet.
- Cul-de-sacs should provide pedestrian and bicycle access to adjacent neighborhoods, open space, and land uses where connections are possible.
- Multi-family residential building entrances should be oriented towards the street, with direct access to sidewalks and transit stops.
- Multi-family residential parking should be located at the rear or sides of structures. Alleys should be used when possible.
- Commercial buildings should have the main façade of their building oriented towards the street.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, pedestrian linkages should be provided to nearby neighborhoods and activity areas.
- The on-site pedestrian circulation system should be directly connected to off-site public sidewalks and should provide direct access to building entrances, parking, and transit stops.
- Shared parking between uses is encouraged.

Existing Transportation Facilities

Regional Roadway Network

The most important interregional roadways within the City of Buellton are U.S. Highway 101 (US 101) and California State Route 246 (SR 246). U.S. Highway 101 is a north-south freeway and truck route that serves as the principal coastal route between northern and southern California. There are three freeway interchanges serving Buellton at: Santa Rosa Road, SR 246 and Rufus T. Buell Drive. There is also a southbound off-ramp that exits directly onto Avenue of Flags (at its northern end). SR 246 is a major two- and four-lane east-west arterial highway that bisects the city and connects Buellton with the city of Lompoc and Vandenberg Space Force Base to the west, and the city of Solvang and upper Santa Ynez Valley to the east. SR 246 connects with Avenue of Flags at a 4-way signalized intersection.

Buellton Roadway Network

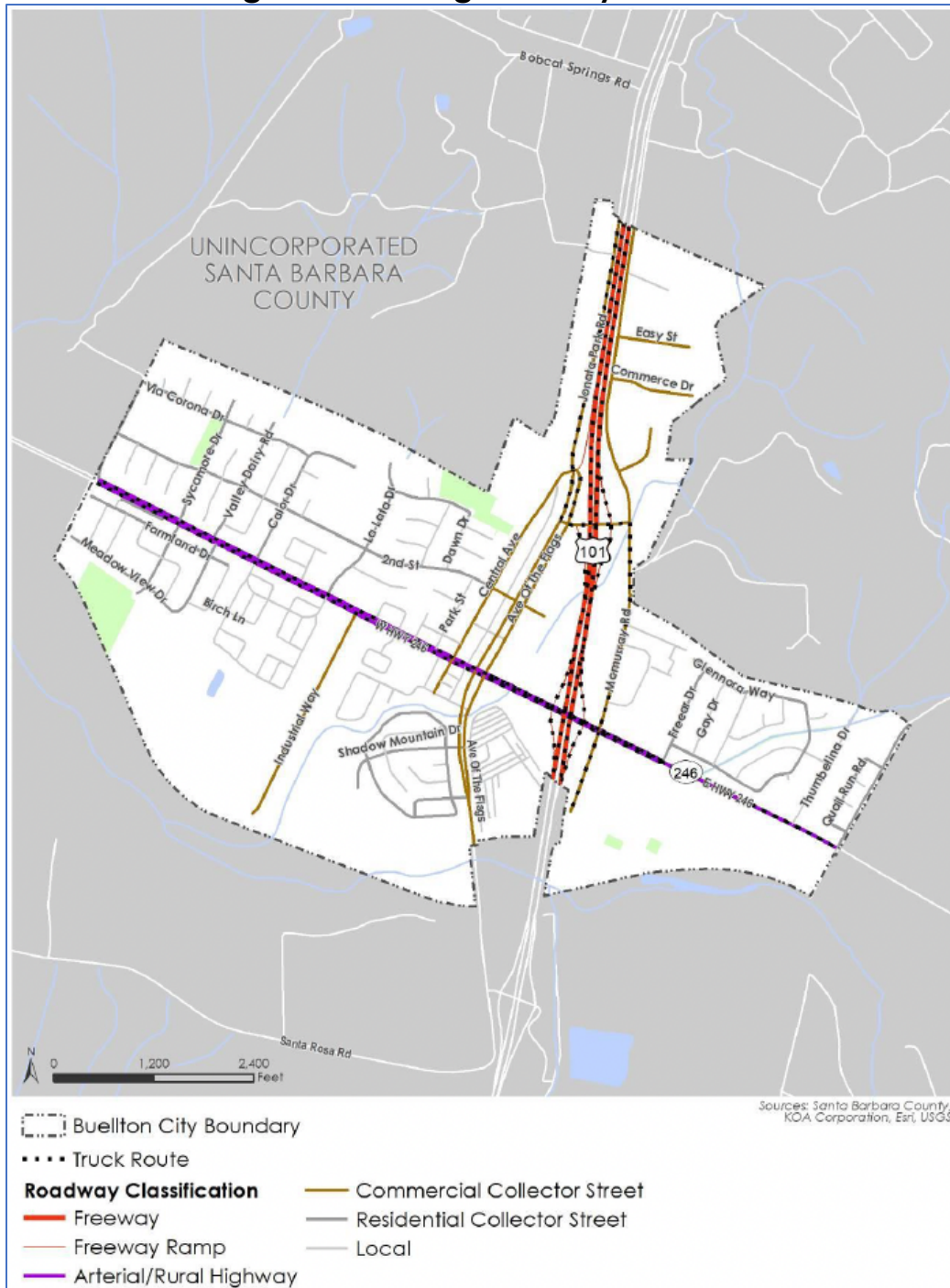
Buellton's roadway network is urban in nature and is surrounded by a mix of rural and suburban roads leading into the city. Buellton's roadway classifications are described below and shown in Figure 11.

The roadway system in Buellton is defined using a hierarchy of roadway types that differentiate the function of each roadway link. These are referred to as facility-type categories, which include three classifications ranging from major arterial with the highest capacity through local streets with the lowest capacity. Each of the classifications is described below:

- **Arterial/Rural Highway** – These are primary circulation facilities which distribute and collect freeway-bound traffic, accommodate intra-city trips, and serve other medium distance movements. By connecting major activity centers and the highest traffic volume corridors, arterials provide a network of continuous routes, facilitating both local and regional travel. SR 246 is a major arterial.
- **Collector Roadway** – The main purpose of collectors is to provide local access to the overall roadway network. Collectors channel traffic from local roadways into the arterial network. Residential collector roadways include Via Corona, Riverview Drive, Sycamore Drive, La Lata Drive, Ballard Canyon Road, and segments of 2nd Street. Commercial collector roadways include Rufus T. Buell Drive, Industrial Way, Jonata Park Road, Avenue of Flags, McMurray Road, segments of 2nd Street. Collector streets generally are ¼ mile to one mile in length and carry daily traffic volumes between 2,000 and 10,000.
- **Local Street** – These are two-lane streets that provide direct access to the adjacent land uses such as residences. Local streets are sometimes identified as

“local residential” and “local non-residential” depending upon the predominant land uses along the roadway. Traffic volumes on local streets are generally less than 5,000 vehicles per day.

Figure 11: Existing Roadway Network

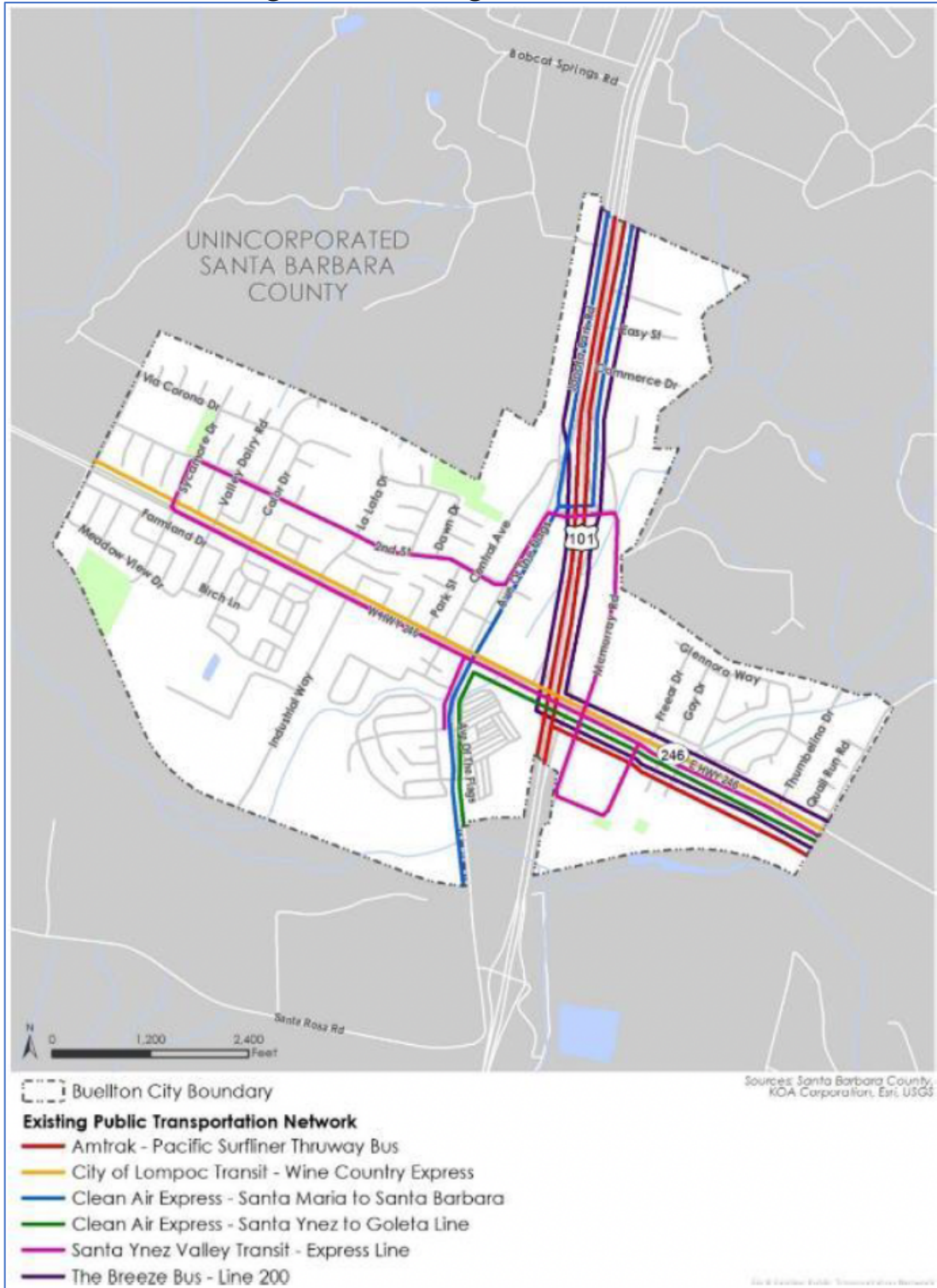


Existing Transit Service

The city is serviced by several bus lines operated by Santa Ynez Valley Transit, City of Lompoc Transit, the Breeze Bus, Amtrak, and Clean Air Express. In addition, Santa Ynez Valley Transit offers dial-a-ride service that allows senior residents and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) certified patrons to reserve curb-to-curb service for locations within a 3/4-mile radius of the fixed transit route. These transit services provide travel alternatives to private automobile. The routes and destinations for each service operator are listed below:

