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PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT

Contra Costa County is committed to providing a high quality of life for its residents. This commitment includes providing public services, infrastructure, and facilities that are accessible to and benefit all county residents, while also working with outside service providers to accomplish those same goals. Although the Public Facilities and Services Element is not explicitly required by State law, the topics addressed here are an integral part of the County's overall planning strategy and a basic consideration in setting growth and development policy.

The following nine sections are included in this Element:

- The **General Public Facilities and Services** section includes policy guidance to support coordination, financing, and equitable distribution of public facilities and services that promote the economic, social, physical, and environmental wellbeing of residents.
- The **Water and Wastewater** section includes policy guidance to provide safe, resilient, and environmentally responsible water and wastewater services to meet existing and future needs.
- The **Drainage and Flood Risk** section includes policy guidance to support effective and resilient natural drainage systems and flood-risk management infrastructure.
- The **Sheriff, Fire, and Emergency Medical Service** section includes policy guidance to provide efficient and effective public safety and emergency services, with emphasis on improvements to the physical environment that support a safe and accessible public realm.
- The **Solid Waste Management** section includes policy guidance aimed at reducing waste, providing equitable and sustainable waste management services, and reducing illegal dumping.
- The **Parks and Recreation** section includes policy guidance to develop an integrated and accessible park and trail system with a focus on improving access to parks for Impacted Communities.
- The **Schools** section includes policy guidance to support a strong and diverse education system from primary school through higher education facilities.
- The **Libraries** section includes policy guidance to expand library services to support access to information and educational opportunities for residents of all ages.
- The **Public Facilities and Services Element Performance Measures** describe how the County will track its progress in achieving some of the major objectives expressed in this Element.

This General Plan highlights policies and actions that address four major themes that serve as a framework for the Plan. For the reader's ease, policies and actions related to these themes are identified throughout the General Plan using the following icons. The policies and actions related to each theme are also compiled in Appendix A. See Chapter 1 for more information about each theme.



Community Health



Environmental Justice



Economic Development



Sustainability

GENERAL PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Coordinated Facilities and Services



The Crockett Community Services District provides bocce courts at Rithet Park.

A complex array of County departments and districts and outside agencies serve the diverse needs of Contra Costa residents and businesses. In addition to the County and incorporated cities and towns, this includes:

- Community services districts providing police, recreation, water, wastewater, and solid waste services.
- Fire protection districts.
- Healthcare districts.
- Park and recreation districts.
- School districts and a community college district.
- Water districts, irrigation districts, and sanitary sewer districts providing water and wastewater services.
- Reclamation districts and a municipal improvement district providing flood protection and levee and drainage maintenance services.

The Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) regulates the jurisdictional boundaries of all cities and special districts, affecting which agencies provide services to a given area. Properties inside city limits receive certain services from the incorporated city, such as law enforcement. Fire protection, parks and recreation, and various other services may be provided by the city or a special district, or a combination of both. Other countywide services, like health and human services, hazardous materials response, and criminal justice, are provided by the County. As such, the County operates at many levels, simultaneously providing mandated countywide services and local services to unincorporated areas, and coordinating with the activities of State agencies, cities, and regional and local special districts.

The County adopts a new budget annually that sets priorities and addresses operating costs. In September 2022, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Capital Facilities Master Plan, outlining a 20-year vision for transforming County facilities to improve customer service delivery and support County

employees providing those services, and guiding future capital facilities budgeting and planning decisions.

Through Senate Bill (SB) 244, State law requires that general plans identify Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs) and evaluate and address any infrastructure or fire service deficiencies in those communities to support public health and safety. For counties, DUCs are defined as an inhabited community with 10 or more dwelling units in close proximity, or where 12 or more registered voters reside, that is located outside of a city sphere of influence and has an annual median household income that is 80 percent or less of the statewide median. The County conducted a DUC analysis in 2023 and found that parts of Rodeo, Crockett, and Bethel Island meet the DUC criteria. Policy guidance related to infrastructure and service needs in these communities is provided in the respective Community Profiles, located in the Stronger Communities Element.

Goal PFS-1
Coordinated public facilities and services that support the economic, social, health, and environmental well-being of the county and its residents.

Policies

PFS-P1.1 

Consider potential effects on the physical, social, cultural, and recreational needs of the surrounding community when developing new County facilities.

PFS-P1.2  

Locate new County facilities that involve regular community access in places that are easily accessible by public transit, walking, and micromobility, to the greatest extent possible.

PFS-P1.3

Encourage, and whenever possible require, public agencies to locate, design, construct, and operate their facilities in a manner that complements and avoids conflict with adjacent land uses.

PFS-P1.4

Encourage, and whenever possible require, co-location and undergrounding of new utility infrastructure, such as transmission and distribution lines, fiber-optic cables, and pipelines, in existing rights-of-way to minimize visual, operational, and environmental impacts on the community.

Actions

PFS-A1.1

Streamline processes for special districts to establish new facilities that support their core mission and are consistent with General Plan goals and policies.

PFS-A1.2 

Update the Capital Facilities Master Plan, Capital Road Improvement and Preservation Program, Parks Capital Improvement Program, and similar plans and programs as needed to maintain consistency with this General Plan, particularly its provisions related to environmental justice.



PFS-A1.3

Notify and request comments from utility service providers on development applications.*

PFS-A1.4

Upon each update to the Housing Element, perform an analysis of infrastructure needs and deficiencies in DUCs and explore funding mechanisms that could make extension of needed services and facilities feasible.*

Just and Equitable Facilities and Services

An uneven distribution of amenities along race and class lines reflects long legacies of racism and discrimination in how public facilities and services are provided. Environmental justice efforts seek equitable access to community investments, and SB 1000 requires that local agencies prioritize public investments in Impacted Communities, as discussed further in the Stronger Communities Element.

Figure PFS-1 shows the locations of existing community facilities countywide in relation to Impacted Communities. The policy guidance in this section seeks to combat historic discrimination by promoting equitable distribution of and access to public facilities and services, and prioritizing improvements in Impacted Communities. This includes the types of facilities shown on Figure PFS-1, as well as technological resources like broadband internet to promote success in the Information Age and equitable code enforcement to promote healthy and safe neighborhoods.

Goal PFS-2

Public facilities, infrastructure, and services that meet the needs of, and are accessible to, residents of Impacted Communities.

Policies

PFS-P2.1



Ensure County facilities and services meet the needs of all users, regardless of age, ability, race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender identity, or economic status.

PFS-P2.2



Pursuant to SB 1000, as part of the County's annual budgeting process, prioritize investments in public facilities, infrastructure, and services that benefit Impacted Communities and respond to their needs, particularly those needs identified in their Community Profiles.

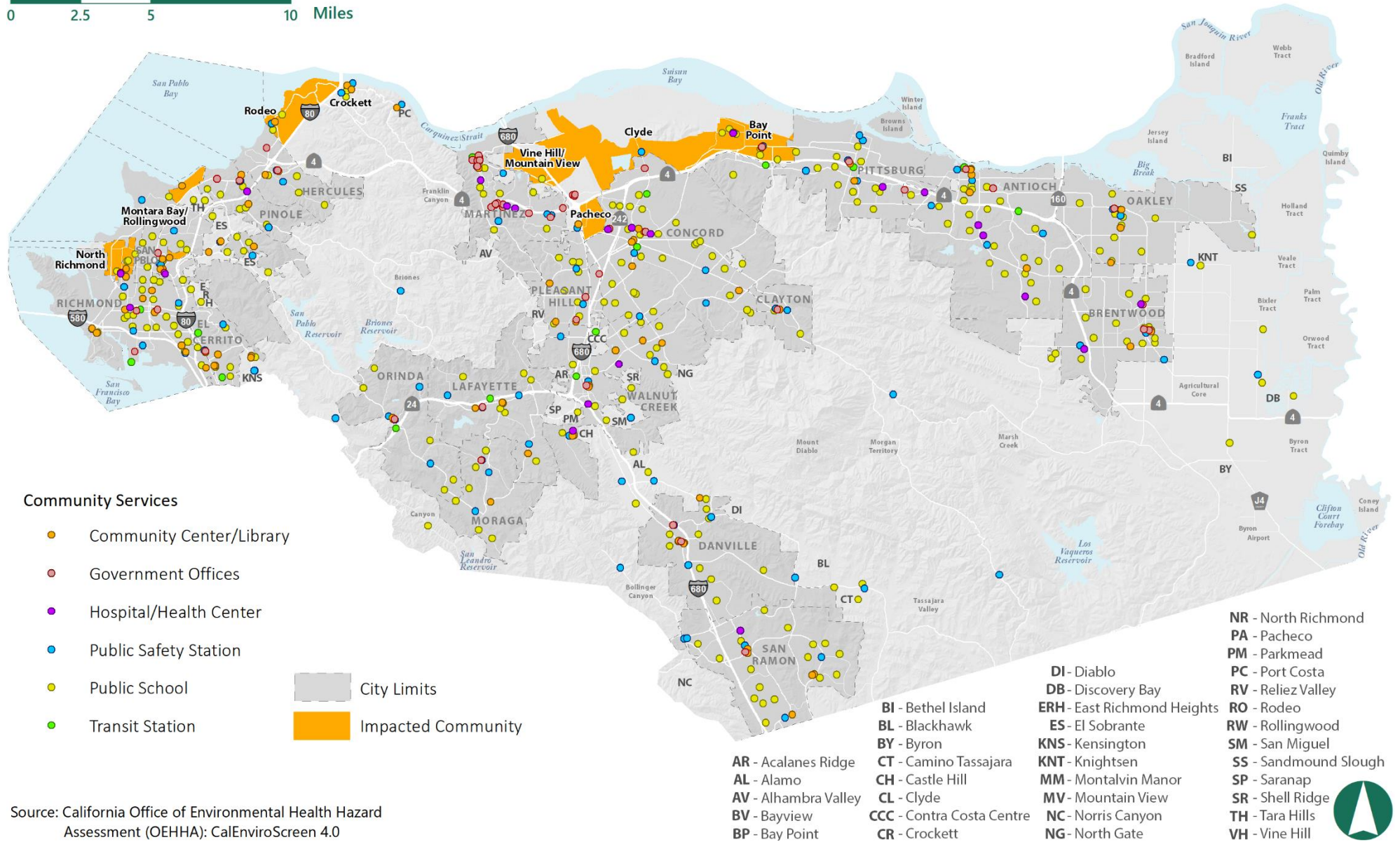
PFS-P2.3



Coordinate with service providers (e.g., water, wastewater, transit, and recreation districts) and advocate for proper planning, maintenance, and implementation of services and infrastructure to ensure efficient service delivery in Impacted Communities.

