

## 4.4 Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources

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This section assesses potential impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources. This section includes a brief summary of cultural and tribal cultural resources background information and a review of known archaeological, built environmental, historical, and tribal cultural resources as well as potential impacts to these resources as a result of implementation of the 2045 General Plan Update. The background information and analysis in this section is partially based on the Environmental Background Report for the City of Santa Maria, prepared in December 2020 to support their General Plan Update.

### 4.4.1 Setting

The cultural history of Santa Maria and the surrounding Santa Maria River Valley can be divided into three major eras: Native-American, Spanish-Mexican and Anglo-American. Remnants from these unique eras exist in the region as a diverse range of tribal, archaeological and architectural resources. The Santa Maria River Valley served as part of the larger Chumash territory that extended from the coast and Channel Islands and inland to include Santa Barbara, most of Ventura, parts of San Luis Obispo, Kern, and Los Angeles Counties. The late 18th and early 19th centuries saw the influx of Spanish-Mexican culture, with the establishment of large Spanish Land Grants in the area along the coast, while the modern Anglo-American era began in the late 19th century with the break-up and sale of the Spanish Land Grants (Santa Maria 2020).

#### a. Prehistoric Setting

##### Native American Era

The Chumash were the primary Native American inhabitants of Santa Maria before the arrival of Europeans. The earliest inhabitants of Southern California were transient hunters visiting the region approximately 12,000 B.C.E. (Before the Common Era), who were the cultural ancestors of the Chumash. At the peak, the Chumash population was estimated to be in the tens of thousands, with territory of around 7,000 square miles that spanned from Malibu to Paso Robles, stretching inland to the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley (Santa Maria 2020).

Permanent Chumash villages included hemispherical dwellings arranged in close groups, with the chief having the largest for social obligations (Brown 2001). Each Chumash village had a formal cemetery marked by tall painted poles and often with a defined entrance area (Gamble et al. 2001). Archaeological studies have identified separate sections for elite versus commoner families within the cemetery grounds (King 1969).

The acorn was a dietary staple for the mainland Chumash, though its dominance varied by coastal or inland location. Chumash diet also included cattail roots, fruits and pads from cactus, and bulbs and tubers of plants such as amole (Miller 1988).

The Chumash people were known as skilled boat builders, allowing them to travel up and down the Pacific Coast and inhabit the Channel Islands. The wooden plank canoe was employed in the pursuit of marine mammals and fish as well as facilitating an active trade network between the mainland and the Channel Islands (Johnson 1987).

The Chumash villages became increasingly permanent over time, with chiefs and shaman priests generally at the highest positions of authority. Women could serve equally with men as chiefs and priests. One chief would often hold responsibility for multiple villages. The Chumash Native American population was decimated due to European disease in the 1700s and 1800s, spread primarily by Spaniards as the mission system was founded and as the region was increasingly colonized by Mexicans and Americans (Santa Maria 2020).

## **b. Historic-Era Setting**

### **Spanish-Mexican Era**

Spanish settlement of the Santa Maria Valley began with the establishment of Mission San Luis Obispo in 1772 and Mission La Purisima in Lompoc 1787. In 1821, Spain granted Mexico independence and soon after the Missions were secularized. Administrators were appointed to transfer such lands to private property owners and to proceed with secular development of the area. This is now known as the Rancho Era, which ended with the transfer of California from Mexico to the United States following the Mexican-American War (Santa Maria 2020).

### **Anglo-American Era**

Americans from the United States began arriving in California in the 1840s. After gold was discovered elsewhere in California, settlers were drawn to the Santa Maria Valley by the possibility of free land, when mission lands were made available for private ownership. With the arrival of farmers and other settlers after California gained statehood, the Santa Maria River Valley became one of the most productive agricultural areas in the state. Four prominent settlers, Rudolph Cook, John Thornburg, Isaac Fesler, and Isaac Miller, each contributed 40 acres of land where their properties met at the present day intersection of Broadway and Main Street to form what was then called “Central City” in 1875. Ten years later, the city’s name was changed to “Santa Maria” (Santa Maria 2020).

Oil exploration began in the Santa Maria Valley in 1888, with large discoveries in the early 20th century. Oil discoveries rapidly attracted a growing population to the Santa Maria Valley, bringing about the need for local governance. In 1905, Santa Maria was incorporated as a general law city. Until 1954, the city remained four square miles in size. Since that time, annexations have increased the size to approximately 22 square miles (Santa Maria 2020).

Since 1957, the city’s economic and population growth has been influenced by growth of Vandenberg Air Force Base, 20 miles south of the city. In the 1970s, the Santa Maria Town Center mall was constructed (Santa Maria 2020). Since that time the City Council has worked to maintain Santa Maria’s status as a regional retail hub, continuously working to add retail outlets. Santa Maria remains the leader in retail sales growth for Santa Barbara County. Agriculture, however, remains the city’s chief economic influence. The Santa Maria Valley is home to several vineyards and wineries and primary crops include strawberries, celery, lettuce, peas, and squash. The Santa Maria Valley is also home to several cattle ranches.

### **Previously Identified Historical Cultural Resources**

The history of Santa Maria is preserved in its Historic Overlay District, landmarks, and objects of historical merit. The historic landmarks and objects listed below were identified by the City’s Landmark Committee and determined to contain historical merit. Of these resources, the Minerva

Club is the only one listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Places (CRHR), none of the other resources below are listed on either register.

