

4.9 LAND USE

This section describes the project site's existing land uses and the impacts of the proposed project on land uses within the site and in the vicinity. This analysis was based on site investigations and analysis from County staff, the visual simulations prepared by Interacta, as well as information contained in the Santa Barbara Ranch and Paradiso del Mare Ocean and Inland Estates EIRs.

4.9.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.9.1.1 Existing Site Conditions

The project site is a 1,784-acre ranch (not including the 18-acre parcel that is not a part of the project applications) located in the rural unincorporated Gaviota Coast area of Santa Barbara County. The site straddles U.S. Highway 101 approximately four miles from the City of Goleta and the urban/rural boundary, with five of the proposed seven parcels located on the coastal terrace in between the highway and the Pacific Ocean. Existing land uses within the project site include cattle ranching, avocado and lemon orchards, agricultural support facilities, as well as a number of agricultural employee dwellings and single family dwellings scattered around the various parcels. The property has a Comprehensive Plan designation of Agriculture (A-II-100) and has been in various forms of agriculture since it was established. Existing development on the site is generally of a rural character and small in scale, with many of the structures dating back to the early 1900s.

In general, the portion of the project site south of U.S. Highway 101 is within the Coastal Zone, though the southern portion of proposed Parcel 7 is within the Coastal Zone as well. Projects which fall within the Coastal Zone are required to be consistent with the California Coastal Act as well as the County's Local Coastal Program (LCP).

4.9.1.2 Surrounding Land Uses and Development

In general, land uses and development in this area of the Gaviota Coast are dominated by agriculture (both ranching and orchard operations), undeveloped vacant land, rural low intensity residential uses, and public and private recreational facilities and open space. The project site is bounded to the north by Los Padres National Forest, to the south by the Pacific Ocean, to the east by existing orchards and other active agriculture and undeveloped land, and to the west by orchards, limited rural residential uses, and a polo horse breeding and training operation (Zacara Ranch, formerly known as El Capitan Ranch). The recreational areas of El Capitan State Beach and the private El Capitan Canyon Campground are located further west of the site and the Naples Townsite and associated Santa Barbara Ranch residential development project are located one mile east of the site. Surrounding residential development is primarily rural in character and modest in size and scale, though several residences in the El Capitan Ranch subdivision area immediately west of the project site and north of U.S. Highway 101 could be characterized as more estate-like. However, these residences are surrounded by productive orchards and largely screened from view, consistent with the rural agricultural character of the area. See **Figure 4.9-1** for a depiction of these various surrounding land uses.

