



CITY OF WATSONVILLE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
250 MAIN STREET • WATSONVILLE, CA 95076
TELEPHONE: (831) 768-3050 • www.cityofwatsonville.org

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: Distribution (refer to attached list)

Subject: Notice of Preparation – Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Lead Agency:

Agency Name: City of Watsonville, Community Development Department
Street Address: 250 Main Street
City/State/Zip: Watsonville, California 95076
Contact: Justin Meek
Principal Planner
Telephone: 831-768-3050

Consulting Firm:

Name: Rincon Consultants, Inc.
Street Address: 2511 Garden Road, Suite C-250
City/State/Zip: Monterey, California 93940
Contact: George Dix
Senior Project Manager
Telephone: 831-999-3612

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is hereby given that the City of Watsonville (City) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan (see Attachment 1) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations Section 15060(d)). City staff is requesting comments from your agency on the scope and content of the project's environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities. An Initial Study has been prepared for the project.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), the City of Watsonville determined that an EIR would be required for this project subsequent to the preparation of an Initial Study. The EIR will evaluate the project for potential impacts on the environment. The Initial Study prepared for the project found less than significant impacts or no impact for the following environmental factors: agriculture and forestry resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, public services, recreation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. The proposed project could potentially affect the following environmental factors and each will be addressed in the EIR: aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, population and housing, transportation, and tribal cultural resources. Cumulative impacts will consider impacts of relevant projects in and around the plan area combined with those of the project. An evaluation of project alternatives that could reduce significant impacts will be included in the EIR.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date and **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice. The review period for public comments pertaining to this NOP extends from October 27, 2022, to November 25, 2022. Please send your response to Justin Meek, AICP, Principal Planner at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Signature:

Justin Meek

Title: Principal Planner
City of Watsonville

Telephone: 831-768-3050

Date: October 27, 2022

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Project Description
Attachment 2: Regional Location Map
Attachment 3: Project Location Map
Attachment 4: Proposed Land Use Plan

Reference: California Administrative Code, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

ATTACHMENT 1 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Title: Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan

Project Location: Downtown Watsonville is located in the southern area of Santa Cruz County, approximately 14 miles southeast of the city of Santa Cruz and 16 miles north of the city of Salinas. The Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan Area (plan area) covers roughly 195.5 acres within Downtown Watsonville, with about 55.5 acres dedicated to streets and right-of-way. Downtown is centered on Main Street and extends west to the edge of existing neighborhoods and the industrial district, south to Pajaro, and several blocks east to the existing neighborhoods. State Route (SR) 152 runs through the center of the plan area and operates along portions of Main Street and as a one-way couplet along E Lake Avenue and E Beach Street. Riverside Drive on the south end of the plan area is a part of SR 129. One of the major intersections within the plan area is the intersection of Main Street and SR 129.

Project Description: The proposed project consists of the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan (DWSP). Generally, a specific plan is a regulatory tool that local governments use to implement their General Plan and to guide development in a localized area. The proposed DWSP has been developed to articulate a community vision and a planning framework for the downtown area that would serve as a guide for the City and other public agency decision makers, community members, and stakeholders over the next 20 to 30 years. The proposed DWSP provides a land use and mobility plan along with development and design regulations to guide future public and private development projects in the downtown area of Watsonville. Additionally, the DWSP includes an implementation strategy and mechanisms to ensure development is coordinated and satisfying the intent of the DWSP. Implementation of the DWSP would require an amendment to the City's General Plan.

The land use components of the DWSP would help the City achieve its objective of incorporating higher density commercial and housing opportunities by accommodating additional residential uses in a compact and active mixed-use environment through both new construction and adaptive reuse of historic or existing buildings. The DWSP envisions the addition of up to 3,886 new residential units; 231,151 square feet of commercial development, 376,827 square feet of industrial development, and 114,572 square feet of civic space within the downtown area over the next 25 years. Because the planning area is mostly developed with commercial buildings and established residential neighborhoods, the DWSP directs future potential growth toward a limited number of vacant or under-utilized sites that could be redeveloped in the downtown area.

