

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT APPLICANT and LEAD AGENCY

County of Santa Barbara
Planning and Development
123 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

2.2 PROJECT SITE LOCATION

The Carpinteria Valley Greenhouse Program study area encompasses most of the Carpinteria Valley in Santa Barbara County, California, and contains approximately 7,196 acres (11.2 square miles). Figure 2-1 shows the regional location. The study area is bound by the Summerland Community Plan boundary to the west, Ventura County to the east (i.e., Rincon Creek), the Coastal Zone Boundary to the north (e.g., roughly the 1,000-foot elevation contour), and Highway 101 to the south, excluding the City of Carpinteria and residential communities within the County along the coast. Figure 2-2 shows the project location.

2.3 EXISTING SITE CHARACTERISTICS

2.3.1 Existing and Surrounding Land Uses.

The southern boundary of the study area surrounds the City of Carpinteria. The interface of the City and the study area consists primarily of residential subdivisions, although some commercial/industrial uses also exist in the eastern end of the Valley. The population of the City of Carpinteria is approximately 14,600.

The study area contains approximately 5,600 acres of agriculturally zoned land, some of which is not in production (i.e. on the steeper hillsides). Greenhouse development consists of 14.9 million square feet (sf) on approximately 750 acres (see Figure 2-3). This includes 14.5 million square feet of permanent greenhouse structures (greenhouses, plant protection structures, and shade and hoop structures) and 450,000 sf of accessory structures (packing sheds, warehouses, etc.). For the purposes of this EIR, “greenhouse development” refers to greenhouses, packing and shipping facilities, shade and hoop structures and other development associated with greenhouses (including paved areas and accessory structures), unless expressly stated otherwise. The majority of existing greenhouse development (9.1 million sf) is concentrated south of State Highway 192, between Nidever Road and Linden Avenue.

Figure 2-1. Regional Location

Figure 2-2. Site and Vicinity

2.3.2. Existing Coastal Plan Land Use Designation and Zoning.

The study area is entirely within the Coastal Zone and governed by the Santa Barbara County Coastal Plan (LCP) and Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO). The majority of these lands are designated Agriculture I (A-I) by the Land Use Element of the County Comprehensive Plan and zoned Agriculture-I (AG-I) by the CZO. Several residential enclaves supporting parcels from 10,000 sf to approximately 3.3 acres are also located within the study area. Greenhouse development is allowed in each of the AG-I zone designations. However, the majority of greenhouse development has occurred on lands zoned AG-I-5 (202 acres) and AG-I-10 (546 acres) since most AG-I-20 and AG-I-40 parcels occur on steep slopes not suitable for greenhouse development. A summary of the acreage within each zone district and the associated greenhouse development is provided in Table 2-1 below. The total Carpinteria Greenhouse study area comprises approximately 7,196 acres.

Table 2-1 Acreage Within Each Zone District

Zoning	AG-Zoned Parcels Within Study Area		Existing Greenhouse and Related Development on AG-Zoned Parcels						
	No. of Parcels	Acres (approx.)	No. of Developed Parcels	Parcel Acres	Greenhouse Development (approx. sf)	Plant Protection Structure	Shade Structure	Accessory Use	Total Square Footage
AG-I-5	49	329	26	196	3,289,000	445,400	425,300	122,900	4,282,600
AG-I-10	388	3500	52	546	8,826,000	507,900	1,020,000	320,800	10,674,700
AG-I-20	3	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AG-I-40	92	1754	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	526¹	5,636	78	742	12,115,000	953,300	1,445,300	443,700	14,957,300

¹ Six parcels have split zoning (either AG-I-40/10 or AG-I-40/20). These parcels have been incorporated into individual zoning categories in order to demonstrate acreage in each zone district. Therefore, the total number of agriculture parcels is 526 rather than 532.

2.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The State CEQA Guidelines require that the project description contain a statement of the objectives of the project proponent.

On January 20, 1998, the County Board of Supervisors directed the Planning and Development Department to address greenhouse development in the Carpinteria Valley through completion of a grant study funded through a Coastal Resource Grant (AB1431) awarded to the County.

The primary objectives of this Carpinteria Valley Greenhouse Program are:

- To assess the cumulative effects of greenhouse development on coastal resources;
- To designate appropriate lands in the Carpinteria Valley for future greenhouse development;
- To provide well crafted development standards which ensure potential land use and environmental impacts are minimized;
- To encourage retrofit and reuse of aging greenhouse structures; and

Figure 2-3: existing greenhouse development
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- To promote and enhance the continuation of open field agriculture in the Carpinteria Valley.

