



**Strategies, Policies and Implementation**

**Strategy #1:  
Inventory Hazards And Monitor  
Changing Conditions**

Given the prevalence of natural hazards common to many portions of the rural unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County, the General Plan contains the following strategies or major policy directions to protect public health and safety:

- Strategy #1: Inventory Hazards And Monitor Changing Conditions
- Strategy #2: Maintain Low Resident Population Densities Within High Hazard Areas
- Strategy #3: Design, Locate And Regulate Development To Avoid Or Withstand Hazards
- Strategy #4: Reduce The Magnitude Of The Hazard, If Possible
- Strategy #5: Provide Public Information Regarding Natural Hazards

Adequate documentation of natural hazard areas, such as flood plains, active landslide areas, fault traces, and high fire hazard areas is essential for purposes of determining appropriate densities for general areas and for determining the appropriate placement of structures such as schools, homes, landfills, and other land uses.

Although some natural features change very little over time, such as the location of fault traces, others must be regularly updated. For example, as new flood control projects are completed, some areas previously subject to a 100 year flood may be removed from that classification. As conditions change, the County's inventories and mapping must be updated to provide an adequate basis for decision-making.

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**R-HS 5**

Strategies for reducing the threat of natural hazards to life and property within rural unincorporated areas shall be to:

1. Inventory hazards and monitor changing conditions.
2. Maintain low resident population densities within high hazard areas.
3. Design, locate and regulate development to avoid or withstand hazards.
4. Reduce the magnitude of the hazard, if possible.
5. Provide public information regarding natural hazards.

**R-HS 6**

Inventories and mapping of natural hazards shall be adequately maintained for use in planning and decision-making, including:

- a. Relative Seismic Stability Map;
- b. Composite Geologic Hazards Map;
- c. Soil Creep;
- d. Saturated, Unstable Soils;
- e. Slope Maps;
- f. Flood Hazards maps;
- g. Relative Fire Hazard Rating;
- h. Dam Failure Inundation Areas maps;
- i. Airport Safety Zones; and
- j. closed Solid Waste Disposal Sites.

**Implementation Recommendations**

**R-HS(i) 9**

Support ongoing efforts to develop and convert hazard-related spatial data to GIS digital format.



**Strategy #2:  
Maintain Low Resident Population  
Densities Within High Hazard Areas**

Given the hazards and topography of the more mountainous regions of the County, it is not uncommon to find that an individual parcel in the rural areas is subject to a variety of natural hazards. For example, most of the mountainous areas are classified as high or extreme fire hazard areas and many areas also contain geologic or seismic hazards. In the South Valley, areas are prone to regular flooding or poor localized drainage that are also least stable during earthquakes.

To minimize risks to resident populations in high hazard areas, the General Plan prescribes relatively low densities of development throughout the rural areas. Limited accessibility is a primary factor. Access in some of the more remote areas is often limited to narrow, dead end roads. In the event of a wildfire or earthquake which closes access roads, large areas may be isolated from assistance other than by air. Emergency response times are increased, and evacuation plans may be impossible to implement. Other concerns, as mentioned in the Summary of this section, involve public financial responsibility for maintaining and repairing roads and other infrastructure which may traverse hazardous areas, such as fault traces or active landslides. In the event that such roads or utilities suffer major damage and have to be repaired or relocated, major unplanned public expenses may be the result.



**Policies and Implementation**

**R-HS 7**

Areas of significant natural hazards, especially high or extreme fire hazard, shall be designated in the County's General Plan as Resource Conservation Areas, with generally low development densities in order to minimize public exposure to risks associated with natural hazards and limit unplanned public costs to maintain and repair public infrastructure.

**R-HS 8**

Areas of persistent flooding and areas of potential inundation from dam failure shall generally be designated for agricultural land uses or other suitable open space use.



**Strategy #3:  
Design, Locate And Regulate  
Development To Avoid Or With-  
stand Hazards**

Beyond the issue of general land use densities, the design, construction, and location of development can in many cases significantly reduce the risk associated with some natural hazards. Building codes play a major role in assuring the safety of structures from seismic hazards, and subdivision design can avoid placement of building sites within areas subject to slope failure or other geologic constraints. The general policies of the County listed below provide the basis for more detailed policies that follow which address specific types of hazards.



**Policies and Implementation**

**R-HS 9**

Development in rural unincorporated areas affected by natural hazards should be designed, located, and otherwise regulated to avoid or reduce associated risks to an acceptable level:

1. In areas of highest potential hazard, such as floodways, active landslides, fault traces, and airport safety zones, no new habitable structures shall be allowed.
2. In other areas of lesser hazards, there shall be no major structures for involuntary occupancy, such as schools, hospitals, correctional facilities or convalescent centers.

**R-HS 10**

In all hazard areas, projects shall be designed and conditioned to avoid placement of structures and improvements where they would:

- a. be directly jeopardized by hazards;
- b. increase the hazard potential; and/or,
- c. increase risks to neighboring properties.



**Infrastructure: Transportation**

**Policies**

*SC 11.0*

A balanced transportation system should be developed which integrates various transportation modes with existing and proposed land uses and assures access to all.

*SC 11.1*

A balanced transportation system should be provided which assures access to all, and which integrates all appropriate modes of transportation into an effectively functioning system, including such modes as auto, ridesharing, public transit, bicycling and walking.

*SC 11.2*

The transportation system should be compatible with existing and proposed land uses and should promote environmental objectives, such as safe and uncongested neighborhoods, energy conservation, reduction of air and noise pollution, and the integrity of scenic and/or hillside areas.

*SC 11.3*

Bicycling and walking should be promoted as alternate transportation modes for their contribution to health and the reduction of energy consumption and pollution.

*SC 11.4*

Public transit should be expanded as needed to meet the changing needs of the area for local and regional access, including such methods as bus, dial-a-ride, paratransit and rail, where appropriate.

*SC 11.5*

Planning for land use and transportation development should be integrated. The timing, amount, and location of urban development should be consistent with the development of the transportation system capacity, and land uses should be designed to promote use of appropriate transportation modes.

*SC 11.6*

Options for future transportation facilities should be preserved in advance of development by such means as identification of routes, reservation of rights-of-way, setback of development to accommodate future width lines, and limiting of access along future major arterials.

*SC 11.7*

The Cities and the County should improve coordination and cooperation on all South County transportation planning.

*SC 11.8*

The recommendations of the Transportation-2000 Program, particularly as they relate: to rail connections between South County and North County and to right-of-way-reservation along major north-south corridors in South County, should be carefully reviewed by South County jurisdictions.

**Flood Control**

**Policies**

*SC 12.0*

Since flooding affects substantial areas of South County, and the flood control projects now being constructed are designed to protect only existing developed and planned urban areas, land development should be managed by the three jurisdictions to mitigate flooding problems and minimize the need for local public funding for additional flood control and local drainage facilities. Flood damage in South County should be minimized through a combination of actions. In flood-prone areas, inappropriate development should be prevented through land use planning, urban development policies and land use regulations. Areas which are developed or planned for development should be protected by the construction of flood control facilities. Development should be managed through advanced planning and design standards to minimize off-site flooding and drainage problems.