



Santa Maria
General Plan

imagine



Land Use Element

Final Draft | August 14February 12,
20265



This page has intentionally been left blank.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Background.....	3
Santa Maria’s Development Pattern.....	3
Community Design and Public Realm	19
Land Use Conflicts.....	19
Issues and Opportunities	20
Land Use Policies	23
Policy Summary	23
Understanding Density and Intensity	24
Standards and Diagrams	26
Policy Framework.....	31

Table of Figures

Figure LU-1: Existing Specific Plans	18
Figure LU-2: Density and Intensity	24
Figure LU-3: General Plan Land Use Map	30

Table of Tables

Table LU-1: Existing Specific Plans.....	9
Table LU-2: Land Use Designations.....	26

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Introduction

The Land Use Element has the broadest scope of all required elements of a General Plan, regulating how land in a city is to be used in the future, as described in California Government Code Section 65302(a).

The Element consists of three main sections: Background, Issues and Opportunities, and Land Use Policies. The *Background* section introduces existing conditions and trends related to priorities addressed in this Element. The *Issues and Opportunities* section describes the key issues and opportunities that shaped the Element. Finally, the *Land Use Policies* section establishes regulatory standards and diagrams and outlines the City's Land Use goals, policies, and implementation actions.

Those goals, policies, and actions establish a framework to guide future growth and development in Santa Maria. The aim is to create a “complete community” that offers a high quality of life for all residents by supporting and prioritizing local jobs, education and medical resources, public amenities, and daily needs in close proximity to safe neighborhoods. The Element emphasizes revitalization of Downtown and the Broadway (SR-135) and Main Street (SR-166) corridors, opportunities for job growth in industrial and commercial areas, and housing in different formats and levels of affordability, while making every effort to preserve agricultural areas while accommodating future growth. The Element also guides community design, addresses existing and potential land use conflicts, and informs ongoing regional collaboration.



Left: Enos Ranch Shopping Center. Top right: Hotel on North Broadway. Bottom right: Bill Libbon Elementary School. Credit: Ashley & Vance Engineering.



A multi-family apartment complex in Santa Maria.

Background

This section introduces existing conditions and trends related to priorities addressed in the Land Use Policies.

Santa Maria's Development Pattern

Historic Development Patterns

In recent decades, Santa Maria has been one of the fastest growing cities in the region. Historically, Santa Maria's growth has been accommodated by annexing and developing vacant or agricultural land. The city has developed primarily through the adoption of Planned Development overlay zones and Specific Plans, as complements to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The majority of Santa Maria features low-to-medium intensity development.

Existing Land Use

Santa Maria is nearly 20 square miles and consists of a variety of land use types and development patterns, including residential, commercial, industrial, airport, public, and agriculture. The section below describes existing land uses, which refers to the way land is currently developed and being used (as of 2020) within City limits. ~~Existing land uses are mapped in Figure LU-1 and listed in Table LU-1.~~ The current land use provides important context for the Issues and Opportunities section below and for the goals and policies set forth in the Policy Framework of this [eElement](#).

Residential

Residential ~~uses make up over 27% of all land in Santa Maria, making it the~~ most prevalent type of use in the city. Most residential development in Santa Maria is in the form of detached, single-family homes, ~~which make up 22% of all residential development.~~ These units are primarily located in subdivisions across the city and outside of the Downtown area, though some single-family units do exist in Downtown.

Condominiums, apartments, and mobile homes make up a small share, ~~only 3.3% collectively~~ of the city's residential land. Multi-family housing tends to be either 1) pockets within primarily single-family residential neighborhoods near Downtown or 2) along major corridors, as complexes with shared facilities, such as ~~private open space, some of which include recreational amenities such as private clubhouses,~~



~~private open space and pools.~~

Single-family residence located in Sky View Estates
Credit: Coastal Community Builders.

Centennial Gardens Apartments Subdivision.

Commercial

~~Commercial uses make up 7.4% of land in Santa Maria.~~ Commercial uses, including retail and office, most often front major roadways, such as Broadway, Main Street, and Betteravia Road, or are located near US-101. Many retail commercial uses near US-101 are located in outdoor shopping ~~malls-centers~~ with a mix of major anchor retailers (such as Costco or the Home Depot) and ~~several~~ smaller retailers. Most commercial uses Downtown—including retail, office, and restaurant land uses—have small building footprints due to small lot size, with the exception of the Santa Maria Town Center Mall and Town Center West.



Enos Ranchos Retail Commercial Shopping Center

Industrial

~~Santa Maria has a presence of industrial land uses, making up 8.5% of all uses in Santa Maria.~~ Industrial uses are most commonly located on the west side of the city near Blosser Road or along US-101 at the north end of the city.



Industrial business located in Santa Maria.

Airport

The Santa Maria Public Airport is located in the southwestern part of the city ~~and accounts for just over 11% of all land in the city.~~ The airport covers 2,598 acres and it is immediately surrounded by compatible land uses, including agriculture, vacant land, and industrial land.

Public, Institutional, and Parks

~~Public, institutional, and parks make up a combined 11% of the land in Santa Maria.~~ The Public, Institutional, and Parks category includes the following uses:

- **Schools.** Public schools are distributed throughout the city and are often community focal points in residential neighborhoods. Hancock College is situated on nearly an entire block near US-101.
- **Places of Worship.** Churches and places of worship or assembly are distributed evenly across Santa Maria, found within residential neighborhoods, along major corridors, and in commercial or industrial areas.
- **Parks.** Like schools, parks are often located in residential neighborhoods and distributed throughout Santa Maria.
- **City facilities.** Most of the City of Santa Maria's government buildings, including City Hall and City offices, are located near the Downtown area. Other City facilities, including the City's wastewater treatment plant and Santa Maria Area Transit operations facility, are located at the edges of the city.



Santa Maria High School

- **Healthcare facilities.** Community health facilities are located throughout the city. Marian Regional Medical Center, located on Main Street adjacent to US-101, is a campus-like hospital complex and is the largest medical use in the city.
- **Government facilities.** Most of the City of Santa Maria's government buildings, including City Hall and City offices, are located near the Downtown area. Other City facilities, including the City's wastewater treatment plant and Santa Maria Area Transit operations facility, are located at the edges of the city. Several facilities owned by the County of Santa Barbara are located along Foster Road.

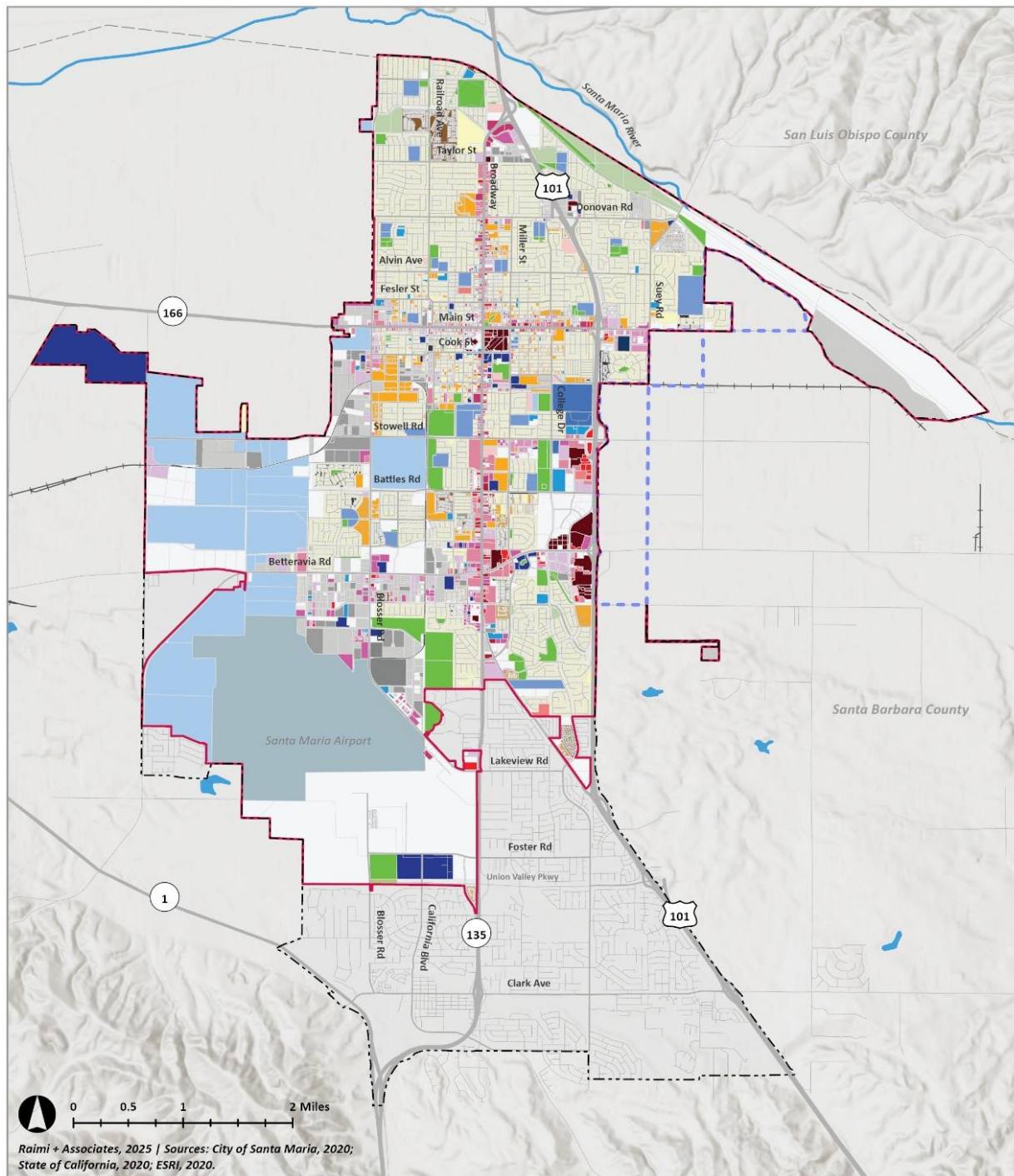
Agricultural

~~Agricultural land makes up nearly 13% of all land in Santa Maria.~~ Most agricultural uses are located on the west side of the city. ~~Agricultural uses a, and so lie~~ immediately to the east and west of City limits. No land within City limits is designated or zoned specifically for agriculture; agricultural uses operate as transitional uses until development is planned for an area.

Vacant

~~Vacant parcels make up 19.5% of all land in Santa Maria.~~ Vacant land is most commonly located on the periphery of the city, including near the Santa Maria River, west of A Street in the western portion of the city, and near the Santa Maria Public Airport.

Figure LU-1: Existing Land Uses



- Current Santa Maria City Limits
- Current Sphere of Influence
- Planned Annexation Area and Sphere of Influence
- Railroads
- Freeways and Highways
- Santa Maria River
- Water
- Parks
- County Boundaries

Residential

- Single-family Residential
- Condominiums
- Apartments
- Mobile Home

Commercial

- Auto Service and Sales
- Office
- Indoor Recreation
- Neighborhood Commerce
- Hotel/Motel
- Theater

Industrial

- Restaurants
- Bank
- Regional Commerce
- Light Industry
- Heavy Industry
- Warehouse

Airport

- Airport
- Parks and Recreation
- Church

Public and Institutional

- Schools (K-12)
- College/University
- Government Office
- Hospital
- Medical Office

Conservation and Agriculture

- Water
- Agriculture
- Vacant
- Private Right-of-Way

Table LU-1: Existing Land Uses

Land Use	Acres	% of City
Residential	3,486	27.3
Single-Family Residential	2,806	22.0
Condominiums	113	0.9
Apartments	359	2.8
Mobile Home	208	1.6
Commercial	948	7.4
Auto Service and Sales	218	1.7
Office	161	1.3
Indoor Recreation	46	0.4
Neighborhood Commerce	249	2.0
Hotel/Motel	41	0.3
Theater	20	0.2
Restaurants	66	0.5
Bank	16	0.1
Regional Commerce	131	1.0
Industrial	1,082	8.5
Light Industry	759	6.0
Heavy Industry	61	0.5
Warehouse	262	2.1
Airport	1,411	11.1
Public and Institutional	1,408	11.0
Parks and Recreation	521	4.1
Church	85	0.7
Schools (K-12)	278	2.2
Colleges/Universities	84	0.7
Government Office	362	2.8
Hospital	11	0.1
Medical Office	67	0.5
Conservation and Agriculture	1,828	14.3

Land Use	Acres	% of City
Agriculture	1,649	12.9
Water	179	1.4
Other	2,589	Other
Private Right-of-Way	106	0.8
Vacant	2,483	19.5
Total	12,752	100.0

Source: City of Santa Maria, 2019

Existing Specific Plans

Specific Plans are optional, detailed planning documents used to implement the General Plan for a specific geographic area of the city. Like General Plans, they are adopted legislatively. Santa Maria has twelve approved Specific Plans; some include a residential component, while others only include non-residential components. Of the Specific Plans that include residential components, all but three are built out. As noted in the Policy Framework, some updates to the Specific Plans are necessary to remain consistent with the General Plan Land Use Element. Specific Plans are illustrated in [Figure LU-1](#) and described below, in Table LU-1.

Table LU-1: Existing Specific Plans

# Plan Name	Plan Name	Description
Area 9 Specific Plan (2012)		This covers 890 acres, including employment, commercial, and residential uses.
1	Entrada Specific Plan (1976)	Establishes a vision and design guidelines for the Broadway and Main Street corridors.

