

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency

**Land Use Planning in California –
How is it Done?**

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The flowchart illustrates the Environmental Review Process for Santa Cruz County. It begins with **Site Identification**, leading to **Preliminary Project Feasibility**, **Capacity Assessment**, and **Preliminary Economic Feasibility Analysis**. These lead to **Site Evaluation**, **Phase 1 Environmental Assessment**, and **Prepare Contracts and Agreements**. A large image of the **Santa Cruz County Code Volume II** book is prominently displayed in the center. The process then moves to **Studies and Plans To Environ. Coordinator**, which involves **Environmental Planning**, **Public Works**, and **Other Reviewing Agencies**. This leads to **Engineer prepares Plans** (including **Drainage** and **Grading**), which then goes to the **Board of Supervisors' Hearing**. A feedback loop exists for **Plan and Study Revisions Before Application Deemed Complete Before EnV. Determination**. The process also includes **Initial Study** and **RDA Staff Review Studies and Mitigation Measures**. The final stage is **Arch. and Engin. Prepare Site Plans and Design**, which leads to **Prepare Envntal. Studies** (including **Traffic Consultant**, **Biotic Consultant**, **Noise Consultant**, **Soils Engineers**, **Other Consultants**, and **Geologist**). The process concludes with **Non-profit write scope of work for consultants**.

into the Details ...

Key Components of Land Use Process

- The General Plan
- Zoning
- Other Local Land Use Regulations
- CEQA
- Building Permit Process

How this all relates to the water agencies & water resource planning

The General Plan - History

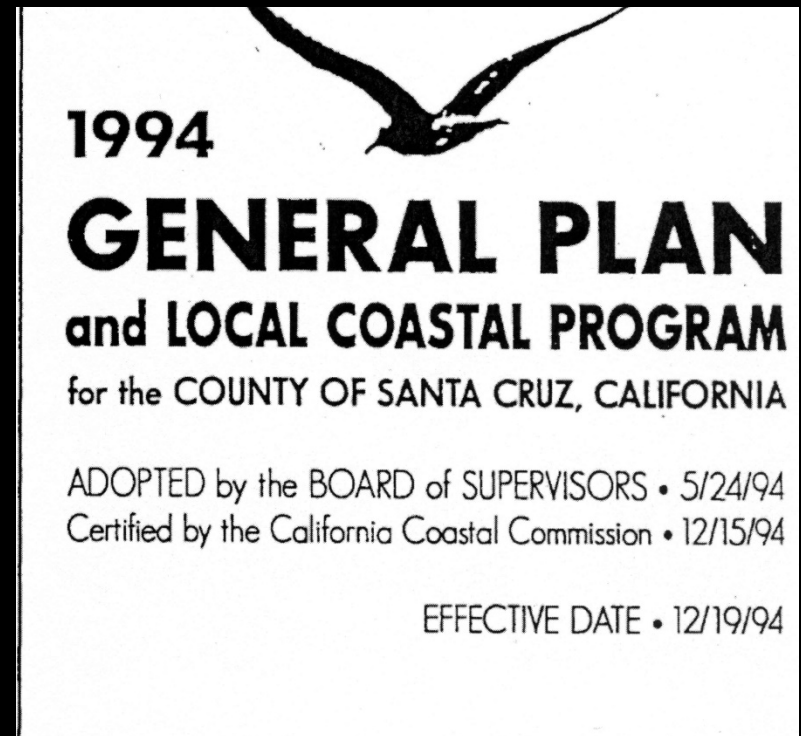
- Began in 1920s in CA as a planning tool – more of a big-picture blueprint
- All changed in early 1970s – State Law
 - GP became land use “constitution”
 - Required chapters (“elements”)
 - Required internal consistency
 - Required consistency with Zoning

The General Plan

- Includes maps and policies
- Eight required elements, including:
 - Land Use
 - Housing &
 - Circulation (and utilities)
- All but minor development projects must be consistent with plan in order to be approved

The General Plan - Updating

- No required timeline for updating GP except the Housing Element
- No approval by State, except Housing Element
- Scotts Valley and County General Plans will turn 25 this year!

