

# CHAPTER 3

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## Environmental Setting

### 3.1 Approach to the Environmental Analysis

#### 3.1.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the possible environmental effects of the Project for the specific issue areas that were identified through the scoping process as having the potential to experience significant effects. A “significant effect” as defined by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15382:

*a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.*

The assessment of each issue area begins with a discussion of the environmental setting related to the issue, which is followed by the impact analysis. In the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the “significance thresholds,” which are those criteria adopted by Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) and other agencies, universally recognized, or developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential effects are significant. For example, the County of Santa Barbara utilizes the Santa Barbara County *Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual* (2021) for evaluating environmental impacts in the County. The next subsection describes each impact of the Project, mitigation measures for significant impacts, and the level of significance after mitigation. Each effect under consideration for an issue area is separately listed in bold text with the discussion of the effect and its significance. Each bolded impact statement also contains a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact as follows:

- **Significant and Unavoidable.** An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per Section 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings under Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Less than Significant.** An impact that may be adverse but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.
- **No Impact.** The proposed project would have no effect on environmental conditions or would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Following each environmental impact discussion is a list of mitigation measures and the residual effects or level of significance remaining after implementation of the measure(s). In cases where the mitigation measure for an impact could have a significant environmental impact in another issue area, this impact is discussed and evaluated as a secondary impact. While SBCAG cannot mandate that sponsoring agencies implement the mitigation measures, ongoing interagency consultation during project specific environmental review process would ensure that mitigation contained herein is considered and implemented where applicable. Project-specific environmental documents may adjust these mitigation measures as necessary to respond to site-specific conditions. Many sections conclude with a screening-level discussion of specific Project transportation projects that may result in identified impacts. The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which are defined and discussed in detail below in Subsection 3.1.2, Cumulative Impact Analysis.

Regarding Mandatory Findings of Significance under CEQA, Section 4.2, *Biological Resources*, describes the potential project-level, programmatic and cumulative effects of the project on plant and animal species populations, habitats, communities, and migratory patterns. Section 4.3, *Cultural Resources*, describes potential project-level, programmatic and cumulative effects from the Project on important historical and prehistorical cultural resources, and Section 4.7, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, describes potential project-level, programmatic and cumulative effects from the Project on tribal cultural resources in the SBCAG region. Potential adverse environmental effects to human beings are discussed in Section 4.1, *Air Quality*, Section 4.5, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Global Climate Change*, and Section 4.6, *Noise*.

The Executive Summary chapter of this Draft PEIR summarizes all impacts and mitigation measures that apply to the Project.

### 3.1.2 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative impacts are discussed in each resource section (Sections 4.1 through 4.8 of this Draft PEIR), following discussions of the program-specific impacts.

#### **Cumulative Impact Approach**

Section 15130(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Where a project's incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable, the effect need not be considered significant, but the basis for the conclusion must be briefly described. Cumulatively considerable, as defined in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)(3), means that the "incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects."

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15355 defines a cumulative impact as two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 identifies two basic methods for establishing the cumulative environment in which a project is considered: the use of a list of past, present, and probable future projects; or the use of adopted projections from a general plan, other regional

planning document, or a certified EIR for such a planning document. The cumulative analyses in this PEIR primarily uses the list approach, with some use of the plan approach to describe the cumulative setting for some resource areas (e.g., air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and transportation). The list approach identifies reasonably foreseeable projects that may contribute to a cumulative effect rather than projections contained in an adopted local, regional or statewide plan, or related planning document. The effects of past and present projects on the environment are reflected by the existing conditions in the program area. Probable future projects are those in the vicinity that have the possibility of interacting with the proposed program to generate a cumulative impact (based on proximity and construction schedule) and either:

- are partially occupied or under construction,
- have received final discretionary approvals,
- have applications accepted as complete by local agencies and are currently undergoing environmental review, or
- are projects that have been discussed publicly by an applicant or that otherwise become known to a local agency and have provided sufficient information about the project to allow at least a general analysis of environmental impacts.

The cumulative list below considers related, reasonably foreseeable projects likely to be constructed simultaneously with construction of individual broadband projects under the proposed program, which would be expected to occur over many years. This time period was selected because it coincides with the timing of the introduction of program impacts (program impacts would generally be associated with construction activities).

### 3.1.3 Cumulative Setting

#### Geographic Scope

The geographic area that could be affected by the Project varies depending on the environmental resource topic. When the effects of the Project are considered in combination with those of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects to identify cumulative impacts, the specific projects considered may also vary depending on the type of environmental effects being assessed. **Table 3-1, *Geographic Scope of Cumulative Impacts***, presents the general geographic areas associated with the different resource topics addressed in this analysis.