- **Santa Ynez Valley Transit** has fixed routes with nine stops throughout Buellton connecting to the neighboring towns of Solvang, Santa Ynez, and Los Olivos. The fixed route runs Monday through Saturday 6:30 AM to 7:00 PM with a peak period frequency of 30 minutes. Dial-a-Ride is open to the general public on Sundays from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM and 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.
- **The City of Lompoc's** connecting transit line, Wine County Express, has one stop on the east side of Buellton once in the morning (8:08 AM), midday (2:10 PM) and afternoon (5:33 PM) and connects to Lompoc.
- **Breeze Bus**, operated by the City of Santa Maria, has two stops, both on the east side of Buellton that come at a peak period frequency of 2.5 hours (Albertson's Center Stop at 6:41 AM, 9:11 AM, 11:41 AM, 2:11 PM, and 4:41 PM and Freear/SR 246 stop at 7:18 AM, 9:48 AM, 12:18 PM, 2:48 PM, and 5:18 PM) and travels to Solvang, Santa Ynez, Los Alamos, Santa Maria, and Lompoc.
- **Amtrak's** Pacific Surfliner Thurway Bus has one stop in Buellton for passengers with valid Amtrak tickets and comes once in the morning (5:15 AM), midday (11:50 AM), and afternoon (2:55 PM) for southbound, and once in the midday (12:55 PM), afternoon (2:50 PM) and late night (10:55 PM) for northbound.
- **The Clean Air Express** has two southbound routes connecting to Goleta and Santa Barbara that pick up in the morning at the Buellton Park & Ride Lot located in the southern area of the city, with a peak period frequency of 1.25 and 1 hour respectively (to Goleta - 5:30 AM and 6:45 AM, and to Santa Barbara - 5:57 AM and 6:57 AM) and northbound routes that picks up in Goleta and Santa Barbara and drop off at the Buellton Park & Ride Lot in the evening (from Goleta - 4:23 PM and 5:30 PM, and from Santa Barbara - 5:15 PM and 6:10 PM).

Figure 12: Existing Transit Network



The table below shows the routes available in Buellton and their peak period frequency. The data is from 2022, and although some bus lines have included more frequent stops since

then (namely the Breeze Bus), the table still accurately reflects all available transit in Buellton and their peak period frequencies, the greatest frequency being half an hour (30 minutes).

Figure 13: Transit Network Frequency

Agency	Line	To	From	Via	Peak Period Frequency
Santa Ynez Valley Transit	Express Route	Solvang Park	Sycamore Drive & 2nd Street	SR-246, Meadowvale Road, Sagunto Street, McMurray Road, Avenue of Flags, 2nd Street	30
Santa Ynez Valley Transit	Dail-a-Ride Service	Locations within 3/4 mile of the SYVT Express Route	Locations within 3/4 mile of the SYVT Express Route	Same route as the SYVT Express Route	30
City of Lompoc Transit	Wine Country Express	Solvang Park	Cypress Street & I Street (Lompoc)	SR-246	>60 ²
The Breeze Bus	200	Solvang Park	Santa Maria Transit Center	US-101, SR-246	>60 ²
Amtrak ¹	Pacific Surfliner Thruway Bus	Santa Barbara Amtrak Station	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	US-101, SR-246	>60 ³
Clean Air Express	Santa Ynez Valley - Goleta	Pesetas Lane (Goleta)	Solvang Park	SR-246, US-101, Hollister Avenue	>60 ⁴
Clean Air Express	Santa Maria - Santa Barbara	Gutierrez Street & Nopal Street (Santa Barbara)	Santa Maria Hagerman Softball Complex	US-101, Avenue of Flags, Calle Real, Anacapa Street, Gutierrez Street	>60 ⁴

Source: Santa Ynez Valley Transit; City of Lompoc Transit; The Breeze Bus; Amtrak; Clean Air Express.

Notes:

- ¹ Passengers are required to present a valid Amtrak ticket to board this route.
- ² This route provides one bus in each direction during the morning, midday, and afternoon periods.
- ³ This route provides one bus in the southbound direction during the morning and afternoon periods. A northbound bus is provided during the midday and late night periods.
- ⁴ This route provides one bus in the southbound direction during the morning and one bus in the northbound direction in the afternoon.

Source: City of Buellton

Existing Bikeways

The State of California Department of Transportation (“Caltrans”) has developed statewide standards and definitions for the planning, design and implementation of bicycle facilities. The following is a summation of these standards. The following descriptions were developed based on the designations outlined in the Santa Ynez Valley Bicycle Master Plan, which was developed in accordance with the State of California classification system. The class numbering standard is being phased out, to some extent, as the name of the facility type becomes more commonplace.

The City of Buellton has several bicycle facilities within the city. The location and extents of bicycle lanes are also described below:

Class I Bikeway (Bicycle Path) – A Class I bikeway is a multi-purpose facility that is physically separated from motor vehicle traffic, often by a barrier or landscaped area. A Class I bikeway providing bidirectional flow has a preferred width of 12 feet but can be reduced to eight feet in width. Bicycle paths are more often used for recreation and are generally provided along river channels and former railroad rights-of-way. These facilities are sometimes referred to as bicycle paths. The city does not currently contain any Class I Bikeways.

Class II Bikeway (Bicycle Lane) – A Class II bikeway is an on-street facility where a portion of the paved roadway area is marked as a special lane for use by bicycles only, often referred to as a bicycle lane. Bicycle lanes provide one-way flow in the same direction as adjacent vehicular travel lanes and typically feature widths of six feet. It is identified by signage along the street that denotes “Bike Lane”, pavement markings and lane line markings. Motor vehicles are prohibited from driving in bike lanes except when turning to and from driveways, intersections, or on-street parking. Green pavement markings are typically used within bicycle lanes to identify potential conflict areas with turning vehicles.

Class II Locations:

- SR-246, eastbound between the western City limits and McMurray Road, and westbound throughout the entire City.
- Avenue of Flags, northbound between the southern City limit and Rufus T. Buell Drive and southbound between Rufus T. Buell Drive and Bear Creek Drive (Rancho de Maria).
- McMurray Road, between Rufus T. Buell Drive and SR-246.

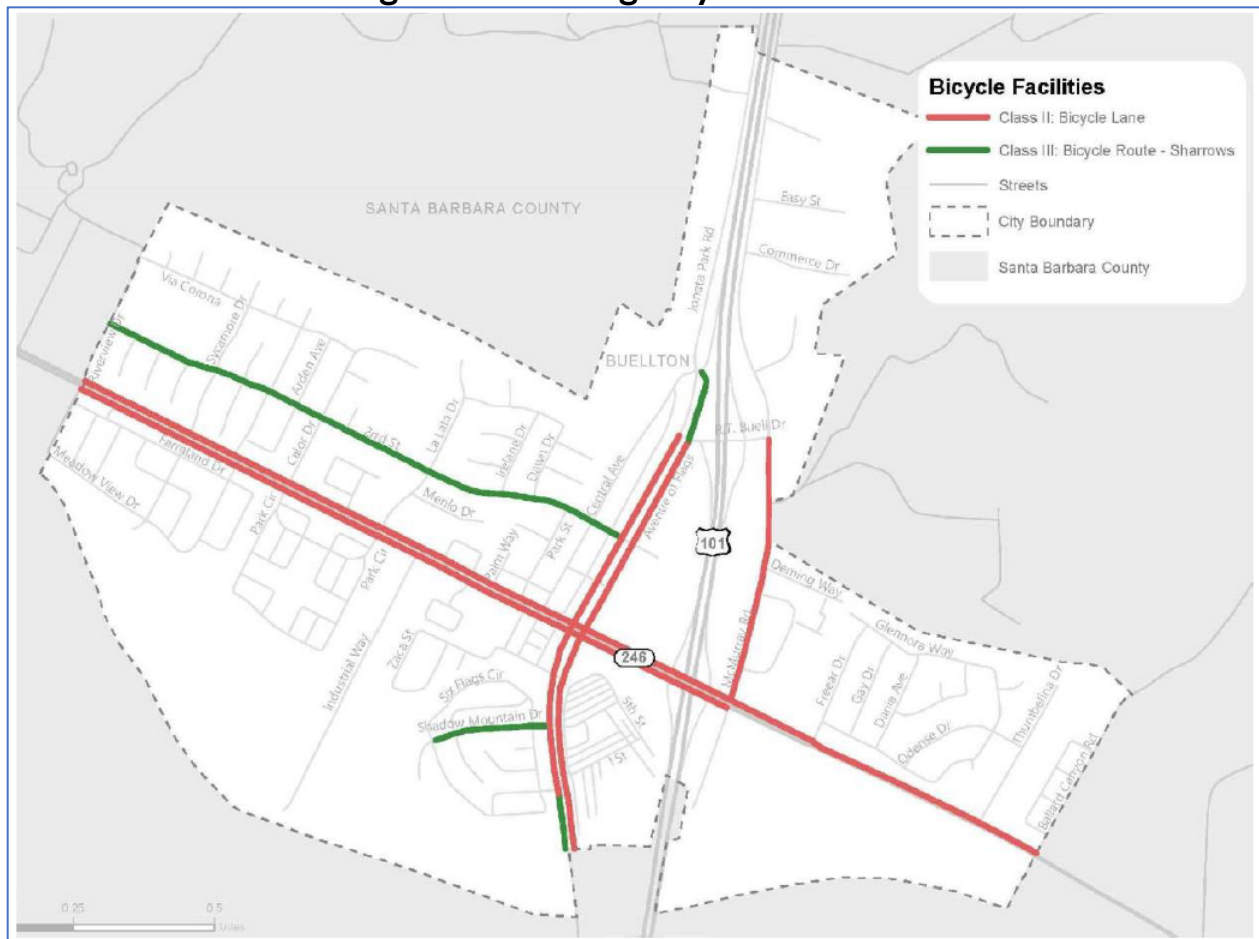
Class III Bikeway (Bicycle Route) – A Class III bikeway, or bicycle route, is defined as a bicycle way designated within a public right-of-way. The purpose of the bicycle route is to encourage a sharing of the roadway between vehicles and bicycles. They are identified by signage along the street that denotes “Bike Route” and roadway markings depicting a bicycle with chevrons/arrows (known as a “sharrow”). The provision of signage and roadway markings is to indicate to drivers that the roadway is to be shared with bicyclists.