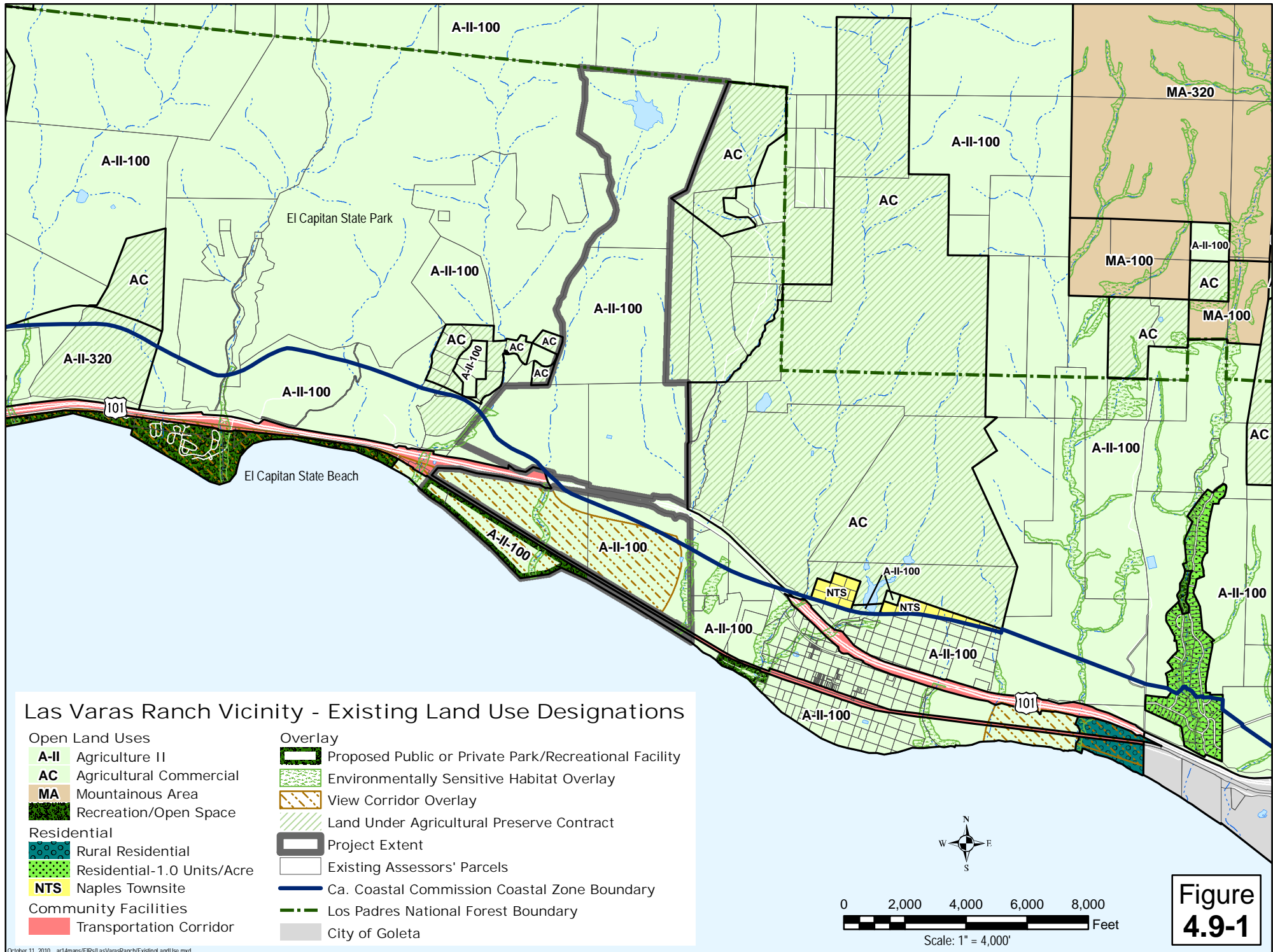


Figure 4.9-1

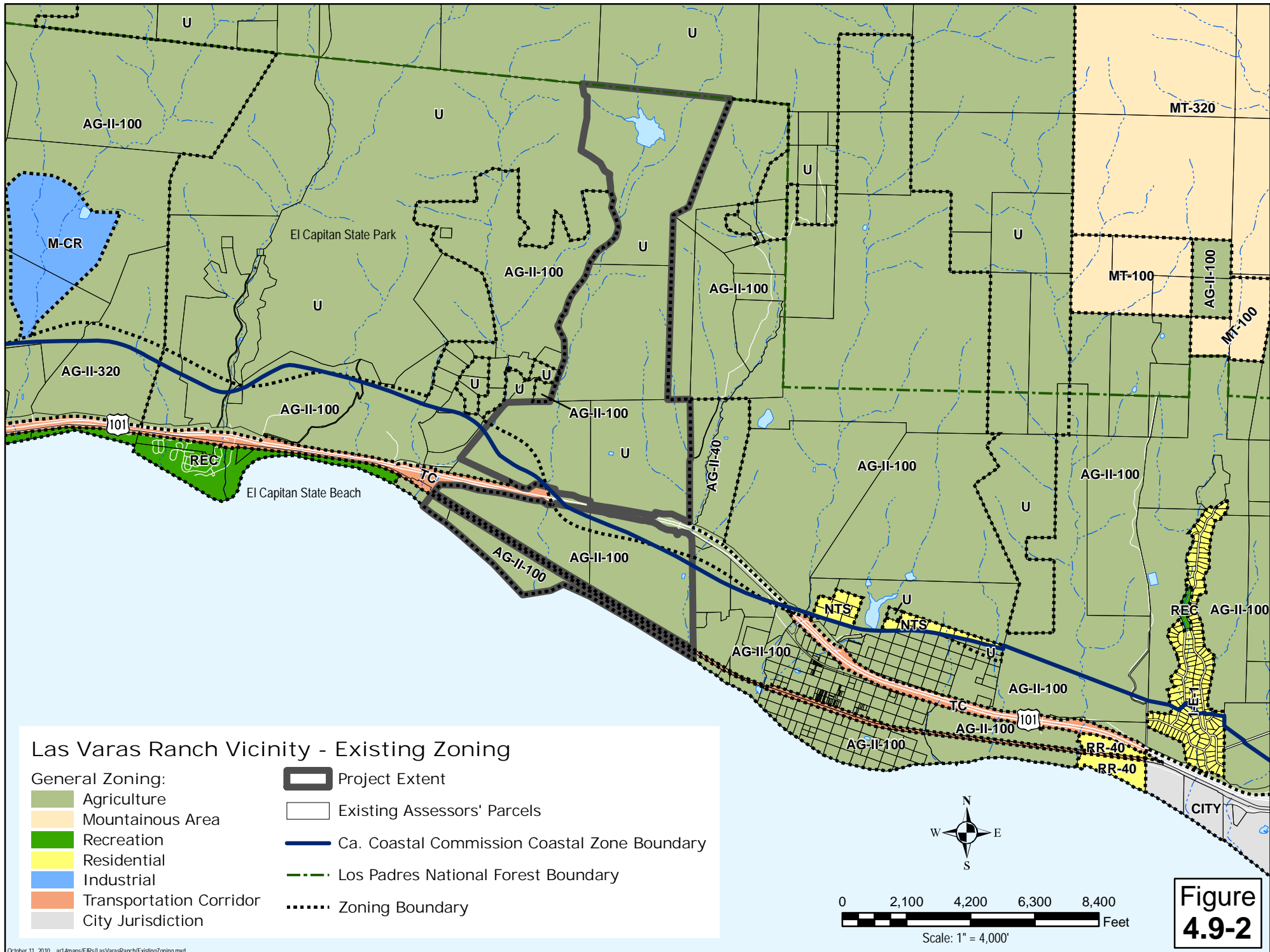


Figure 4.9-2

4.9.1.3 Existing and Proposed Land Use Designations and Zoning

As shown on **Figure 4.9-1**, the entire property has a land use designation of A-II-100, which is Agriculture with a minimum parcel size of 100 acres. Zoning on that portion of the property within the Coastal Zone is AG-II-100, Agriculture with minimum 100-acre parcels (**Figure 4.9-2**). The inland portion of the project is currently zoned Unlimited Agriculture (U), 10-acre minimum parcel size, under Ordinance 661. Ordinance 661 applies in certain rural areas of the County and predates Article III (now the Land Use Development Code) of Chapter 35 of the County Zoning Ordinance. As Ordinance 661 is an antiquated zoning ordinance, discretionary development projects on lands that are presently zoned under Ordinance 661 are typically rezoned to the appropriate zone district in conformance with the existing County Zoning Ordinance. Thus, the inland portion of the project site is proposed to be rezoned to AG-II-100 as part of the project, consistent with the coastal portion of the site (**Figure 4.9-3**). No changes in land use designations are proposed as part of the project.

Several important land use overlays exist on the property, including: a View Corridor Overlay covering most of the site south of U.S. Highway 101; a Proposed Public or Private Park/Recreational Facility Overlay comprising the coastal bluff parcels south of the railroad from Edward's Point west; and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Overlays covering Gato and Las Varas Creeks south of U.S. Highway 101. See **Figure 4.9-1** for a depiction of these overlays.