2.5 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

Project Overview. The Carpinteria Greenhouse Program would consist of Local Coastal Program amendments that would:

- Amend the Coastal Zoning Ordinance (Article II) to specifically allow greenhouse expansion and retrofitting in identified areas located throughout the Carpinteria Valley determined to be appropriate for greenhouse development. The proposed AG-I-CARP zone district is designed to include specific development standards that will promote greenhouse development consistent with the protection of other important coastal resources.
- Identify and maintain zoning for areas appropriate for the continuation of open field agriculture (AG-I-OF).

Proposed Project. The Carpinteria Valley Greenhouse Program recommends rezoning areas located throughout the study area through a set of rezone ordinance amendments to Article II, County Coastal Zoning Ordinance. These amendments would result in two new zone districts specific to the Carpinteria Valley. One would designate lands suitable for the continuation and expansion of greenhouse development greater than 20,000 sf and the other would promote the continuation of open field agriculture. Areas identified for continued greenhouse use and expansion would be designated by a new AG-I-CARP zone district, while a new AG-I-OF (Open Field) zone district would be applied to all remaining agriculturally zoned parcels in the study area. These two zone districts would be substantially similar to the existing AG-I zone district except for the greenhouse use. Greenhouse development less than 20,000 sq. ft. cumulative per parcel is a preexisting permitted use in the existing AG-I zone district that will remain unchanged in both the proposed AG-I-OF and AG-I-CARP zone districts. Under the existing AG-I zoning, greenhouse development of less than this threshold requires a Coastal Development Permit. The primary intent of the AG-I-OF zone district is to promote and support open field agriculture as a long-term viable use by limiting the piecemeal expansion of greenhouse development and related intensive infrastructure improvements. However, mModifications and specific standards would be included to address both open field uses and greenhouse development as discussed below. Specifically, these amendments would:

- Amend Division 1, General, Section 35-52 to include two new zone districts (AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF).
- Amend Division 2, Definitions, Section 35-58 to add definitions for greenhouses and related structures.
- Amend Division 4, Zone Districts, to add two new zone districts (AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF).
- Conduct rezones and map changes to retire the AG-I-5, AG-I-10, AG-I-20 and AG-I-40 zone districts from the Carpinteria Valley study area and add the AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF to the identified parcels.

A complete text of the proposed ordinance amendments and definitions of greenhouses and related structures is included in Appendix B.

Greenhouse Expansion Areas. The AG-I-CARP zone district would be applied to all agricultural parcels identified for new greenhouse expansion (Figures 2-4 and 2-5). A number of criteria have been used to determine suitability, including the proximity to existing historic greenhouse clusters, parcel visibility, distance from adjacent incompatible land uses (residences, schools, etc.), distance from water courses, existing crop type, and parcel size. The goal of applying these criteria is to promote future greenhouse expansion adjacent to existing greenhouse clusters and avoid piecemeal expansion of greenhouses development into open field areas.

Buildout within the new AG-I-CARP zone district could allow construction of up to 3.0 million square feet (68.9 acres; 1 acre = 43,560 square feet) of new greenhouse development primarily within and adjacent to existing clusters of greenhouse development. Buildout assumptions are based on a conservative analysis of the remaining development potential of parcels located within the proposed AG-I-CARP zone district, as well as the maximum allowable square footage for undeveloped parcels based on the proposed setback and building coverage requirements. Table 2-2 includes a summary of how the existing greenhouse development would be divided between the proposed new AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF zone districts. A detailed parcel-based analysis of acreage that potentially could be developed with greenhouses on which this summary is based is contained in Appendix C.

Table 2-2 Total Existing Greenhouse Development Within Proposed Zone Districts (square feet)

Development Type	AG-I-CARP Zone	AG-I-OF Zone ¹
Greenhouse	8,513,000	3,602,000
Plant Protection Structures	935,000	18,000
Shade Structures	694,000	751,000
Accessory Buildings	326,000	118,000
Totals	10,468,000	4,489,000

¹ Does not include an additional 636,000 sf of approved, but unbuilt greenhouses (364,000 sf from 95-DP-025 and 272,000 sf from 95-DP-018).

Of the ~~approximately~~ 5,63600 acres zoned for agriculture in the study area, 462 acres would be zoned AG-I-CARP, as illustrated by the beige shading in Figures 2-4 and 2-5. (Figures 3-1 and 3-2 are aerial photographs of the main portion of the Carpinteria Valley that illustrate the same area). AG-I-OF zoning would be applied to the remaining 5,174 acres, of which 310 acres currently contain greenhouse related development (103 acres covered by greenhouses, plant protection structures, shade structures, and accessory buildings).

The proposed AG-I-CARP zone district would include greenhouse-development standards and a streamlined permit process for greenhouse structures, depending on the type and location of the structure. For example, a ministerial permit (i.e., Coastal Development Permit) may be required for reconstruction/retrofitting of existing greenhouses, provided that the development standards included in the ordinance are implemented into the project design.