Class III Locations:

- 2nd Street, between Riverview Drive and Avenue of Flags.
- Avenue of Flags, northbound between Central Avenue and Rufus T. Buell Drive and southbound between Bear Creek Drive and the southern City limit.
- Shadow Mountain Drive, between Six Flags Circle and Avenue of Flags.

Class IV Bikeway (Cycle Tracks) – A Class IV bikeway, often referred to as a Cycle Track, is an on-street facility that is physically separated and protected from vehicular traffic. This facility provides a bicycle lane that is located between the sidewalk and either on-street parking or a travel lane. The bicycle lane can be separated from vehicular lanes by a variety of treatments, including grade separation, barriers (such as post or bollards), or on-street parking. This type of facility offers similar benefits to a bicycle path. The city does not currently contain any Class IV Bikeways.

Figure 14: Existing Bicycle Facilities



Source: City of Buellton

Transportation Technologies

A number of recent technological innovations, such as ride and bike sharing applications and microtransit, are changing the ways in which people move from place to place and reducing the need to own a car. Microtransit is a form of transport that adaptively responds to demand. Microtransit routes are created to match demand for trips and supply of available vehicles to maximize the efficiency and accessibility of service. Furthermore, electric vehicles, both for personal use and mass transportation, and the charging infrastructure that supports them are proliferating. Electrified transportation has the potential to substantially reduce emissions of air quality pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. There are currently three locations that provide electric vehicle charging stations in Buellton: two charging stations at Sideways Inn (114 E. Hwy 246); two charging stations at City Hall (Planning Dept – 331 Park Street); and a Tesla “Supercharger Station” with eight charging stations at the Marriott Hotel (555 McMurray Road). Additionally, the City of Buellton adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, in compliance with AB 1236, in order to expedite the process for permitting charging station infrastructure in the city.

Existing Citywide Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

As discussed previously, the City of Buellton’s VMT contribution to roadways within the SBCAG region under existing conditions was calculated using data from the SBCAG Travel Demand Model for model year 2020. The uses within the city generate approximately 471,663 daily VMT. Based on a service population (residents plus employees) of approximately 10,266 people, the city generates an average of 45.94 daily VMT per person in the service population. In comparison, the uses within Santa Barbara County generate an average of 28.58 daily VMT per person in the service population. Therefore, the City of Buellton generates an average daily VMT of approximately 1.6 times that of Santa Barbara County as a whole.

Findings and Next Steps

Similar to the Land Use Element, the Circulation Element was last comprehensively updated in 2005 and the associated 2021 LUCE update began laying the foundation for Circulation and Mobility baseline analysis. There are a range of Circulation Element updates to consider as part of the comprehensive General Plan Update including the following:

- New goals and policies related to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Level of Service (LOS).
- Build upon and strengthen Complete Streets into policies and programs.
- Incorporate policies and programs resulting from Caltrans’ Highway 246 upgrades concept study.
- Analyze all feasible transportation and land use connections (ex. Transit hubs, Transit Oriented Development etc.) and incorporate into policies and programs.
- Strengthen planning programs for a future River Trail.

Resource Conservation

Introduction

Conservation of natural and cultural resources within and around Buellton contribute to the city's quality of life. Buellton is characterized by its surrounding agricultural and naturally scenic setting that provides economic and recreational opportunities. Scenic land and historic resources are prized assets to Buellton and will remain one of the principal attractions for residents and visitors of the city.

Regulatory Context

Room to Roam Act (Assembly Bill 1889)

The Room to Roam Act requires cities and counties to update their General Plans to include considerations for wildlife movement within or around a proposed project area. The new law requires the General Plan to identify and analyze connectivity, permeability, and natural landscape areas within the jurisdiction, identify and analyze wildlife passage features, consider impacts of wildlife barriers caused by development and avoid, minimize and mitigate these impacts. The analysis must consider options to remediate barriers to wildlife connectivity, restore degraded habitat, and open landscape

California Register of Historical Resources

CEQA requires a lead agency to determine whether a project would have a significant effect on one or more historical resources. A "historical resource" is defined as a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Public Resources Code [PRC] §5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.) (14 CCR 15064.5[a][1]) "a resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code" (14 CCR, Section 15064.5[a][2]); or "any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be an historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record" (14 CCR 15064.5[a][3]).

Tribal Cultural Resources

Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) amended CEQA to mandate consultation with California Native American tribes during the CEQA process to determine whether or not the proposed project

may have a significant impact on a Tribal Cultural Resource, and that this consideration be made separately from cultural and paleontological resources.

Recognizing that California tribes are experts in their tribal cultural resources and heritage, AB 52 requires that CEQA lead agencies carry out consultation with tribes at the commencement of the CEQA process to identify Tribal Cultural Resources. Furthermore, because a significant effect on a Tribal Cultural Resource is considered a significant impact on the environment under CEQA, consultation is required to develop appropriate avoidance, impact minimization, and mitigation measures. Consultation is concluded when either the lead agency and tribes agree to appropriate mitigation measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect, if a significant effect exists, or when a party, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached (21080.3.2[b]), whereby the lead agency uses its best judgement in requiring mitigation measures that avoid or minimize impact to the greatest extent feasible.

Air, Water, and Wildlife

Air Quality

The City of Buellton is located within the South Central Coast Air Basin (SCCAB), which includes all of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties and is within the jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD). Santa Barbara County is in attainment for all state and federal standards for criteria pollutants, except PM_{10} (particulate matter between 10 and 2.5 micrometers in diameter). The primary sources of air pollution in Santa Barbara County are ground-level ozone, particulate matter, and air toxins. To a lesser extent, air pollution is attributed to stationary sources and area-wide sources.

Buellton does not contain substantial air pollutants that are typically caused by stationary sources such as industrial and manufacturing uses. Wildfires are another known source of particulate matter concentrations through smoke, which are expected to pose a greater threat to the region and state as climate change increases the frequency and severity of wildfires. The major local air pollution sources in the City are on-road vehicles (from U.S. Highway 101 and State Route 246). Residents who live in house that surround these high traffic areas or near congested roadways may be exposed to greater level of local air pollutions.

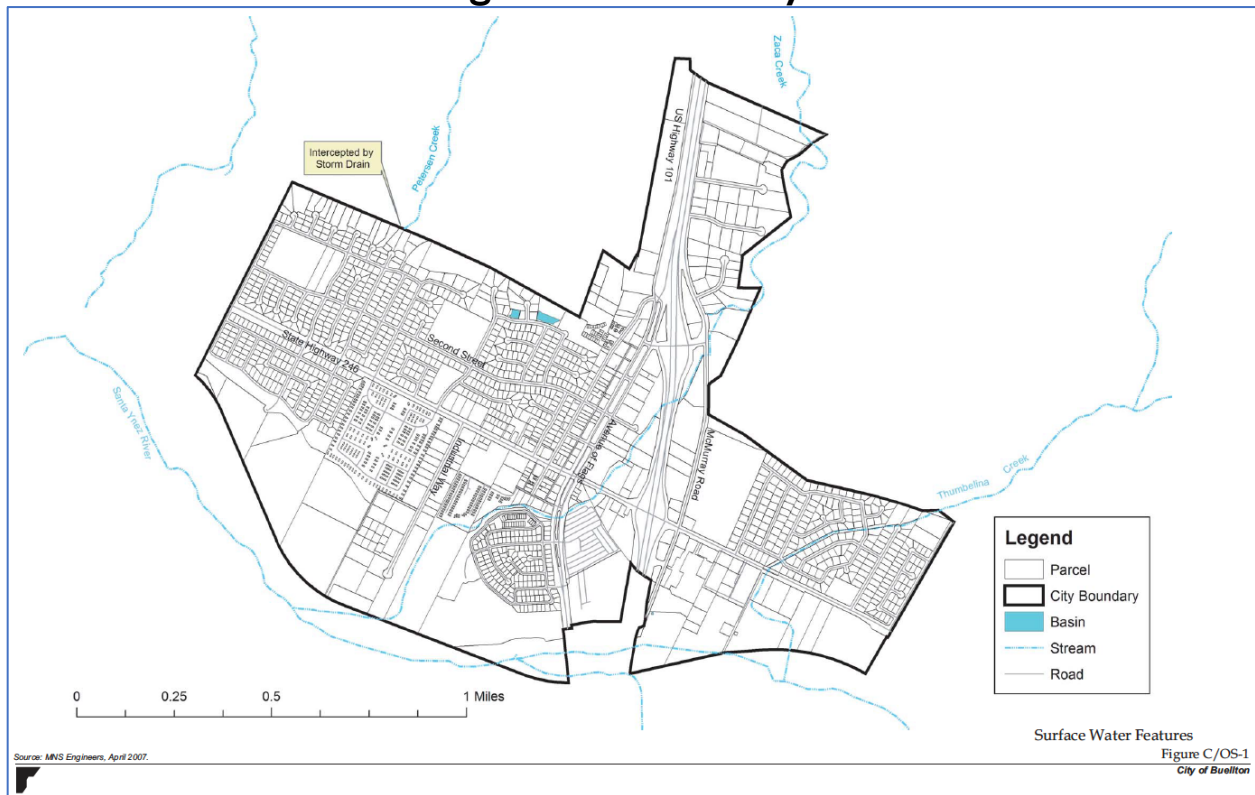
SBCAPCD conducts continuous air monitoring to assess regional air quality, updates their website with hourly measurements, and issues alerts when conditions reach a dangerous level and residents should stay indoors. In addition, SBCAPCD develops and enforces strategies to ensure that air quality standards are met. All construction activities in the City of Buellton are required to incorporate SBCAPCD requirements pertaining to minimizing construction- and demolition-related emissions. These SBCAPCD requirements include a quantitative threshold identified in the Scope and Content of Air Quality Sections in Environmental