4.9.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

4.9.2.1 State Regulations and Administering Agencies

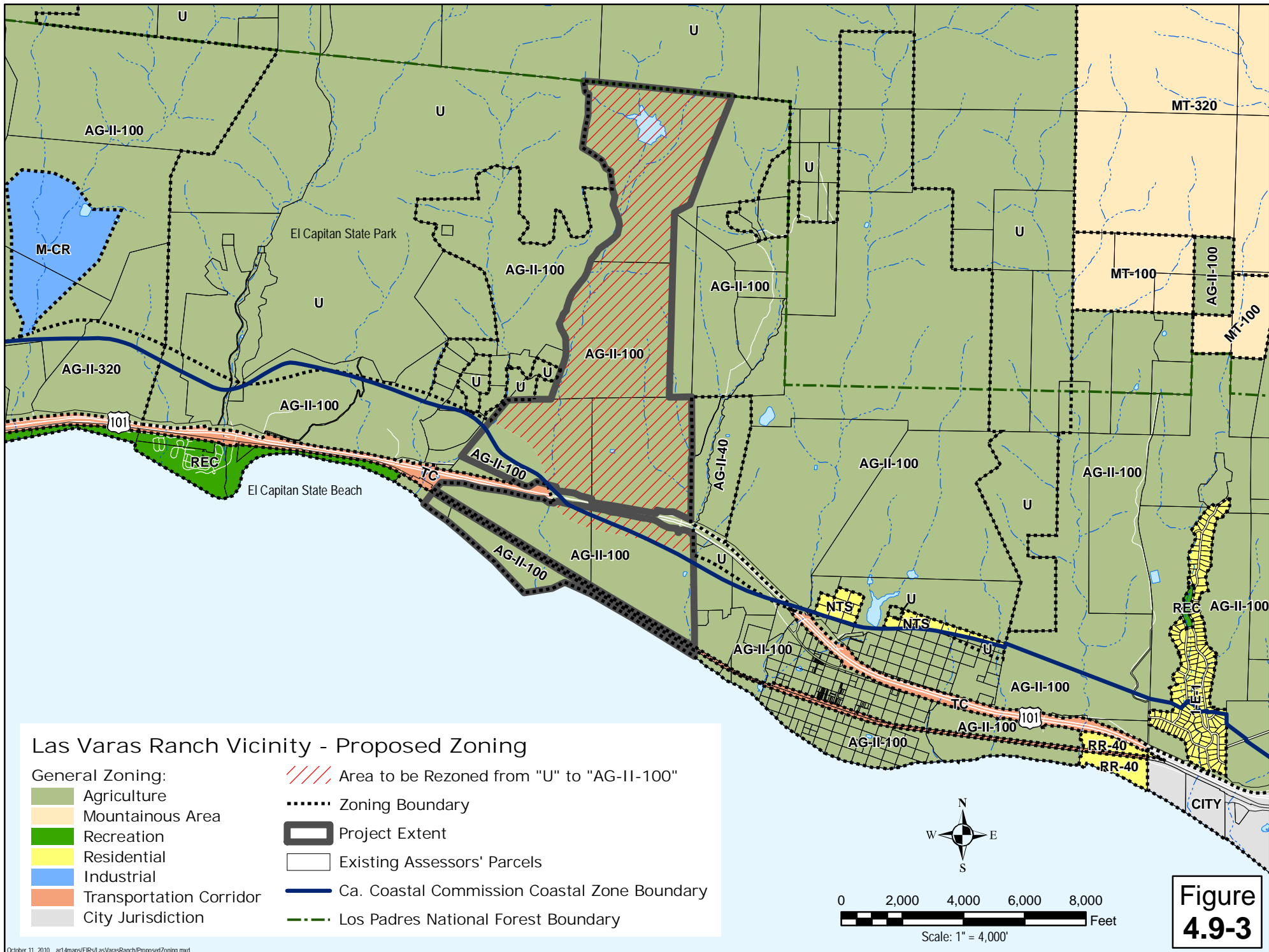
California Coastal Act

The California Coastal Act was enacted by the State Legislature in 1976 to provide long-term protection of California's 1,100 mile coastline for the benefit of current and future generations. The California Coastal Commission oversees application and implementation of the Coastal Act and has authority over certain types of land use and development in the coastal zone through administration of the Coastal Act. The Act includes numerous policies addressing various resources within the coastal zone, as discussed in the relevant sections of this EIR. A detailed policy consistency analysis is included in Section 5.0 of the EIR.

- **Coastal Act Policy 30250(a):** *New residential, commercial, or industrial development, except as otherwise provided in this division, shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources.*

4.9.2.2 Local Regulations and Policies

A number of County policy and planning documents included as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan, including the Coastal Land Use Plan (CLUP), address land use and development. The CLUP contains the principal land use policies for development in the coastal zone. The County has incorporated numerous policies into the CLUP in order to ensure conformance with the California Coastal Act. The CLUP designates the project parcels within



the coastal zone as A-II-100, with corresponding zoning of the Coastal Zoning Ordinance as AG-II-100. The purpose of this land use designation and zoning is to establish agricultural land use for large agricultural lands in rural areas as the principal land use and to preserve these lands for long-term agricultural use. The Comprehensive Plan, including its various elements (most notably the Land Use Element), similarly contains policies guiding land use and development within coastal and inland portions of the County. A detailed policy consistency analysis is included in Section 5.0 of the EIR.