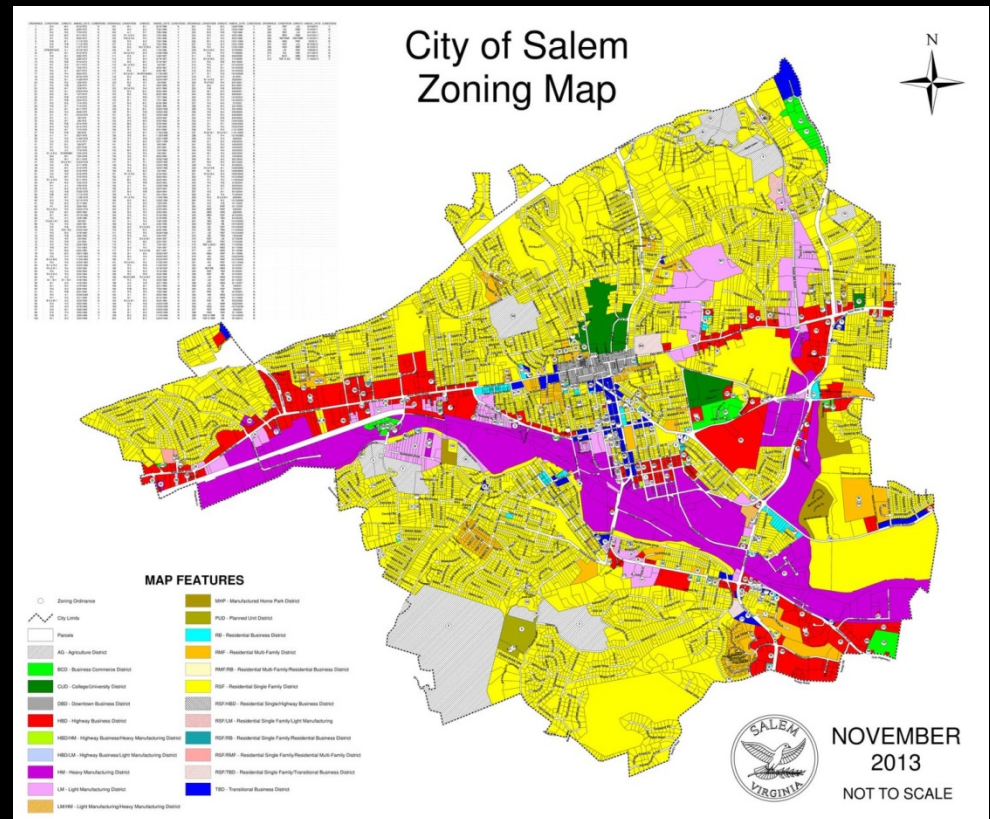


Zoning -- History

- Zoning started in CA in mid 1800s
- Focused initially on public health and safety & property value preservation
- State formalized zoning laws in 1950-60s
- Linked to General Plans in early 1970s
(zoning must be consistent with GP)

Zoning – Maps

- Includes zoning maps
- Much more precise in use type and density than General Plan



Zoning – development standards

- Lists allowed uses by zone district
- Defines development standards:
 - Parking, setbacks, height, etc.
- Defines project review and approval process
- Project approvals must be consistent with zoning regulations

Other local Land Use Regulations

Environmental Protection Regulations

- Grading/erosion control
- Stream and biotic resource protection
- Well and septic installation
- Mining and Quarrying
- Many others



Other local Land Use Regulations



- Protection of agricultural lands

- Affordable housing
- Growth management
- Cannabis cultivation



Public involvement



California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Requires review of possible environmental impacts for:

- Many development projects
- Public infrastructure projects (incl. water)
- General Plan adoption and amendment
- Most zoning and other ordinance amendments

CEQA - EIRs

- Requires preparation of:
 - Negative Declaration or
 - EIR
- Findings as part of Project approval
- Can be focus of litigation



Building Permit Process

- Based upon State-adopted building codes
- Required for all but the smallest construction projects
- Obtained after planning approvals