- The Minerva Club
- The First United Methodist Church
- Saint Peter's Episcopal Church
- The Martin Luther Tunnell Home
- The Santa Maria Inn
- The Reuben Hart Home
- Santa Maria High School
- The Landmark Building
- City Hall
- The Coca Cola Bottling Company
- Heritage Walk
- The Haslam Building
- Buena Vista Park
- Flagpole at the George S. Hobbs' Civic Center
- Site of Santa Maria's First Waterworks
- Site of the Pacific Coast Railroad Depot
- Four Corners Intersection at Main Street and Broadway
- Veterans' Memorial Community Center
- First Masonic Temple Site
- John Long House
- Orange Street Kindergarten
- Cypress Street Kindergarten
- St. Mary's Catholic Church
- Bell at El Camino School
- Site of Leo's Drive-In
- Bas Relief of Columbus' Ship, Santa Maria
- Santa Maria Civic Theater
- Zanetti Home
- Site of Rusconi's Café
- Waler House
- Franklin House
- Independent Order of Oddfellows and Haslam Building
- Rubel House

## 4.4.2 Regulatory Setting

### a. Federal Regulations

#### National Register of Historic Places

The NRHP was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment” (36 Code of Federal Regulations 60.2). The NRHP recognizes properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance must also possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A property is eligible for the NRHP if it meets any one of the following criteria:

- **Criterion A:** Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- **Criterion B:** Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past
- **Criterion C:** Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of installation, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
- **Criterion D:** Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

In addition to meeting at least one of the above designation criteria, resources must also retain integrity. The National Park Service recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, considered together, define historic integrity. To retain integrity, a property must possess several, if not all, of these seven qualities, defined in the following manner:

- **Location:** The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred
- **Design:** The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property
- **Setting:** The physical environment of a historic property
- **Materials:** The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property
- **Workmanship:** The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory
- **Feeling:** A property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time
- **Association:** The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property

#### Historic American Buildings Survey

The Historic American Buildings Survey, established in 1933 as the nation’s first federal preservation program, set the standard for documenting historic architecture through a collaboration between the National Park Service, Library of Congress, and the American Institute of Architects. Designed to

mitigate the loss of architectural heritage, the Historic American Buildings Survey created a publicly accessible archive capturing a wide range of American building traditions. Its records support preservation, rehabilitation, and design efforts while contributing to public education and professional training. The program's enduring impact lies in its comprehensive documentation methods, alignment with national preservation standards, and its role in cultivating future preservation professionals.

### **Archaeological Resources Protection Act**

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act amended the Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 United States Code [USC] 431–433) and set a broad policy that archaeological resources are important to the nation and should be protected, and special permits required before the excavation or removal of archaeological resources from public or Indian lands. The purpose of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act was to secure, for the present and future benefit of the American people, the protection of archaeological resources and sites that are on public lands and Indian lands, and to foster increased cooperation and exchange of information between governmental authorities, the professional archaeological community, and private individuals having collections of archaeological resources and data that were obtained before October 31, 1979.

### **American Indian Religious Freedom Act**

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act established federal policy to protect and preserve the inherent rights of freedom for Native groups to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religions. These rights include but are not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.

### **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 sets provisions for the intentional removal and inadvertent discovery of human remains and other cultural items from federal and tribal lands. It clarifies the ownership of human remains and sets forth a process for repatriation of human remains and associated funerary objects and sacred religious objects to the Native American groups claiming to be lineal descendants or culturally affiliated with the remains or objects. It requires any federally funded institution housing Native American remains or artifacts to compile an inventory of all cultural items within the museum or with its agency and to provide a summary to any Native American tribe claiming affiliation.

## **b. State Regulations**

### **California Environmental Quality Act**

CEQA requires a lead agency (in this case, the City) to determine whether a project may have a significant effect on historical resources. Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1 of the Statutes of CEQA, Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1, and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 were used as the guidelines for this evaluation. PRC Section 5024.1 requires that any properties that can be expected to be directly or indirectly affected by a proposed project be evaluated for CRHR eligibility. The purpose of the CRHR is to maintain listings of the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from material impairment and substantial adverse change. The term "historical resources" includes a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the CRHR; a resource included in a local register of historical resources; and any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead

agency determines to be historically significant (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[a]). The criteria for listing properties in the CRHR were expressly developed in accordance with previously established criteria developed for listing in the NRHP.

According to PRC Section 5024.1(c)(1-4), a resource may be considered historically significant if it retains integrity and meets at least one of the following criteria. A property may be listed in the CRHR if the resource:

- 1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.
- 2) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
- 3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
- 4) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Under CEQA, if an archeological site is not a historical resource but meets the definition of a "unique archaeological resource" as defined in PRC Section 21083.2, then it should be treated in accordance with the provisions of that section. A unique archaeological resource is defined in PRC Section 21083.2(g) as:

An archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- 1) Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
- 2) Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
- 3) Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

Resources that neither meet any of these criteria for listing in the CRHR nor qualify as a unique archaeological resource under CEQA PRC Section 21083.2 are viewed as not significant. Under CEQA, "A nonunique archaeological resource need be given no further consideration, other than the simple recording of its existence by the lead agency if it so elects" (PRC Section 21083.2[h]).

Tribal cultural resources as defined in PRC Section 21074, should also be treated in accordance with the provisions of that section. A unique tribal cultural resource is defined in PRC Section 21074a) as:

- 1) Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:
  - a) Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources.
  - b) Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1.
- 2) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

## **Native American Heritage Commission**

PRC Section 5097.91 established the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), whose duties include the inventory of places of religious or social significance to Native Americans and the identification of known graves and cemeteries of Native Americans on private lands. PRC Section 5097.98 specifies a protocol to be followed when the NAHC receives notification of a discovery of Native American human remains from a County Coroner.

