

MEMORANDUM

DATE March 19, 2026
TO City of Hollister Planning Commission
FROM David Early and Carey Stone, PlaceWorks
SUBJECT Overview of Draft General Plan, Draft Climate Action Plan, and Draft Environmental Impact Report Addendum

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview of the Draft General Plan, Draft Climate Action Plan (CAP), and Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) Addendum for consideration at the March 26, 2026 Planning Commission Study Session meeting. The draft documents are available for review at: <https://hollister2040.org/>

This memorandum includes the following components:

- » Overview of the process to create the draft plans.
- » Summary of the Revised General Plan.
- » Summary of the Revised CAP.
- » Overview of community engagement process.
- » Summary of community Input on the Revised Draft Plans.
- » Overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Report Addendum.
- » Next Steps.

UPDATE ON DRAFT GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

As a brief reminder, the process to update the General Plan included the phases discussed below:

- » **Existing Conditions:** Researching and documenting baseline environmental conditions in Hollister and preparing a series of reports available on <https://hollister2040.org/documents-past-meeting-materials/>.
- » **Vision and Guiding Principles:** Establishing a communitywide vision and supporting guiding principles. The General Plan Vision describes the future of Hollister as the community would like it to be in 2040. The Vision and Guiding Principles guided the development of the goals, policies, and actions and land use changes.
- » **Policy Development:** Developing policy options for key issues identified through input given at the General Plan visioning workshops held in Summer 2020 and the three GPAC meetings held in Fall 2020. On June 22, 2021, the City Council provided final policy direction for the following topics:
 - » Parks
 - » New School Funding
 - » Farmland Mitigation
 - » Sensitive Habitats
 - » Heritage Trees
 - » Economic Development
 - » Retail Leakage
 - » Job Creation

- » Industrial Uses
 - » Tourism
 - » Airport
 - » Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School
 - » Level of Service
 - » Roundabouts
 - » Growth Management
 - » Special Planning Areas
 - » Residential Land Use Designations
 - » Inclusionary Housing
 - » Historic and Cultural Resources
 - » Coordination with Local Tribes
 - » Environmental Justice
 - » Arts and Culture
 - » Climate Change, Sustainability, and Natural Hazards
- » **2023 Draft General Plan.** On April 4, 2023, the City published the Draft General Plan, Draft CAP, and Draft Agricultural Preservation Program for public review and comment. The Draft General Plan carries forward the majority of the existing General Plan goals, policies and actions along with the policy direction developed through the prior phases and City staff recommended updates all informed by feedback collected during community participation processes.
 - » **September 11, 2023 City Council Direction.** On September 11, 2023, the City Council directed staff to revise the Draft General Plan to:
 - Expand the Sphere of Influence.
 - Include a total of five Specific Plan areas.
 - Update the North Gateway Commercial designation to allow residential uses.
 - Add an action in the Arts Element to prepare a study for a potential public art fee.
 - Make targeted land use changes to sites on Buena Vista Road, Chappell Road/Santa Ana Road, Glenmore Drive, and in the Meridian Road Special Planning Area.
 - Update the agricultural land preservation requirement from preserving two acres of ag land for every acre disturbed to a 1:1 ratio.
 - » **2024 Revised General Plan.** The City published the Revised General Plan on July 3, 2024 that incorporated Council direction from the September 11, 2023 meeting.
 - » **October 24, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting.** At the October 24, 2024 Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Commission recommended adoption of the Draft 2024 Revised General Plan and Draft Climate Action Plan and certification of the Revised Draft EIR.
 - » **December 3, 2024 City Council Meeting.** At the December 3, 2024 City Council meeting, the City Council adopted the 2024 draft of General Plan 2040, Climate Action Plan and Agricultural Preservation Program and certified the Final Environmental Impact Report.
 - » **March 3, 2025 City Council Meeting.** At the March 3, 2025 City Council meeting, the City Council repealed the resolution that adopted the 2024 General Plan (Resolution Number 2024-01) in response to a referendum petition that would have put the repeal of the General Plan resolution on the ballot for an upcoming election.