FIGURE PFS-1 COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



Source: California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA): CalEnviroScreen 4.0



PFS-P2.4

Continue to provide contact information for the Code Enforcement Section of the Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) on the front page of the DCD website. Maintain clear, simple lines of communication for residents to reach the County regarding code enforcement and nuisance complaints, and ensure equitable, prompt responses.

PFS-P2.5



Continue to prioritize and adequately fund code enforcement and clean-up of illegal dumping on public and private property in Impacted Communities.

Actions

PFS-A2.1



Establish funding and financing mechanisms in Impacted Communities to provide and maintain community-desired public facilities and services. These could be County- or community-initiated, and include business improvement districts, green benefit districts, and similar mechanisms.

PFS-A2.2



Establish an entity within the County tasked with ensuring that County services and facilities in Impacted Communities are coordinated, prioritized, and delivered efficiently and effectively.

PFS-A2.3



Implement and maintain urban greening and green infrastructure, such as sustainable/green street projects, in Impacted Communities.

PFS-A2.4



Regularly assess Code Enforcement responses and Public Works maintenance practices to ensure equitable implementation. Prioritize resources to keep Impacted Communities safe and clean, emphasizing enforcement actions on issues identified in Community Profiles.

PFS-A2.5

Work with the Contra Costa Crisis Center to provide Code Enforcement contact information through the 211 Contra Costa information service.

PFS-A2.6



Pursue public-private partnerships that improve access to reliable, fast, and affordable internet in Impacted Communities.

Funding Services and Infrastructure

Financing capital improvements and public services within Contra Costa County is complex, given the large number of agencies involved. As urban growth continues throughout the county, demands for public services and infrastructure will increase, which can place higher fiscal burdens on service providers. Meanwhile, many service providers lack adequate funding for

ongoing maintenance and eventual replacement of existing infrastructure, much of which was constructed in the decades immediately following World War II.

Special financing mechanisms may be required to support major new development. These could include County Service Areas, community facilities districts, or other benefit assessment districts that fund services through a special tax on properties within the service area. New development is also subject to the County's impact fee programs, which apply fees to development projects proportionate to the cost of providing public facilities and services to the development.



Streetscape improvements like this project along Fred Jackson Way in North Richmond are provided by the County's Public Works Department.

Goal PFS-3

Adequate, fair, and cost-effective funding for public facilities, infrastructure, and services.

Policies

PFS-P3.1

Coordinate with LAFCO, infrastructure and service providers, and cities to ensure infrastructure and services are reliable and provided in a cost-effective and equitable manner.*

PFS-P3.2

Require new development to pay its fair share of public improvement costs for infrastructure, facilities, maintenance, and services based on the proportionate cost of serving the project.*

PFS-P3.3

When new development cannot adequately be served by existing infrastructure and facilities or through the County's impact fee programs, require a public facilities financing plan that identifies the necessary public improvements and establishes an equitable plan to pay for and develop the required improvements.*



PFS-P3.4

When communities request levels of County services that exceed the countywide standard, require creation of (or annexation into) a County Service Area, community facilities district, or equivalent mechanism to fund the supplemental service costs. Allow exceptions for enhanced services in Impacted Communities if alternative funding sources can be identified.*

PFS-P3.5

When new development needs ongoing infrastructure maintenance that exceeds County standards or existing funding levels, require creation of or annexation to a County service area, community facilities district, benefit assessment district, or other special funding unit to pay for those maintenance activities.*

PFS-P3.6

When adopting, amending, and imposing impact fees, community benefits agreements, and developer exactions, consider the effects of such fees and exactions upon individual project economics, housing supply, economic development, and the County's broad goals and objectives related to overall community development. If gap funding can be identified, consider fee reductions or exemptions for projects in Impacted Communities that are consistent with the community objectives identified in their Community Profile.

Actions

PFS-A3.1

Implement an equitable and standardized approach to property tax sharing with cities during the annexation process.

PFS-A3.2

Regularly update development impact fees to ensure new development pays its fair share of infrastructure and service costs.*

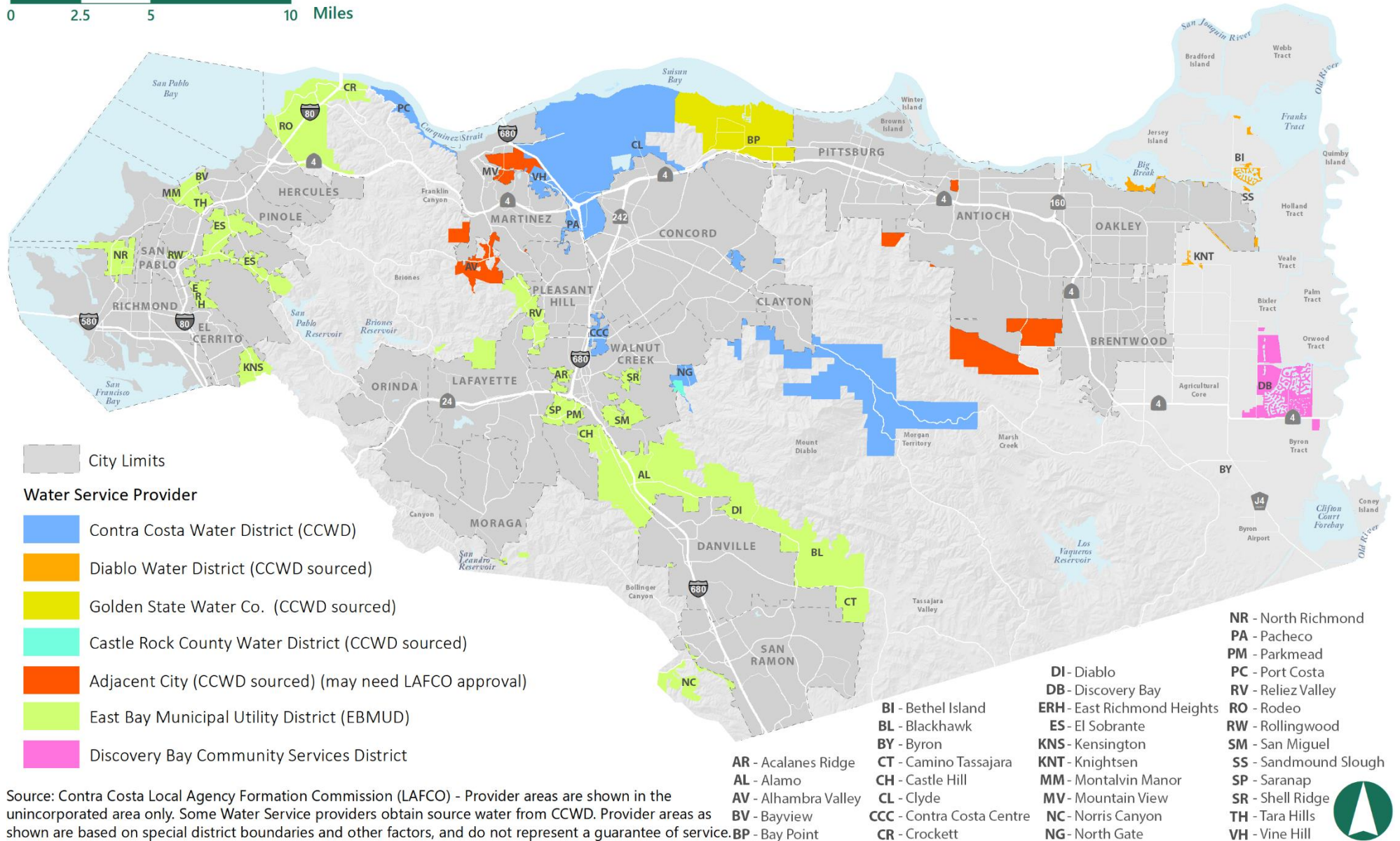
WATER AND WASTEWATER

Water service consists of transmission of raw water from its source to a treatment facility, treatment, and then distribution through a network of pressurized pipes. Water service in unincorporated urban parts of Contra Costa County is provided by special districts and some cities, as shown in Figure PFS-2. The major water service providers in the unincorporated county are East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and Contra Costa Water District (CCWD).