<u>2</u>	<u>Rivergate-Roemer Specific Plan (1994; amended in 2020)</u>	<u>This is a 194-acre site including 605 residential units, a 29-acre retail center, an elementary school, and 50 acres of parks, trails, and open space areas. This plan has been fully built out with the exception of 29 acres zoned C-2 to allow for future retail commercial and potentially mixed-use projects.</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>North Preisker Ranch Specific Plan (1999; amended in 2001)</u>	<u>This is a 144-acre site that includes a mix of low and low-medium density residential uses, community facilities, and recreational open space. This plan is fully built out with the exception of a 2.5-acre site.</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Hidden Pines Specific Plan (1994; amended in 1999)</u>	<u>This is a 60-acre site at the northern edge of the city, with 20 acres designated for small-lot single-family residential use and 40 acres preserved as open space around the existing Blosser Retardation Basin. This plan is fully built out.</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>West Main Specific Plan (1994)</u>	<u>This is an 88-acre area focused on agricultural, community commercial, and light industrial uses.</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan (1994; amended in 2011)</u>	<u>This is a 315-acre site that includes residential units, parks, schools, bikeways and trails, and a cultural center. The residential subdivisions in the plan area are Pacific Crest, Harvest Glen, Harvest Glen Gardens, St. Clair, and Centennial Gardens. This plan is fully built out.</u>
<u>7</u>	<u>Blosser Southeast Area 5B Specific Plan (2020)</u>	<u>Formerly part of the Blosser Southeast Specific Plan, this is a 145-acre area consisting of commercial uses, 1,105 residential units, public facilities, a 19-acre sports complex, a school site, and open space. The plan area is currently undeveloped but has entitlements that would permit 1,440 units (including ADUs)</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>Blosser-Southwest Specific Plan (1994; updated in 2010)</u>	<u>This is a 258-acre site planned primarily for residential uses of varying densities, with supporting neighborhood commercial development, an elementary school, and a community park. This plan is fully built out with the exception of a 10-acre parcel located at the NW corner of Blosser Rd. and Battles Rd.</u>
<u>9</u>	<u>Mahoney Ranch North Specific Plan (2008)</u>	<u>This is a 141-acre site that includes low-density residential, heavy commercial/manufacturing, and open space uses, with the majority of land preserved for agriculture and open space.</u>
<u>10</u>	<u>Mahoney Ranch South Specific Plan (2008)</u>	<u>This is a 319-acre site that includes agricultural and commercial uses, and 1,405 residential units on annexed land. However, there is no proposed development due to environmental constraints (e.g., California Tiger Salamander)</u>
<u>11</u>	<u>West Stowell Specific Plan (1994)</u>	<u>This is a 165-acre area that includes agriculture and related commercial and industrial uses. This plan is mostly built out.</u>
<u>12</u>	<u>Area 9 Specific Plan (2012)</u>	<u>This is an 890-acre area that includes employment, commercial, and residential uses. The Windset Farms Commercial Greenhouse facility and the Santa Maria Valley Railroad are located in this area. Portions of this area were rezoned from commercial/professional office to single-family residential during the 2025 General Plan Update.</u>

<u>13</u>	<u>Entrada Este Specific Plan (1994; updated in 1996, 2000, 2001, and 2012)</u>	<u>This is a 480-acre site that features residential subdivisions such as Bradley Square, several multi-family developments, retail, shopping centers, parks, basins, and trails. This plan is fully built out.</u>
<u>14</u>	<u>Enos Ranchos Specific Plan (2008)</u>	<u>Formerly part of the Entrada Este Specific Plan, this is a 121-acre site that includes retail, commercial shopping centers, office, warehouse, auto sales, and high-density residential uses, schools, and parks.</u>
<u>15</u>	<u>Santa Maria Airport Business Park Specific Plan (2000; amended in 2008 and 2020)</u>	<u>This site includes the 2,600-acre airport property, which includes a 740-acre business park and active open space, and commercial land uses around an 18-hole golf course.</u>
<u>16</u>	<u>Downtown Santa Maria Specific Plan (2008; amended in 2015)</u>	<u>This plan area includes 50 square blocks centered at the intersection of Broadway and Main Street and establishes land uses and building form regulations, including parking requirements, design guidelines, and architectural styles.</u>
<u>Blosser Southeast Specific Plan (1994 and amended in 2011)</u>		<u>This is a 315-acre site that includes residential units, parks, schools, bikeways and trails, and a cultural center.</u>
<u>Blosser Southeast Specific Plan</u>		<u>This is an 88-acre area consisting of commercial uses, 1,105 residential units, public facilities, and open space (formerly part of the Blosser Southeast Plan).</u>

ast Ar ea 5B Sp eci fic Pl an (2 02 0)		
Bl os se r So ut h we st Sp eci fic Pl an (1 99 4 an d up da te d in 20 10)		This is a 258-acre site planned primarily for residential uses of varying densities, with supporting neighborhood commercial development, an elementary school, and a community park.
D o w nt o w n Sa nt a Ma ria		Includes 50 square blocks centered at the intersection of Broadway and Main Street and establishes land uses and building form regulations, including parking requirements, design guidelines, and architectural styles.

a Sp eci fic Pl an (2 01 5)		
En os Ra ne ho s Sp eci fic Pl an (2 00 8)		This is a 121-acre site that includes a mix of retail, office, warehouse, community facilities, auto sales, and high-density residential uses.
En tra da Est e Sp eci fic Pl an (1 99 4)		This is a 480-acre site that includes single-family detached residential units, auto sales, and commercial office uses.
En tra da Sp eci fic Pl an (1 97 6)		Establishes a vision and design guidelines for the Broadway and Main Street corridors.
Hi dd en		This is a 60-acre site at the northern edge of the city, with 20 acres designated for small-lot single-family residential use and

Pine s Specific Plan (1994 amended in 1999)		40 acres preserved as open space around the existing Blosser Retardation Basin.
Mahoney Ranch North of the Specific Plan (2008)		This is a 141-acre site that includes low-density residential, heavy commercial/manufacturing, and open space uses, with the majority of land preserved for agriculture and open space.
Mahoney Ranch South Sp		This is a 319-acre site that includes agricultural and commercial uses, and 1,405 residential units on annexed land.