- » **April 21, 2025 City Council Meeting.** Following the repeal of the 2040 General Plan on March 3, 2025, the City Council held a public hearing study session to provide further direction on moving forward with an update to the 2005 General Plan. At this meeting, the City Council provided direction to revise the previously adopted 2040 General Plan to align with direction from the 2023 Public Review Draft General Plan.
- » **2026 Draft General Plan.** The City published the Draft General Plan on January 16, 2026 that incorporated Council direction from the April 21, 2025 meeting.
- » **Public Review and Adoption:** Public review and Council consideration of final documents are the remaining tasks of the General Plan update. This phase includes approximately four months of public review of the Revised Draft General Plan and Revised Draft CAP. In addition, a series of City Council and Planning Commission hearings will be held to consider adoption of the Revised Draft Plans. See “Next Steps” below for more detail.

SUMMARY OF THE REVISED GENERAL PLAN

The Revised General Plan includes an introductory chapter and vision chapter, as well as an individual chapter for each of the 10 General Plan elements that establish goals, policies, and actions for implementing the General Plan. The 10 elements include the eight-mandated topics required by California Government Code Section 65302 as well as two additional topics of particular interest to Hollister. The 2026 Draft General Plan includes the following elements:

- **Land Use and Community Design Element.** This element establishes the type, location, density and intensity of development activity in Hollister. It describes the goals and policies that will guide Hollister’s future growth patterns and development standards.
- **Circulation Element.** This element describes the services, facilities, and capital improvements needed to facilitate vehicle, pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and emergency circulation.
- **Community Services and Facilities Element.** This element describes the community facilities that are necessary in the provision of Hollister’s essential public services.
- **Economic Development Element.** This is a new element as part of this update to the General Plan and establishes policy guidance to support and maintain an economically viable community.
- **Natural Resources and Conservation Element.** This element outlines City policy for the preservation of natural resources and provision of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- **Health and Safety Element.** This element covers two of the 8 State-mandated elements: safety and noise. The safety section of this element identifies and assesses hazards in the community and establishes the goals, policies, and actions necessary to ensure community safety and protection from noise.
- **Open Space and Agriculture Element.** This element outlines City policy for the preservation of open space and agricultural areas.

- **Housing Element.** This element identifies the housing needs of the city for all income levels and strategies and policies for providing housing to meet those needs. Since the Housing Element is updated more frequently than the other elements, as required by State law, it exists as its own document outside of the proposed 2040 General Plan and is therefore not part of the proposed project. The current Housing Element addresses housing needs in Hollister for the 2015 to 2023 housing cycle and is currently being updated by the City through a separate process.
- **Arts and Culture Element.** This is a new element as part of this update to the General Plan and outlines City policy for creating a lively arts scene that encourages self-expression and ensures the representation of Hollister’s arts and cultural communities.
- **Environmental Justice Element.** This is a new element as part of this update to the General Plan and identifies impacted communities and sets policy direction to minimize effects of environmental hazards on these communities, with an emphasis on pollution exposure, food access, and safe and sanitary homes.

Proposed Sphere of Influence Change

The Hollister Sphere of Influence (SOI) is defined and determined by San Benito County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), although the City can propose the area that it would like its SOI to include. Per the direction of the City Council, the City is proposing changes to the currently approved SOI as shown on Figure 1.

The current SOI is roughly 1,817 acres or about 2.8 square miles. The proposed SOI expansion would add about 289 acres (about 0.5 square miles) to increase the SOI to approximately 2,106 acres and 3.2 square miles. The proposed SOI would extend further south of the existing SOI, but would remain contiguous with the existing SOI border to the east and west. The proposed SOI would expand to Union Road between San Benito Street and Southside Road and to Enterprise Road between Southside Road and SR 25. As described in the Union Road Special Planning Area, development in this expansion area would be subject to specific guidelines for development, including the creation of a Specific Plan for proposed projects within the Union Road Special Planning Area.