- EBMUD provides treated water to approximately 1.4 million people in western Contra Costa County and portions of Central County. EBMUD brings water from the Mokelumne River watershed in the Sierra Nevada through three 81-mile aqueducts to the East Bay. Water is stored in a network of reservoirs, including Briones, Lafayette, San Pablo, and San Leandro in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties prior to treatment.

FIGURE PFS-2 WATER SERVICE PROVIDERS

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





Los Vaqueros Reservoir is integral to the county's water supply.

- **CCWD** provides treated and untreated water to approximately 500,000 people in central and northeastern Contra Costa County. Customers include municipalities, industrial facilities, businesses, and residences. CCWD's water is sourced from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta via the 48-mile Contra Costa Canal. CCWD also stores water at Los Vaqueros Reservoir in East County, southwest of Byron, before it is delivered via the Contra Costa Canal.

Properties outside of a water service district rely on individual groundwater wells or private water systems. East Contra Costa Irrigation District and Byron-Bethany Irrigation District also make additional raw water available to properties in East County.

Wastewater service consists of transmission of wastewater to a treatment facility, treatment, and then disposal of the wastewater and residual waste solids. As shown in Figure PFS-3, many special districts are responsible for

wastewater service in unincorporated Contra Costa County. The largest wastewater service providers include Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSD), which serves most of Central County, and the West Contra Costa Sanitary District (WCCSD), which serves much of West County. Rural areas outside district boundaries rely on on-site wastewater treatment systems to treat sewage.

Goal PFS-4

Water and wastewater services that meet current and future needs in a safe, resilient, and environmentally responsible manner.

Policies

PFS-P4.1



Support the goal of regional self-sufficiency as part of new water system planning efforts, where all regions in the state are required to implement a variety of local water supply options and institute conservation and reuse programs to reduce reliance on exports from the Delta.

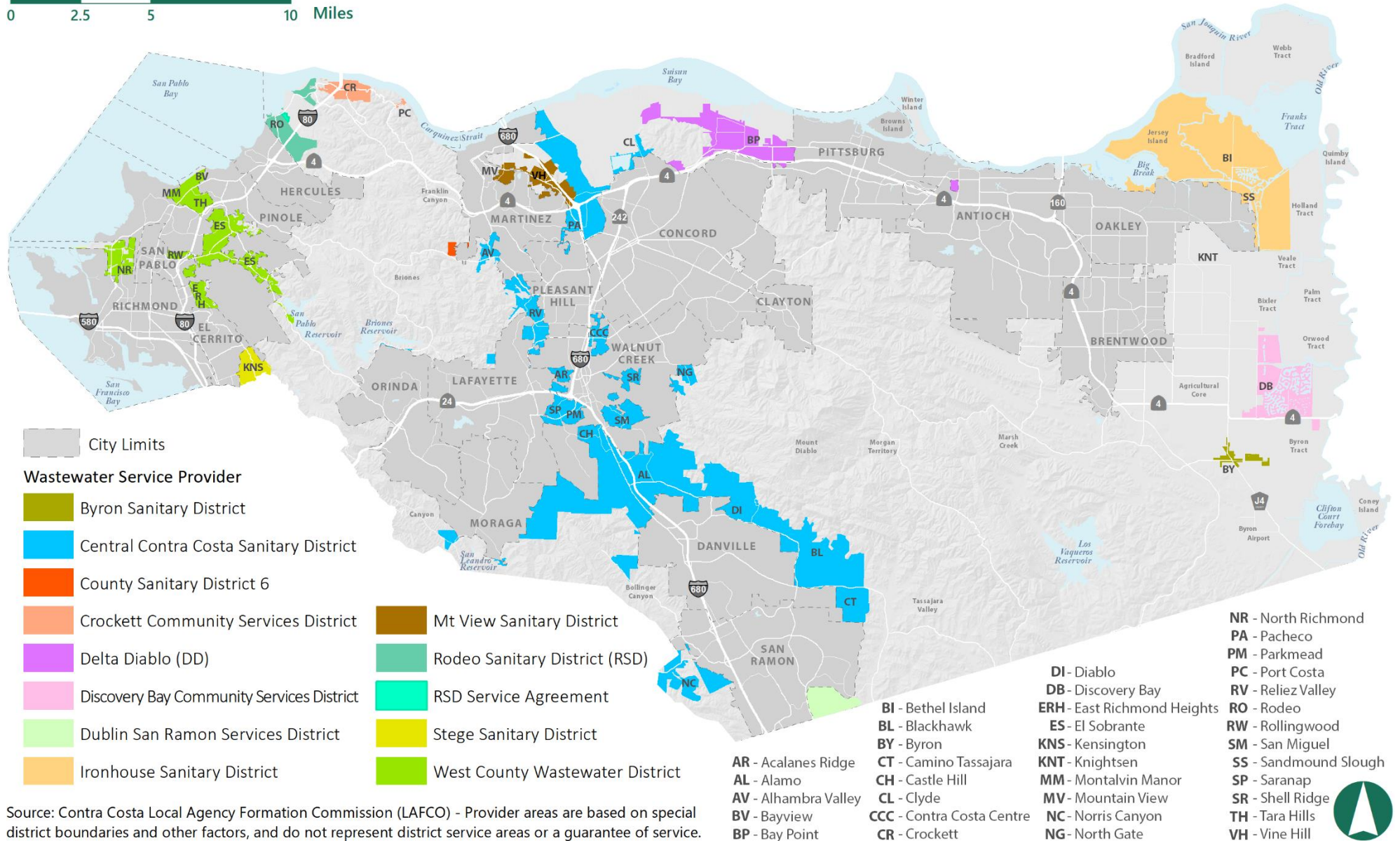
PFS-P4.2



Encourage water service providers to require separate service connections and meters for recycled water use or where large quantities of water are used for special purposes, such as landscape irrigation.

FIGURE PFS-3 WASTEWATER SERVICE PROVIDERS

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



Source: Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) - Provider areas are based on special district boundaries and other factors, and do not represent district service areas or a guarantee of service.



PFS-P4.3

Support the State Water Resources Control Board's efforts to eliminate small public water systems in new development. Allow such systems only for projects that cannot feasibly be connected to a public water system.*

PFS-P4.4



Partner with water service providers to ensure continuity of service and provide financial relief to Impacted Communities if prices rise during drought conditions.

PFS-P4.5



Require new development to demonstrate the availability of a safe, sanitary, and environmentally sound water delivery system with adequate capacity.*

PFS-P4.6



Require new development to demonstrate the availability of a safe, sanitary, and environmentally sound wastewater treatment system with adequate capacity.*

PFS-P4.7

Support CCWD's planned Phase 2 Expansion of Los Vaqueros Reservoir.

PFS-P4.8

Partner with water service providers to protect water conveyance infrastructure, such as aqueducts and canals, from encroachment and pollution.

PFS-P4.9

Deny applications to establish private wastewater treatment facilities within the Delta Primary Zone that would serve areas outside the Primary Zone.

Actions

PFS-A4.1

Establish a standing drought and water shortage task force to facilitate drought and water shortage preparedness for State small water systems and domestic wells within the County's jurisdiction.

PFS-A4.2


Develop a plan to address potential drought and water shortage risk, including interim and long-term solutions for State small water systems and domestic wells.

See the Conservation, Open Space, and Working Lands Element for policies and actions related to water quality, conservation, and management.

DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK

Unlike engineered domestic water and sanitary sewer systems, the pattern of stormwater drainage is determined by water's natural tendency to flow downhill. Consequently, much of the drainage system serving the county consists of natural drainage swales, ditches, and watercourses. Water ultimately drains into San Francisco and San Pablo Bays, or the Delta.

Flood control infrastructure includes levees, drainage channels, and other structures designed to prevent creeks, the Delta, and other water bodies throughout Contra Costa County from overflowing their banks and causing floods. Conventional flood control infrastructure often incorporates concrete



and riprap lined channels, detention basins, and other highly engineered solutions. Increasingly, communities and agencies are transitioning to “green infrastructure,” which focuses on using natural drainage swales, permeable pavement, and rain gardens to filter and absorb stormwater.

The Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (CCCFCWCD), which is a dependent special district governed by the County Board of Supervisors, is responsible for regional flood control projects. Incorporated cities and the CCCFCWCD have developed regional drainage plans in many areas to guide developers in implementing new drainage systems as part of development projects, and to provide the basis for local and federal flood control projects. On-site drainage infrastructure is provided and/or improved by developers as part of the land development process.

Levees are especially important components of the county’s flood control infrastructure. Figure PFS-4 depicts Contra Costa’s levee system, most of which is owned and operated by public agencies such as reclamation districts. Similar to dams, levees hold back water and protect lower-lying areas from inundation. In Contra Costa County, many of these areas are at or below sea level. Levees protect critical infrastructure, including water intake and conveyance facilities, highways, railroads, natural gas pipelines and storage fields, and electrical transmission lines, as well as thousands of acres of private property.