## **Assembly Bill 52**

Assembly Bill (AB) 52, which took effect on July 1, 2015, amends PRC Section 5097.94 by adding eight new sections that relate to Native Americans and expands CEQA by establishing a formal consultation process for California Tribes that must be completed before a CEQA document can be certified. Any project that may affect or cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource would require a lead agency to consult with a California Native American Tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project. Consultation is beneficial because Tribes may have knowledge about the land and cultural resources that should be included in the environmental analysis for projects. The NAHC identifies Native American Tribes to be included in the process. PRC Section 21080.3.1 identifies timing and other protocols for the consultation process.

Section 21074 of AB 52 also defines tribal cultural resources as a new category of resources under CEQA. According to PRC Section 21074(a)(1), tribal cultural resources are either defined as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, or objects with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe, or are listed in or eligible for the CRHR or a local historic register, or have been determined by the lead agency to be a tribal cultural resource. PRC Section 21084.2 establishes that a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource may have a significant effect on the environment. PRC Section 21084.3(a) states that the lead agency shall establish measures to avoid impacts that would alter the significant characteristics of a tribal cultural resource, when feasible.

## **Senate Bill 18**

Senate Bill (SB) 18 establishes responsibilities for local governments to involve tribal organizations in early stages of land use planning for the purpose of protecting, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places. The provisions of SB 18 apply only to city and county governments and not to other public agencies. California Government Code Section 65352.3 (adopted pursuant to the requirements of SB 18) requires local governments to coordinate and consult with tribal organizations prior to the adoption or any amendment of a general plan or specific plan. Tribal organizations would be considered eligible to consult on a project if they were to have traditional lands in a local government's jurisdiction, and are identified, upon request, by the NAHC. Tribes have 90 days from the date on which they receive notification to request consultation unless a shorter timeframe has been agreed to by the tribe.

## **California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5**

The disposition of human remains is governed by Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC) and PRC Sections 5097.94 and 5097.98 and falls within the jurisdiction of the NAHC. According to California HSC Section 7050.5(b), if human remains are discovered, the County Coroner must be notified within 48 hours and there should be no further disturbance to the site where the

remains were found. If the remains are determined by the coroner to be Native American, the coroner is responsible for contacting the NAHC within 24 hours. California HSC Section 7051(a) prohibits all persons from removing or otherwise disturbing human remains that are inadvertently discovered before their significance may be determined. Section 7052 establishes a felony penalty for mutilating, disinterring, or otherwise disturbing human remains, except by relatives.

### **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 sets provisions for the intentional removal and inadvertent discovery of human remains and other cultural items from federal and tribal lands. It clarifies the ownership of human remains and sets forth a process for repatriation of human remains and associated funerary objects and sacred religious objects to the Native American groups claiming to be lineal descendants or culturally affiliated with the remains or objects. It requires any federally funded institution housing Native American remains or artifacts to compile an inventory of all cultural items within the museum or with its agency and to provide a summary to any Native American tribe claiming affiliation.

### **California Penal Code Section 622.5**

California Penal Code Section 622.5 provides misdemeanor penalties for damaging or destroying objects of historic or archaeological interest located on public or private lands, but specifically excludes the landowner.

### **California Public Resources Code Section 5097.5**

PRC Section 5097.5 defines the unauthorized disturbance or removal of archaeological, historic, or paleontological resources located on public lands as a misdemeanor.

## **c. Local Regulations**

### **Santa Maria Municipal Code**

Chapter 8-3 of the Santa Maria Municipal Code authorizes the Parks and Recreation Commission to designate places, sites, buildings, structures, works of art and other objects within the incorporated limits of the City as having historic, cultural, aesthetic or other special character or interest in accordance with the following standards.

1. The landmark designated shall have historical, cultural, aesthetic or special character or interest for the general public and not be limited only in interest to a special group of persons, and be at least 50 years of age.
2. The designation of such as a landmark under this chapter shall not be detrimental to the general welfare of the community.
3. The designation of such landmark shall not require the expenditure of an unreasonable amount of money to carry out the purposes of this chapter. In applying this provision it is the intent of this chapter that whenever a landmark proposed to be so designated is private property, expenditures for its upkeep, preservation, maintenance and protection shall be made by the owner thereof in all but the most exceptional cases. If upon careful review by the Recreation and Parks Commission it is proposed that public funds be expended for the preservation, restoration, maintenance or protection thereof, or any other purpose in connection with the designation, the recommendation made by the Recreation and Parks Commission to the City

Council shall set forth that fact, and shall set forth in full the reasons therefor, and shall include a statement setting forth as accurately as possible the estimated cost in public funds which would be so involved. The City Council in acting upon the proposed designation shall also determine whether the expenditure of public funds in connection therewith is justified. In the event that such designation would be ineffective for the preservation, restoration or protection of the proposed landmark, without such expenditure, and the City Council determines that the expenditure is not justified, the place, site, building, structure, work of art or other object which is the subject of the proposal shall not be designated an historical landmark.

4. The designation of such landmark shall not infringe upon the right of a private owner thereof, if there is such, to make any and all reasonable uses of such landmark which are not in conflict with the purposes of this chapter.