Proposed Land Use Changes

The Revised General Plan land use map, as shown in Figure 2, carries forward the majority of existing designations. However, the land use map does propose targeted changes. A summary of the major land use changes as directed by the City Council include:

- Designate sufficient land as High Density Residential to utilize the Government Code section 65583.2, subdivision (c)(3)(B) default density standard provision which allows jurisdictions to identify Housing Element sites for lower income households without additional analysis such as market demand, financial feasibility, or information based on development project experience within a zone or zones that provide housing for lower-income households. The California Department of Housing and Community Development, also referred to as HCD classifies

Hollister as Metropolitan jurisdiction which requires a default density standard of a minimum of 30 dwelling units/acre.¹

- Apply Medium Density Residential and High Density Residential in the Meridian Street Extension Special Planning Area. Also apply the General Commercial designation in this area to improve access to commercial services on the east side of the city.
- For areas outside the SOI, the City Council directed staff to apply the Agricultural designation. For already urbanized areas outside the SOI, the City Council directed staff to apply the land use designation that matched the existing use.

As part of the 2026 update to the General Plan, City staff also recommends that the parcels immediately surrounding the Hollister Municipal Airport be designated as Airport Support. The Airport Support land use designation and associated Zoning District is generally an industrial zoning district that allows for airport-related business which might otherwise not be feasible in the Industrial designation. The Airport Support designation would facilitate the Hollister Municipal Airport's unique through-the-fence opportunities (airplane manufacture/repair, flight schools, etc.). Airport Support also allows standard M1 and IBP land uses as well for properties that want to retain industrial land uses.

In addition, the Draft General Plan proposes residential density changes compared to the 2005 General Plan as summarized in Table 1. A summary of these changes includes:

- As discussed, the 2026 Draft General Plan increases the High Density Residential designation minimum density as directed by the City Council to meet the HCD default density standard. City staff also suggests this same minimum density be applied to the Mixed-Use, Downtown Mixed Use, and West Gateway Commercial and Mixed Use designations for the same reason.
- As directed by the City Council, the 2026 Draft General Plan increases the upper range of the Downtown Mixed Use density to 125 du/ac because the small parcels in the Downtown limit what can actually be built. Raising the maximum residential density to 125 du/ac per acre could potentially encourage developers to add residential components to their mixed-use projects.
- To better align with the High Density Residential density range, the 2026 Draft General Plan changes the Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential designation density ranges as shown in Table 1.
- The 2026 Draft General Plan also modifies the Medium Density Residential designation to preclude single family residential uses as an allowed use to increase the diversity of housing options in Hollister.
- As directed by the City Council, the 2026 Draft General Plan allows residential uses in the North Gateway Commercial designation with a density range of 30 to 65 du/ac.

¹ <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/housing-element-memos/docs/defaultdensity2020censusupdate.pdf>

- As directed by the City Council, the 2026 Draft General Plan measures all densities based on gross acres instead of net acres.

TABLE 1 SUMMARY OF GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATION UPDATES

Land Use Designation	Existing GPLU Density	Draft GPLU Density
Residential Estate	1 du/5 ac	0.2 to 1 du /ac
Low Density Residential	1 to 8 du/ac	6 to 10 du/ac
Medium Density Residential	8 to 12 du/ac	11 to 29 du/ac
High Density Residential	12 to 35 du/ac	30 to 65 du/ac
Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential	25 to 40 du/ac	30 to 65 du/ac
Downtown Commercial and Mixed-Use	25 to 45 du/ac	30 to 125 du/ac
West Gateway Commercial and Mixed-Use	20 to 35 du/ac	30 to 65 du/ac
North Gateway Commercial	n/a	30 to 65 du/ac
Home Office	8 to 12 du/ac	11 to 29 du/ac