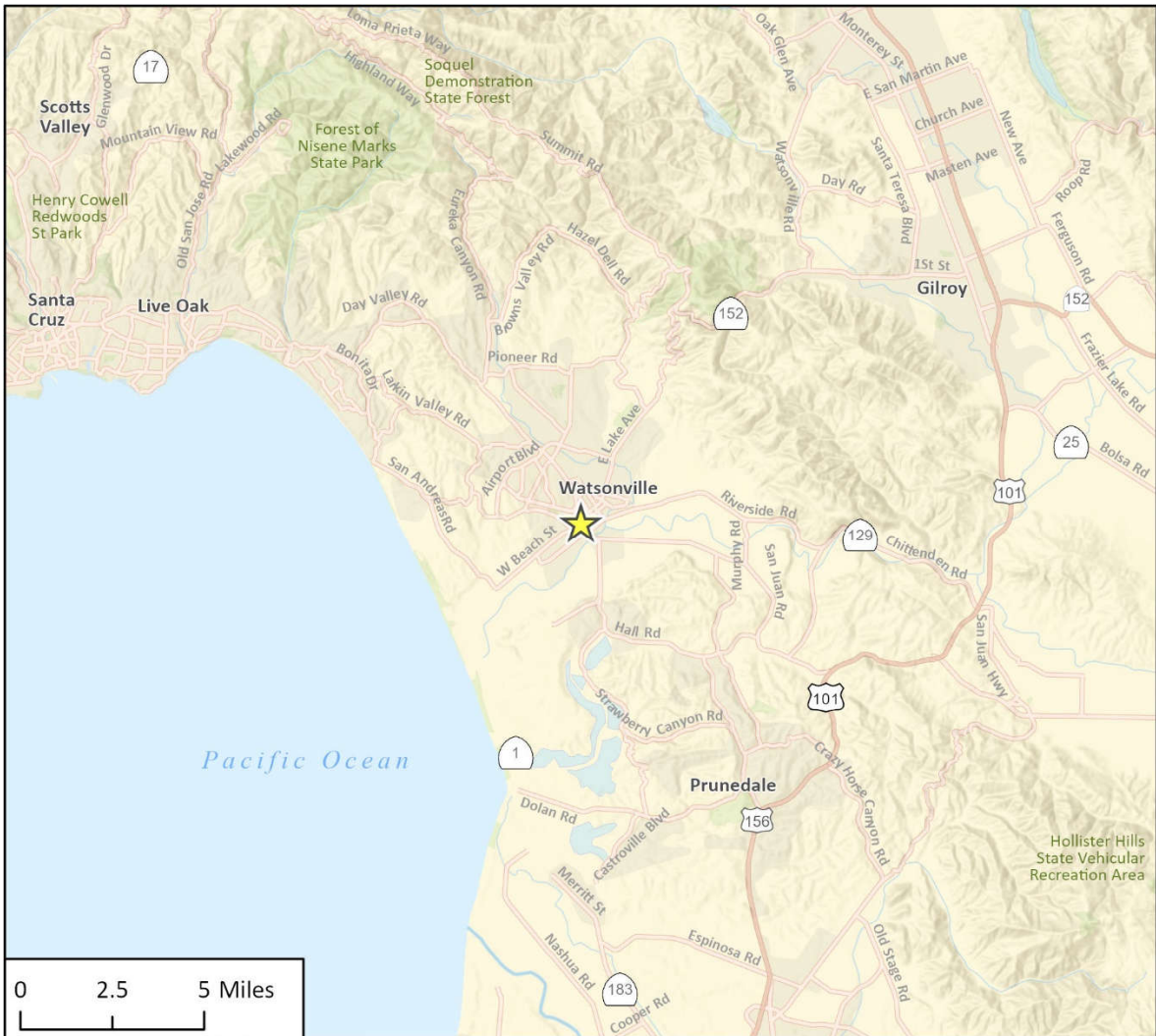
The mobility components of the DWSP focus on the provision of multi-modal transportation options in the downtown area, such as vehicle, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian mode options. It includes design concepts for downtown streets, as well as bicycle and pedestrian network improvements. In addition, the mobility component identifies mobility goals, such as the provision of complete streets, effective and sufficient parking, curb management, and travel demand management strategies.

Project Alternatives: The EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of project alternatives that, consistent with CEQA, meet most of the project objectives and reduce or avoid potential environmental effects, including a required No Project Alternative.

When the Draft EIR is completed, it will be available for review at the City's offices located at 250 Main Street, Watsonville, California 95076 and online at: <https://www.cityofwatsonville.org/1626/Downtown-Specific-Plan>. The City will issue a Notice of Availability of a Draft EIR at that time to inform the public and interested agencies, groups, and individuals of how to access the Draft EIR and provide comments.

If you have questions regarding this NOP, please contact Justin Meek, AICP, Principal Planner at (831) 768-3050 or via email at downtown.specific.plan@cityofwatsonville.org.