## **Resource Management Element**

Archaeological resources—such as artifacts, structures, and refuse—provide crucial insight into the cultural practices, environmental adaptations, and societal changes of past human populations. According to the City’s current Resource Management Element, the Santa Maria Valley is generally not recognized as a major archaeological or paleontological resource area due to the limited number of recorded sites, certain parts of the city exhibit varying degrees of sensitivity. Figure RME-5 of the City’s current Resource Management Element shows areas west of A Street and south of Foster Road are considered to have high to moderate archaeological sensitivity, suggesting a greater potential for encountering cultural materials during ground-disturbing activities. In contrast, the portion east of A Street, between West Carmen Lane and Foster Road, is categorized as having low sensitivity, and the area north of West Carmen Lane has negligible sensitivity.

### 4.4.3 Impact Analysis

#### **a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds**

##### **Methodology**

The assessment of potential impacts to historic, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources was informed by a review of readily available information from sources including, but not limited to, the City’s list of Historical Landmarks and Objects of Historical Merit, the City’s Resource Management Element, the State Office of Historic Preservation website and the National Parks Service. As a programmatic document, this EIR presents a citywide assessment of the 2045 General Plan Update. Because this Program EIR is a long-term document intended to guide actions up to 2045, this analysis relies on program-level evaluation.

On April 7, 2025 the City of Santa Maria prepared and mailed letters to six local Native American Tribes who have requested notification under AB 52 and SB 18. Under AB 52 tribes have 30 days and under SB 18 tribes have 90 days to respond and request consultation. The City has not received any request for consultation from the tribes who received the notification letter. No other tribes responded during the 30-day or 90-day period to request consultation, which elapsed on May 7th, 2025 for AB 52 and on July 8th, 2025 for SB 18.

## Significance Thresholds

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G to the CEQA Guidelines. For the purposes of this EIR, implementation of the plan may have a significant adverse impact on cultural resources if it would do any of the following:

1. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5;
2. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5;
3. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries

Implementation of the plan may have a significant adverse impact on tribal cultural resources if it would do any of the following:

1. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
  - a. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or
  - b. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

The significance of a cultural resource and, subsequently, the significance of any impact are determined by consideration of whether that resource can increase our knowledge of the past. The determining factors are site content and degree of preservation. A finding of archaeological significance follows the criteria established in the CEQA Guidelines.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (Determining the Significance of Impacts to Archaeological Resources) states:

- (3) [...] Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be “historically significant” if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the CRHR (PRC Section 5024.1, Title 14 CCR Section 4852).
- (4) The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to PRC Section 5020.1(k)), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in PRC Section 5024.1(g)) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in PRC Sections 5020.1(j) and 5024.1.
- (b) A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.

Historical resources are “significantly” affected if there is demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its surroundings. Generally, impacts to historical resources can be mitigated to below a level of significance by following the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for

the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings or the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Guidelines Section 15064.6(b)). In some circumstances, documentation of a historical resource by way of historic narrative photographs or architectural drawings will not mitigate the impact of demolition below the level of significance (Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(2)). Preservation in place is the preferred form of mitigation for archaeological resources as it retains the relationship between artifact and context, and may avoid conflicts with groups associated with the site (Guidelines Section 15126.4 (b)(3)(A)). If an archaeological resource does not meet either the historical resource or the more specific “unique archaeological resource” definition, impacts do not need to be mitigated (Guidelines Section 15064.5(e)). Where the significance of a site is unknown, it is presumed to be significant for the purpose of the EIR investigation.

## b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

<b>Threshold 1:</b> Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?
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**Impact CUL-1 DEVELOPMENT FACILITATED BY THE 2045 GENERAL PLAN HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ADVERSELY AFFECT PREVIOUSLY UNIDENTIFIED HISTORIC-PERIOD RESOURCES. IMPLEMENTATION OF APPLICABLE 2045 GENERAL PLAN POLICIES, STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS, AND THE SANTA MARIA MUNICIPAL CODE WOULD MINIMIZE ADVERSE IMPACTS ON HISTORICAL RESOURCES. WITH MITIGATION, IMPACTS TO HISTORIC-PERIOD RESOURCES WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

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Pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, all of the resources included in the NRHP, CRHR and the City’s Historical Landmarks and Objects of Historical Merit list are considered historical resources. In addition to these known historical resources, there may be other unidentified historic resources which are eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, CRHR or the City’s Historical Landmarks and Objects of Historical Merit list.

The 2045 General Plan Update would guide the general distribution, location, and extent of the various land uses in Santa Maria, but the plan does not propose or approve any specific development. As there is no development included in the plan, adoption of the plan would not directly alter any historical resources. The plan does include changes to land use designations with the intent of increasing density throughout certain areas of the city. These land use changes, and the increased development that could accompany them, have the potential to impact historical resources, including those already designated as historical as well as those which may be eligible in the future.

New residential, commercial, and industrial uses would be introduced through both new construction and the conversion of existing properties to different land use designations. The plan’s emphasis on increased density and clustered development increases the likelihood of redevelopment, or additional development, on already-developed lots. Future development may involve renovations, demolitions, or new construction, which could affect historical resources that have not yet been formally evaluated but may be eligible for listing on the NRHP, CRHR, or local registers under CEQA. Over the 20-year planning horizon through 2045, additional buildings will surpass the 450-year age threshold, making them potential historic resources. As a result, redevelopment activities could lead to the physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of such resources.