Strengthening Delta levees is vitally important to safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of county residents and are equally important components of the county’s flood control infrastructure. In addition to protecting property from flooding, Delta levees form the backbone of the regional road system, ensure the continued existence of Delta towns and communities, and protect habitat for wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. They form a network of channels that entice boaters to explore the Delta and support a longstanding tradition of hunting and fishing. They also carry fresh water to

the pumps that supply water to the farmers of the San Joaquin Valley and residents of the Bay Area and Southern California. Local levee-maintaining agencies have managed the financing and ongoing maintenance, rehabilitation, and repair of Delta levees, and have improved levee integrity, reducing overall Delta flood risk. Much remains to be accomplished, however, as sea level rise, increased storm frequency and intensity, and higher flows from greater rainfall and less snowfall as a result of climate change will continue to threaten levee stability and effectiveness.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) implements the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) to improve flood risk management in the Central Valley and the Delta. The CVFPP seeks to integrate and improve ecosystem functions concurrently with flood management investments and projects. It also calls for local agencies to protect urban communities (defined as communities with at least 10,000 residents) in the Central Valley from a 200-year flood, which is a flood that has a 0.5-percent probability (1 in 200) of occurring in any year. In unincorporated Contra Costa County, only Discovery Bay meets the criteria for 200-year flood protection.

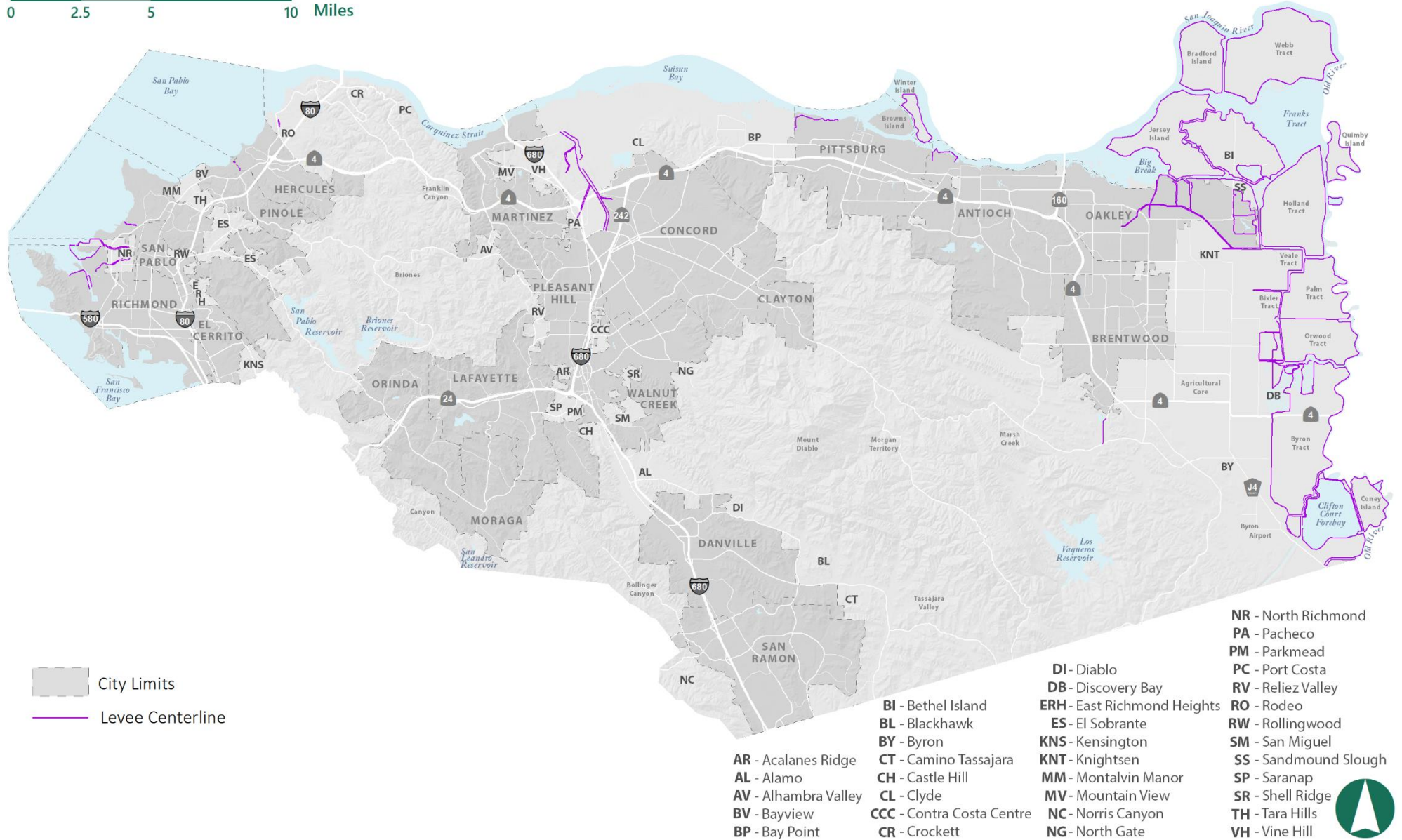


The capacity of Grayson Creek in Pacheco has been increased to protect against flooding.



FIGURE PFS-4 LEVEE CENTERLINES

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





Goal PFS-5
Natural systems and flood-risk management infrastructure that can handle stormwater year-round and adapt to new and changing conditions.

Policies

PFS-P5.1

Support public and private efforts to improve protection against flooding, subsidence, and inundation, especially projects that achieve 200-year flood protection or better, factoring in anticipated sea level rise, in areas of the county covered by the CVFPP.

PFS-P5.2

Partner with responsible parties, public and private, to ensure ongoing funding exists for maintenance and rehabilitation of flood management facilities and structures (e.g., levees, pump stations, canals, channels, and dams), particularly those that do not meet adopted State or federal flood-protection standards.*

PFS-P5.3

Allow for future height increases to private levees protecting inland areas from tidal flooding and sea level rise by requiring rights-of-way and setbacks to be sufficiently wide on the levee’s upland side and prohibiting new structures from being constructed on top of or immediately adjacent to the levee.

PFS-P5.4

Support material stockpiling and equipment staging for emergency repair of Delta levees by:

- (a) Consulting with reclamation districts to identify storage sites within the Delta Primary Zone.
- (b) Denying entitlements to convert identified storage sites to uses that would preclude storage unless the affected reclamation district(s) identify suitable alternative sites or determine sites to be converted are no longer needed.
- (c) Denying entitlements for mining/extraction uses that would remove from the Primary Zone those materials deemed essential for levee repair.

PFS-P5.5

Evaluate projects involving water impoundment or conveyance to ensure they will not create a risk of seepage onto adjacent properties. Such projects must conclusively demonstrate that unacceptable seepage will not occur.

PFS-P5.6

Require projects with potential to significantly impact natural watercourses to establish or participate in programs that ensure ongoing maintenance of the watercourses to maintain their flood carrying capacity and habitat values.

PFS-P5.7



When developing new or revised regional drainage and flood management plans, including plans to protect against sea level rise, incorporate adequate setbacks and alternative drainage system improvements that provide aesthetic, recreational, and environmental benefits. Improvements should avoid structural modifications to



watercourses and preserve riparian habitat and floodplains, and convert engineered drainage systems to more natural systems, when and where possible. In areas at risk of temporary or permanent inundation from sea level rise, ensure that improvements can continue to provide adequate protection for the projected level of inundation by 2100 or the expected operational life of the project, whichever is later.*

PFS-P5.8



Incorporate green infrastructure into new and retrofitted flood-control and streetscaping projects, including replacing existing asphalt and other hardscapes with green infrastructure, as feasible.*

PFS-P5.9



Work with developers of properties along transit corridors or in commercial or mixed-use areas to combine required C.3/stormwater treatment facilities with green infrastructure on the adjoining public right-of-way to enhance the value and sizing of these facilities.

PFS-P5.10

Encourage public participation in design processes for major flood control and sea level-rise resiliency projects to ensure that these facilities are context-sensitive and provide multiple public benefits whenever possible.

Actions

PFS-A5.1

Identify existing developed areas where drainage maintenance issues exist and coordinate with each affected

community to consider creating a benefit assessment district or similar local funding mechanism to pay for improvement and maintenance needs.*

PFS-A5.2



Coordinate with responsible parties, public and private, to develop a flood risk management plan for the levee systems protecting the unincorporated county that:

- (a) Identifies the entities responsible for operation and maintenance of the levees.
- (b) Determines the anticipated flood levels in the adjacent waterways and the level of protection offered by the existing levees along the waterways.
- (c) Establishes a long-term plan to upgrade the system as necessary to provide at least a 100-year level of flood protection, and 200-year level of flood protection where required.
- (d) Considers the worst-case situations of high tides coupled with sea level rise and storm-driven waves.
- (e) Protects beneficial uses of San Francisco Bay and the Delta and their water.
- (f) Prioritizes designs that foster riparian habitat while containing floodwaters, such as by using more natural materials, landforms, and vegetation, rather than concrete channels and other conventional flood-control infrastructure.
- (g) Encourages multipurpose flood-management projects that, where feasible, incorporate recreation, resource conservation, preservation of natural riparian habitat, and scenic values of waterways.

- (h) Takes a holistic approach to flood-risk management so that new infrastructure does not simply transfer flooding impacts from one property or location to another.
- (i) Considers flood and tidal impacts to existing brownfields, especially adjacent to shorelines.
- (j) Includes provisions for updates to reflect future State- or federally mandated levels of flood protection.

PFS-A5.3



Develop watershed management plans incorporating best management practices that slow, spread, and sink water runoff to flatten the hydrograph (i.e., water flow over time) where erosion is a concern, while also enhancing wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities where feasible.*

PFS-A5.4



Establish programs for development projects alongside natural watercourses that ensure regular maintenance of the waterway, including debris removal, erosion control, and conservation and restoration of native species.*

PFS-A5.5



Coordinate with the Contra Costa County Mosquito and Vector Control District to identify and remedy areas with ongoing drainage problems to reduce disease risk from stagnant water.

See the Health and Safety Element for policies and actions related to flood hazards and sea level rise and the Parks and Recreation section later in this Element for policies and actions related to secondary recreational uses of flood-control infrastructure.

SHERIFF, FIRE, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE

Law enforcement services in Contra Costa County are provided by several agencies at various levels of government. In the unincorporated county, community policing is provided primarily by the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office, with special districts like the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District providing service in certain areas.

Beyond police services, careful design of the built environment can also help prevent crime and increase the sense of safety. Research has shown that the *certainty* of being caught is a highly effective deterrent to criminal activity. Design elements that enhance visibility of public spaces, such as adequate lighting and windows and porches that encourage residents to have “eyes on the street,” can create safer environments. The policy guidance in this section emphasizes improvements to the physical environment that support an accessible and visible public realm. Additional policy guidance in the Stronger Communities Element addresses engagement with Impacted Communities to ensure the designs for public realm improvements allow residents and visitors to feel safe and welcomed.

Fire protection services in Contra Costa County are provided by six fire protection districts and three city fire departments that adequately cover the entire county except for Jersey Island, Bradford Island, Quimby Island, Webb



Tract, and the Marathon Refinery near Martinez, as shown in Figure PFS-5. All fire protection agencies within the county have signed mutual-aid agreements to provide assistance to neighboring agencies. The firefighting capabilities of these agencies are further augmented by personnel and equipment from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.



The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District operates this station in Discovery Bay.

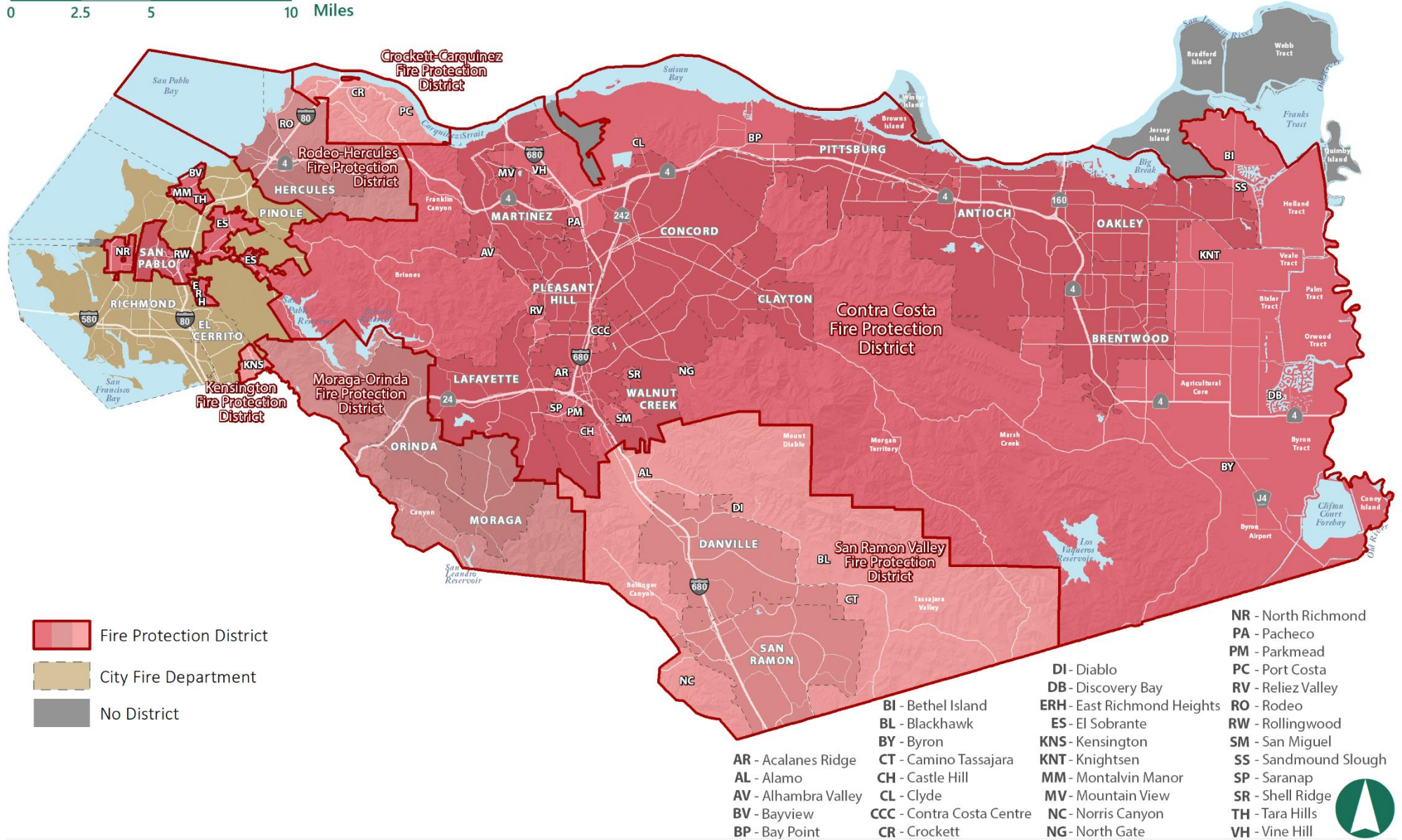
Contra Costa County Health Services contracts with the Contra Costa Fire Protection District, Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District, San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, and American Medical Response to provide emergency ambulance service. Emergency response calls for the unincorporated county are fielded by the Office of the Sheriff's Communications Center.

Public safety response time standards provide a means to ensure that the community will remain safe as the county develops. The County strives to achieve the following public safety standards:

- **Sheriff Response Times:** Average law enforcement response time of five minutes or less for Priority 1 calls (where a threat to people may exist).
- **Fire Response Times:**
 - Four minutes or less response time for the arrival of the first engine company at a fire suppression incident, 90 percent of the time.
 - Six minutes or less response time for the arrival of the second engine company at a fire suppression incident, 90 percent of the time.
 - Eight minutes or less response time for an initial full alarm assignment at a fire suppression incident that does not involve a high-rise building, 90 percent of the time.
 - Ten minutes and 10 seconds or less response time for an initial full alarm assignment at a fire suppression incident that involves a high-rise building, 90 percent of the time.
- **Emergency Medical Services Response Times:**
 - Four minutes or less response time for the arrival of a unit with a first responder, 90 percent of the time.
 - Eight minutes or less response time for the arrival of an advanced life support company, 90 percent of the time.

FIGURE PFS-5 FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





Goal PFS-6

Efficient and effective law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services for all communities.

Policies

PFS-P6.1

Require new development to support effective law enforcement and fire protection by providing a safe and accessible public realm for all.

PFS-P6.2

Design, improve, and maintain public spaces to maximize visibility and safety through appropriate lighting and landscaping.

PFS-P6.3

During the discretionary review process for projects with potential to increase demand on fire protection services, consult with the applicable fire district to identify any upgrades to fire protection facilities, infrastructure, and equipment needed to reduce fire risk and improve emergency response.*

PFS-P6.4

Encourage multi-jurisdictional and mutual-aid disaster response training between all agencies providing emergency services within the county.

Actions

PFS-A6.1

Engage community members, law enforcement, and local leaders, and amend the County Ordinance Code to incorporate standards for new development that support a safe, accessible public realm for all through environmental design.*

See the Health and Safety Element for policies and actions related to wildfire hazards and emergency response and the Transportation Element for policies and actions related to safe streets.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

In Contra Costa County, the private sector is mainly responsible for solid waste collection and disposal, and the County is responsible for planning, administration, and facility approval. The County, Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs), and certain special districts enter into franchise agreements with private waste haulers to provide collection services. The County oversees solid waste management for about half of the unincorporated population, which is currently serviced by four different franchise agreements. Disposal facilities, which are shown in Figure PFS-6, are privately owned. Given the many entities involved, public and private, effective solid waste management requires significant coordination.

Reducing waste in the first place, along with repairing or reusing items and materials, are important strategies for overall sustainability. The California Integrated Waste Management Act (CIWMA) requires cities and counties to adopt and implement waste diversion programs for source reduction, recycling, and composting, and requires that each county adopt a Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CoIWMP); the County's.



CoIWMP was adopted in May 1993. In addition to the CIWMA, the State continues to enact laws addressing solid waste and recycling. The County reports to the State annually regarding compliance with existing laws, including diversion goals and waste reduction measures.

Waste that is not diverted is deposited into landfills, where it breaks down slowly and emits methane, a potent greenhouse gas (GHG), contributing to climate change. Methane emissions from landfills are a major source of the GHG emissions generated in the county. Landfill operators already capture a large proportion of this methane, which can be used to generate energy or converted to a liquid fuel that can be used to power vehicles and other equipment. There are opportunities for landfill operators to expand the methane collection infrastructure at the county's landfills, capturing more methane and reducing the county's GHG emissions.

Illegal dumping is a large-scale pervasive problem in Contra Costa County and a high-priority issue because of its immediate and long-term adverse effects on health and safety, community assets, community pride, economic development, and natural habitats. Illegal dumping hot spots are widespread throughout the county, occurring on rural roads and agricultural land, in suburban neighborhoods, and in urban environments affecting many communities regardless of socio-economic status. However, Impacted Communities are disproportionately affected by illegal dumping. In 2018, the County formed an interdepartmental team and began implementing strategies to combat illegal dumping as part of the Contra Costa County Illegal Dumping Initiative. Strategies are grouped into four categories: educate, prevent, clean up, and enforce; they include a public outreach campaign to educate residents about dumping, street signs placed near dumping zones with information on how to report dumping activity, removal of abandoned recreation vehicles, and dedicated law enforcement to investigate dumping crimes



Illegal dumping harms community character, health, economy, and natural resources.

Goal PFS-7

Safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible solid waste diversion and reduction practices and management.

Policies

PFS-P7.1

Coordinate with private solid waste collection and disposal companies, cities, and other appropriate agencies to plan solid waste management facilities that are safe, effective, and efficient.*

PFS-P7.2

Coordinate with other jurisdictions to ensure that solid waste management, including solid waste resource recovery (e.g., reduce, reuse, recycle, compost, and waste-to-energy), is carried out in accordance with the CoIWMP and meets strict environmental standards.*

PFS-P7.3

Strive to provide equivalent solid waste collection services and rates across each unincorporated community under County franchise control.

PFS-P7.4

Ensure that new development complies with the requirements of the CoIWMP.*

PFS-P7.5

Require new residential and commercial uses to provide adequate space for trash, recycling, and organics collection, as well as edible food recovery when applicable.*

PFS-P7.6



Encourage new technologies for organics processing consistent with SB 1383, the Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Reduction Strategy of 2016.

PFS-P7.7



Support expansion of recycling programs and efforts to locate convenient, accessible recycling centers in Impacted Communities.

PFS-P7.8



Consistently use a multiprong approach (i.e., educate, prevent, clean up, enforce) to combat illegal dumping.

PFS-P7.9



Prohibit new landfills in ecologically sensitive areas, and require that new landfills be located, designed, and operated to avoid adverse impacts to surrounding land uses, including by limiting the area of landfill activities; limiting hours of operation; providing safe and appropriate transportation routes; maintaining site security; identifying associated off-site feeder transfer stations; grading to blend the landfill disturbance area with surrounding topography; covering refuse daily; and mitigating noise, odor, litter, and visual impacts.*

PFS-P7.10



Require that new landfills provide the following:

- (a) An appropriate leachate collection and recovery system.
- (b) An approved erosion-control and drainage plan.
- (c) Geotechnical studies, including stability analysis, to determine the most appropriate engineering design.
- (d) A habitat enhancement plan that provides for at least a 3:1 replacement for lost significant habitat.*



PFS-P7.11



Require new landfills to be designed and operated so that upon decommissioning they can be repurposed for other uses, such as renewable energy facilities, recycling and organics recovery operations, outdoor recreation facilities, and open space.

PFS-P7.12



Require that new and expanded landfill operations significantly reduce GHG emissions to meet or exceed State targets to the extent feasible, and work toward carbon-neutral landfills.

PFS-P7.13



Extend the life of landfills by continually striving to:

- (a) Reduce the amount of solid waste generated.
- (b) Reuse and recycle as much solid waste as possible.
- (c) Utilize the energy and nutrient value of solid waste (i.e., waste-to-energy and composting).
- (d) Properly dispose of remaining solid waste.*

PFS-P7.14

Discourage direct public access to landfills and instead direct the public to transfer stations. Base the need for new or expanded transfer stations on economics, the need to mitigate traffic impacts, and the need to inspect refuse for hazardous materials and recyclables.

PFS-P7.15



Ensure transfer stations provide adequate capacity to accommodate recovery of recyclables and organic materials and encourage organics processing.*

PFS-P7.16

Include a condition of approval in land use permits for solid waste facilities requiring review for compliance with permit conditions every three to five years.*

Actions

PFS-A7.1

Study the potential benefits of combining the County's solid waste collection franchise agreements, or adjusting the boundaries of franchise service areas, to improve efficiency and consistency.

PFS-A7.2



Streamline the permitting process for composting, organics processing, and repair/reuse facilities.

PFS-A7.3



Partner with community organizations and solid waste franchise collection haulers to maximize participation in community clean-up days and residential on-call garbage pick-ups in Impacted Communities. Encourage community participation by holding these events in conjunction with other community events whenever possible.

PFS-A7.4



Work with other counties, cities, and community members to establish public/private partnerships to combat illegal dumping.

PFS-A7.5



Install signage and increase education, monitoring, enforcement, and rapid cleanup to discourage illegal dumping, especially in Impacted Communities and rural areas.

PFS-A7.6



Use the County's legislative platform process and partner with other public agencies throughout the state to propose and support legislation to combat illegal dumping.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Contra Costa County is an outdoor enthusiast's delight. Whether it is a peaceful nature walk through Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline, an exciting hike around historic Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, fishing at a nearby reservoir, or a fun day out with family and friends at a local park, the county offers something for residents of all ages and abilities. In this region, one can explore the beautiful landscapes, appreciate breathtaking views, enjoy outdoor activities, and learn about the local flora and fauna. This wide variety of activities encourages physical activity, learning, and socialization, while also providing opportunities for people to connect with nature and enjoy the outdoors. Quality parks and recreational opportunities can also contribute to economic development by attracting visitors and promoting tourism. Overall, parks and recreation are essential to creating healthy, vibrant communities where individuals and families thrive.



The Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline provides trail recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. (Community-submitted photo)

Most county residents are fortunate to have access to a variety of parks and trails in unincorporated areas, as shown on Figures PFS-7 and PFS-8:

- **State and regional parks** provide a broad range of recreational opportunities, such as hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing, swimming, camping, group sports, and ecological and cultural education. This category includes Mount Diablo State Park and Marsh Creek State Historic Park, which are owned and managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, as well as many regional parks owned and managed by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). In addition, EBMUD and CCWD offer recreational opportunities, such as hiking and fishing, as secondary uses within the watersheds of their reservoirs. The US National Park Service also operates the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial at Military Ocean Terminal Concord, John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez, and Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site just outside Danville.

FIGURE PFS-8 TRAILS NETWORK

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





- **Local parks** are indispensable elements of our neighborhoods and communities. They serve as focal points where people can exercise and enjoy leisure time together, and include a variety of amenities such as sports courts, community centers, swimming pools and splash pads, playgrounds, ballfields, picnic areas, community gardens, and gathering spaces. Local parks in unincorporated areas are typically owned and maintained by the County or a special district, such as a recreation and park district or community services district. The local park system is often augmented by similar facilities on school campuses. In some areas, private organizations such as homeowners' associations maintain parks for their communities, sometimes allowing public access.
- **Trails** are essentially linear parks that provide safe connections between residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, and other destinations. Because of their connectivity, they also act as alternative commute routes in some communities, though typically they're restricted to pedestrian, bicycle, and micromobility use. Major regional trails in Contra Costa County include portions of the San Francisco Bay Trail, a 500-mile network of trails along San Francisco and San Pablo Bays that is managed collaboratively by several agencies, including the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments, and EBRPD; portions of the 50-mile Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail that is managed by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council; and the 26-mile Iron Horse Regional Trail, 13.5-mile Contra Costa Canal Regional Trail, and 19-mile Delta de Anza Regional Trail managed by EBRPD. The county is also crisscrossed by innumerable smaller, local trails, many of which are unpaved and informal.

While not shown on Figure PFS-7, numerous parks within incorporated cities and towns are also available to residents of unincorporated areas.

The County coordinates with agencies at all levels of government to provide and maintain parks and recreational programs in unincorporated communities. The County administers and regularly updates the Parks Capital Improvement Program, which allocates funding to park projects and maintenance based on community priorities and budget availability. Park acquisition and development are also funded in part through the County's Parks Impact Fee, which is a fee charged to new residential projects. The fee amount is based on the project size, location, and type(s) of housing proposed.

Access to parks and open space is an important environmental justice issue. Impacted Communities, which are described in the Stronger Communities Element, often lack access to the range and quality of facilities that support a high quality of life and positive public health outcomes. This can be a significant driver of poor physical and mental health. It is important to correct this inequity by investing in Impacted Communities and ensuring that each resident has access to space for outdoor physical activity.




Ambrose Park provides play areas for children in Bay Point.

Park standards provide a means to ensure that parks and recreation facilities are provided as the county develops. The County strives to provide 3 acres of local parks per 1,000 residents. This standard is an important tool for requiring new development to provide facilities when parks to serve new residents are lacking nearby.

Goal PFS-8
An easily accessible, integrated system of high-quality parks and trails to meet the needs of all residents.


Policies

PFS-P8.1  Support development of a variety of local amenities that meet a diverse range of recreational needs, such as ballfields, all-abilities playgrounds, tot lots, spraygrounds, adult fitness courses, gymnasiums, swimming pools, sport courts, passive parks, pocket parks, urban gardens, and trails.

PFS-P8.2  Provide a local park within a safe 10-minute walk for all residents in urban communities or within a 5-minute drive for residents in suburban communities, as indicated in Figures PFS-9 and PFS-10.*

PFS-P8.3   Expand access to diverse, high-quality parks, green spaces, recreational facilities, trails, and natural environments for residents of Impacted Communities, including by facilitating multiple transportation modes. Partner with other agencies and non-governmental organizations to obtain funding, and design and maintain these facilities to offer a safe and comfortable environment for users of all ages and abilities.

PFS-P8.4   Prioritize and promote recreational activity programs and opportunities in Impacted Communities.

PFS-P8.5  Require projects subject to the Park Dedication or Park Impact Fee Ordinances to develop parks and recreation amenities identified in, or proposed for addition to, the County’s Park Capital Improvement Plan. Park Impact fees or in-lieu fees should be assessed only when the County determines developer improvements are not feasible.*

PFS-P8.6   Support expanded access to recreation opportunities by working with other agencies to co-locate parks and trails with public facilities, such as schools and utility easements, prioritizing Impacted Communities.



FIGURE PFS-9 PUBLIC PARK AND OPEN SPACE WALKABILITY FOR URBAN COMMUNITIES

0 2.5 5 10 Miles

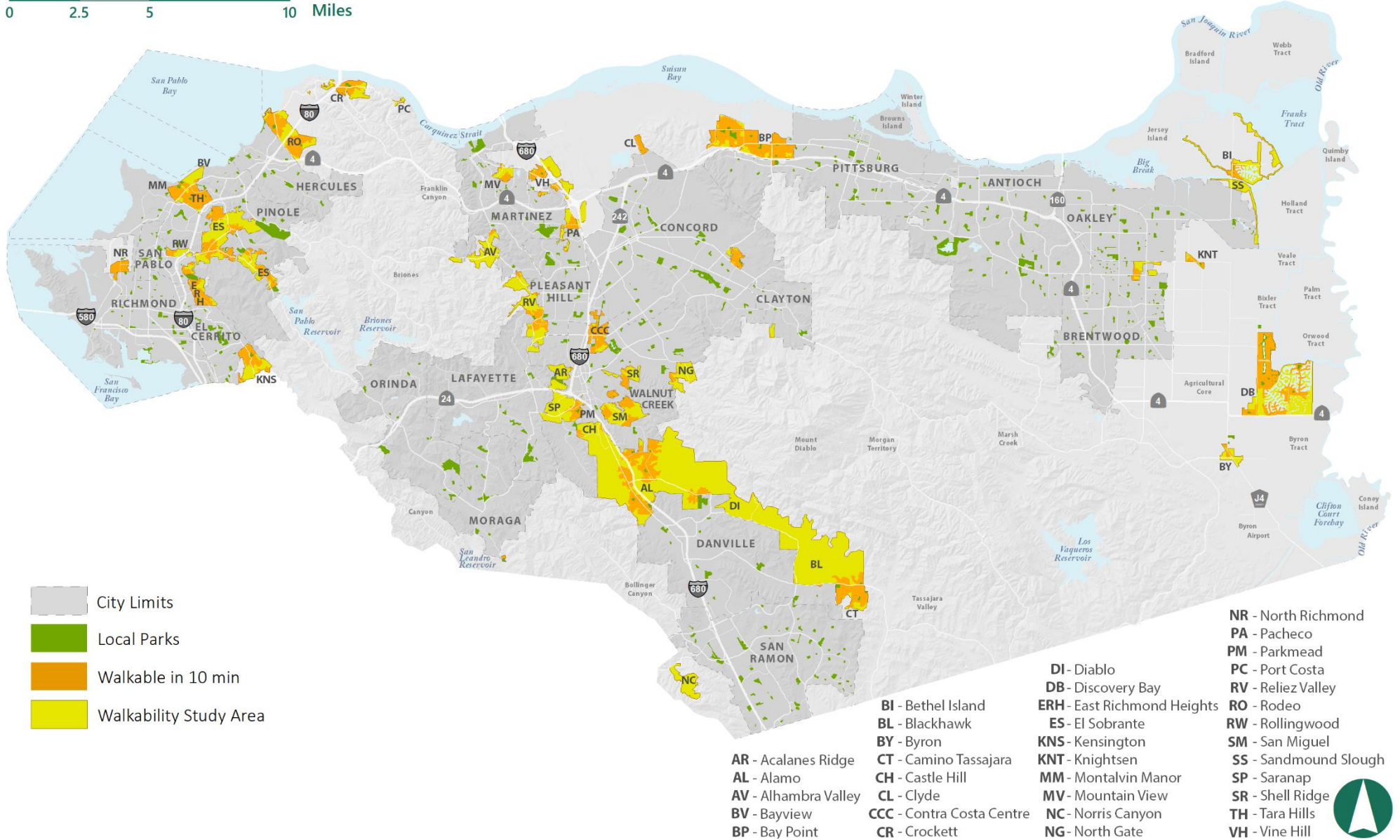
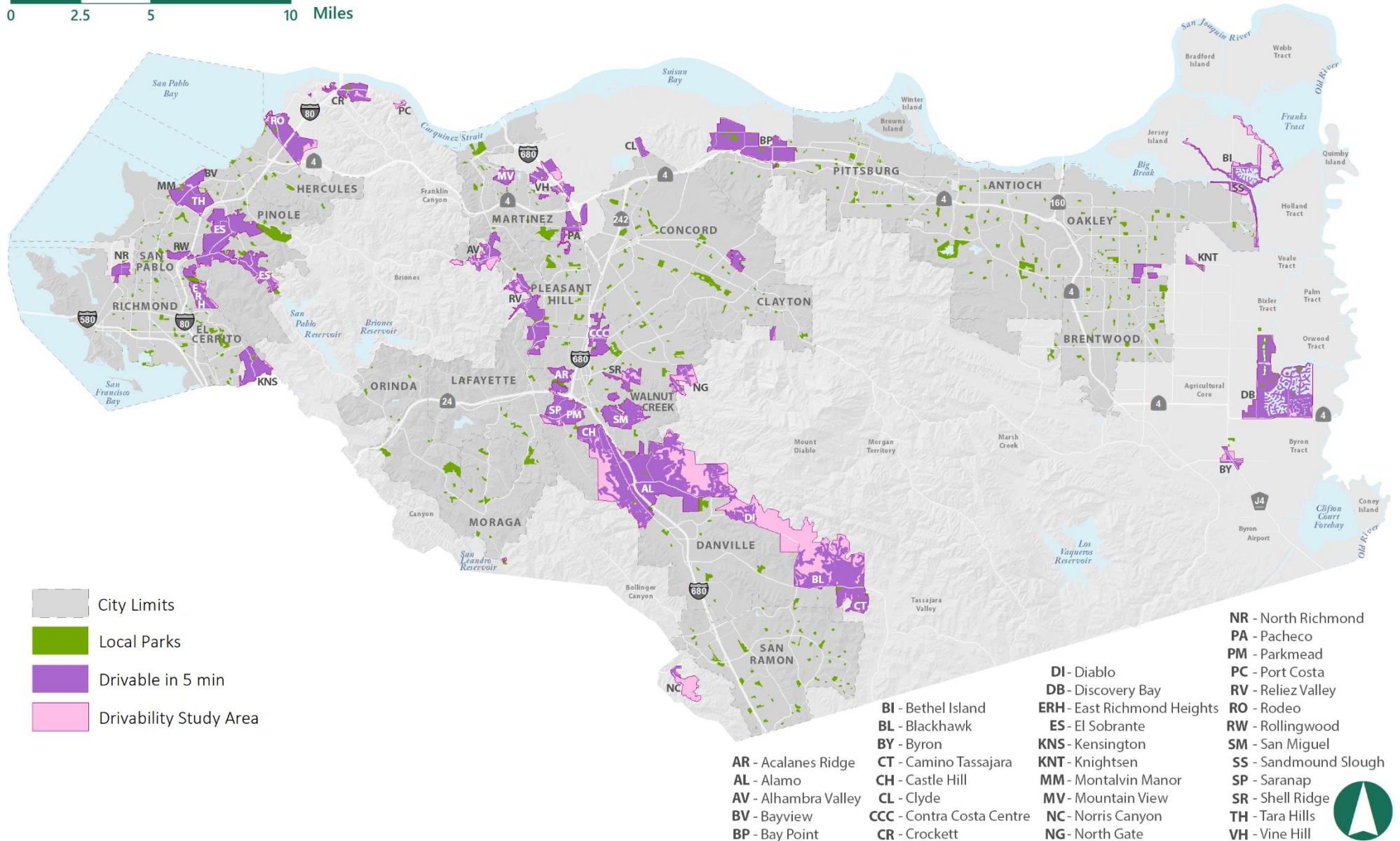


FIGURE PFS-10 DRIVE TIMES TO PUBLIC PARKS AND OPEN SPACE FOR SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





PFS-P8.7  

Design recreational facilities to complement the natural features of the area, including topography and vegetation, whenever appropriate.

PFS-P8.8 

Support expanded public access to the waterfront and development of water-related recreational opportunities, such as fishing and boating.

PFS-P8.9 

Support development of a comprehensive and interconnected network of trails, including intra- and inter-regional trails like the San Francisco Bay Trail, Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail, Great California Delta Trail, and Marsh Creek Corridor Trail, that provides public access to shorelines, ridges, and other scenic areas, connects residents with open space and nature, and links urban areas with parks and other recreational facilities.

PFS-P8.10 

Encourage use of abandoned railroad rights-of-way for trails or other public purposes and participate in collaborative planning processes to determine the best use of abandoned rail corridors.

PFS-P8.11  

Support local community groups and volunteer organizations in efforts to improve and maintain local parks, trails, and other public spaces, such as through an Adopt-A-Park/Trail program, especially in Impacted Communities.

Actions

PFS-A8.1 

Create an internal County entity that works across departments and non-County agencies to coordinate planning and funding of unincorporated local parks, recreational facilities, and trails.

PFS-A8.2  

Coordinate with recreation and park districts and cities to prepare a parks and open space needs assessment for all unincorporated communities, prioritizing Impacted Communities. Integrate the results of the assessment into a Parks Master Plan and the Parks Capital Improvement Program and implement improvements that address barriers to outdoor physical activity, such as inadequate infrastructure and safety concerns.

PFS-A8.3 

Annually update park dedication and in-lieu fee requirements based on the Consumer Price Index for All Customers, All Items for the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose Metropolitan Area to accommodate for increases or decreases in development costs. Conduct a fee study at least once every 10 years to reflect changes in the cost of land, local park and recreational needs, and development conditions.*

PFS-A8.4 

Maintain up-to-date maps showing quarter-mile and half-mile walking distances and five-minute driving times to public parks.

PFS-A8.5

Study the feasibility of developing an equestrian trail network throughout the county's rural areas.

SCHOOLS

Good schools are the building blocks of vibrant, healthy communities. Communities with good schools are great places to raise families, and a good education system not only attracts new residents, but also encourages young people to remain in the community as they start their own families. Good schools are also economic development drivers, as businesses are attracted to communities where employees will have access to quality education for their families. The 18 school districts providing K-12 public education that serve Contra Costa County are shown on Figure PFS-11.



Verde Elementary School in North Richmond is one of many schools operated by the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

Colleges and universities also play an important role in community life. Aside from the direct contributions they make to the local economy as large employers, post-secondary educational institutions provide critical workforce development and training through partnerships with local businesses and community groups. Post-secondary public education in Contra Costa County is offered at California State University, East Bay – Concord Campus and three community colleges operated by the Contra Costa Community College District: Contra Costa College in San Pablo; Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, with a satellite campus in San Ramon; and Los Medanos College in Pittsburg. Numerous public and private colleges and universities, including prestigious institutions like the University of California, Berkeley and Stanford University, are also within 50 miles of Contra Costa County, providing county residents with extraordinary opportunities to pursue higher education.

Goal PFS-9

Primary, secondary, and higher education facilities that serve the varied educational needs of all county residents.

Policies

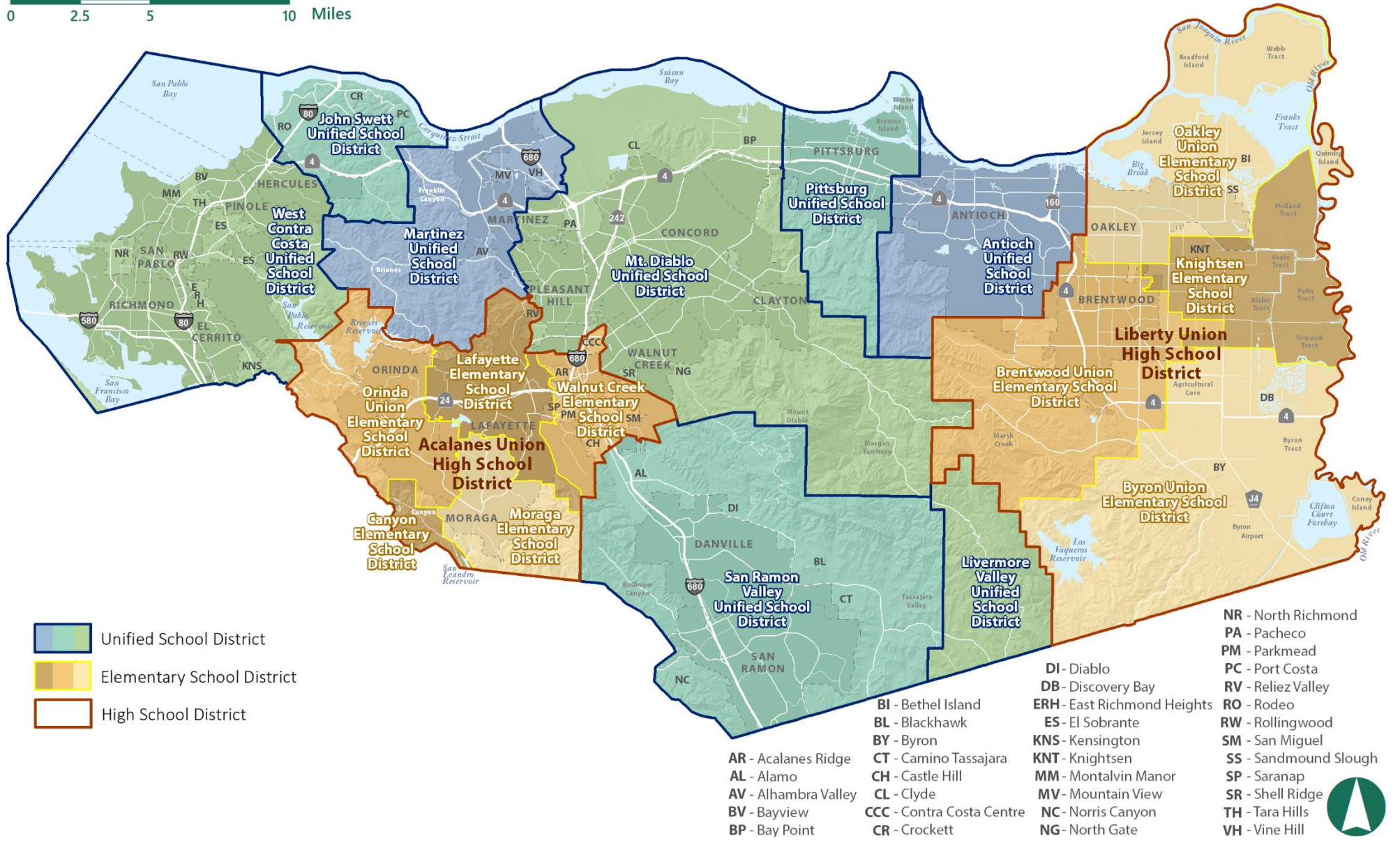
PFS-P9.1

When reviewing new development proposals, coordinate with affected school districts to ensure adequate school capacity is or will be available, school sites are designated or dedicated if necessary, and adequate access is provided.*



FIGURE PFS-11 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



PFS-P9.2

Encourage dedication of school sites through density transfer of the dedicated acreage or other incentives.

PFS-P9.3



Encourage school districts to use school sites for multiple community purposes, such as recreation, and to locate new schools in conjunction with and/or adjacent to parks and trails.

PFS-P9.4

Oppose efforts by school districts to locate new schools outside the Urban Limit Line.

PFS-P9.5

Support efforts to enhance and expand access to higher education.

Actions

PFS-A9.1

Amend County Ordinance Code Title 8 – Zoning and Title 10 – Public Works and Flood Control to regulate public school siting and construction of off-site improvements related to public schools, to the extent allowable under Government Code Sections 53094 and 53097. Ensure these amendments include requirements for roadway improvements, including Complete Streets and multimodal roadway conditions.

See the Stronger Communities Element for policies and actions related to workforce development.

LIBRARIES

Libraries are some of the oldest and most important public institutions. They provide access to knowledge and enhance public literacy. The Contra Costa County Library works in partnership with the incorporated cities and towns to operate 26 libraries across the county, offering robust programming for all ages, preschool to adults, including English as a Second Language (ESL), Science, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) courses for kids, technology and computer help, interactive educational performances, arts and crafts events, book clubs, free lunches for children, and other programs. Residents can also reserve group study rooms and meeting rooms for educational, cultural, and community-related meetings, programs, and activities.



Local libraries provide access to numerous education resources and programs.



Goal PFS-10

Library services that meet the informational and social needs of county residents.

Policies

PFS-P10.1



Prioritize expansion of library services in Impacted Communities.

PFS-P10.2



Locate and design library facilities to provide access to the greatest number of people. Ensure they are sited in areas with broadband internet and close to public transit.

PFS-P10.3

Provide adequate funding for maintaining and improving library operations.*

Actions

PFS-A10.1

Develop library service and facility standards, identify standards not being met, and seek necessary resources to achieve those standards.*

PFS-A10.2

Adopt a library impact fee to ensure new development mitigates its impact on library services.*

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To track progress in achieving the major goals of this Element, every five years, the County will collect data to assess its performance against the following measures. Progress will be tracked relative to the prior performance review and the baseline year of 2024. Based on the findings from the five-year review, the County may adjust policies, actions, or the approach to implementing them to improve performance, as needed.

- More dollars invested per capita on public improvements in Impacted Communities than in other parts of the county.
- Fire suppression incidents responded to with the first engine company within four minutes or less, with the second engine company within six minutes or less, and with the initial full alarm assignment within eight minutes or less (or 10 minutes and 10 seconds if it involves a high-rise building), 90 percent of the time. Emergency medical service incidents responded to with a unit with a first responder within four minutes or less and with an advanced life support company within eight minutes or less, 90 percent of the time.
- Increased percentage of homes within a 10-minute walk of a local park.
- At least 3 acres of local parkland per every 1,000 residents.
- Reduced number of illegal dumping incidents.