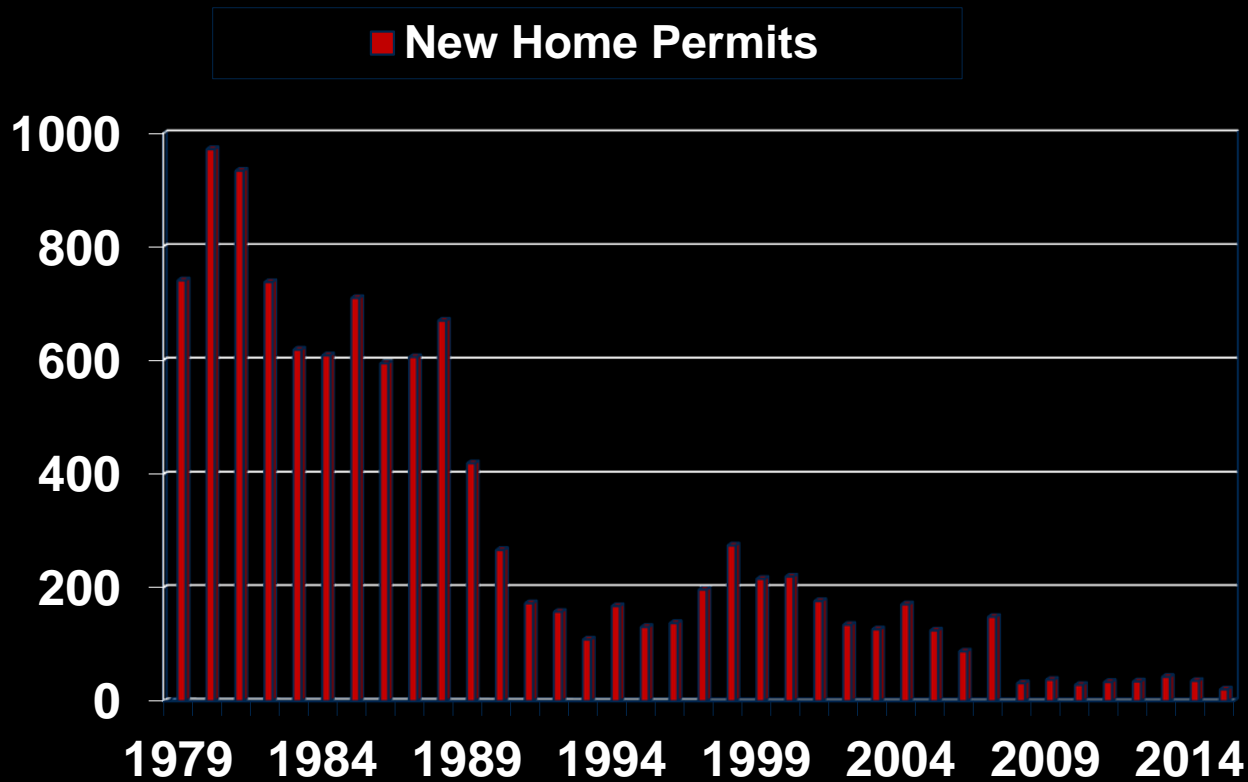


Building Codes

State has started using codes more to achieve larger environmental policy goals:

- Energy efficiency – heating and lighting
- Solar collectors
- Dramatic increased efficiency in water use

Building Permits Over Time



Role of Utility Districts

- General plan – close consultation
- Review and comment on larger development projects
- Will-serve letters – both planning and building permits