Goals and policies included in the Conservation and Open Space Element of the plan, listed below, would reduce impacts to historical, and potentially historical, resources:

**Goal COS-7: Historic and cultural resources.** The city's cultural heritage is preserved and celebrated.

**Policy COS-7.1: Historic, cultural, and tribal resources.** Protect the city's historic, cultural, and tribal resources through the City's Historic Overlay Ordinance, Historic Landmark Ordinance, and proper tribal consultation practices.

**Action COS-7.1.1:** Review and explore opportunities for strengthening the Historic Overlay Ordinance to protect and document culturally significant sites, including tribal and historic resources.

**Action COS-7.1.2:** Enforce federal, State, and local regulations related to the preservation of historic and cultural resources.

**Action COS-7.1.3:** Avoid the relocation, rehabilitation, or alteration of historic resources to the greatest extent feasible, consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

**Action COS-7.1.4:** Support the adaptive reuse of designated and non-designated historical resources by enforcing the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration, and providing technical assistance and sharing of best practices.

**Policy COS-7.2: Historic, cultural, and tribal resource impact mitigation.** Identify impacts of new development on historic, cultural, and tribal resources during the development and environmental review process and incorporate site-specific mitigation measures accordingly to minimize the identified impacts.

**Policy COS-7.3: Tribal resource protection.** Protect tribal resources by partnering with representatives of Native American tribes during planning and development activities.

**Action COS-7.3.1:** Partner Consult with local tribes and cultural organizations to identify and conserve cultural resources and points of interest.

**Action COS-7.3.2:** Continue to comply with State, regional, and local regulations pertaining to notification and engagement of Native American tribes, including AB 52 and SB 18.

**Policy COS-7.4: Cultural resource access.** Explore opportunities to incorporate cultural resources into parks and open spaces, enriching community access to Santa Maria's history.

**Action COS-7.4.1:** Develop wayfinding and educational signage for significant historical and cultural resources.

**Action COS-7.4.2:** Pursue grant funding to facilitate the preservation and restoration of historic sites significant to the City's cultural identity.

Future development would also be subject to the provisions of applicable federal and State cultural resource regulations, as well as Chapter 8-3 of the City's Municipal Code. As the plan's policies and actions may be subject to varied interpretation, Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure effective implementation of Conservation and Open Space Element Actions COS-7.1.3 and COS-7.1.4. For any new development that could affect known or potential historical resources, a qualified historian must prepare a historical resource evaluation to assess possible impacts. With implementation of

this mitigation measure, development under the plan would have a less than significant impact on historical resources.

## **Mitigation Measures**

### *CUL-1 Historical Built Environment*

If determined necessary based on preliminary review conducted by City staff, applicants for new discretionary development projects that propose to significantly alter or demolish any historic-age features (i.e., structures determined to be over 450 years of age based on available City records, such as permitting records) shall be required to submit a historical resources evaluation prepared by a qualified architectural historian or historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in architectural history or history (36 CFR Part 61). The report shall address areas containing buildings, structures, objects, sites, landscape/site plans, or other features that are 450 years of age or older and are proposed to be altered or demolished as a part of the proposed project. The evaluation shall include an intensive-level evaluation in accordance with the guidelines and best practices meeting the State Office of Historic Preservation guidelines. All evaluated properties shall be documented on Department of Parks and Recreation Series 523 Forms. The historical resources evaluation report shall be submitted to the City for review and approval.

If historical resources are identified through the survey and evaluation, the relocation, rehabilitation, or alteration of the resource shall be completed consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatments of Historic Properties (Standards). Applicants shall submit a report to the City that identifies and specifies the treatment of character-defining features and construction activities, and demonstrates how the project complies with the Standards and avoids the substantial adverse change in the significance of the historical resource as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b). The report shall be prepared by an architectural historian or historical architect meeting the Professional Qualifications Standards as defined by 36 CFR Part 61 and provided to the City for review and concurrence prior to project approval.

## **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would reduce potential adverse impacts on historical resources by requiring the identification and evaluation of historic-age built environment features consistent with State Office of Historic Preservation guidance, and—when applicable—ensuring conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. This process would promote responsible management of significant resources through avoidance, rehabilitation, or relocation where feasible, and ensure effective implementation of Conservation and Open Space Element Actions COS-7.1.3 and COS-7.1.4. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1, impacts to historical resources pursuant to §15064.5 would be less than significant.

**Threshold 2:** Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

**Impact CUL-2 DEVELOPMENT FACILITATED BY THE 2045 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DISTURB OR DAMAGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES. IMPLEMENTATION OF APPLICABLE 2045 GENERAL PLAN POLICIES, STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS, AND THE SANTA MARIA MUNICIPAL CODE WOULD MINIMIZE ADVERSE IMPACTS TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES. WITH MITIGATION, IMPACTS TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

The 2045 General Plan Update would guide the general distribution, location, and extent of the various land uses in Santa Maria, but the plan does not propose or approve any specific development. As there is no development included in the plan, adoption of the plan would not directly impact any archaeological resources. The plan does include changes to land use designations with the intent of increasing density throughout certain areas of the city, as well as annexation of undeveloped land east of the City Limits. These land use changes, and the increased development that could accompany them, have the potential to impact known as well as previously unidentified archaeological resources.

Effects on archaeological resources can only be determined once a specific project has been proposed because the effects are highly dependent on individual project site conditions and the characteristics of proposed ground disturbing activities. However, ground disturbing activities associated with development facilitated by the 2045 General Plan Update have the potential to damage or destroy archaeological resources that may be present on or below the ground surface. Potential impacts to archaeological resources are most likely to occur on undeveloped lots, areas that have not been studied through a cultural resource investigation, or when excavation extends to depths lower than previous disturbance. Consequently, damage to or destruction of previously unknown subsurface archaeological resources could occur as a result of development facilitated by the plan.