4.9.3 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The *County of Santa Barbara Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual* does not include specific thresholds for land use or growth inducing impacts. The following thresholds are based on the State CEQA Guidelines (Appendix G) and the County's Initial Study Checklist. The proposed project would result in a significant land use impact if it would:

- Introduce land uses or structures that would be incompatible with existing surrounding land uses and character; or
- Conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, including policies regarding the preservation of open space, which results in a significant adverse physical effect; or
- Induce substantial growth or concentration of population, for example, by constructing infrastructure with capacity to serve new development beyond the project.

4.9.4 PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Consistency of the proposed project with applicable land use policies, including policies of the County's Comprehensive Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan, is addressed in detail in Section 5.0 Policy Consistency of this EIR.

Impact LU-1: Land Use Compatibility.

The proposed project includes the reconfiguration of nine existing lots (seven of which were legally created, one is limited to a narrow strip of coastline that is not considered developable, and one does not have a Certificate of Compliance but is proposed to be merged to become part of Parcel 6) into seven lots and the identification of areas for future residential development. Thus, a total of up to seven principal residences and associated residential accessory structures (including, potentially, additional farm employee dwellings) could be developed in the future within the project site. Proposed Parcel 5 already includes a principal single family residence within the development envelope, which could remain or be demolished and rebuilt in the future. Five lots would be located south of the highway on the coastal terrace and two lots would be located north of the highway in the foothills. This equates to a shift of development potential of one developable lot and associated future residence from the north side to the south side of the highway as compared to the existing parcel configuration. In addition, the proposed project includes infrastructure improvements including access roads and a shared water system to serve future development on the site. The existing ranching and orchard operations are proposed to remain and vertical and horizontal trail easements are proposed for dedication to the County for future

public trail opportunities through and along the property. These new residential and recreational land uses would be compatible with the surrounding area as they would be low intensity and would not introduce significant sources of noise, traffic, or nighttime lighting that would detract from existing surrounding land uses and character. With the exception of the two parcels along the coastal bluff currently substandard in parcel size and which would remain substandard under the proposal, the proposed project would result in parcels that meet minimum parcel size requirements and are consistent with existing land use designations. The AG-II-100 zone district, which covers much of the Gaviota Coast, allows for one principal residence on each legal parcel, even if the parcel is below the minimum parcel size. Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with the land use and zoning densities identified for this area.

The project identifies development envelopes of up to five acres (2.5 acres for Parcels 2 and 7) for each of the proposed parcels. For proposed Parcel 6, given the size of the parcel, a single development envelope has not been identified at this time but future non-agricultural development would be limited to two contiguous acres within a five-acre envelope within one of the three “development areas” identified on the site plan. Single family residences are not necessarily incompatible with the surrounding rural character and existing land uses, as they are principally permitted uses within agricultural zone districts and it is customary for agriculturists to maintain principal residences on their agricultural properties. In fact, most of the ranches along this section of the Gaviota Coast contain home sites. However, these envelopes could accommodate large estate-style residences and residential accessory structures and improvements that could potentially be out of character with the surrounding rural agricultural setting and existing development which has historically been modest in scale, as there are no limits placed on the size or scale of future residential development. Though, by limiting residential development to two contiguous acres within each envelope, the project would be consistent with the restrictions placed on properties enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve Program, restrictions which have been established and adopted by the Board of Supervisors to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture.

The severity of this potential conflict and incompatibility is largely due to the visibility and prominence of future development within some of the proposed parcels from public vantage points. Measures to help ensure compatibility of development with the surrounding land uses and character include 1) if the development fits the site’s topography and is not perched prominently on hillsides or ridge tops or intrudes into the skyline as viewed from public vantage points; 2) if the development is adequately and appropriately screened by vegetation and landscaping without the landscaping obscuring coastal views; and 3) if the development is designed and sited in a manner that respects the rural character of the area. While large, the development envelopes represent a small fraction (less than 2%) of the overall ranch. Maintaining the existing agricultural operations and undeveloped areas within the ranch would help to minimize potential incompatibilities of future residential development by maintaining the rural context of the setting and ensuring that future residential land uses remain subordinate to the rural agricultural character of the area. This is accomplished by limiting non-agricultural development to no more than two contiguous acres within the development envelopes (in conformance with the requirements for Agricultural Preserve properties under the Uniform Rules) and establishing CC&Rs that ensure continued participation in the ranch’s agricultural operations by future landowners. The CC&Rs also function to ensure that future landowners are well informed of the existing on-site agricultural operations prior to their purchase, which would help to minimize any future land use conflicts between residential use and on-site agricultural activities. However, absent any restrictions or

guidelines addressing future development of the site and absent specific architectural designs and details to evaluate, the potential land use impacts from the development of incompatible structures are considered *potentially significant but mitigable*.

