Santa Barbara County Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment

Innovation in Green Community Planning Award

County of Santa Barbara, Department of Planning and Development Placeworks
Atlas Planning Solution

APA CA CENTRAL COAST Section

The Santa Barbara County Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) is a detailed analysis of the risk posed by climate change to the unincorporated county. It represents a comprehensive, multi-sector, multi-hazard approach that centers vulnerable populations and equity. The CCVA assesses climate vulnerabilities for sensitive populations, buildings, and infrastructure in the face of increasing threats from wildfires, drought, debris flows, flooding, sea level rise, extreme weather, and other hazards. It also includes a robust analysis of vulnerable economic drivers, natural resources, and key community services such as energy and government functions. The CCVA looks at direct physical harm from climate change as well as less tangible impacts such as decreased mental or behavioral health, disruptions in economic activity, and reduced quality of life. Community and stakeholder engagement was essential to ensure the CCVA reflected the local knowledge and experience of residents, County staff, and other community stakeholders, which was directly used by the project team to describe and prioritize the vulnerabilities in the CCVA. The County committed to an inclusive engagement process that included an interactive website, stakeholder discussions, virtual workshops, presentations, focus groups, subject matter experts, and social media postings. The CCVA complies with the State's climate adaptation requirements for safety elements, and its findings will support preparation of climate adaptation policies to be included in the upcoming Seismic Safety and Safety Element of the County's General Plan, Climate Action Plan, Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Adaptation Plan.







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