Documents (SBCAPCD 2017), to reduce air quality impacts in the jurisdiction. In addition, standard dust control measures must be implemented for any discretionary projects that involve earth-moving activities, regardless of size or duration. In the long-term, the risks of poor air quality can be mitigated by reducing the sources of pollution as much as possible.

Water Resources and Water Quality

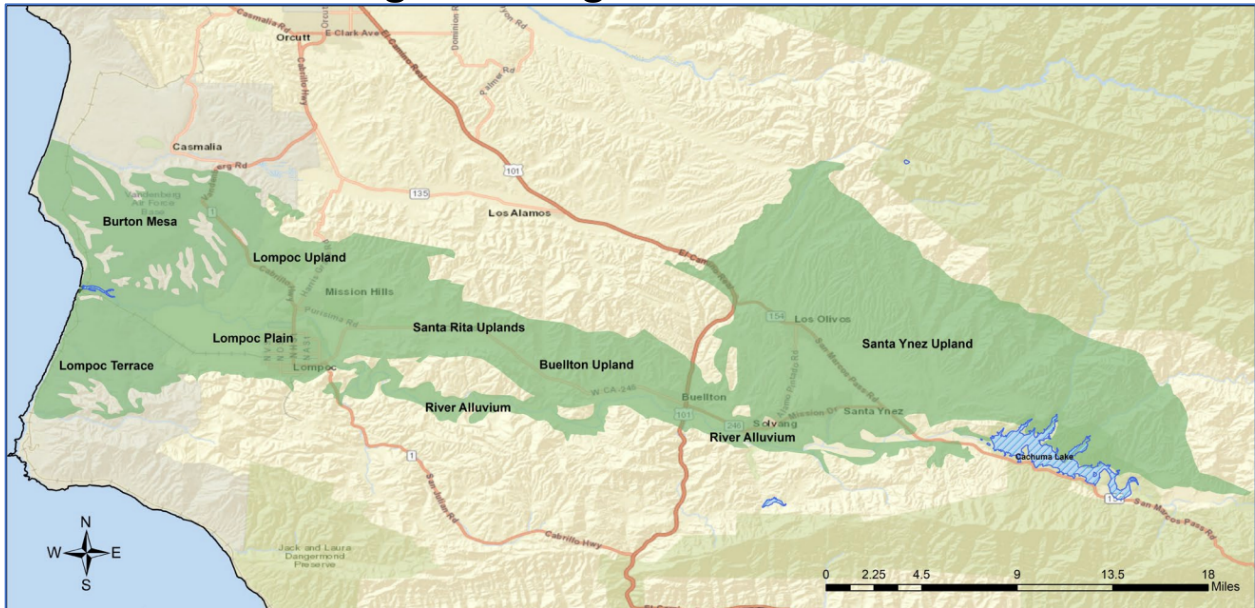
Zaca Creek, Thumbelina Creek, and Peterson Creek all flow through Buellton to the Santa Ynez River, which borders the City to the south. Nojoqui Creek flows north and joins the Santa Ynez River south of the City limits. Figure 14 below displays the locations of each waterway.

Figure 15: Waterways



The Santa Ynez River watershed, located in central Santa Barbara County, California, is about 900 square miles in area. The Santa Ynez River flows west about 90 miles from its headwaters at 4,000 feet in the San Rafael Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Bradbury Dam and Cachuma Reservoir, located 48.7 river miles from the ocean, splits the watershed nearly in half. Immediately upstream from Cachuma Reservoir, the river passes through a narrow trough between the mountains. Below Cachuma Reservoir, the river flows over broad alluvial floodplains. West of Buellton, it flows through a narrow meandering stretch to the Lompoc Narrows and outlets to the Pacific Ocean after emerging onto the broad, flat Lompoc Plain. Figure 15 below displays the location of the watershed in the region.

Figure 16: Regional Watershed



Source: Santa Barbara County

The City's main water sources are a State Water allotment and four groundwater wells, three of which are located adjacent to the Santa Ynez River and one of which is located at 140 West Highway 246. Groundwater used by the City draws from the Santa Ynez River Alluvial Basin and Buellton Uplands Basin. The Buellton Uplands Groundwater Basin encompasses about 29 square miles located about 18 miles east of the Pacific Ocean and directly north of the Santa Ynez River. The Santa Ynez River Riparian Basin sediments overlie portions of the Buellton Uplands in the south-east part of the basin. Due to the hydrologic gradient (generally north to south), it is likely that the Buellton Uplands Basin discharges into the Santa Ynez River Riparian Basin.

Historical hydrographs of annual maximum water level trends for the Santa Ynez River Valley display yearly fluctuations, with some areas responding rapidly to precipitation and infiltration. However, following the recent years of drought, water levels in 19 all sub-basins within each management area continued to decline, and storage was at or near historic lows throughout the entire basin. Water levels have generally responded favorably following two consecutive years of above average precipitation (Santa Barbara County Groundwater Basins Summary Report, 2024).

The City's groundwater supply is managed in partnership with the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD). Currently, water supplied to customers in the City meet all State and Federal standards for water quality. The City, CCWA, and SYRWCD regularly monitor water quality pursuant to applicable standards. Every year the City prepares an Annual Water Supply Report and a Consumer Confidence Report. SYRWCD also publishes an annual water quality report. In 2019, although nitrate was detected during sampling of the District's wells, the detected

concentrations were below the state standard. Nitrate sources in drinking water are most commonly fertilizer runoff from agricultural operations, leaching from septic tanks and sewage, or erosion of natural deposits. While Buellton’s water supplies meet safe drinking water standards, some community members, including infants, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals, may be more vulnerable to contaminants than others and should take additional precautions to have their water filtered or treated.

Wildlife Movement

An approximate 2-mile section of the Santa Ynez River is located along the southern boundary of the city. The River is considered an important wildlife dispersal and migration corridor for a variety of wildlife species. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has designated the River as a Southern California Steelhead Stream and as such is considered to provide habitat for steelhead during times when the River is flowing.

Zaca and Thumbelina Creeks cross the city as well and provide wildlife corridors of limited quality due to surrounding development, especially Thumbelina Creek which is mainly concrete-lined. Past urban development has decreased the aerial extent of riparian habitat adjacent to the Creeks that could provide cover for some species while traversing these corridors. The Creeks are also crossed by roadways, including Highways 246 and 101, which further limit their value as movement corridors.

Historic Landmarks

On September 10, 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution 20-22 designating five historical landmarks in Buellton. For these sites, any proposed alteration, addition, or demolition to the site or any structure is subject to City Council review regarding appropriate mitigation of historic resource loss through permanent acknowledgement and recognition of the site’s historical significance. The sites are listed below:

Flagpoles within Avenue of Flags Medians. The flagpoles within the Avenue of Flags medians were originally placed by Vince Evans and received formal recognition by Governor Ronald Reagan through his dedication of the Avenue of Flags in 1968.

Red Rose Court Motel. The Red Rose Court Motel, formerly the Buellton Auto Court, was originally built in 1929 by Mr. and Mrs. George Petersen and was purchased in 1938 by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Daily, whose family still owns the property today.

Andersen’s Restaurant. Since 1924, Andersen’s Restaurant has been a local landmark that makes Buellton known as the “Home of Split Pea Soup”, originally owned by the Andersen Family, later by Vince Evans, and then by Milt Guggia. The restaurant closed in early 2024, and the property was sold to a private entity.

US Post Office. The Post Office building was originally used as a schoolhouse in Buellton dating back to the consolidation of four area schools into the Buellton Union Grammar School in 1922. The property is currently owned by the City.

Willemsen Dairy Barn. One of the last remaining vestiges of the dairy industry in the City, this property was purchased from the Willemsen family by the City in 2020. The barn on the property dates back to early 20th century. The City is preserving the property for community use as a multipurpose recreational facility; existing buildings will be preserved to the extent feasible for the following uses: library, community meeting facility, event center, and children's museum.

Findings and Next Steps

- Analyze the applicability of the Room to Roam Act to the City's updated General Plan and any associated policies or programs for wildlife movement protection.
- Establish a Historic Resources section within the updated General Plan and the policies of Resolution 20-22 as historic resource protection policies for future landmarks.
- Analyze the potential restoration of Zaca Creek and establishing it as a community connector and public recreation amenity.