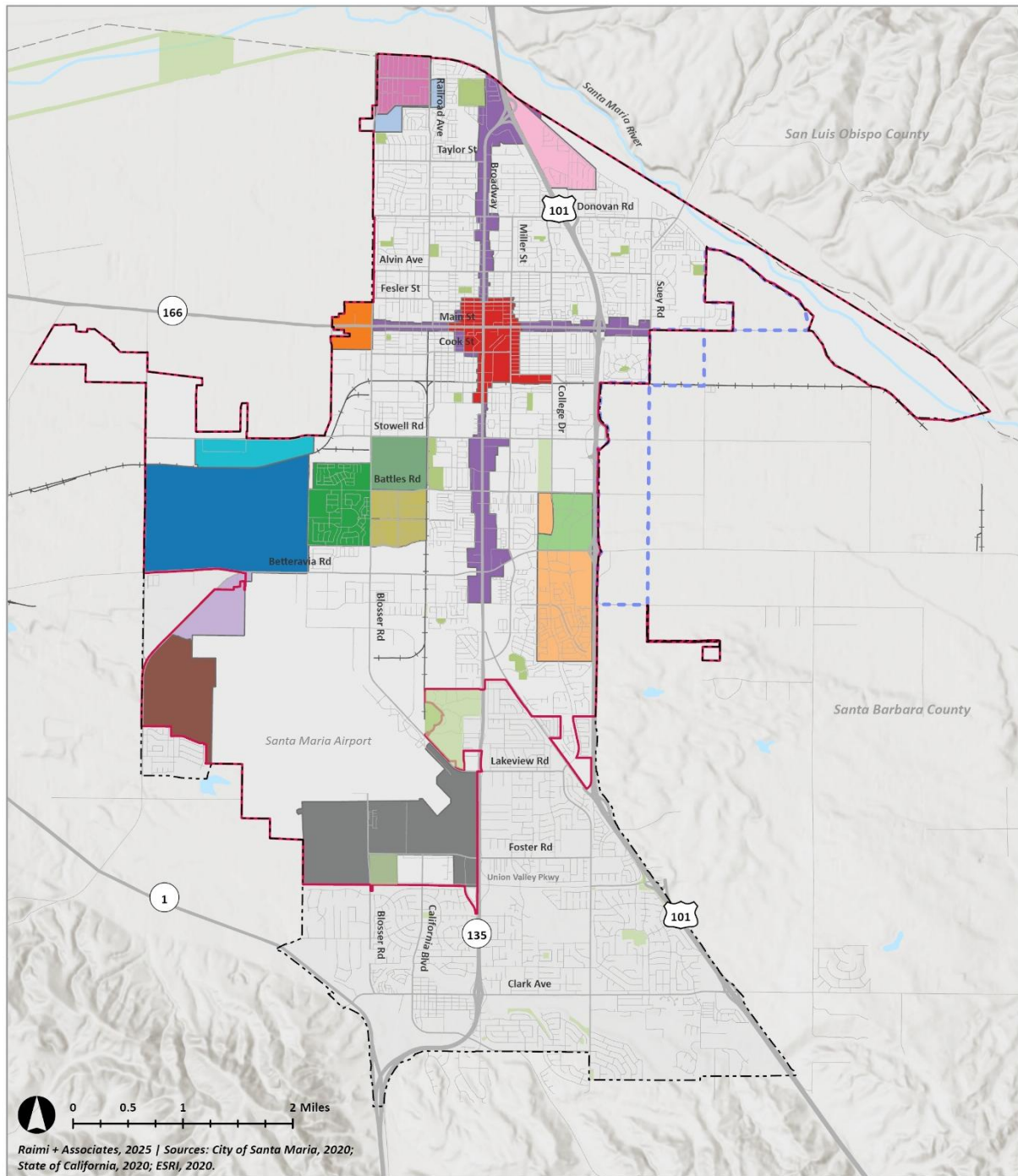
eci fic Pl an (2 00 8)		
N or th Pr eis ke r Ra ne h Sp eci fic Pl an (1 99 9 an d a m en de d in 20 01)		This is a 144-acre site that includes a mix of low and low-medium density residential uses, community facilities, and recreational open space.
Ri ve rg at e- Re e m er Sp eci fic Pl an (1		This is a 194-acre site including 605 residential units, a 29-acre retail center, an elementary school, and 50 acres of parks, trails, and open space areas.

99 4)		
San ta Maria Airport Business Park Specific Plan (2008)		This site includes the 2,600-acre airport property, which includes a 740-acre business park and active open space, and commercial land uses around an 18-hole golf course.
West Main Street Specific Plan (1994)		This is an 88-acre area focused on agricultural, community commercial, and light industrial uses.
West Street Specific Plan		A 165-acre area including agriculture and related commercial and industrial uses.



Single-family residential subdivision in the southern part of the city.

Figure LU-1: Existing Specific Plans



Raimi + Associates, 2025 | Sources: City of Santa Maria, 2020; State of California, 2020; ESRI, 2020.



- Current Santa Maria City Limits
- Current Sphere of Influence
- Planned Annexation Area and Sphere of Influence
- Railroads
- Freeways and Highways
- Santa Maria River
- Water
- Parks
- County Boundaries
- Entrada Specific Plan
- Rivergate Roemer Specific Plan
- North Preisker Ranch Specific Plan
- Hidden Pines Specific Plan
- West Main Specific Plan
- Blosser-Southeast Specific Plan
- Blosser-Southeast Area SB Specific Plan
- Blosser-Southwest Specific Plan
- Mahoney Ranch North Specific Plan
- Mahoney Ranch South Specific Plan
- West Stowell Specific Plan
- Area 9 Specific Plan
- Entrada Este Specific Plan
- Enos Ranchos Specific Plan
- Santa Maria Airport Business Park Specific Plan
- Downtown Specific Plan

Community Design and Public Realm

Community design refers to the experience a person has when spending time in Santa Maria. Community design is impacted by several factors, including landscaping and greenery; public art; the location, scale, and architectural character of homes, stores, parks, offices, and other spaces; and how easily a person can travel between destinations. Quality community design, including beautiful, well-designed, pedestrian-scale buildings, streets, and public spaces, can increase civic pride, improve community safety, strengthen connections to local arts and culture, and make Santa Maria a more attractive place to live, visit, and work.

The “public realm” refers to the aspects of community design managed by the City. Features of the public realm, including accessibility, connectivity, and the quality of the pedestrian environment, are important characteristics of community design. Walkable neighborhoods with sidewalks and street trees often provide economic benefits, including higher property values, increased private investment, and tourism. Residents in walkable neighborhoods typically engage in more physical activity than residents in neighborhoods with low walkability, leading to improved public health outcomes.

The majority of Santa Maria’s public realm is auto-oriented, with wide roadways, long crossing distances, and few pedestrian amenities. Most streets do not have designated bicycle facilities but do have sidewalks. However, most sidewalks are generally narrow and close to vehicular traffic. There are few streetscape amenities —such as street trees, benches, trash cans, water fountains, or public art —and most street lighting consists of auto-oriented, tall cobra-head fixtures that illuminate the sidewalk unevenly. Despite these challenges, Downtown’s gridded street pattern makes it one of the most walkable areas of the city, and many residents living near Downtown and along Broadway and Main Street are within a five-minute walk of retail.

Land Use Conflicts

Land use conflicts may arise when development causes undesirable environmental consequences that affect the surrounding neighborhood, such as noise, dust, traffic congestion, lighting, visual or aesthetic impacts, odor, and drainage problems. Land use conflicts may potentially result in adverse health impacts to nearby residents.

Land use conflicts that may result in the most significant impacts to residents include:

- Industrial and/or trucking uses immediately adjacent to residential;
- Heavy commercial (commercial uses that take up a lot of land, may require transport of materials by truck, require large loading and docking areas, and where the possibility of noise generation may exist) immediately adjacent to residential;
- Agricultural uses immediately adjacent to residential;
- Heavy traffic impacting residential neighborhoods; and
- Airport noise impacts.

Most of Santa Maria’s existing land use conflicts are between residential and industrial uses. Many of these instances are along railroad lines. Though conflicting land use adjacencies are often buffered with walls or landscaping, they cannot completely mitigate impacts. ~~There are no conflicts of heavy commercial uses (such as regional commercial) immediately adjacent to residential properties.~~

Issues and Opportunities

This section describes the issues and opportunities that informed the policy direction of the Land Use Policies.

Jobs-housing imbalance. ~~Over the last 20 years, population growth has outpaced job growth, creating a jobs-housing imbalance. Though population growth has outpaced job growth in the past 20 years, in 2020, the jobs-housing balance was 1.45 jobs per housing unit.~~ Lack of local jobs requires residents to travel outside the city for work. According to projections from the SBCAG, the trend will be exacerbated through 2050.

Land use conflicts. Industrial uses are occasionally located next to residential uses (and other sensitive uses). Residents living next to industrial facilities may be exposed to emissions, odors, noise, and other factors detrimental to public health.