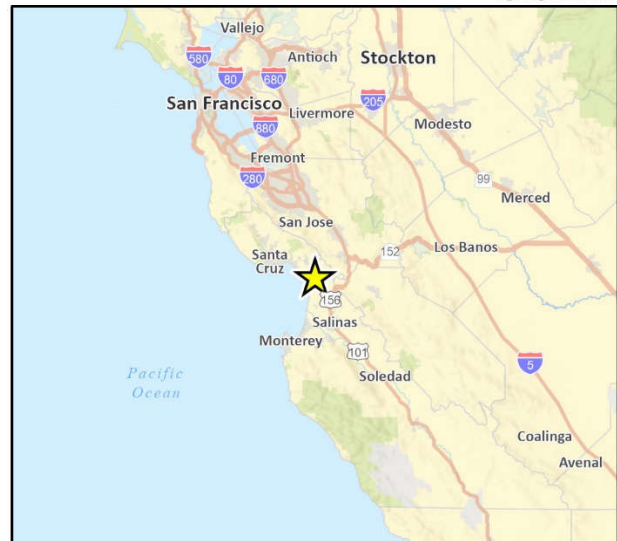
ATTACHMENT 2 – REGIONAL LOCATION



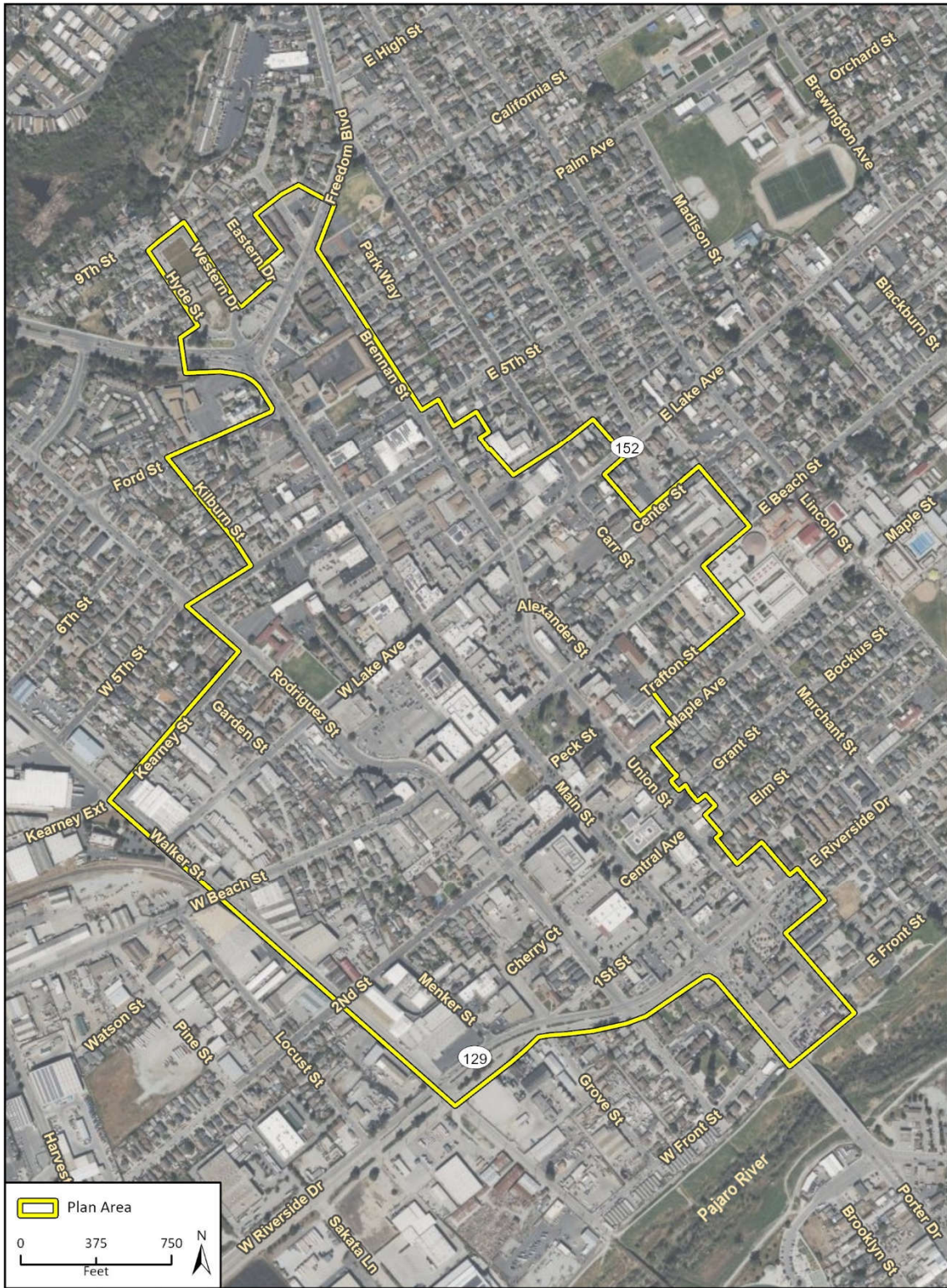
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Regional, Site, Land Use and Zoning Maps
Fig 1: Regional Location

 Project Location



ATTACHMENT 3 – PROJECT LOCATION



ATTACHMENT 4 – PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

