County of Santa Cruz

701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Notice of Availability
Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
for Buena Vista Landfill Redevelopment Project
State Clearinghouse #2024020617

Project Title: Buena Vista Landfill Redevelopment Project, State Clearinghouse No. 2024020617

Project Location: The Project is located at the Buena Vista Landfill site, located between Buena Vista Drive and Harkins Slough Road in unincorporated southern Santa Cruz County, west of Highway 1 within the California Coastal Zone. The Buena Vista Landfill address and primary entrance is 1231 Buena Vista Drive.

Project Purpose: The Project purpose is to ensure an orderly landfill closure program that meets state and federal requirements and provides ongoing solid waste handling capabilities to allow the County to meet state-required waste management goals for waste reduction, source separation, materials recycling, household hazardous waste management, and organics diversion.

Project Description: The Project includes transitioning the Buena Vista Landfill to the Buena Vista Transfer Station, allowing County residents, businesses, and commercial waste haulers to continue bringing solid waste, household hazardous waste, recyclables, and organic materials to the site upon the landfill's formal closure.

The Project includes the following components, which are shown on Figure 1.

1. **Transfer Stations.** Two new waste transfer stations would be developed at the landfill site to implement transfer station operations for waste handling and transport. Transfer Station A would serve self-haulers (residents and businesses), and Transfer Station B would serve franchise haulers and larger commercial vehicles. Harkins Slough Road would be realigned around Transfer Station A to allow existing traffic on Harkins Slough Road to remain outside the landfill facility, and to contain all solid waste operational traffic on internal roadways within the facility.
2. **Organics Diversion Facility**. A new organics diversion facility (ODF) would be developed to continue the existing organics preprocessing activities and support additional processing and diversion in compliance with State organics diversion requirements. The ODF would be located either within the existing active landfill footprint in the northern portion of the site (ODF Option 1) or on the "top deck" of the Old Landfill in the southwest portion of the site and be expanded to include composting (ODF Option 2).
3. **Landfill Closure and Revegetation**. Once capacity of the Current Active Landfill area is reached, the landfill closure and revegetation plan would be implemented. The process includes a final cover system (cap), grading, and grassland revegetation. The closure plan also includes management and environmental monitoring systems for landfill gas, surface water, and groundwater.

Additionally, the Project includes the following environmental enhancement and habitat restoration features to improve the functions and values (i.e., ecosystems services) of biological and aquatic resources within and adjacent to the Buena Vista facility: Restoration of Harkins Slough Road Drainage, Culvert Modification with Small Wildlife Crossing at Main Entrance, Culvert Replacement under Internal Roadway to Old Landfill, Restoration of Old Landfill Wetland and Drainage (ODF Option 2 only), Wildlife Movement Corridor between Gallighan Slough and Harkins Slough, and Wildlife Directional Features at Key Locations

4. **Optional Improvements.** The Project could also include the following optional improvements to support the Project purpose and components described above:

    a. **Internal Access Road Improvements**. Internal roadway improvements could include asphalt paving of existing unpaved roads and repaving of existing worn and deteriorated roads.

    b. **Scale House Upgrades**. Upgrades could include additional scales with radio frequency identification to improve traffic flow and scale house operations.

    c. **Recycling Center Upgrades.** The existing recycling center could be upgraded on site and/or relocated to the northeast portion of the landfill (where ODF Option 1 could be located) to accommodate recovery of more mandated materials, increase transportation efficiency, and include a marketing and storage facility for sale and reuse.

    d. **Equipment Parking and Storage Area**. A new transfer truck/trailer and heavy equipment parking and storage area, including vehicle fueling and electric vehicle charging facilities, could be located on County property on the south side of Rountree Lane, between the County's Rountree Medium (Jail) Facility and Buena Vista Migrant Center (farmworker housing and childcare facility)/Tierra Alta affordable housing complex.

Finally, to support the key Project components, the Project requires and thus includes the following administrative updates: Agricultural Resource Map Amendment, General Plan/Local Coastal Program Map Amendment, and Zoning Map Amendment.

For more information about the project, please visit the project website: https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/PublicWorks/RecyclingSolidWaste/BuenaVistaProject.aspx.

Potential Environmental Impacts: The Draft EIR provides an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and identifies mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level where possible. The Draft EIR identified potential significant and unavoidable impacts (cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level to biological resources (coast live oak woodland sensitive habitat) from the Proposed Project.

There would be additional potentially significant impacts from the Proposed Project to the following resources, and identified mitigation measures would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level: biological resources(Crotch's Bumble Bee, California Red-Legged Frog, Northwestern Pond Turtle, avian species, bat species, San Francisco Dusky-Footed Woodrat, trees and other sensitive habitat), cultural/tribal resources (archaeological resources or human remains), geology and soils (soil instability and expansive soils), greenhouse gas emission (consistency with the California Air Resources Board 2022 Scoping Plan and County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan), and noise (excessive construction and operational noise in specific areas).

The Draft EIR also identified and evaluated Project Alternatives that would reduce the potential significant and unavoidable impact to a less than significant level.

Public Review Period: The public review period for the Draft EIR begins Monday, October 26, 2026, and ends Thursday, December 10, 2026, at 5:00 pm. The County must receive all written comments regarding the adequacy of the Draft EIR within this period.

Comments on the Draft EIR should be submitted in writing to: Nicole Steel, 701 Ocean Street, Room 330, Santa Cruz CA 95060 or via email to BuenaVistaProject@santacruzcountyca.gov.

Public Meeting: The County is scheduled to hold a public meeting on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm in the Aptos Library Community Room, located at 7695 Soquel Drive, Aptos, CA 95003. The County will describe the Proposed Project and Project Alternatives, summarize the potential impacts, and accept verbal and written comments.

Draft EIR Availability: Copies of the Draft EIR are available for review at the following locations.

- County of Santa Cruz Offices, 701 Ocean St., Room 410 on the 4th Floor, Santa Cruz.
- Santa Cruz Public Library, Aptos Branch, 7695 Soquel Drive, Aptos.
- https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/PublicWorks/RecyclingSolidWaste/BuenaVistaProject.aspx.

Figure 1, Proposed Project Overview