Mitigation Measures

Land use impacts associated with compatibility of development would be mitigated by implementation of the following mitigation measures:

- Mitigation Measure CULT 5, which requires that future residential development be compatible with the size, bulk, scale, height, and style of existing historic structures within the project site; and
- Mitigation Measures AES 1 through AES 5, which reduce aesthetic impacts of the project.
- Mitigation Measure AG 2-3, which codifies the applicant's commitment to remain in agriculture through the recordation of CC&Rs.

Residual Impacts

The residual impact of Impact LU-1 is **less than significant (Class II)** with implementation of the mitigation measures referenced above.

Impact LU-2: Conflicts with County Policies

The proposed project would potentially conflict with Policy 10-2 of the Coastal Land Use Plan associated with the proposed development envelope on Parcel 3. The location of the envelope would result in future residential development within a recorded archaeological site (CA-SBA-80). Consistency with this policy requires avoidance of development within archaeological sites where possible. As discussed in Section 4.5 of the EIR, Mitigation Measure CULT 2-1 would reduce the extent of the development envelope in order to avoid the potential for future development within the areas of the site that contribute to the site's significance. Implementation of this mitigation measure would ensure consistency with this policy.

Policy 9-9 of the Coastal Land Use Plan requires that a 100-foot wide buffer be maintained around wetlands within the County. The proposed development envelope on Parcel 5 currently encompasses several potential wetlands and wetland buffer areas. Thus, there is the potential that future development within this envelope could encroach into the wetland buffer areas, in conflict with this policy. This impact would be mitigated by limiting development to outside of the wetland buffer areas (Mitigation Measure BIO 16).

Impacts associated with conflicts with County policies resulting in significant adverse physical effects are therefore considered *potentially significant but mitigable*. There are no other conflicts with County plans or policies that result in significant adverse physical effects. For a detailed analysis of the project's consistency with County plans and policies, refer to Section 5.0 of the EIR.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure CULT 2-1, which reduces the extent of the development envelope on Parcel 3, would ensure consistency with Coastal Land Use Plan Policy 10-2. Mitigation Measure BIO 16 would ensure consistency with Coastal Land Use Plan Policy 9-9.

Residual Impacts

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CULT 2-1 would result in avoidance of development within the sensitive areas of CA-SBA-80. Complete avoidance is not possible without resulting in other significant adverse impacts, as discussed in Section 5.0. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO 16 would ensure that future development would not encroach into required wetland buffers. Implementation of these mitigation measures would ensure consistency with County policies and reduce adverse physical impacts associated with such conflicts to **less than significant (Class II)** levels.

Impact LU-3: Growth Inducing Impacts.

Section 15126(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss the growth inducing impact of the proposed project, including “ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.”

The proposed project would result in up to seven new single family dwellings and associated residential accessory structures, including potential guest houses and/or agricultural employee dwellings. It is expected that the existing single family dwellings located within the proposed development envelopes on parcels 4, 5, and 6 would be converted to agricultural employee dwellings or potentially demolished and replaced in the case of the residence on Parcel 5 (the existing residence on proposed Parcel 4 is historically significant and is intended to remain). This level of development would not result in substantial population growth in the area or foster economic growth as a result of increasing the local demand for commercial uses that serve residents. Moreover, buildout under the current parcel configuration within the project site would result in a similar increase in population.