Walkability. Downtown is the most walkable part of the city, but residents in most other areas of the city have less convenient walking access to schools, parks, and/or retail. In addition, the city's trail network is limited and lacks connectivity, hindering the ability of pedestrians to walk to destinations. Improving walkability and expanding the trail network can lead to improved health, increase opportunities for socialization, reduce dependency on vehicles, and improve the visual appearance of the city's street network.

Downtown Santa Maria. Downtown has a diverse mix of land uses and housing types, and it has many of Santa Maria's historic, civic, and cultural resources. This area has emerged as a focal point for potential transformation, serving as a primary gathering place for the community. Community feedback has indicated a strong interest in expanding Downtown amenities, including more public art, multifunctional gathering spaces, and placemaking initiatives that celebrate Santa Maria's unique culture. The City's ongoing efforts to implement the Santa Maria Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Multimodal Streetscape Plan will revitalize the area with new employment opportunities and enhanced local identity and public realm. The City is partnering with developers for the construction of new multi-family housing with over 700 apartment units, mixed-use residential, and retail commercial projects in the heart of Downtown, at the intersection of Broadway and Main Street. Multi-family housing, ground floor commercial uses, new plazas, and gathering spaces are planned and are expected to be built within the next six years. Other private developments are also being built, including the recently completed Gateway Mixed-use project on the northwest corner of Main Street and Broadway and the planned conversion of the building formerly occupied by Mervyns and Fallas into apartments (construction anticipated to begin in 2025). These developments will help fulfill the Downtown vision of a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly destination environment.

Corridor revitalization. Two of the city's primary corridors, Main Street and Broadway, consist of low-intensity commercial and office projects and disconnected shopping centers. The General Plan Land Use Map (Figure LU-3) redefines these corridors as the only designated mixed-use areas of the city. This provides the opportunity for mixed-use corridors with higher intensity development in both vertical and horizontal formats. Additional revisions to the Entrada Specific Plan will be required to further implement the vision for both corridors.

Redevelopment opportunities. Though much of the vacant land in Santa Maria is part of either a Specific Plan or a development project in the pipeline, many of the developed areas have low improvement-to-land value ratios and/or a low Floor Area Ratio (FAR), indicating an opportunity for the redevelopment of these areas in the future. The updated General Plan Land Use map and General Plan policies provide direction for how and why areas should redevelop across Santa Maria to implement the General Plan vision.

Character and design. The majority of Santa Maria is auto-oriented, providing opportunities for improved public realm through streetscape design, amenities, and connectivity improvements. Commercial and industrial places and streets have some of the greatest potential for improved mobility, enhanced character, and placemaking due to low-rise development and large areas devoted to surface parking.

Annexation. Cities regulate and plan for land within their jurisdiction, known as city boundaries, and can pre-plan land within their Sphere of Influence, or land that is likely to fall under a city's jurisdiction in the future. A city may also grow beyond the existing city boundaries or Sphere of Influence. Annexation is the legal process of expanding a city's boundary by incorporating adjacent unincorporated land into its jurisdiction. The annexation process is overseen by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), an independent regulatory body with the authority to change city boundaries and spheres of influence.¹ To annex land, the City submits applications to LAFCO to expand its Sphere of Influence and annex unincorporated areas. Further detail—More information regarding the LAFCO process for Sphere of Influence changes and annexations can be found on the LAFCO website at www.sblafco.org/.

Annexation serves as an opportunity for Santa Maria to grow responsibly, expanding needed jobs, housing, entertainment, public facilities, and services beyond the City's current limits. The area identified for planned annexation would expand the City's jurisdiction east of US-101, as identified on Figure LU-3 as "Planning Annexation." The planned annexation area offers a defined area of land to further design and develop through Specific Plans or Master Plans that would provide an appropriate mix of land uses and intensities.

Complete community: A complete community, or "complete neighborhood," supports people of all ages, income levels, and backgrounds in meeting their daily needs within a short walk, bike, bus ride, or vehicle trip from their home. The Santa Maria community emphasized the desire for the components of a complete community, including safe neighborhoods, housing options at various price points, quality local jobs, parks and recreation, walkable neighborhoods, and high-quality public services. The goals and policies in this ~~e~~Element set forth a path for evolving the existing City of Santa Maria to ensure complete neighborhoods become a complete community, and creating a complete neighborhoods community within the Planned Annexation Area, creating a complete community in Santa Maria and within the planned annexation area.

¹ (n.d.) *What Are LAFCOs?* California Association of Local Formation Commissions. Retrieved May 12, 2025, from https://calafco.org/About_LAFCOs

Land Use Policies

The Land Use Policies address the key issues and opportunities identified above and create a comprehensive roadmap for the future of how land is developed in Santa Maria.

The *Standards and Diagrams* section establishes regulatory standards and diagrams. A standard is a rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. Likewise, a diagram is a graphic expression of the text of a particular policy.

The *Policy Framework* section outlines Land Use goals, policies, and implementation actions. A goal describes the community's desired future. A policy is a specific statement of intent that guides decision-making. An action is an activity, procedure, program, or project that carries out a policy.

Policy Summary

The goals, policies, and implementation actions of the Land Use Element emphasize the City's desired development pattern, community design, compatibility of land uses, and regional coordination.

Policies are focused on a balanced mix of uses (Goal LU-1), a vibrant downtown (Goal LU-3), mixed-use corridors (Goal LU-4), varied housing stock (Goal LU-5), strong commercial (Goal LU-6) and industrial sectors (Goal LU-7), and a thriving airport (Goal LU-8), while preserving agricultural lands (LU-9) and utilizing annexation as a means of measured expansion (Goal LU-2).

The Element prioritizes community design and public realm improvements through emphasis on architectural and building design (Goal LU-10), urban design (Goal LU-11), and pedestrian-focused public spaces (Goal LU-12). Reducing land use conflicts (Goal LU-13) and requiring high-quality utilities, facilities, and services for existing and new development (Goal LU-14) will also improve the built environment in Santa Maria. Finally, regional and local planning agency coordination (Goal LU-15) will support issues of mutual concern, especially balancing growth with the preservation of agricultural areas in Santa Maria and the surrounding region.



Santa Maria City Hall, 2025.

Understanding Density and Intensity

State law requires that General Plans establish the maximum development intensity allowed within each designation. The two generally accepted metrics are dwelling units per acre for residential uses (density) and floor area ratio (FAR) for non-residential uses (intensity). Figure LU-2 below describes dwelling units per acre and FAR in further detail.

Figure LU-2: Density and Intensity

Dwelling Units per Acre (du/ac)

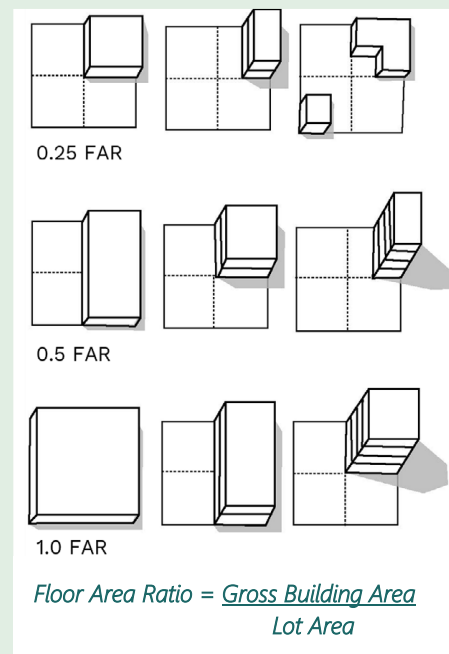
The term “density” is used for residential uses and refers to the population and development capacity of residential land. Density within the General Plan is described in terms of dwelling units per net acre of land (du/ac), exclusive of existing and proposed streets and rights-of-way.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

Development intensity refers to the extent of development on a parcel of land or lot. FAR is used in the General Plan as a measure of non-residential or mixed-use development intensity.