SUMMARY OF THE REVISED CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

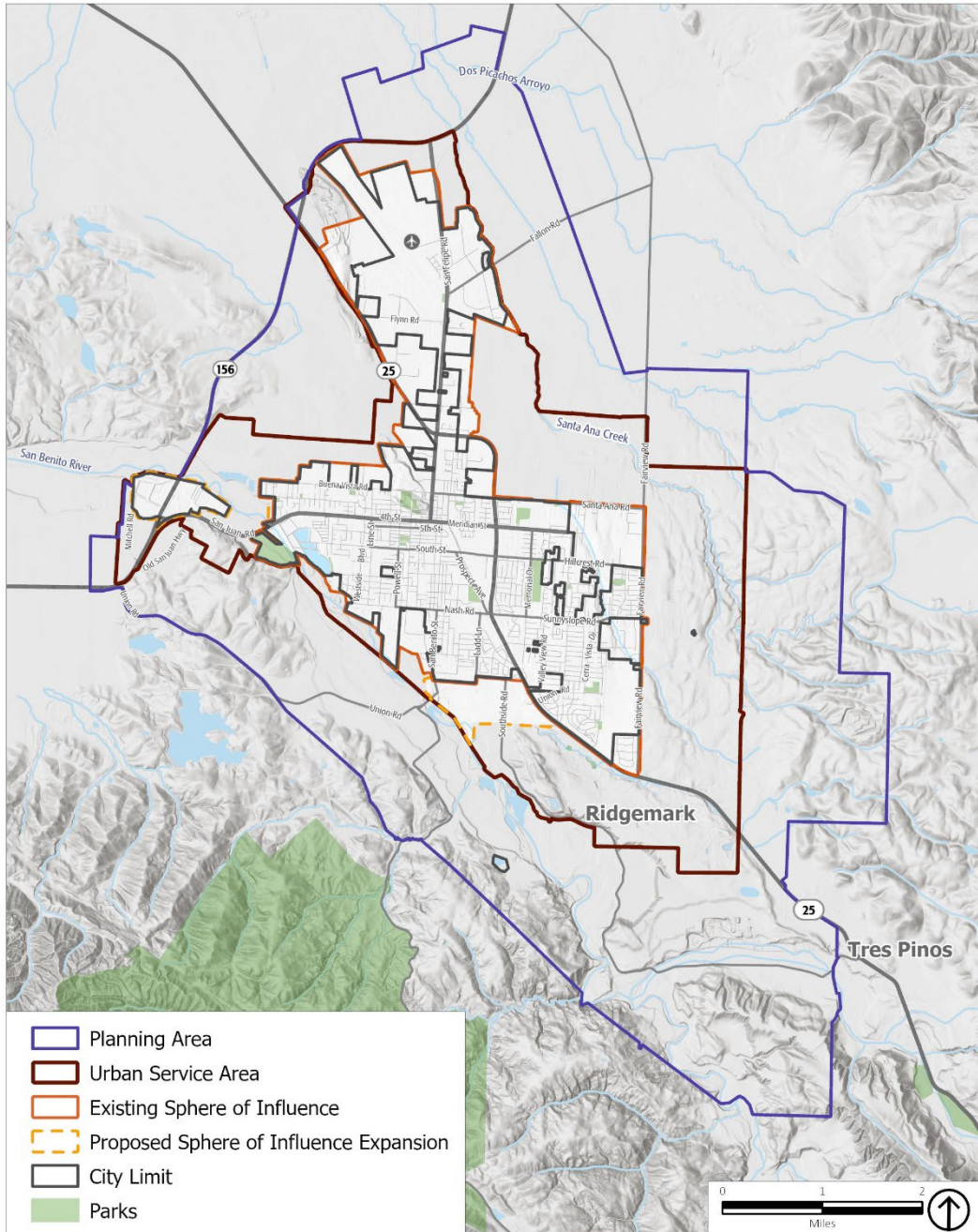
The Revised Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a strategic plan that assesses and reduces Hollister’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, consistent with State targets and directions. It identifies Hollister’s current and projected future sources of GHG emissions, including electricity and natural gas use, vehicle travel, solid waste generation, and other activities. The CAP also includes a discussion of how climate change may affect Hollister by increasing the frequency and severity of flooding, drought, extreme heat, regional wildfires, and other natural hazards.