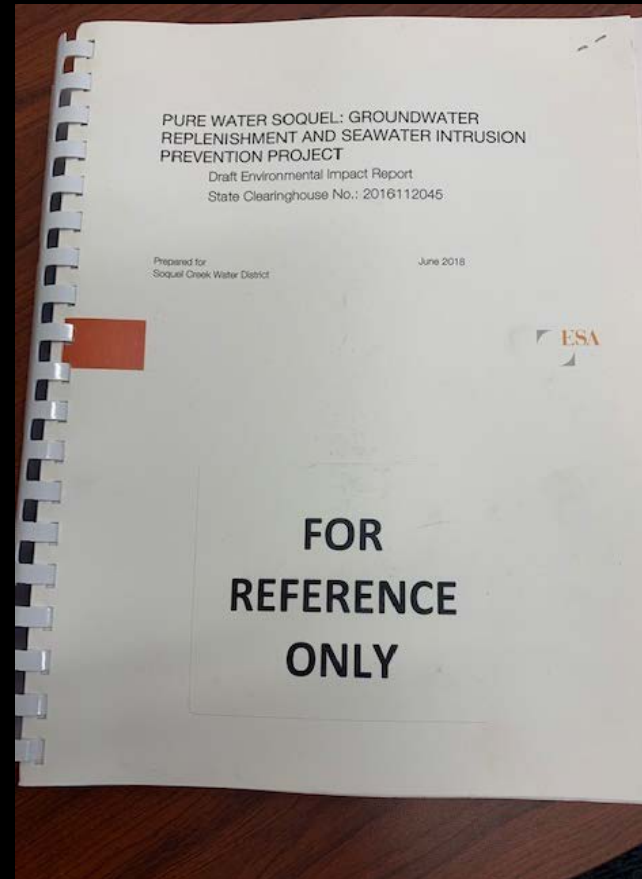
Role of Utility Districts

Once general plan is adopted, they are responsible for taking reasonable measures to provide adequate capacity for projected growth



Utility District Permits

- Generally, water districts projects do not require planning or zoning permits
- But they are still subject to CEQA review & EIRs



Growing Involvement of State in Local Land Use Decisions

- Historically, State role had been generally passive role -- set general guidelines and let locals figure it out
- With the exception of Housing Element

But that's changing ...