FAR represents the ratio between the total gross floor area of all buildings on a lot and the total land area of that lot. For example, a 20,000 square foot building on a 40,000 square foot lot yields a FAR of 0.5. A 0.5 FAR describes a single-story building that covers half of the lot, a two-story building covering approximately one-quarter of the lot, or a four-story building covering one-eighth of the lot.

These FAR calculations and gross floor area do not consider the square footage of any parking facilities (including but not limited to parking structures, surface parking, or underground parking) or other structures not designed for human occupation. Additionally, “lot,” as used here, may encompass multiple legal parcels which are planned as a cohesive development (e.g., mixed-use







with townhomes and commercial development which may require subdivisions into separate legal parcels for financing and separate ownership).







Standards and Diagrams







This section establishes Santa Maria's General Plan land use designations and regulating Land Use Map.




General Plan Land Use designations have been designed to reflect the range of uses necessary for the future development of the planning area. Each designation in Table LU-2 below provides a detailed description of each type of land use found within the General Plan Land Use Map, including the purpose, allowed uses, maximum density or intensity, and in some instances, maximum allowed height. More detailed regulations are included in the Zoning Ordinance. The General Plan Land Use Map depicts the location and extent of land use designations described in Table LU-2 throughout the city, the City's Sphere of Influence, and potential annexation areas. These designations should not be considered as being tied to a specific time in the future. The designation in one area may relate to currently developed uses, while others are oriented to development at an indefinite date in the future. Designations allowing for new uses do not necessarily constitute an abandonment of existing uses.

Table LU-2: Land Use Designations

Designation	Description
Residential	
Residential Agricultural (RA) or Very Low Density (VLDR) 	To create a transition area between agricultural and strictly urban uses, as well as provide for a particular residential lifestyle. <u>Allowed uses:</u> Single-family homes; non-commercial agricultural activities, the keeping of horses, and certain commercial agricultural activities on larger (suggested minimum of 5- to 10-acre) parcels. <u>Density:</u> Maximum 2.2 du/ac <u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> R-A, PD (Planned Development) Overlay
Lower Density Residential (LWDR) 	To encourage high-quality single-family residential development on larger lots. <u>Allowed uses:</u> Single-family homes. <u>Density:</u> Maximum 5.5 du/ac <u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> R-1, R-1-8,000 to R-1-10,000, PD Overlay
Low Density Residential (LDR) 	To encourage new areas with overall densities on standard-sized lots, providing the amenities and open spaces associated with traditional single-family areas. <u>Allowed uses:</u> Single-family homes. <u>Density:</u> Maximum 8 du/ac <u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> R-1, R-1-5,500 to R-1-6,500, PD Overlay
Low-Medium Density Residential (LMDR) 	To encourage densities that provide affordable single-family housing on small lots while at the same time maintaining adequate individual private open space, design flexibility, and the character of a single-family neighborhood. <u>Allowed uses:</u> Small lot single family, townhomes, rowhouses, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes. <u>Density:</u> Maximum 10 du/ac <u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> RSL-1, RMH, R-1 4,500 to R-1-5,000, R-2, PD Overlay

<p>Medium Density Residential (MDR)</p> 	<p>Allows a mixture of unit types while maintaining the feeling of a single-family neighborhood.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Small lot single family, townhomes, rowhouses, and duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes; courtyard housing, and walk-up multi-family housing.</p> <p><u>Density:</u> Maximum 12 du/ac</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> R-2, PD Overlay</p>
<p>High Density Residential (HDR)</p> 	<p>To provide for an urban residential environment, preferably close to shopping facilities and existing activity centers, as well as provide an incentive for reinvestment in older established areas.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Townhomes, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, mobile homes, and multifamily housing.</p> <p><u>Density:</u> Maximum 30 du/ac</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> R-3, PD Overlay</p>
<p>Mixed-use</p>	
<p>Corridor Mixed-use (CMU)</p> 	<p>This will allow for multi-story, multi-use development that is contextual to adjacent residential uses. The intent is to allow for the creation of commercial uses mixed with multi-family housing.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Standalone or mixed retail, restaurants, service commercial (such as banks or real estate offices), service establishments (such as medical clinics and beauty shops), office buildings, hotels, multi-family housing, townhomes, and duplexes.</p> <p><u>Density:</u> Maximum 35 du/ac</p> <p><u>Commercial FAR:</u> Maximum 2.0</p>
<p>Commercial</p>	
<p>Neighborhood Commercial (NC)</p> 	<p>To provide areas that offer convenience goods and services to local residents without disrupting the residential character of an area. These areas are intended to be small in size and not geared to providing a multitude of more specialized goods and services serving a city-wide market.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Supermarkets, convenience grocery stores, drug stores, laundromats, bakeries, and shoe repair shops.</p> <p><u>Commercial FAR:</u> Maximum 0.5</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> C-1, CC, CPO, PD Overlay</p>
<p>Community Commercial (CC)</p> 	<p>To include the majority of retail uses outside the central core, particularly along the development corridors that have emerged. The majority of these uses would be geared to the city-wide market.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Retail uses, including regional retail, service commercial, small offices, auto sales, and services.</p> <p><u>Commercial FAR:</u> Maximum 0.5</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> C-1, CC, CPO, PD Overlay</p>
<p>Commercial/ Professional Office (CPO)</p> 	<p>To provide areas for offices, which may be compatible with a range of other uses.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Standalone office or business park development for professional medical, non-profit, and public offices, as well as a certain complementary commercial uses.</p> <p><u>Commercial FAR:</u> Maximum 1.0</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> CPO, PD Overlay</p>