Like the previous draft CAP, the Revised CAP contains a comprehensive set of strategies that reduces these emissions 82 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2045. Key strategies in the CAP include:

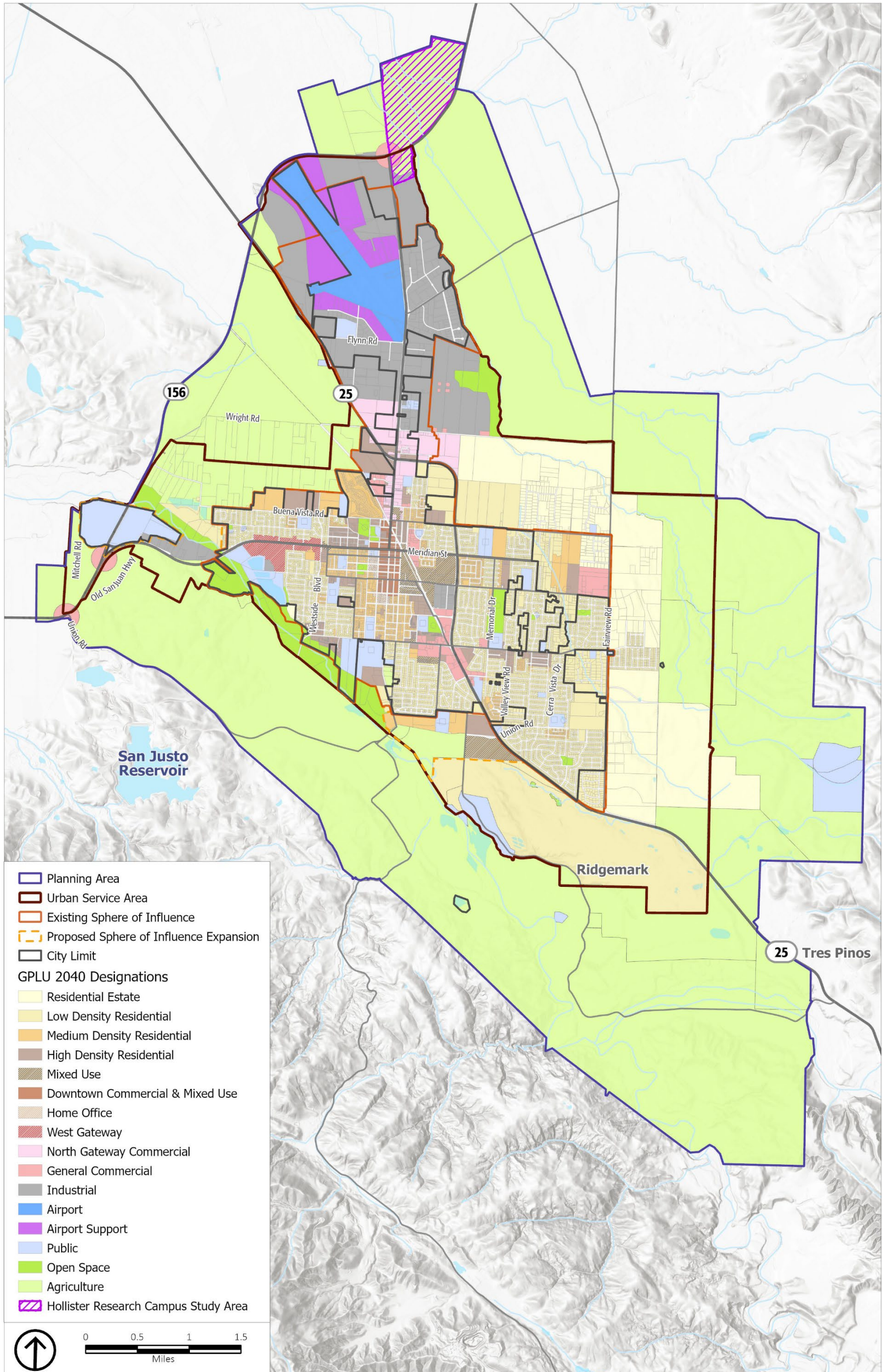
- Encouraging community members to replace natural gas appliances with electric models.
- Reducing vehicle travel through improved access to local and regional transit systems.
- Increasing Hollister’s electric vehicle adoption rate.
- Transitioning away from diesel-powered construction and landscaping equipment.
- Decreasing the amount of waste sent to landfills.