Safety

Introduction

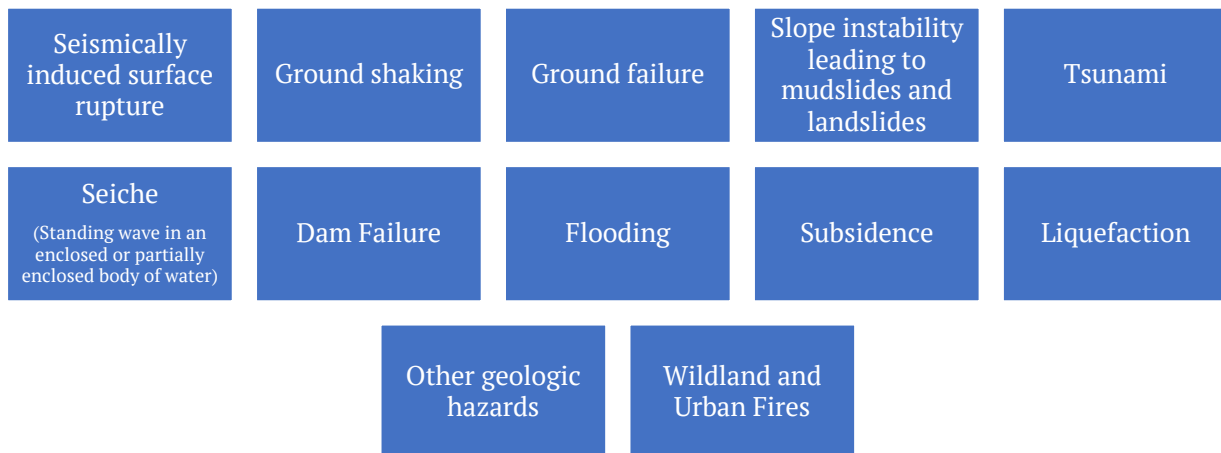
The City of Buellton, incorporated on February 1, 1992, is located on US Highway 101 in the Santa Ynez Valley, 40 miles northwest of Santa Barbara and 360 feet above sea level. Buellton enjoys a Mediterranean coastal climate with mild, dry summers and cool, wet winters. Located along the Santa Ynez River, the city is prone to the effects of natural hazards related to flooding, wildfire, and earthquakes. As an inland community, the city can also be affected by severe weather events such as windstorms, extreme heat, and drought. These hazards have impacted Buellton in the past and will continue to impact it in the future.

Regulatory Framework

California Government Code (GC) § 65302 (g) identifies the statutory requirements that govern the preparation of a General Plan Safety Element. This section of the GC has been modified several times to respond to the changing issues and priorities of the State since its original adoption. For additional details regarding the statutory requirements governing General Plan Safety Elements, please refer to Appendix A of this report.

Basic Element Requirements

GC § 65302 (g) 1 requires the Safety Element to address the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of the following hazards:



All these required applicable hazards to the City are addressed in the Safety Element Requirement Matrix at the end of this section and will then be incorporated into the updated Buellton Safety Element.

In addition, Safety Elements are required to address these non-hazard specific issues, as they apply to the City:

Peakload Water Supply Requirements

Evacuation Routes

Military Installations

Minimum Road Widths and Clearances Around Structures

Recent Bill Changes

In addition to the requirements in GC § 65302 (g) 1, other changes adopted by the California Legislature have affected what is required to be addressed in the Safety Element:

- **Wildfire Hazards (SB 1241):** SB 1241 (GC § 65302 (g) 3) requires cities and counties to address fire risk in state responsibility areas (SRA) and very high fire hazard severity zones in the safety element of their general plans upon the next revision of the housing element. This bill also requires cities and counties to make certain findings regarding available fire protection and suppression services before approving a tentative map or parcel map.
- **Evacuation Concerns (AB 747 and SB 99):** SB 99 (GC § 65302 (g) 5) requires the identification of developments in any hazard area that do not have two evacuation routes. Also, AB 747 (GC §65302.15) further requires that Safety Elements shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to identify the capacity, safety, and viability of evacuation routes under a range of emergency scenarios within the jurisdiction. While this requirement identifies the Safety Element, there is the potential this analysis may overlap with the Circulation Element and will require coordination to reduce any potential conflicts.
- **Climate Change Concerns (SB 379):** SB 379 (GC §65302 (g) 4) requires that the Safety Element be reviewed and updated as necessary to address climate adaptation and resiliency. This review occurs in conjunction with the preparation of a vulnerability assessment or with reliance on a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), which addresses climate adaptation risks and vulnerabilities. Reliance on this document ensures compliance and leveraging of this plan, effectively allowing for comprehensive implementation of future projects and programs that support addressing the effects of climate change.
- **Plan Integration (AB 2140):** AB 2140 (GC §65302.6) recommends the integration of the LHMP into the General Plan Safety Element. Upon completion of this voluntary requirement, the City would be eligible for potential cost savings during future disaster/emergency events where the California Disaster Assistance Act requirements are activated. Preparation of the LHMP and General Plan Safety

Element anticipates compliance with this requirement. The City recently participated in the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) prepared by Santa Barbara County and other agencies within the County. The City's Annex to this MJHMP can help support AB 2140 compliance.

State Regulations

- **Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act:** The intention of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act of 1972 (California Public Resources Code (PRC), Chapter 7.5, Section 2621-2699.6) is to reduce the risks associated with surface faults. It requires the designated State Geologist to identify and map “Earthquake Fault Zones” around known active faults. Per PRC Section 2623, before the approval of a project, cities and counties shall require a geologic report defining and delineating any hazard of surface fault rupture. If a city or county finds that no undue hazard of that kind exists, the State Geologist may waive the report.
- **Seismic Hazards Mapping Act:** The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (PRC, Chapter 7.8, Section 2690-2699.6) created a statewide seismic hazard mapping and technical advisory program in 1990 to help cities and counties address the effects of geologic and seismic hazards caused by earthquakes. Per PRC §2697, cities and counties shall require, before the approval of a project located in a seismic hazard zone, a geotechnical report defining and delineating any seismic hazard. If a city or county finds that no undue risk of this kind exists, based on information resulting from studies conducted on sites near the project and of similar soil composition to the project site, the geotechnical report may be waived but other geotechnical reports may still be required such as a soils analysis. After report approval or a waiver granted, subsequent geotechnical reports shall not be required, provided that new geologic datum, or data, warranting further investigation is not recorded. Each city and county shall submit one copy of each approved geotechnical report, including the mitigation measures, if any, and are delivered to the State Geologist within 30 days of report approval.

Existing Conditions Summary

Seismic Hazards (Seismic Shaking, Liquefaction, Landslide)

The City is located in the Santa Ynez Valley, a wedge-shaped topographic depression (caused by two major faults) bounded by the Santa Ynez Mountains on the south, the San Rafael Mountains to the east and north, and the Purisima Hills on the west. On the south, the east-west trending Santa Ynez Fault forms the base of the uplifted Santa Ynez Mountains and extends from Ventura County across the entire width of Santa Barbara County.

The City is located in Seismic Zone 4, which is the highest potential status for earthquake activity in the state of California. The nearest fault to Buellton (Santa Ynez Fault) is located approximately six miles south of the city limits. The City's MJHMP Annex maps fault lines and liquefaction zones, which could impact existing and future development if an earthquake were to occur. The City, in conjunction with County Department of Building and Safety, have examined all structures within the City limits and determined that Buellton has no unreinforced masonry buildings.

Following the 6.5 San Simeon Earthquake in December 2003, Buellton's Public Works Department determined that all water reservoirs (currently located underground) were unaffected and continued to operate normally. Since that time, Reservoirs 1 and 2 have been completely reconstructed and upgraded to meet future needs and seismic requirements. Though some areas of the City lie within mapped landslide hazard areas, according to the City's MJHMP Annex, Buellton has never experienced a landslide hazard event.