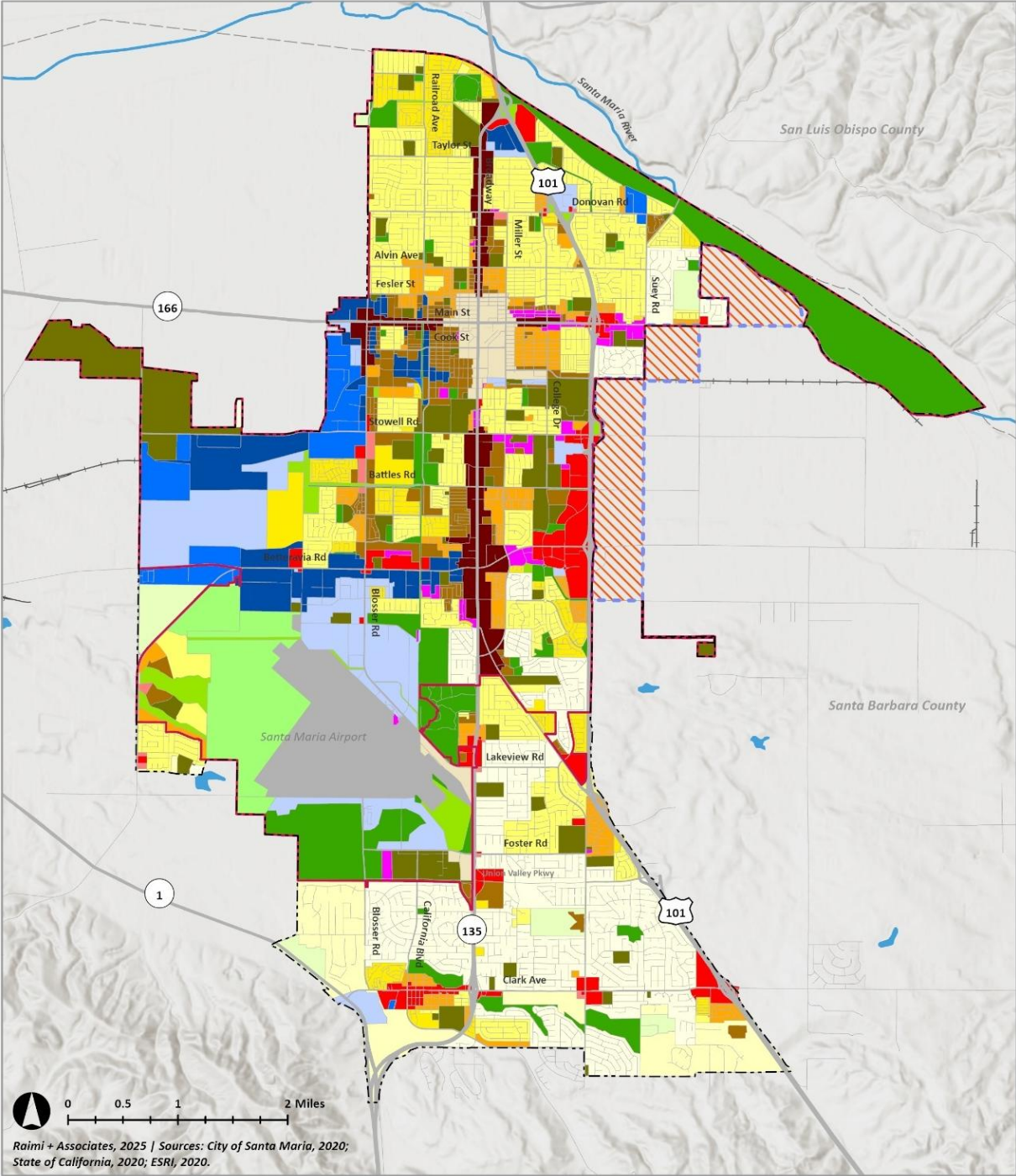
Industrial/Airport	
<p>Light Industrial (LI)</p> 	<p>To accommodate industrial uses that primarily conduct operations within the building, do not generate substantial negative environmental impacts, and are most compatible with adjacent non-industrial uses.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Research facilities, light assembly plants, non-public-oriented-offices and industrial support offices, and auto sales.</p> <p>Commercial FAR: Maximum 1.0</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> M-1, PD Overlay</p>
<p>Heavy Commercial/Manufacturing (HCM)</p> 	<p>To permit activities that combine manufacturing and retail on the same site, along with other heavy commercial uses that are land intensive, involve transport of materials by heavy trucks, require large loading and docking areas, and may generate significant noise.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Lumberyards, boat works, warehouses, wholesale building supply dealers, mobile home sales, farm equipment sales, equipment repair.</p> <p>Commercial FAR: Maximum 1.0</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> CM, PD Overlay</p>
<p>General Industrial (GI)</p> 	<p>To provide areas for all types of heavy industrial uses, particularly those that need to be separated from other land uses because of the impacts associated with these activities, such as heavy truck traffic, noise, odor, or dust.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Range of intensive industrial uses, including heavy manufacturing and heavy trucking operations.</p> <p>Commercial FAR: Maximum 1.0</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> M-2, PD Overlay</p>
<p>Airport Service (AS)</p> 	<p>To facilitate the airport and airport-related commercial and industrial uses, to provide specific areas for aircraft operation and navigation aids, and to minimize hazards to the safe landing and take-off of aircraft.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Full range of airport service uses, including airport operation and support activities.</p> <p>Commercial FAR: Maximum 1.0</p> <p>Corresponding Zoning: AA, CZ, AS-I, AS-II, AS-III, PD Overlay</p>
Public and Open Space	
<p>Primary Agricultural Open Space (AOS-1)</p> 	<p>To preserve certain areas for present and future agricultural production, protect natural resources, provide for recreation and scenic protection, provide scenic areas along railroad rights-of-way, act as an urban agriculture buffer, allow mineral extraction, and/or act as a safety buffer between the urban land uses and the levee. It also provides for limited residential uses.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Intensive crop agricultural uses, and all land classified as prime agricultural (Class I and II soils).</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> OS, PD Overlay</p>
<p>Secondary Agricultural Open Space (AOS-2)</p> 	<p>To preserve certain areas for present and future agricultural production, protect natural resources, provide for recreation and scenic protection, provide scenic areas along railroad rights-of-way, act as an urban agriculture buffer, allow mineral extraction, and/or act as a safety buffer between the urban land uses and the levee. It also provides for limited residential uses.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Less intensive agricultural uses, including grazing. Includes some lands that are not prime agricultural but are an agricultural buffer and are not now considered suitable for urban expansion.</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> OS, PD Overlay</p>

<p>Conservation Open Space (COS)</p> 	<p>To preserve certain areas for present and future agricultural production, protect natural resources, provide for recreation and scenic protection, provide scenic areas along railroad rights-of-way, act as an urban agriculture buffer, allow mineral extraction, and/or act as a safety buffer between the urban land uses and the levee. It also provides for limited residential uses.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Includes areas subject to flood hazard, significant groundwater recharge areas, areas adjacent to creek beds, areas of surface and sub-surface mineral extraction, levee buffer, airport safety areas, and publicly-owned landscaped areas.</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> OS, PD Overlay</p>
<p>Recreational Open Space (ROS)</p> 	<p>To preserve certain areas for present and future agricultural production, protect natural resources, provide for recreation and scenic protection, provide scenic areas along railroad rights-of-way, act as an urban agriculture buffer, allow mineral extraction, and/or act as a safety buffer between the urban land uses and the levee. It also provides for limited residential uses.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Includes existing and proposed recreational facilities, including parks; bikeways; equestrian trails; paths; <u>commercial recreation facilities;</u> and selected public utility and railroad rights-of-way and associated uses; <u>land reclamation projects;</u> and publicly-owned and operated sanitary landfill operations that have the potential for reclamation and development into the aforementioned recreational facilities.</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> OS, PD Overlay</p>
<p>Community Facilities (CF)</p> 	<p>To provide for necessary facilities for use by the public.</p> <p><u>Allowed uses:</u> Range of public facilities, including schools and government buildings. Open space facilities, such as parks, are classified under "Open Space."</p> <p><u>Corresponding Zoning:</u> PF, PD Overlay</p>
Other	
<p>Downtown Specific Plan (SP)</p>	<p>The Downtown Specific Plan designation refers to the area within the Downtown Santa Maria Specific Plan. It includes 50 square blocks centered at Broadway/Main Street and establishes land uses and building form regulations, including parking. See the Specific Plan for further details and regulations.</p>
<p>Planned Annexation (PA)</p>	<p>To encourage comprehensive planning and urban design flexibility for large annexation land areas (over 60 acres) through the adoption of a specific plan or master plans following the General Plan Update process, as the City proceeds with annexation. Such flexibility allows the City to adopt a set of land use specifications and implementation programs tailored to the unique characteristics of each area.</p>