Goals and policies included in the Conservation and Open Space Element of the plan, listed below, would reduce impacts to archaeological resources:

**Goal COS-7: Historic and cultural resources.** The city's cultural heritage is preserved and celebrated.

**Policy COS-7.5: Archaeological resource protection.** Protect archaeological resources by requiring development to incorporate adequate mitigation to ensure the integrity of these resources.

**Action COS-7.5.1:** Continue to analyze project-specific impacts to archaeological resources through the development review and CEQA processes with the goal of avoiding and reducing impacts on archaeological resources.

**Action COS-7.5.2:** Consult with representatives of Native American tribes to ensure the appropriate treatment of archaeological resources, including cultural artifacts and human remains, if found.

These goals, policies, and actions are intended to preserve and protect known as well as previously unidentified archaeological resources. Development facilitated by the plan would be subject to the provisions of applicable federal and State cultural resource regulations listed in Section 4.4.2, Regulatory Setting. These regulations require project-specific avoidance of archaeological resources, or if an archaeological resource cannot be avoided, implementation of mitigation in accordance with applicable federal and State law regarding data collection and preservation of archaeological

resources. However, there is potential for historic-aged and prehistoric archaeological resources to exist throughout the plan area which could be damaged or destroyed during ground-disturbing activities. Therefore, the 2045 General Plan's impact on archaeological resources is potentially significant and Mitigation Measures CUL-2(a) through CUL-2(c) are required.

## **Mitigation Measures**

### *CUL-2(a) Archaeological Resources Assessment*

If determined necessary based on preliminary review conducted by City staff, applicants for new discretionary development projects that involve ground disturbance activities (that may include but are not limited to, pavement removal, potholing, grubbing, tree removal, and grading) shall be required to submit to the City an archaeological resources assessment prepared by a qualified archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in either prehistoric or historic archaeology. Assessments shall include a CHRIS records search at the NWIC and a SLF Search from the NAHC. The records searches shall characterize the results of previous cultural resource surveys and disclose any cultural resources that have been recorded and/or evaluated in and around the development site. A qualified archaeologist shall conduct a Phase I pedestrian survey for those projects which include development in archaeologically sensitive areas, as designated by the City, to locate any surface cultural materials.

If the Phase I archaeological survey identifies resources that may be affected, the applicant shall also conduct Phase II testing and evaluation. If resources are determined significant or unique through Phase II testing and site avoidance is not possible, the qualified professional shall identify appropriate site-specific mitigation measures in the Phase II evaluation. These measures may include, but would not be limited to, a Phase III data recovery program, avoidance, or other appropriate actions to be determined by a qualified archaeologist. If significant archaeological resources cannot be avoided, impacts may be reduced to less than significant level by filling on top of the sites rather than cutting into the cultural deposits. Alternatively, and/or in addition, a data collection program may be warranted, including mapping the location of artifacts, surface collection of artifacts, or excavation of the cultural deposit, to characterize the nature of the buried portions of sites. Curation of the excavated artifacts or samples would occur as specified by the archaeologist. The City shall review and approve the archaeological resources assessment prior to project approval.

### *CUL-2(b) Unanticipated Discoveries*

For new development projects where a Phase I archaeological survey identifies archaeological resources that may be affected, project applicants shall be required to retain a qualified cultural resource specialist to monitor construction activities that involve ground-disturbing activities within 60 feet of a potentially significant cultural resource. If archaeological resources are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work in the immediate area shall halt and an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeology shall be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. If determined to be necessary by the qualified archaeologist, the evaluation may require preparation of a treatment plan and archaeological testing for CRHR eligibility. If the discovery proves to be significant under CEQA and cannot be avoided by the project, additional work, such as excavating the cultural deposit to fully characterize its extent and collecting and curating artifacts, may be determined to be necessary by the qualified archaeologist to mitigate any significant impacts to cultural resources. If archaeological resources of Native American origin are identified during construction, a qualified archaeologist shall consult

with the City to begin Native American consultation procedures. Periodic reports of the find and subsequent evaluations shall be submitted to the City during construction.

#### *CUL-2(c) Workers Environmental Awareness Program*

For new development projects where a Phase I archaeological survey identifies archaeological resources that may be affected, project applicants shall ensure a City-approved archaeologist provides a cultural resources awareness training program (Worker Environmental Awareness Program [WEAP]) for all personnel involved in project construction, including field consultants and construction workers. The WEAP shall be conducted prior to any project-related ground disturbing activities in the project area. The WEAP would include relevant information regarding sensitive cultural resources, including applicable regulations, protocols for avoidance, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. The WEAP shall also describe appropriate avoidance and impact minimization measures for cultural resources that could be located at the project site and would outline what to do and who to contact if any potential cultural resources or tribal cultural resources are encountered.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2(a) through CUL-2(c) would reduce potential adverse impacts on archaeological resources by requiring identification and evaluation of any archaeological resources that may be present prior to construction and by providing steps for the evaluation and protection of unanticipated finds encountered during construction. This process would promote responsible management of archaeological resources through avoidance, rehabilitation, or relocation where feasible, and ensure effective implementation of Conservation and Open Space Element Policy COS-7.5 and Actions COS-7.5.1 and COS-7.5.2. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2(a) through CUL-2(c), impacts to archaeological resources pursuant to Section 15064.5 would be less than significant.