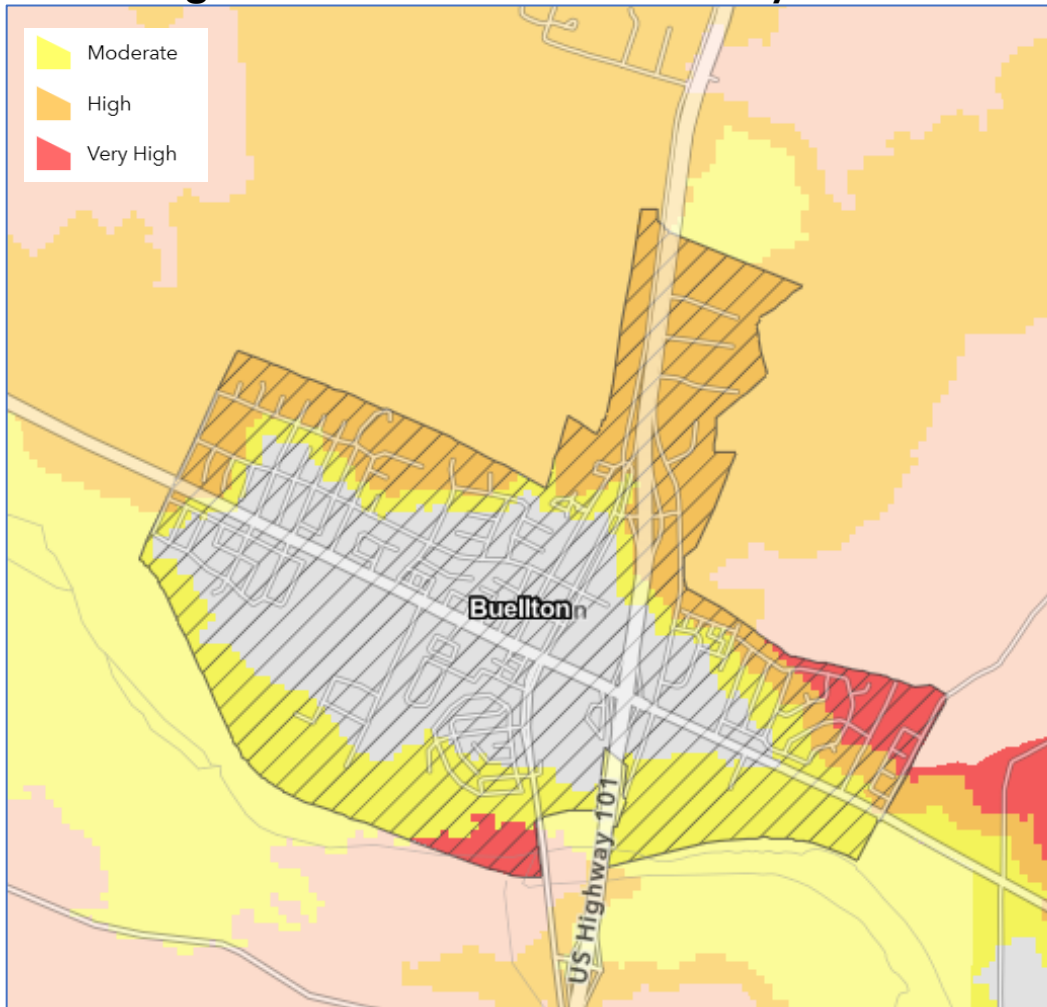
Wildfire

The threat of a wildland fire affecting Buellton is high due to the presence of dense, flammable vegetative fuels on land surrounding the City in what is known as the wildland urban interface (WUI). The WUI is where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with wildland or vegetative fuels. The threat is particularly significant during dry summer months and when there are strong wind conditions. The fire season extends approximately 5 to 6 months, from late spring through fall, however given the right conditions, fires can occur at anytime throughout the year. The City does not currently have very high fire hazard severity zones mapped by Cal Fire but forthcoming updated map(s) could show new very high fire hazard severity zones within the City limits.

Buellton contracts with Santa Barbara County for Fire Protection Services. The Fire Department, as well as Santa Barbara County Building & Safety, requires that all commercial development over 5,000 square feet install indoor sprinklers and use fire-resistant building materials. Within the unincorporated areas surrounding Buellton, the Fire Department has a vegetation management program that annually inspects all lots in early spring and advises property owners that all brush must be removed by July 1 of each year. Within the city limits, the Buellton Code Enforcement Officer and County Fire undertake a weed abatement program in the spring to reduce fire threat.

September 2023 Cal Fire maps for the Buellton area show State Responsibility Areas with moderate, high, or very high Fire Hazard Severity Zones (see Figure 1). Future annexations will be required to address potential wildfire hazards as part of the annexation process.

Figure 17: SRA Fire Hazard Severity Zones



Source: CalFire, April 2024

Floods

In Buellton, hazardous flooding events are most commonly associated with the Santa Ynez River. On July 22, 1993, Buellton adopted a Floodplain Ordinance (Ordinance No. 17.04). Buellton’s Floodplain Ordinance requires all new buildings to be built at least 200 feet from the top of the bank of the Santa Ynez River and all new buildings are constructed 2 feet above the flood zone.

Drought & Water Storage

At this time, the City’s primary water source is groundwater from the Santa Ynez River Underflow and the Buellton Uplands. The State Water Project supplements City water supply. Groundwater supply is currently not in danger of overdraft and can adequately supply existing needs. However, to ensure the sustainability of the City’s water supply, the

City implements water conservation measures in its operations and maintenance as well as provides and participates in water conservation programs.

The City has 3 in-ground concrete reservoirs for storage constructed in 1958, ranging from 180,000 gallons to 850,000 gallons. The reservoirs do not serve as long-term storage but rather have fairly fast turnover rates due to community usage.

The City continues to regularly coordinate with local and regional agencies to review its policies and programs for city operations and the local community regarding water and resource conservation.

Currently, the City funds a landscape rebate program, operates the Buellton Green Scene Program (a community resource sustainability program and outreach effort), participates in the Regional Water Efficiency Program, the County's Green Business Program, and the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.

Energy Shortage & Resilience

Energy access is one of the key impacts of disasters. Any event that disrupts power for more than a day can cause significant social disruption and potential deaths. Reliance on dispersed power production stations connected by a power distribution grid spreading over thousands of miles, exposes the system and people that rely on it to a myriad of threats. Buellton receives all of its commercial power from Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E).

The City has limited control over its power distribution system. As of January 2022, Buellton residents and businesses transitioned from having their electric power provided by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) to having it provided by Central Coast Community Energy (3CE). 3CE follows a Community Choice Aggregator model that allows for greater commitment to clean and renewable energy. 3CE assumes exclusive responsibility for electricity generation, including purchasing electricity from generators, investing in generating resources, and balancing supply with demand. PG&E or Southern California Edison (SCE) retains sole responsibility for 3CE customers' electricity distribution, metering, and billing. The City actively participates in reducing its power usage and partners with 3CE, PG&E, the County of Santa Barbara, the State of California, and Federal energy conservation programs. In addition, the City installed solar panels at key facilities to help offset power needs and reduce power supply disruption, where possible.

The City has entered into a five-year contract with PG&E (August 2020 - August 2025) to use River View Park, as a Community Resource Center (CRC) during a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) event. The CRC provides temporary power and other facilities and services in order to limit disruption to Buellton and Santa Barbara County residents during these events.

Dam/Levee Failure

Buellton lies approximately 15 miles west of the Bradbury Dam and sits along the Santa Ynez River. If dam failure occurs, Buellton could experience substantial flooding along the Santa Ynez River and adjacent properties. A significant seismic retrofit of Bradbury Dam was completed in 2006 which brought the dam up to federal standards for seismic safety.

Pandemic/Public Health Emergency

The City—as well as the County, State, nation, and the entire world—is vulnerable to outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics caused by either newly emerging or existing diseases. A significant public health emergency can have a considerable impact on the population, the economy, and essential public services (e.g., fire and police protection, medical services, etc.). Populations identified by the county as especially vulnerable to human health hazards include:

- Undocumented persons
- Senior citizens (especially those living alone)
- People with existing chronic health conditions
- People experiencing homelessness
- Overcrowded households and neighborhoods
- Low-resourced ethnic minorities/people of color
- Households in poverty
- Communities with a high pollution burden
- People without health insurance

Undocumented or non-English speaking individuals may be less able to understand disease-related information or receptive to responding to government outreach, while lower-income households may lack the means to comply with the direction. Trends of the COVID-19 pandemic further revealed vulnerable groups within Santa Barbara County's population, including residents of Buellton.

Residents' healthcare needs are met by medical resources in Buellton, and regionally in the City of Santa Maria and the City of Santa Barbara. As demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare resources were strained throughout the county. Further, hospitality, retail, and tourism industries were adversely affected economically through reduced activity and a limited workforce, including businesses in the City. The City relies on the federal, state, and County Health and Human Services systems to monitor and mitigate potential catastrophic disease outbreaks.

Buellton's limited population and location within the relatively sparsely populated Santa Ynez Valley would tend to mitigate some of the risks associated with a pandemic or other public health emergency, as the recent COVID-19 pandemic has shown. However, there is still the potential for considerable risk to the health and safety of residents and visitors, as

well as an even greater potential for economic impacts due to measures that may need to be taken to respond to such an event.

Safety Element Requirements Matrix

The following matrix was prepared to help City staff understand how the existing safety element meets current requirements as codified in GC § 65302 (g) (requirements after the adoption of new state requirements like SB 1241, SB 99, AB 747, SB 379, and AB 2140). To facilitate the review, this matrix relies on the latest version of the General Plan Safety Element Assessment from the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (highlighted in blue). This Cal Fire assessment includes requirements pertaining to wildfire and emergency evacuation, within jurisdictions containing Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZs) and/or a State Responsibility Area (SRA). Due to the presence of VHFHSZs, these requirements will apply to Buellton.

The Safety Element Requirement Matrix identifies the following:

- If the requirement is currently included in the existing Element and what Safety Element policies address the requirement.
- Provides a brief explanation for inclusion/omission in the updated element.
- Identifies opportunities for expansion and recommendations for compliance with new requirements.

The table is intended as a quick reference regarding how the updated safety element will be prepared and the new topics/issues that will be addressed.

Safety Element Requirement Matrix (As of February 2025)				
Safety Element Requirement	Included	Not Included	Reason for Inclusion or Exclusion	Opportunities for Expansion (Where Applicable)
Seismically Induced Surface Rupture		X	No Alquist Priolo Special Study Zones (active faults) are known to be located within the City.	N/A
Ground Shaking	X Policies S-7, S-8, S-10, S-11		Nearby fault systems like the Santa Ynez, Los Alamos, and San Andreas have the potential to cause strong ground shaking.	Expand on current policies, including language that considers the most up-to-date CA Building Codes. Create policies that can assist property owners with retrofits and mitigation projects.
Ground Failure		X	There are no identified fault traces inside the city limits.	N/A
Slope Instability: Landslides, Mudslides	X Policy S-9		The city is on a gently sloping area in a riverine flood plain where the risk of landslide is generally low. No critical facilities are susceptible to landslide hazards.	Review and expand policies regarding slope instability and improved mapping to highlight potential risk to structures in the Class 7, 9, and 10 landslide hazard zones. Add landslide hazard map from the LHMP.
Tsunami		X	Due to the City's location inland from the coastline, tsunamis are not a hazard of concern	N/A

Safety Element Requirement Matrix (As of February 2025)

Safety Element Requirement	Included	Not Included	Reason for Inclusion or Exclusion	Opportunities for Expansion (Where Applicable)
Seiche		X	There are no large bodies of water in or near Buellton	N/A
Dam Failure	X Policy S-5		Failure of Bradbury Dam would inundate portions of Buellton and Solvang with relatively little evacuation time.	Obtain the most recent inundation maps and Emergency Action Plan for Bradbury Dam from the Bureau of Reclamation.
Flooding	X Policies S-1 – S-4, S-12, S-13		All FEMA zones are identified, and adequate background information is included.	Update to include the latest National Flood Hazard Layer map amendments. Update with current flood infrastructure projects.
Subsidence		X	No substantial subsidence problems have been identified in the City.	N/A
Liquefaction	X Policies S-9, S-10		The potential for liquefaction is highest in areas nearest the Santa Ynez River and Zaca Creek.	Map the areas with sandy, alluvial soil and shallow groundwater that pose the greatest liquefaction risk
Peak Load Water Supply Requirements		X	This is typically covered by Cal Fire requirements.	If Cal Fire requirements do not apply, this should be addressed relying on Cal Fire recommendations.
Military Installations		X	There are no active military installations within twenty miles of the City.	N/A
Minimum Road Widths and Clearances Around Structures		X	This is typically covered by Cal Fire requirements.	If Cal Fire requirements do not apply, this should be addressed relying on Cal Fire recommendations.
SB 379 Compliance (Climate Change)		X	New information needed	Add climate change impact analysis to the SE or LHMP for appropriate hazards.
This section should be adhered to if Cal Fire identified Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the City or Sphere of Influence				
Wildland and Urban Fires	X Partial		One policy in place	Significant policy updates, creation of new policies, to meet compliance standards with CAL Fire standards.
Wildfire Goal		X	New information needed	Develop an overall goal for fire safety in the Safety Element (SE).
Wildfire: Historical fire data		X	New information needed	Include a history of local wildfires in the city and local region.
Wildfire: Land uses in VHFHSZ	X Policy S-14		New information needed	Include a brief description of development trends in the city in particular areas that meet this requirement. Create a policy that addresses this as part of the update.
Wildfire: Fire protection responsibilities		X	New information needed	Outline responsibilities of fire protection in the jurisdiction.
Wildfire: References to CWPP, LHMP, etc.	X Goal #1		New information needed	Complete or update a California Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Include references to CWPP, linking it with other SE requirements such as Land Use.

Safety Element Requirement Matrix (As of February 2025)

Safety Element Requirement	Included	Not Included	Reason for Inclusion or Exclusion	Opportunities for Expansion (Where Applicable)
Wildfire: Residential evacuation without two points of ingress/egress identified.		X	New information needed	<p>Create a section in the SE addressing emergency evacuation.</p> <p>SB99 Analysis: Create a map identifying these residential areas and the parcels within that meet the Cal FIRE requisite (30+ parcels) w/o 2 pts of ingress/ egress. Perform an analysis as part of the SE update and add this information to the Evacuation portion of the SE.</p> <p>Policy creation that avoids this issue in the future when new development or redevelopment is considered.</p>
Wildfire: Evacuation routes identified		X	New information needed	<p>Create maps depicting the potential evacuation routes as identified.</p> <p>Have any studies been conducted about route capacity and viability under various scenarios?</p> <p>Create a policy that would ensure that these routes are analyzed before any new development or major redevelopment occurs.</p>
Wildfire: Development standards to meet or exceed CA CCR: Title 14		X	New information needed	Create a new policy stating that all building standards must meet or exceed current CA Title 14, CCR.
Wildfire: Minimize new development in VHFHSZs		X	New information needed	Create a policy stating this as a requirement for new development and redevelopment
Wildfire: Firesafe design for future development		X	New information needed	Create policy requiring that firesafe design be mandatory for future development.
Wildfire: New essential facilities located outside of fire risk areas		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Mitigate existing non-conforming development to current fire standards.		X	New information needed	Create a policy and subsequent actions, if needed, that will address this and outline a strategy.
Wildfire: Evaluate redevelopment after large fires		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Fuel modification for new developments in VHFHSZs.		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Fire protection plans for new development in VHFHSZ		X	New information needed	Create a new policy to address this requirement (reference the CWPP).
Wildfire: Long-term maintenance of the fire reduction projects.		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Adequate ingress/egress to new development		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Minimum evacuation of residential areas in a VHFHSZs		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.

Safety Element Requirement Matrix (As of February 2025)				
Safety Element Requirement	Included	Not Included	Reason for Inclusion or Exclusion	Opportunities for Expansion (Where Applicable)
Wildfire: Areas with inadequate access routes		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Public outreach regarding defensible space, specific plans to at risk population.		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Future water supply identified		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: New development requires adequate fire protection		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Infrastructure for new development, including: water supply and location, long term integrity of water supply, evacuation and emergency access, fuel modification and defensible space, vegetation clearance on roads, and visible home and street signage.		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Map of existing emergency service facilities		X	New information needed	Map the emergency critical facilities and ensure adequate fire coverage.
Wildfire: Assessment and projection of future emergency needs		X	New information needed	Create a new policy addressing this requirement.
Wildfire: Emergency services training		X	New Information Needed	Develop policy to address the requirement. Add section in fire protection.
Wildfire: Mutual aid agreements		X	New information needed	Add section describing the mutual aid agreements.

Findings and Next Steps

- Updated mapping should be incorporated that includes new information pertaining to FEMA flood hazard zones, liquefaction and landslide hazards, wildfire hazards, and dam inundation. Maps in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) may be used instead of those in the current Safety Element.
- Incorporate a climate change discussion and the potential effects on the hazards of concern within the City. These hazards include wildfire, severe weather events (heat, drought, wind), precipitation, and flooding.
- Map evacuation constraints within the City to identify key locations where evacuation challenges may occur due to single ingress/egress conditions.
- Expand wildfire hazards discussion and goals and policies to address the following key areas.

- Location of Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
- Potential development requirements for fire prone areas.
- Historical fires that have impacted the city and region.
- Fire capabilities and responsibilities of the City and other participating agencies.
- Estimated water peak demand during firefighting operations and the infrastructure to support that demand.
- Address home hardening, vegetation management, and defensible space for private and public properties.
- Assess fire response capabilities and infrastructure.
- Address planning and preparation activities associated with mutual aid and recovery.
- Identify training processes and protocols in place to address emergency needs.

Noise

Introduction

This Baseline Conditions Report has also been developed to assess and summarize the existing noise-related environmental conditions in the City of Buellton. Its intent is to assist in the identification of key issues affecting the City that may require modification or creation of new goals, policies, and implementation actions.

The information provided in this report is based on a review of the following documents:

- 2007 Buellton General Plan Noise Element
- Buellton Municipal Code § 8.04.030(G)
- Office of Planning and Research (OPR) General Plan Guidelines

Other resources addressing noise include guidance from federal and state agencies like the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Highways Administration, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and current academic literature regarding noise and vibration.

Regulatory Framework

The following summarizes the federal, state, and local regulations related to noise and vibration in Buellton.

Federal

United States Clean Air Act: Title 42 of the United States Code deals with protection of public health, social welfare, and civil rights. [Title 42 U.S.C. 85](#), “Air Pollution Prevention and Control,” is commonly known as the Clean Air Act. [Subchapter IV of Chapter 85](#), “Noise Pollution,” contains requirements that apply to noise abatement activities conducted or overseen by federal departments and agencies. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Noise Abatement and Control provides valuable analysis and guidance to local and state agencies to address noise effects. This guidance can assist jurisdictions with understanding and applying noise regulations within their jurisdiction in compliance with federal requirements.

State

- **California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research:** California Government Code § 65302(f) identifies the requirements for the preparation of a General Plan Noise Element. The key components required in this element include:

- Identification and appraisal of noise problems in the community.
- Current and projected noise levels for major roadways and thoroughfares, air transport activities, and uses and developments that generate high levels of noise. Noise contours should be developed to help establish land-use patterns that minimize the exposure of community residents to excessive noise.

Policies and implementation measures/actions to address existing and future noise issues, serving as a guide for compliance with the local and state requirements.

- **California Health and Safety Code, Division 28, Noise Control Act:** Commonly known as the “California Noise Control Act of 1973” this law recognizes that excessive noise is a serious hazard that can result in physiological, psychological, and economic damage to the public health and welfare. Recognizing that noise in the urban, suburban, and rural settings continues to increase, the state has the responsibility to assist communities in the control, abatement, and prevention of unwanted and hazardous noise. The goal of this law is to provide an environment where noise does not jeopardize residents’ health or welfare. State activities would be required to adhere to the provisions of this law as well as local requirements where applicable.
- **California Department of Transportation:** Caltrans published an updated version of its [Transportation and Construction Vibration Manual](#) in 2020. The manual provides general guidance on vibration issues associated with construction and operation of projects in relation to human perception and structural damage.

Local

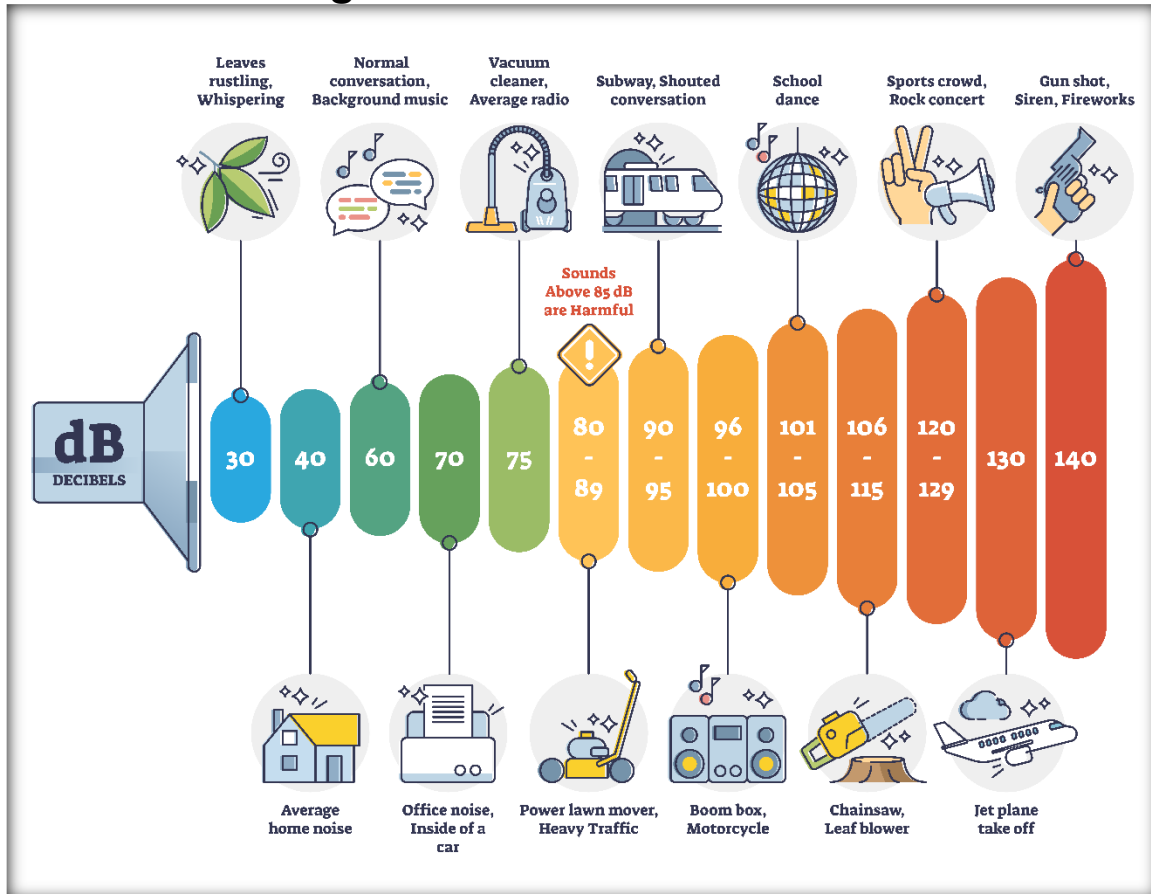
City of Buellton Municipal Code § 8.04.030(G) serves as the City’s overall noise regulation. Individual noise regulations also appear in Municipal Code chapters 12 and 19. A key section referenced during the development process is § 8.04.03(G)(3), which identifies sound-level standards by land-use designation. These standards allow the City to determine the maximum decibel levels permitted for both daytime and nighttime periods, depending on the land use and development proposed. It also provides criteria to determine excessive noise generation from properties, allowing the City to better regulate uses that may create a nuisance to neighboring properties (house parties, unregulated businesses, etc.).

Noise Scale

Noise is measured in decibels (dB), which is a logarithmic scale used to measure sound. Most sounds are not harmful to a person’s health; however, prolonged exposure to sounds above

85dB can affect hearing and have other health effects. Figure 15 identifies the noise measurements that coincide with various sounds which may be heard within a city.

Figure 18: Noise Measurements



Source: Adobe

Issues/Constraints

Noise within the City of Buellton is generated from a variety of sources. Land uses sensitive to noise generally include uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks, or where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residences, hospitals, schools, guest lodging, libraries, and parks are most sensitive to noise intrusion.

Roadway Noise

Roadway traffic is the primary source of noise in the City. Highways 101 and 246 carry by far the most traffic through the area and are consequently the major noise contributors. The Avenue of Flags is the only other roadway in the City that currently carries sufficient traffic to produce audible noise at a substantial distance. Other City roads carry low-to-moderate

traffic (500-2,500 Average Daily Trips), but not sufficient to produce far-reaching noise contours.

Commercial and Industrial Operations

Industrial and commercial operations can be substantial sources of noise, depending on the type and hours of operation. Stationary noise sources of concern typically include loading docks, generators, pumps, air compressors, outdoor speakers, motors, heavy equipment, and similar machinery. Existing or planned commercial/industrial operations may result in noise impacts when they are adjacent to noise sensitive land uses.

The sand, gravel, and rock extraction facilities in the Santa Ynez Riverbed near Buellton (Granite Construction, Buellflat Rock Company) produce substantial operational noise. However, no sensitive noise receptors in the city are located in the immediate vicinity of these operations. The highest concentrations of commercial uses in the city are located along Highway 246, the Avenue of Flags, McMurray Road, and Industrial Way. In some areas, residential uses are located immediately adjacent to commercial uses.

Agriculture Operations

Assorted agricultural operations are located outside the city limits. Agricultural operations produce noise associated with wind machines, diesel engines, aerial application aircraft (crop dusters), tractors, and some types of livestock. In some locations, agricultural operations are located immediately adjacent to residential uses within the city limits.

Construction Noise

In general, the grading phase of development project construction tends to create the highest noise levels because of the operation of heavy equipment. Noise levels associated with heavy equipment typically range between 75–95 dBA at 50 feet from the source (EPA, 1971). Power tools, generators, material deliveries, and vehicle backup signals can also generate noise impacts for neighboring properties.

Needs and Opportunities

Noise is a common side effect of city activities. Noise can be generated at stationary locations (i.e., loading docks) or move throughout the community (motorcycles). The interaction of uses and the ways that people live and work within their communities determines how much or little noise is produced. Identifying how current land uses may be exacerbating noise issues will be a key method to determining what changes to policies and regulations are necessary. Unfortunately, certain conditions within the community (i.e., U.S.

Highway 101) may be outside of the City's control to change. However, the actions that can be taken may improve the comfort of residents and businesses in noise-impacted areas.

New land uses should reflect the changing nature of noise generation within Buellton. For some properties within the community, an increase in commercial or hospitality activities may generate new or different noises that may depart from existing conditions, while other parts of the community may not experience a change.

Findings and Next Steps

Noise plays a key role in the quality of life within any community. In the case of Buellton, there are several factors that contribute to the noise conditions experienced by residents and businesses.

- Highways 101 and 246 are major throughfares through the City that generate a significant amount of noise. Properties adjacent to these roads can be subjected to noise impacts that could affect the health and well-being of occupants.
- Evaluate the proximity of commercial and industrial development near existing residential areas and identify appropriate policies and programs that help reduce noise-related conflicts with neighboring residential properties.
- Increased use of commercial corridors for mixed-use or residential use should consider appropriate site design and building materials usage to address noise concerns.
- Code updates may be necessary to better regulate the following concerns:
 - Public nuisance abatement to help with excessive noise issues that may not trigger thresholds in the Noise Ordinance.
 - Modifications to special sound source standards to better manage noise complaints from properties generating excessive noise.
 - Investigating changes to criteria used for determining noise impacts and mitigation strategies for when land use conflicts occur.

Social Equity

Introduction

The concept of social equity pertains to the idea that equal access to opportunity and quality of life should be available to all communities, regardless of income, race, location or other factors such as disability, single-parent households and non-English speaking households. Promoting and achieving social equity requires acknowledgement of diversity of culture and backgrounds within the communities that may have not been previously acknowledged. Compared to more densely populated cities, Buellton generally does not have substantial differences in race, income levels, or quality of life, based on the latest census data but differences and disparities are always present in some form. While Buellton does not have any formally identified Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) according to State guidelines, the City embraces its obligations if potential disproportionate burdens upon certain segments of the local population are identified.

Regulatory Context

The State of California has adopted several regulations that pertain to environmental justice and social equity in planning. The following describes relevant policies and legislative requirements.

Senate Bill 1000

Also known as the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, Senate Bill (SB) 1000 was enacted in 2016 and provides a framework to examine social equity and environmental justice during a General Plan update. SB 1000 addresses the inequitable distribution of pollution and associated health effects in low-income and minority communities by requiring local governments to identify DACs and create goals, policies and programs to promote environmental justice. The requirements of SB 1000 specifically seek to reduce health risks in DACs, promote greater civil engagement and prioritize programs that address the disproportionate burdens in DACs.

A DAC is defined as: “An area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code; (*)OR an area that is a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.” The first half of this definition refers to the State Health and Safety Code and identifies DACs using CalEPA methodology in relation to the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen).

SB 1000 requires jurisdictions to identify DACs pursuant to the above definition and to address the following topics, when applicable, within a General Plan:

- Pollution Exposure and Air Quality
- Public Facilities
- Food Access
- Residential Safety
- Physical Activity
- Community Engagement
- Programs to address needs of DACs

While there are no formally designated DACs in Buellton based on CalEnviroScreen results, the General Plan update will consider the above topics as applicable to determine whether there are any disproportionate social, economic and environmental burdens that may potentially impact certain segments of the City's population. If needed, the General Plan update would incorporate relevant goals, policies and programs to address identified impacts.

Senate Bill 379

SB 379, enacted in 2015, requires the incorporation of climate adaptation and resiliency strategies when general plan safety elements are updated. Preparation of the updated safety element must include a vulnerability assessment identifying climate change related risks, goals that pertain to climate adaptation and resilience, and associated policies, objectives and implementation measures. The requirements of SB 379 are intertwined with SB 1000 in that both pieces of legislation require the assessment of a community's vulnerabilities and development of policies to address them.

Assembly Bill 617

AB 617, enacted in 2018, seeks to improve air quality in disadvantaged communities by directing Air Quality Management Districts to implement retrofit control technology to reduce air pollutants generated by heavy machinery, deploy additional air monitoring systems and implement plans to reduce emissions in DACs. The Community Air Protection Program, authorized by AB 617 and implemented by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) in partnership with local air districts, provides incentive funding for projects that reduce exposure to critical air pollutants and toxic air contaminants in the communities most impacted by air pollution.

Senate Bill 535

California's statewide greenhouse gas emissions cap and trade program funds the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) through the sale of emission permits among regulated entities. SB 535 requires that 25 percent of the GGRF must be dedicated towards disadvantaged communities. SB 535 also directed CalEPA to identify DACs, which the agency defines as census tracts that score in the top 25 percentile of CalEnviroScreen.

Findings and Next Steps

- Evaluate if any disproportionate social, economic and environmental burdens may potentially impact certain segments of the City's population and incorporate relevant goals, policies, and programs into the General Plan to address such impacts.