**TABLE 3-1  
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Resource Topic	Geographic Area
Air Quality	Local and regional
Biological Resources	Santa Barbara County and beyond
Cultural Resources	Program area
Energy	Local and regional
Global Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas	Local and regional
Noise and Vibration	Project area and vicinity
Tribal Cultural Resources	Program area
Utilities and Service Systems-Telecommunication Facilities	Program area

## Project List

Probable future projects considered in the cumulative analysis meet the criteria described above: they are in the Project vicinity and have the possibility of interacting with the Project to generate a cumulative impact (See **Table 3-2**, *Cumulative Project List*, and **Figure 3-1**, *Cumulative Project Map*). This list of projects was considered in the development and analysis of the cumulative settings and impacts for most resource topics within the geographic scope of each resource topic (as listed in Table 3-1). Past and present projects in the vicinity were also considered as part of the cumulative setting, as they contribute to the existing conditions upon which the environmental effects of the Project and reasonably foreseeable future projects are compared.

**TABLE 3-2  
CUMULATIVE PROJECT LIST**

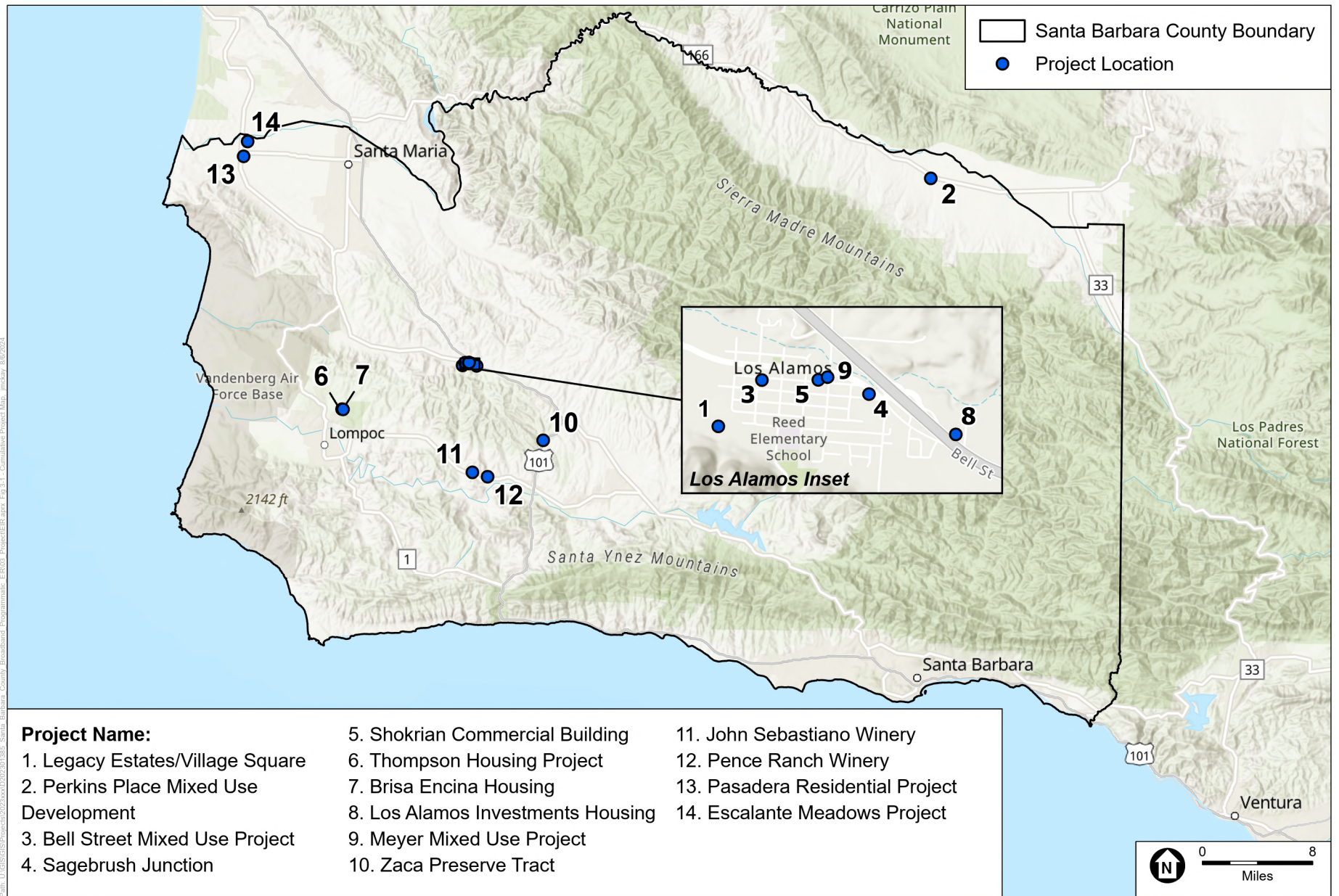
Project Name	Location	Description	Project Status
<b>Unincorporated Santa Barbara County</b>			
Legacy Estates/Village Square	SW corner of Los Alamos APNs 101-201-001, 101-202-001, 101-231-001, 101-232-001, 101-233-001, 101-234-001, and 101-242-001	59 lot subdivision and subsequent development of those lots with single-family dwellings	Project approved overall, Building permits under review, Zoning permits approved and under review for individual dwellings
Perkins Place Mixed Use Development	60 Perkins Rd, New Cuyama APN 149-051-001, -002	16 very low income dwellings, 16 low income dwellings (15,996 sq. f.t of residential) and nonresidential of 1,110 sq. ft.	Zoning permits under review
Bell Street Mixed Use Project	230 St Joseph St, Los Alamos APN 101-181-001	One commercial building (5,203 sq. ft.) and four residential units (12,143 sq. ft.)	Zoning permits approved, Building permits not submitted
Sagebrush Junction	742 Bell St, Los Alamos APNs 101-260-006, -007	Three, two-story apartment buildings containing a total of eight two-story apartments for a total of 10,320 sq. ft. and two single story commercial buildings of 4,400 and 1,200 sq. ft.	Zoning permits approved, Building permits not submitted
Shokrian Commercial Building	565 Waite St, Los Alamos APNs 101-191-009, -017	Two-story, 4,580 sq. ft. commercial building	Zoning permits under review
Thompson Housing Project	1426 Burton Mesa Blvd, Lompoc APN 097-111-006	Residential consisting of 46 studios, one 2-bedroom, and common areas.	Zoning permits under review
Brisa Encina Housing	Burton Mesa Blvd & Rucker Rd, Lompoc APN 097-111-007	Residential consisting of 49 units (12 1-bedrooms, 12 2-bedrooms, 25 studios) across two buildings of 11,956 sq. ft. and 12,135 sq. ft.	Zoning permits approved, building permits submitted
Los Alamos Investments Housing	477 Price Canyon Rd, Los Alamos APNs 101-130-016, -019	Residential development consisting of 67 dwellings (44 2-bedrooms, 14 3-bedrooms, 9 4-bedrooms), 38 will be single-family dwellings and 29 duplexes	Zoning permits under review