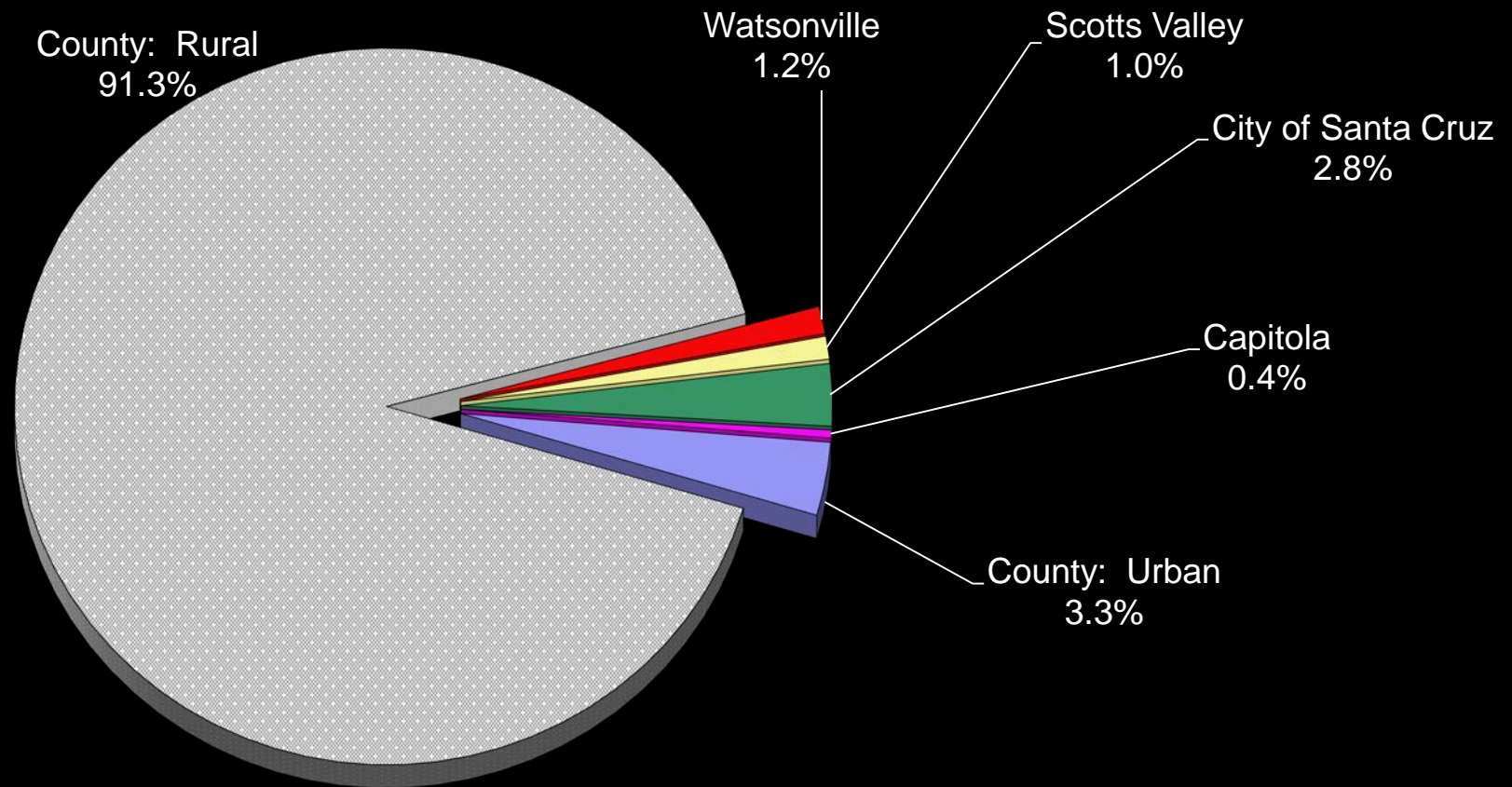
2015 Legislative Analyst Report

“California’s home prices and rents have risen because housing developers in California’s coastal areas have not responded to economic signals to increase the supply of housing and build housing at higher densities.”

New State Laws

- Expanded CEQA exemptions for urban infill projects
- Mandating regs for second units (ADUs)
- Housing production goals (in Housing Element) are becoming requirements
- New penalties for not meeting housing production goals
- More changes to come ...

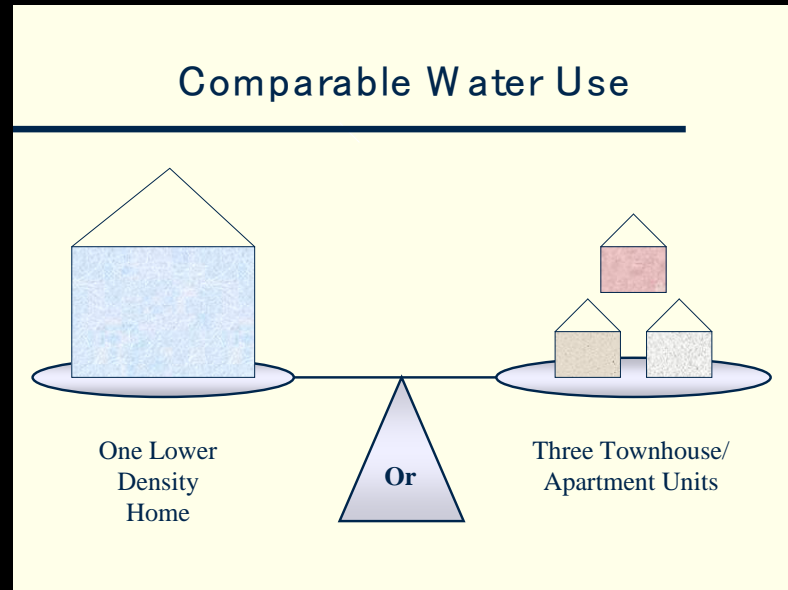
Will Need to go in the Urban Areas



But Will Be Water Efficient

- Required housing will be workforce smaller multi-family denser units

- This type of housing uses less water



Conclusions

- Land use process is very complicated
- Public and water purveyors have important, in the General Plan process
- Water districts have limited role in development review—will-serve letters
- District's job is to make best efforts to produce water to meet GP demand

Conclusions - continued

- District's projects exempt from local permits, but not CEQA
- Will be more growth in the future, but per unit water use for new housing will be lower due to:
 - More water efficient building codes, and
 - Mandates for more compact housing types
- More challenges ahead ...

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Q & A Session