<b>Threshold 3:</b> Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?
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**Impact CUL-3 GROUND DISTURBING ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH DEVELOPMENT FACILITATED BY THE 2045 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE COULD RESULT IN DISTURBANCE OF HUMAN REMAINS. COMPLIANCE WITH CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 7050.5 AND PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE SECTION 5097.8 WOULD ENSURE THIS POTENTIAL IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

Human burials outside of formal cemeteries can occur in prehistoric archaeological contexts, and the Santa Maria Cemetery lies within the plan area. Excavations during construction activities facilitated by the plan could have the potential to disturb human remains in the plan area which could include Native American burial sites.

Pursuant to California HSC Section 7050.5, if human remains are found, the County Coroner must be notified immediately, and no further disturbance would occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the County Coroner would notify the NAHC, which would determine and notify a Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The MLD has 48 hours from being granted site access to make recommendations for the disposition of the remains. If the MLD does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the landowner would reinter the remains in a location that would not be affected by future ground-disturbing activities. Development facilitated by the

plan would comply with the provisions set forth pursuant to California HSC Section 7050.5 and PRC Section 5097.98. Therefore, although it is possible ground-disturbing activities related to project construction could disturb human remains beneath the project site, adherence to California HSC Section 7050.5 would ensure impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation is required because impacts would be less than significant.

<p><b>Threshold 4:</b> Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or</li><li>b. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.</li></ol>
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**Impact CUL-4 DEVELOPMENT FACILITATED BY THE 2045 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DISTURB OR DAMAGE TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES. IMPLEMENTATION OF APPLICABLE 2045 GENERAL PLAN POLICIES, STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS, AND THE SANTA MARIA MUNICIPAL CODE WOULD MINIMIZE ADVERSE IMPACTS TO TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES. WITH MITIGATION, IMPACTS TO TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

As discussed in the Methodology section, the City of Santa Maria sent notification letters on April 7, 2025, to six local tribes under AB 52 and SB 18, but no requests for consultation were received during the respective 30- and 90-day response periods, which ended on May 7 and July 8, 2025.

Potential effects on tribal cultural resources can only be fully assessed once a specific project is proposed, as impacts are highly dependent on site-specific conditions and the nature and extent of ground-disturbing activities. Nevertheless, development facilitated by the plan may involve ground disturbance in areas that have not been subject to prior cultural resource studies, creating the potential to disturb or destroy previously unidentified tribal cultural resources. These impacts are more likely to occur on undeveloped parcels or in locations where excavation reaches below previously disturbed soils. As such, inadvertent impacts to tribal cultural resources could result from future development under the plan.

Future development facilitated under the plan that is subject to CEQA would be required to comply with the provisions of AB 52, including formal consultation with California Native American Tribes traditionally affiliated with the area, prior to project implementation. In compliance with AB 52, a determination of whether project-specific substantial adverse effects on tribal cultural resources would occur along with identification of appropriate, project-specific avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures would be required. Due to the programmatic nature of the plan, it is not possible to fully determine impacts. Impacts on tribal cultural resources can only be accurately

evaluated when a specific project is proposed, given that potential effects vary based on individual site conditions and the scope of planned ground-disturbing work. Although no specific tribal cultural resources eligible for the NRHP, CRHP or local register were identified as being impacted by the plan, it is possible for tribal cultural resources to exist throughout the plan area. Any future project implementation would require project-specific tribal cultural resources identification and consultation, and the appropriate avoidance, minimization, or mitigation would be incorporated.

Policies included in the Conservation and Open Space Element of the plan, listed below, would reduce impacts to tribal cultural resources:

**Policy COS-7.3: Tribal resource protection.** Protect tribal resources by partnering with representatives of Native American tribes during planning and development activities.

**Action COS-7.3.1: Partner Consult** with local tribes and cultural organizations to identify and conserve cultural resources and points of interest.

**Action COS-7.3.2:** Continue to comply with State, regional, and local regulations pertaining to notification and engagement of Native American tribes, including AB 52 and SB 18.

**Policy COS-7.1: Historic, cultural, and tribal resources.** Protect the City's historic, cultural, and tribal resources through the City's Historic Overlay Ordinance, Historic Landmark Ordinance, and proper tribal consultation practices.

**Action COS-7.1.2:** Enforce federal, State, and local regulations related to the preservation of historic and cultural resources.

**Policy COS-7.2: Historic, cultural, and tribal resource impact mitigation.** Identify impacts of new development on historic, cultural, and tribal resources during the development and environmental review process and incorporate site-specific mitigation measures accordingly to minimize the identified impacts.

These policies and actions are intended to preserve and protect known and previously unidentified tribal resources. In addition to these local policies, development facilitated by the plan would be subject to the provisions of applicable federal and State tribal resource regulations, listed in Section 4.4.2, Regulatory Setting.

Development facilitated by plan would undergo project-specific tribal cultural resource consultation pursuant to the requirements of PRC Section 21084 and Policy COS-7.3, Tribal resource protection. There is always potential for unknown tribal cultural resources to exist throughout the plan area which could be damaged or destroyed during ground-disturbing activities. The following measures are included to mitigate potential impacts to less than significant, knowing that upon recognition, avoidance would be the preferred method when feasible. Therefore, the plan's impact on tribal cultural resources is potentially significant and Mitigation Measures CUL-4(a) and CUL-4(b) are required.