When the 2026 General Plan was revised, the CAP was revised to reflect the new allowed land use pattern.

FIGURE 1 EXISTING AND PROPOSED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE



Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2025; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

FIGURE 2 DRAFT GENERAL PLAN LAND USE MAP


Source: ESRI, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2025; San Benito County, 2020; USGS, 2019

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Draft General Plan and Draft CAP were developed through a public process, consisting of issue exploration, visioning, and policy development as described above. A General Plan Advisory Committee provided overall direction, with the assistance of citizen representatives who worked closely with the consultant team and City staff to guide the public process for updating the plan.

Table 2 summarizes the outreach events and Table 3 summarizes the meetings undertaken through March 2025. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020, the City collected community input primarily through virtual workshops and online activities. Although most of the workshops were virtual, they still allowed for dialogue and small group participation so community members could share ideas and hear feedback from their neighbors.

The public input received from the workshops, online activities, survey, and General Plan Advisory Committee meetings helped inform the development of the Draft Plans. The Revised Plans will be reviewed in public discussion and finalized based on Council direction which will be provided on April 20, 2026.

TABLE 2 **SUMMARY OF OUTREACH EVENTS**

#	Meeting Date	Topic	# of Participants
Workshops			
1	Saturday, June 27, 2020	Visioning Workshop	12
2	Tuesday, June 30, 2020	Visioning Workshop	18
3	Wednesday, July 8, 2020	Visioning Workshop	15
4	Thursday, July 9, 2020	Visioning Workshop	20
5	Tuesday, March 9, 2021	Policy Options Workshop	16
6	Wednesday, March 10, 2021	Policy Options Workshop	20
7	Thursday, May 6, 2021	Spanish Language Workshop	45
8	Wednesday, May 17, 2023	Draft General Plan, Draft CAP , and Draft Agricultural Preservation Program- Farmers Market Pop-up	71
9	Thursday, May 18, 2023	Draft General Plan and CAP - Virtual Workshop	15
10	Tuesday, July 16, 2024	Revised Draft EIR Public Meeting	5
Online Activities			
1	Summer 2020	Visioning Online Engagement	47
2	Spring 2021	Policy Options Online Engagement	8