Figure 2-4: proposed greenhouse development: i.e. Project Description West panel

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Figure 2-5: proposed greenhouse development: i.e. Project Description EAST panel

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Development Standards included in the proposed zone district would provide siting and design standards to address water quality and groundwater recharge, drainage and flooding, visual resources, biological resources, and traffic and circulation. In addition, increased setbacks and reduced building heights are proposed to minimize visual impacts and provide additional area for landscape screening, storm water retention basins, and to limit shading effects on adjacent structures. These proposed standards include:

- Maximum lot coverage shall include all greenhouse structures, parking, accessory buildings, and necessary retention basins where no development would be allowed within the remaining open space and setback areas. The maximum lot coverage shall be 75% for lots less than 5 acres, 70% for lots 5 to 9.99 acres, and 65% for all lots 10 acres or more;
- A minimum 50-foot setback of all greenhouse ~~related structures~~ development from adjacent residential uses;
- Increased landscaping and setback requirements to provide protection of public view corridors, particularly from public roads and foothill residential areas;
- Blackout screens for any greenhouse structures designed to include interior “cycling lighting”;
- Roof panel orientation for reflective roof surfaces to minimize solar reflection as viewed from hillside development.

Open Field Areas. To maintain open field areas (i.e., those areas not identified for substantial new greenhouse expansion) a new AG-I-OF (Open Field) zone district would be created. The intent of this zone district is to designate lands in the Carpinteria Valley for the preservation of open field agriculture, and to provide standards that will promote and support open field operations as a long-term viable use by limiting the piecemeal expansion of greenhouses s development and related intensive infrastructure improvements.

The Open Field zone district is substantially similar to the current AG-I zone district with respect to minimum lot size, parking, landscaping, etc. Greenhouse development of less than 20,000 sf cumulative per parcel is an existing permitted use in the existing AG-I zone district, these provisions will remain unchanged in the proposed AG-I-OF zone district. However, new greenhouse development or additions to existing greenhouse development that exceeds the 20,000 sf threshold will be precluded. However, the permitted use section of the ordinance would preclude new greenhouses on vacant parcels. Existing greenhouse uses may continue and alterations to existing greenhouse structures will be allowed provided a number of development criteria are met. Temporary structures (e.g., shade structures, berry hoops) and Additionally, the permitted use section of the ordinance would continue to allow accessory uses, buildings, and structures that are customarily incidental to open field agriculture, which includes small accessory greenhouse structures. These small new greenhouses and related development and other accessory buildings shall be ~~allowed~~ subject to the following criteria:

- No new greenhouse development shall exceed a cumulative total of 20,000 square feet per legal lot;
- The maximum height of any temporary shade or hoop structure shall not exceed ~~16-12~~ feet;
- The maximum height of any greenhouse or accessory structure shall not exceed 30 feet.

2.6 DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS REQUIRED

Approval of the proposed project would entail the following discretionary actions by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to implement the Carpinteria Valley Greenhouse Program:

1. Certification of the Environmental Impact Report.
2. Adopt a resolution to amend the Local Coastal Program for Santa Barbara County including:
 - Adopt a resolution to amend various sections of the Local Coastal Plan to implement the Greenhouse Study (Definitions, Policies 8-5, 8-6);
 - Amend Article II, Division 1, General, Section 35-52 to include two new zone districts (AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF);
 - Amend Article II, Division 2, Definitions, Section 35-58, to add definitions for greenhouses and related structures;
 - Amend Article II, Division 4, Zone Districts, to add two new zone districts (AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF);
 - Amend Article II, Division 7, General Regulations, Section 35-126, to specify greater setbacks for greenhouse development on interior lots, Section 35-130, to add AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF to the subdivision of agricultural land finding; and Sections 35-142 and 35-142A, to add the AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF district to those which may participate in the residential second unit program;
 - Amend Article II, Division 10, Nonconforming, Section 35-162, to add language that would allow nonconforming greenhouse structures to rebuild in the event of damage in the AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF zone districts;
 - Amend Article II, Division 11, Section 35-169, to add the AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF districts to the exemption for coastal development permits for agricultural accessory structures of less than 500 square feet; Section 35-172, to add the AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF districts to the list of districts where some conditional uses are prohibited; and Section 35-174, to allow processing of greenhouse development plans under the jurisdiction of the Director;
 - Conduct rezones and map changes to retire the AG-I-5, AG-I-10, AG-I-20 and AG-I-40 zone districts from the Carpinteria Valley study area and add the AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF to the identified parcels.
3. Amend Santa Barbara County Agricultural Preserve Uniform Rules.

The County's Agricultural Preserve Uniform Rules (Uniform Rules) implements provisions of the Williamson Act. The Uniform Rules would be amended to allow the creation and continuance of Agricultural Preserve or Farmland Security Zone contracts within the AG-I-CARP and AG-I-OF zone districts, subject to the qualifications and terms of the Williamson Act and the Uniform Rules.