

Open Space Element Update

Project Scoping and Options

Board of Supervisors
August 26, 2025



County of Santa Barbara
Planning and Development
Julie Harris

Purpose of Hearing

- Long Range Planning Work Program includes an Open Space Element update pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 1425
- P&D is seeking Board direction regarding project scope
- Three options for Board's consideration



Senate Bill 1425

- *Access to open space for all residents in a manner that considers social, economic, and racial equity, correlated with the environmental justice element*
- *Climate resilience and other cobenefits of open space, correlated with the safety element*
- *Rewilding opportunities, correlated with the land use element*

Low Option

- Addresses the three key requirements of SB 1425
- Aligns with other County policy planning efforts
 - Environmental Justice Element
 - Recreation Master Plan
 - Climate Adaptation Plan
 - Safety Element Update



Low Option

- Includes general rewrite and modernization
 - Open space categories as required by State Government Code
 - Open space inventory and maps
 - New or updated maps
 - Appealing redesign and format



Moderate Option

- Builds on the low option
 - Identify opportunities to enhance rewilding of existing open spaces on public and conserved lands
 - Identify connections between existing fragmented open space lands on, between, or among public lands and lands managed for conservation or preservation by non-profit organizations or similar entities
 - Identify priorities for future study and planning efforts
 - US 101 Gaviota Pass Wildlife Connectivity Study



High Option

- Builds on low and moderate options
 - Updates the Conservation Element
 - Additional studies, mapping for rewilding and wildlife connectivity
 - Assembly Bill 1889 compliance
 - Consider combining Open Space and Conservation Elements

Estimated Staffing Needs & Consultant Costs

	Low Option	Moderate Option	High Option
	SB 1425-Basic Compliance	Expand Rewilding Efforts on Public and Conserved Lands	Update Conservation Element & AB 1889 Compliance
Staffing	0.8 FTE	1.1 FTE	1.8 FTE
Consultant Total	\$0	\$60,000 - \$80,000	\$450,000 – 550,000
• Planning/Biologist	N/A	\$60,000 - \$80,000	\$250,000 – 300,000
• EIR	N/A	N/A	\$200,000 – 250,000
Budget and Work Program Implications	None Included in FY 2025-2026 LRP Work Program	Some staffing reallocation Reallocation of existing funds for consultant services	Significant reallocation of staffing resources Significant funding for consultant services

Recommended Actions

- Receive and file the Planning and Development report
- Provide direction regarding the scope of the update
- Determine that the Board's actions are not a project and not subject to environmental review