Source: PlaceWorks, 2024.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

#	Meeting Date	Topic
GPAC Meetings		
1	Thursday, June 4, 2020	General Plan Kick-off
2	Tuesday, October 6, 2020	Visioning
3	Tuesday, November 17, 2020	Existing Conditions
4	Tuesday, March 23, 2021	Policy Options
5	Tuesday, March 30, 2021	Policy Options
6	Tuesday, April 6, 2021	Policy Options
7	Tuesday, April 13, 2021	Policy Options
8	Tuesday, April 27, 2021	Policy Options
Planning Commission Meetings		
1	Thursday, April 22, 2021	EIR Scoping Meeting
2	Monday, May 24, 2021	Draft Vision Statement and Policy Options
3	Thursday, August 10, 2023	Draft General Plan, Draft CAP, Draft Agricultural Preservation Program, and Draft EIR
4	Thursday, October 23, 2024	Revised General Plan, CAP, Agricultural Preservation Program and FEIR
City Council Meetings		
1	Monday, April 6, 2020	GPAC Formation
2	Monday, March 1, 2021	Project Update
3	Tuesday, June 22, 2021	Draft Vision Statement and Policy Options
4	Tuesday, January 18, 2022	Project Update
5	Monday, September 11, 2023	Draft General Plan, Draft CAP, Draft Agricultural Preservation Program, and Draft EIR
6	Monday, December 3, 2024	Revised General Plan, CAP, Agricultural Preservation Program and FEIR
7	Monday, March 3, 2025	Repeal of Revised General Plan
8	Monday, April 21, 2025	Direction on General Plan Update

Source: PlaceWorks, 2026.

COMMUNITY INPUT ON THE REVISED PLANS

This section includes a summary of the community feedback collected on the 2026 Draft General Plan from January 2026 through March 19, 2026 via emails sent to City staff:

- » Revised Draft General Plan 2040
 - Change designation at the northwest corner of San Benito Street and Union Road from Medium Density Residential to either Commercial or Mixed-Use. Reduce diversity, equity, and inclusion themes in the Draft General Plan Vision.

- Revise Policy NRC-3.8 to replace the requirement for “zero-emissions operations” with measures that can be controlled by the property owner.
- Revise Policy LU-5.5 which requires regional distribution centers to be located at least 1,000 feet away from sensitive receptors (housing, schools, day care centers, and health facilities) and replace it with enforceable performance standards.
- Change the designation of APNs 56-250-005 & 028 (151 & 191 Hillcrest – the existing concrete plant) from Mixed Use to Industrial.
- Revise Policy LU-14.1 to allow development in Union Road without requiring the development of a Specific Plan first.

No comments have been received regarding the Revised Draft Climate Action Plan.

Attachment 2 includes public comments received as of March 19, 2026.

OVERVIEW OF THE ADDENDUM TO THE GENERAL PLAN 2040 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

On December 3, 2024, the City Council certified the Hollister 2040 General Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Agricultural Lands Preservation Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR), State Clearinghouse No. 2021040277 and approved the Hollister 2040 General Plan, Climate Action Plan (CAP), and Agricultural Lands Preservation Program (ALPP) Project. However, subsequent to the EIR certification, the City Council repealed the 2024 General Plan and directed staff to revert to the 2023 Draft General Plan.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Sections 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et. seq.) recognize that between the date an environmental document is completed and the date the project is fully implemented, one or more of the following changes may occur: 1) the project may change; 2) the environmental setting in which the project is located may change; 3) laws, regulations, or policies may change in ways that impact the environment; and/or 4) previously unknown information can arise. If such changes occur, CEQA requires the lead agency to evaluate these changes to determine whether or not they affect the conclusions in the environmental document. Depending on the circumstances, this evaluation can lead to a determination that a subsequent EIR, a supplemental EIR or an EIR Addendum is required.

The City prepared an Addendum to the Certified EIR (Attachment 3) because evaluation of the 2026 Draft General Plan determined that none of the circumstances requiring a subsequent or supplemental EIR are applicable. Specifically, the 2026 Draft General Plan would not result in impacts that differ from the 2024 Draft General Plan, it would not trigger the need for preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR under the criteria in CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162(a) and 15163(a), and it would not change the assumptions made under the Certified EIR.

NEXT STEPS

Publishing the Revised Draft Plans was an important milestone for the Hollister General Plan Update project. The remaining key milestones of the General Plan Update include:

- » March 26, 2026 -- Planning Commission considers recommending Final General Plan and CAP for adoption to the City Council.
- » April 20, 2026 – City Council considers Final General Plan and CAP for adoption.