## **Mitigation Measures**

### *CUL-4(a) Workers Environmental Awareness Program*

For any project with the potential to encounter tribal cultural resources as determined through consultation and/or the preparation of archaeological assessments, the project applicant shall be required to invite a City-approved archaeologist to provide a tribal cultural resources awareness

training program (Worker Environmental Awareness Program [WEAP]) for all personnel involved in project construction, including field consultants and construction workers. The City would also invite consulting Tribe(s) to provide a tribal cultural resources awareness training program for all personnel involved in project construction, including field consultants and construction workers. The WEAP training shall be conducted prior to any project-related ground disturbing activities in the project area. The WEAP would include relevant information regarding sensitive cultural resources and tribal cultural resources, including applicable regulations, protocols for avoidance, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. The WEAP will also describe appropriate avoidance and impact minimization measures for tribal cultural resources that could be located at the project site and would outline what to do and who to contact if any potential cultural resources or tribal cultural resources are encountered. The WEAP would emphasize the requirement for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment of any discovery of significance to Native Americans and would discuss appropriate behaviors and responsive actions, consistent with local tribal values.

#### *CUL-4(b) Tribal Cultural Monitoring*

For any project with the potential to encounter tribal cultural resources as determined through consultation and/or the preparation of archaeological assessments, the project applicant shall be required to retain a tribal monitor to monitor construction activities that involve ground-disturbing activities that will occur within 60 feet of a potentially significant cultural resource.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-4(a) and CUL-4(b) would mitigate potential impacts to a less than significant level by requiring the identification and evaluation of any tribal cultural resources that may be present prior to construction and by providing steps for the evaluation and protection of unanticipated finds encountered during construction.

#### 4.4.4 Cumulative Impacts

A project's environmental impacts are "cumulatively considerable" if the "incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15065[a][3]). Regional cumulative impacts consider the City-wide impacts together with similar impacts of reasonably anticipated regional projects/programs. The general approach to cumulative impact analysis used in this EIR, as well as the determination of the cumulative impact analysis area, is discussed in Section 3, *Environmental Setting*, Subsection 3.3, *Cumulative Development*.

By its nature, a general plan considers cumulative impacts insofar as it considers cumulative development that could occur within the City Limits and annexation areas. Cumulative development throughout the City of Santa Maria and the Santa Barbara County region has the potential to result in significant impacts on historical resources, particularly through the incremental alteration or demolition of historic structures and features associated with long-term growth and redevelopment. While many of these resources are known, others have not yet been evaluated and may be eligible for listing on the NRHP, CRHR, or local historic registers. Given the scale and pace of cumulative development activities, cumulative development and redevelopment could cause the loss of built-environment historical resources, resulting in a significant cumulative impact.

The plan would facilitate additional growth within the city, including on sites with known or potential historical resources. Although compliance with proposed policies within the plan would reduce impacts to these resources to the maximum extent feasible, cumulative development and redevelopment could nonetheless cause the loss of built-environment historical resources. Alteration or demolition of historical resources remains a possibility throughout the plan area and immediate surroundings with potentially cumulative impacts. As such, cumulative impacts to historical resources are considered significant. The 2024 General Plan Update would implement Mitigation Measure CUL-1, which requires identification and evaluation of historic-age built environment features consistent with State Office of Historic Preservation guidance, and ensures conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. All new development in the City and annexation areas would be required to be consistent with the goals and policies included in the Conservation and Open Space Element, and to comply with applicable federal and State cultural resource regulations, as well as Chapter 8-3 of the City's Municipal Code. Compliance with the goals and policies included in the Conservation and Open Space Element as well as applicable federal and State cultural resource regulations, in addition to implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure the plan's contribution to significant cumulative historical resource impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

Cumulative development throughout the City of Santa Maria and the Santa Barbara County region would result in development in previously undisturbed areas, contributing to regional impacts on archaeological resources. While impacts to archaeological resources are frequently mitigated on a project-by-project basis, certain archaeological resources may have regional significance, and the cumulative loss of archaeological resources may be considerable. As such, cumulative impacts to archaeological resources are considered significant. The 2024 General Plan Update would implement Mitigation Measures CUL-2(a) through CUL-2(c), which require the identification and evaluation of any archaeological resources that may be present prior to construction and by providing steps for the evaluation and protection of unanticipated finds encountered during construction. All new development in the City and annexation areas would be required to be consistent with the goals and policies included in the Conservation and Open Space Element, and to comply with applicable federal and State cultural resource regulations. Compliance with the goals and policies included in the Conservation and Open Space Element as well as applicable federal and State cultural resource regulations, in addition to implementation of required mitigation measures would ensure the plan's contribution to significant cumulative archaeological resources impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

The potential for disturbance of human remains is site-specific, such that the disturbance of remains at one site is generally not considered additive at another site. While cumulative development has the potential to uncover unidentified human remains, all cumulative development would be subject to the requirements set forth within California HSC Section 7050.5 and PRC Section 5097.98. These code sections set standard procedures for the discovery of human remains and further evaluation if the remains are determined to be of Native American origin. Consequently, cumulative impacts associated with potential disturbance of human remains would be less than significant.

Compliance with AB 52 and continued involvement with local tribes in regional planning efforts would support the identification of potential adverse impacts on known tribal cultural resources and facilitate the implementation of avoidance, minimization, or supplemental mitigation measures beyond those provided in Mitigation Measures CUL-4(a) and CUL-4(b). Therefore, cumulative impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant.