

5.14. Population and Housing

POPULATION AND HOUSING				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G.

5.14.1. Setting

The Project site is surrounded by a mix of commercial, public/quasi public, and residential land uses. Overall, this area of the City of Goleta is substantially built out and land use density has increased over time. Substantial increases in population can be achieved only by the development of higher density housing, either on vacant land or through redevelopment of existing land uses. Table 5.14 1 provides existing population, housing, and employment estimates for the County of Santa Barbara and the City of Goleta.

Table 5.14-1. Year 2025 Existing Conditions – Population, Housing, and April 2025 Employment: City of Goleta and County of Santa Barbara

Location	Population	Housing Units		Employment	
		Total Units	Vacancy Rate	Total Employed*	Unemployment Rate
City of Goleta	32,747	13,155	4.8%	18,700	2.9%
County Santa Barbara	447,132	163,361	6.3%	213,000	4.9%

*Accounts for population greater than 16 years of age and in Labor Force.
Source: CA DOF, 2025; CA EDD, 2025

5.14.2. Regulatory Background

This section includes a description of the population and housing regulatory framework. There are no federal or state regulations, plans, and standards for population and housing that apply to the proposed Project.

City of Goleta General Plan Housing Element. The City’s housing policies are intended to respond to housing needs within the context of the entire General Plan. The policies and programs of the element are intended to provide more detailed direction and the means for accomplishing the city’s goals. The city’s goals aim to provide a balanced and diverse community, a variety of housing types and choices, great neighborhoods, housing for special needs populations, employee housing, and community and regional collaboration (City of Goleta, 2023). The following City of Goleta General Plan Housing Element policy and its objectives generally relate to the proposed Project:

- **Policy HE 4: Energy Conservation and Sustainable Development [GP]**

Objectives: Promote energy conservation by encouraging energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, sustainable building materials, and transit-oriented development.

HE 4.3 Use of Renewable Energy Sources. For new projects, the City encourages the incorporation of renewable energy sources. The City will consider incorporating renewable energy sources that do not have adverse effects on the environment or on any adjacent residential uses. Solar access

must be protected in accordance with the State of California Solar Rights Act. New development cannot impair the performance of existing solar energy systems. Compensatory or mitigation measures may be considered in instances where there is no reasonable alternative.

Time period: Throughout the planning period

Responsible party: Planning and Environmental Review Department

Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The City of Goleta Housing Element contains adopted plans and regulations that enable a variety of housing types to be built, minimize constraints such as fees and permit procedures, and assist affordable housing development to meet the city's housing allocations identified through the state's Regional Housing Needs Assessment process. The Housing Element identifies adequate sites with appropriate zoning densities, development standards, and infrastructure to accommodate the community's need for new housing at all price levels, and – where appropriate and legally possible – remove constraints to housing development. In addition to the five income categories established in state housing law (extremely-low, very-low, low, moderate, and above-moderate), Goleta has identified an additional category—workforce housing (120 to 200 percent of median income) in recognition of the high housing costs in the south coast area of Santa Barbara County (City of Goleta, 2023).

5.14.3. Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Thresholds of Significance

A significant impact on population and housing would be expected to occur if the proposed Project resulted in any of the impacts in the CEQA Appendix G checklist. There are no additional thresholds defined in the County of Santa Barbara's Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (2021), which has been adopted by the City of Goleta (adopted by Resolution 08-40).

Impact Analysis

(a) Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT. The proposed Project is in a largely developed urban area. There would be no direct population growth induced by the Project, as it would not provide new housing and would not require an expansion of the workforce to construct, service, and maintain the BESS facility. Scale Microgrids, LLC is expected to provide staffing for the Project. During the 8-month construction period, the proposed Project would provide short-term jobs for a small workforce. Construction needs are not anticipated to result in workers relocating to the area. The proposed Project would result in neither a permanent increase in population nor a decrease in available housing.

The construction and operation of the BESS facility would support future planned growth by ensuring reliable electricity to the area served by SCE and would result in an indirect effect of facilitating the development of the surrounding area of the City of Goleta. Greater electrical reliability would provide developmental and employment opportunities to the regional workforce. While further development or redevelopment in the City of Goleta may induce some population growth, this has already been accounted for through the City's General Plan Housing Element (City of Goleta, 2023) Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Therefore, there would be a less than significant effect as a result of the proposed Project.

(b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

NO IMPACT. The proposed Project would be within an existing vacant property and would not displace any housing or people and, therefore, would not necessitate the construction of replacement housing.

Construction of the BESS facility would occur over approximately 8 months and would not require the relocation of workers to the region. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

5.14.3.1. Impact Conclusions and Mitigation Measures

The proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to population and housing, and thus, no mitigation measures are recommended.