

CHAPTER 17.01GROWTH MANAGEMENTSections:

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17.01.010 PURPOSE. One purpose of this Chapter is to state clearly various policies which should govern the future growth and development of Santa Cruz County. A further purpose is to provide for the enactment of a Growth Management System to regulate the character, location, amount, and timing of future development so as to achieve the stated policies. A further purpose of this Chapter is to provide for increased housing opportunities for persons with average and below average incomes who wish to reside in Santa Cruz County. Finally, it is the purpose of this Chapter to protect the public health, safety, and welfare by regulating the future use and development of land in Santa Cruz County. (Ord. 2561.1, 7/5/78)

17.01.020 FINDINGS. It is hereby found and determined as follows:

(a) Rapid Population Growth. Santa Cruz County is one of the fastest growing counties in the State of California and in the United States. Since 1970, Santa Cruz County has experienced a rate of growth which has been at least twice that experienced by the State of California as a whole.

(b) Continued Growth Likely. It is likely, absent the enactment of a Growth Management System, that Santa Cruz County will continue to experience an extremely rapid rate of population growth, at a rate forecasted to be approximately twice the rate experienced by the State of California as a whole.

(c) Santa Clara County Plans for Santa Cruz County to Grow. It is particularly likely that Santa Cruz County will continue to experience rapid population growth because jurisdictions in the adjoining Santa Clara Valley have provided, in their General Plans, and in their other planning policies, to generate a demand for new residential housing which such jurisdiction plan shall be located in Santa Cruz County.

(d) Environmental Damage and Economic Effects. Rapid population growth and development is causing extremely serious adverse environmental and economic effects, some of which are specified below:

1. Loss of Agricultural Lands. The County possesses significant agricultural lands, including prime agricultural lands, and agricultural lands which, while not defined as "prime", are economically productive or potentially economically productive. Such agricultural lands are a local, state and national resource, which should be preserved. These agricultural lands are being lost to development, and the continued viability of commercial agriculture in Santa Cruz County is threatened by rapid population growth and inappropriately placed development.
2. Mineral and Timber Resources. Rapid population growth and development also threaten the timber harvesting and mineral industries which are significant factors in the County's economy.
3. Fish and Wildlife Resources. The County has other important natural resources, including wildlife, anadromous fish, and unique plant communities, which should be preserved; these are endangered by rapid growth and inappropriate development.
4. Marine Habitats. Coastal lagoons and marine habitats which should be preserved for their economic and biologic value are being degraded and destroyed by rapid population growth and inappropriate development.
5. Air and Water Quality. Rapid population growth and development are causing the degradation of Santa Cruz County's air and water quality and threatening the health and well-being of present and future residents.

6. Scenic and Aesthetic Resources. The scenic and aesthetic qualities of Santa Cruz County are being destroyed by inappropriately placed development.

7. Water Supplies. The "safe yield" capacity of natural surface and groundwater sources is being exceeded in many areas of the County, causing water supply and water quality problems which will be irreversible or extremely expensive to correct. Overpumping of the Pajaro Valley groundwater basin, in particular, threatens future agricultural water supply and, consequently, Santa Cruz County's commercial agriculture.

(e) Cost of Services. Rapid population growth and development has expanded the demand for governmentally-provided services beyond the ability of the public to pay for and provide such services. Specifically, in many parts of the County the public is unable to pay for, provide, or maintain adequately the following services required by new development:

1. An adequate number of elementary and secondary school classrooms and teachers;
2. Adequate law enforcement and fire protection;
3. Adequate roads, sewers, and water.

School overcrowding, traffic congestion, higher crime rates, and increasingly inadequate water supplies, roads, and sewage facilities will be the result of continued rapid population growth and development. These problems are greatly aggravated when new development takes place in rural areas rather than in areas where urban services can be provided at less cost to taxpayers.

(f) Housing Crisis. Santa Cruz County is experiencing a housing crisis. Increasingly, persons with average and below average incomes whose work or other connections with the County of Santa Cruz lead them to wish to live here are unable to locate housing at a price they can afford.

Economically disadvantaged citizens are increasingly excluded from living in Santa Cruz County. The increasing demand for housing in Santa Cruz County which has accompanied the rapid population growth and development now taking place has aggravated the housing crisis, and any growth management system designed to minimize or prevent the problems caused by rapid population growth and development must simultaneously provide a positive program to increase the availability of housing for people with average and below average incomes. (Ord. 2561.1, 7/5/78)

17.01.030 POLICIES. The findings made in this Chapter identify environmental, economic, and housing problems caused by or associated with the rapid population growth and development of Santa Cruz County. It is hereby determined that in order to minimize or eliminate such problems, and to assure the public health, safety, and welfare, the following policies shall guide the future growth and development of Santa Cruz County.

(a) Preserve Agricultural Lands. It shall be the policy of Santa Cruz County that prime agricultural lands and lands which are economically productive when used for agriculture shall be preserved for agricultural use.

(b) Distinguish "Urban" and "Rural" Areas. It shall be the policy of Santa Cruz County to preserve a distinction between areas in the County which are "urban", and areas which are "rural". Divisions of land in rural areas shall be discouraged, and new residential developments shall be encouraged to locate in urban areas.

(c) Urban Area Protection. It shall be the policy of Santa Cruz County to insure that new development in the unincorporated "urban" areas does not proceed without the provision of adequate services which will enhance the quality of life for current and future residents of these urban areas; the County Capital Improvement Plan shall reflect this commitment.

(d) Annual Population Growth Limit. It shall be the policy of Santa Cruz County to set an annual population growth for this County which shall limit growth to that amount which represents Santa Cruz County's fair share of each year's statewide population growth.

(e) Housing for Persons with Average Incomes. It shall be the policy of Santa Cruz County that at least 15 percent of those housing units newly constructed for sale or rental each year shall be capable of purchase or rental by persons with average or below average incomes.

(f) Resource Protection. It shall be the policy of Santa Cruz County to prevent the division or other development of lands which contain timber resources, mineral resources, and wildlife habitat or other natural resources, except when any such development is conditioned so as to prevent the loss of or damage to such resources. (Ord. 2561.1, 7/5/78)

17.01.040 GROWTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

(a) Within six months of the date this Chapter becomes effective, the Board of Supervisors shall enact, by such ordinance, or ordinances as may be required, a Growth Management System to regulate the character, location, amount, and timing of future residential and other development in Santa Cruz County. Said ordinance or ordinances shall provide for the establishment, each year, of an annual population growth goal which shall limit population growth during that year to an amount which represents Santa Cruz County's fair share of statewide population growth. Said ordinance or ordinances shall likewise carry out the other policies and provisions specified in this Chapter.

(b) The Board of Supervisors may, from time to time, amend any ordinance enacted by them to carry out the provisions of this Chapter. No part of this Chapter, however, shall be amended or repealed except by a vote of the people.

(c) If any portion of this Chapter is hereafter determined to be invalid, all remaining portions of this Chapter shall remain in full force and effect and, to this extent, the provisions of this Chapter are separable. (Ord. 2561.1, 7/5/78)