Project Name	Location	Description	Project Status
Meyer Mixed Use Project	580 Bell St, Los Alamos APN 101-191-010	Two-story mixed use building (retail, residential, 4,496 sq. ft. footprint), three short-term rentals (1,576 sq. ft., 1,576 sq. ft., and 55 sq. ft.), and a 400 sq. ft. retail building	Zoning permits under review
Zaca Preserve Tract	Jonata Park Rd, Buellton APNs 099-400-017, 099-600-041	Tract map creating seven parcels of 20 acres each, no development beyond basic infrastructure at this time	Map recordation in works, zoning and building permits for infrastructure under review
John Sebastiano Winery	7631 E Hwy 246, Lompoc APN 099-220-021	Winery of 35,385 sq. ft. with tasting rooms, offices, and winery operations	Zoning permits under review
Pence Ranch Winery	1909 Hwy 246, Buellton APN 099-220-013	Winery of 19,979 sq. ft. with tasting rooms, offices, and winery operations	Zoning and building permits issued, unknown if it will be constructed
<b>City of Guadalupe</b>			
Pasadera South Housing Project	Located at the southeast corner of Highways 1 and 166 (numerous APNs)	Residential development consisting of the addition of approximately 98 homes to the overall Pasadera Homes development, which intends to bring more than 800 homes to Guadalupe	Under construction
Escalante Meadow Project	1035 - 1096 Escalante Street Guadalupe (located on the south side of 11 <sup>th</sup> Street) APNs 115-230-003, -004	Replacement of existing 26 dwelling unit structure with 52 single story residential units, along with community center and associated amenities	Under construction, expected to be operational November 2024

**SOURCES:**

County of Santa Barbara, 2024

City of Guadalupe, 2024



SOURCE: ESA, 2024

Santa Barbara County Last-Mile Broadband Program

**Figure 3-1**  
Cumulative Project Map