A key issue to consider when evaluating whether a project may be growth inducing is the services (water, sewer, etc.) that may be established or extended in order to serve the project. In the case of the proposed project, sewer service for each proposed parcel would be provided through private individual septic systems which are sized for the specific development project and are not considered growth inducing. There would be no extension of municipal sewer lines to serve the project, which could otherwise remove an impediment to growth in some areas and have the capacity to provide service to additional development in the future. In regards to water service for future residential development at the ranch, the project proposes to develop a private shared water system utilizing a combination of water storage, pumps, and water diversion from Gato Creek. The shared water system would be sized to accommodate future residential development of the seven parcels, including potential use by guest houses or agricultural employee dwellings, for a total of up to 14 dwelling units. The system could potentially be expanded in the future to accommodate additional development if the largest proposed parcel (proposed Parcel 6) were further subdivided in the future. The remaining project

parcels could not be further subdivided given the current zoning and minimum 100-acre parcel size. Proposed Parcel 6 is severely constrained with steep slopes and extensive riparian and oak woodland vegetation further up the canyon, thus limiting the opportunities for additional development and residential subdivisions.

Since the scope of the project involves reconfiguring nine existing lots (seven of which have Certificates of Compliance) into seven new lots, the overall potential for future residential development is no greater under the proposed project relative to the existing setting (though the location of potential future development would change under the project, shifting one of the legally developable parcels from the north side of the highway to the south side).

For these reasons, the project would not be growth inducing. Growth inducing impacts are considered *adverse but less than significant (Class III)*.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Residual Impacts

The residual impact of LU-3 is **less than significant (Class III)**.

4.9.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Other planned, pending and future projects in the area of the project site, as identified in the Cumulative Projects list, will result in incremental development of the Gaviota Coast for residential purposes and has the potential to change the character of the area from one distinguished by rural agricultural and undeveloped land with occasional residences of modest size to one defined by more numerous residential estates spanning the landscape along the U.S. Highway 101 travel corridor. While the area will always remain rural given existing zoning and land use designations as well as the existence of several agricultural and resource conservation easements and agricultural preserves, there is the potential for residential development to become more of a dominant land use along this portion of the Gaviota Coast, especially in the region east of the project site around the Naples Townsite where denser residential development may occur. However, most of the Gaviota Coast is zoned AG-II-100 or AG-II-320, 100-acre or 320-acre minimum parcel size, which would limit future opportunities for increased development intensity. The AG-II zone district allows for one residential dwelling per legal parcel as a principally permitted use, regardless of parcel size. Thus, the amount and density of residential development along the Gaviota Coast is dictated by existing parcel configurations, with few opportunities to subdivide existing rangeland into parcels less than 100 acres in size.

New residential development associated with the cumulative projects (including the proposed project and the identification of building envelopes for future development) totals 143 residential units (assuming implementation of the Santa Barbara Ranch Alternative 1 project totaling 72 units; the MOU project consisting of 18 fewer units). This number of residential units distributed along the entire Gaviota Coast would not necessarily be incompatible with the existing rural agricultural land uses characteristic of the area; however, the majority of these residences would be concentrated in a roughly three-mile segment within or east of the Naples

Townsite and many of these would be clearly visible from the main travel corridor of U.S. Highway 101. House sizes within this development could range from approximately 4,000 square feet to 13,000 square feet and would include guest houses, garages, and other residential accessory structures that would potentially be out of character with existing rural land uses in the surrounding area. Land use in this immediate area would become characterized more by rural residential development, with most of the lots less than 20 acres in size, than by agriculture and ranching. The Paradiso del Mare project just east of Santa Barbara Ranch is also proposing two residences of over 6,000 feet with accessory structures on the coastal terrace south of U.S. Highway 101. These two projects are located at the gateway to the Gaviota Coast as one leaves the urban communities of Goleta and Santa Barbara, and thus have a notable influence on helping to define the rural agricultural character of land uses and development along the Gaviota Coast. Other planned, pending, and future projects may follow this trend of large estate-style residences that, together, could change the character of existing and surrounding land uses and development along the Gaviota Coast. For these reasons, cumulative impacts with regards to land use compatibility and the rural character of the surrounding area are considered significant. The proposed project would only contribute up to seven new residences and accessory structures across 1,784 acres to this cumulative development and many of these would not be visible from U.S. Highway 101 so as not to significantly contribute to the change in character of the area as experienced by the general public. In addition, the ranch would be maintained in agriculture consistent with its current orchard and ranching operations. This would help to ensure that the site retains its existing rural agricultural character and residential uses remain subordinate to the rural setting. Therefore, the project's contribution to the significant cumulative impact is *not cumulatively considerable*.

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