Notes:

1. *Single-family zones are subject to SB9, which was passed in 2021. This law allows parcels in single-family zones to be subdivided and duplexes built on each lot.*
2. *The maximum residential density of any residential land use designation may be exceeded to complement General Plan Housing Element policy (in accordance with the density bonus provisions of Section 65915 of the California Government Code).*

Figure LU-3: General Plan Land Use Map



Raimi + Associates, 2025 | Sources: City of Santa Maria, 2020; State of California, 2020; ESRI, 2020.



- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| Current Santa Maria City Limits | Lower-Density Residential (LWDR) | General Industrial (GI) |
| Current Sphere of Influence | Low-Density Residential (LDR) | Heavy Commercial/Manufacturing (HCM) |
| Planned Annexation Area and Sphere of Influence | Low-Medium Density Residential (LMDR) | Airport Service (AS) |
| Railroads | Medium Density Residential (MDR) | Primary Agricultural Open Space (AOS-1) |
| Freeways and Highways | High Density Residential (HDR) | Secondary Agricultural Open Space (AOS-2) |
| Santa Maria River | Corridor Mixed-use (CMU) | Conservation Open Space (COS) |
| Water | Neighborhood Commercial (NC) | Recreational Open Space (ROS) |
| Parks | Community Commercial (CC) | Community Facilities (CF) |
| County Boundaries | Commercial/Professional Office (CPO) | Specific Plan (SP) |
| Residential Agricultural (RA) or Very Low Density (VLDR) | Light Industrial (LI) | Planned Annexation (PA) |

Policy Framework

Citywide Framework and Development Pattern

Goal LU-1: Balanced mix of uses. A balanced mix of land uses meets the present and future housing, employment, and recreation needs of the community.

Policy LU-1.1: Land use pattern. Implement the General Plan Land Use Map and corresponding Land Use Designations as described in Figure LU-3 and in Table LU-2 to continue efforts to create a complete community.

Action LU-1.1.1: Following adoption of the General Plan Update, prepare a comprehensive update of the City's Zoning Code and Zoning Map with districts that mirror the General Plan designations and allow flexibility in uses without the need for Planned Development Overlay districts.

Action LU-1.1.2: Implement the Santa Maria Objective Design Standards and recommended Design Review process that streamlines the existing process of reviewing applications for the development of vacant sites or site redevelopment.

Action LU-1.1.3: Amend the Area 9 Specific Plan to allow low-density residential uses along A Street, consistent with the LMDR designation.

Action LU-1.1.3: Action LU-1.1.4: Study the reduction or elimination of parking requirements (particularly for General Commercial uses) as a part of amendments to the Municipal Code and/or Specific Plans.

Policy LU-1.2: Infill development. Prioritize the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized parcels with a focus on infill of existing residential, commercial, and industrial capacity to revitalize revitalizing Downtown and deteriorating neighborhoods, to the extent feasible. Accommodate growth while making every effort to preserve agricultural lands and open space.²

Action LU-1.2.1: Implement the City's adopted Specific Plans to the extent feasible.

Policy LU-1.3: Areas of change. Focus new development, infill, and higher density or intensity development along the city's primary corridors (Main Street and Broadway), within the Downtown, and in surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy LU-1.4: Neighborhood preservation. Support the revitalization and enhancement of older neighborhoods in the Downtown and surrounding areas by continuing to invest in infrastructure and streetscape upgrades.

Policy LU-1.5: Job/housing balance. Achieve a job-to-housing ratio of 1.2 that balances new housing development and job production in Santa Maria over the General Plan horizon.

² Please see the Economic Development Element for policies related to infill development.

Goal LU-2: Annexation as outward growth. Santa Maria expands in an orderly and efficient manner to accommodate future growth.³

Policy LU-2.1: Planned Annexation ~~a~~Area. Expand Sphere of Influence and annex the Planned Annexation ~~a~~Areas identified on the General Plan Land Use Map to meet housing and jobs development goals.

Action LU-2.1.1: In collaboration with the County of Santa Barbara, submit a LAFCO application to modify the City's Sphere of Influence to include the Planned Annexation ~~a~~Area.

Action LU-2.1.2: In collaboration with landowners, developers, and the County of Santa Barbara, submit LAFCO applications to annex ~~subareas of~~ the Planned Annexation ~~a~~Area.

Policy LU-2.2: Connections to annexed area. Require new development within future annexation areas to provide infrastructure, multimodal, and public realm connections to the developed core of Santa Maria.

Policy LU-2.3: Future ~~s~~Specific ~~p~~Plans. Require ~~s~~Specific ~~p~~Plans or ~~m~~Master ~~p~~Plans in support of annexation in the Planned Annexation Area that are consistent with the following objectives:

- Prioritize new employment uses near existing institutions, such as educational or research and development (R&D) near Marian Regional Medical Center and Allen Hancock College, and industrial or commercial uses adjacent to US-101 and along East Main to provide convenient access to regional transportation.
- Provide a diversity of ~~higher density~~ housing types for rental and ownership at a range of price points, to minimize land area expansion and conversion of agricultural lands.
- Design complete neighborhoods where residents have convenient walking and biking access to public facilities, services, and retail.
- Buffer schools, parks, and homes from infrastructure, major roadways, the Santa Maria regional landfill, industrial land uses, and other land uses that may produce odor or noise or negatively impact air quality.
- Support expansion of the Marian Regional Medical Center and other supportive medical offices in new development in close proximity to the existing Medical Center.
- Support higher education, including expansions of Allen Hancock College and other public, private, and post-secondary schools.
- Provide 5 acres of parks per 1,000 residents, per the City's park service standard, and plan for new public and recreational facilities.
- Develop a safe, connected network of sidewalks and trails that provides ample connections to destinations.

³ Please see the Economic Development Element for policies related to annexation.

Goal LU-3: Vibrant Downtown. An iconic and vibrant Downtown serves as the heart of Santa Maria.⁴

Policy LU-3.1: Specific Plan implementation. Implement the vision and strategies of the Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Multimodal Streetscape Plan to create a walkable downtown destination.

Policy LU-3.2: Revitalization of shopping centers. Prioritize revitalization and infill efforts at the Santa Maria Town Center and Town Center West areas, consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan.

Policy LU-3.3: Downtown outdoor gathering. Prioritize new public and quasi-public multifunctional outdoor gathering spaces in Downtown redevelopment.

Policy LU-3.4: Downtown arts and culture. Infuse arts and culture in the Downtown through public art installations and placemaking initiatives.

Policy LU-3.5: Reduce surface parking in Downtown. Support parking solutions that reduce surface parking lots within the Downtown area to better utilize land and promote pedestrian walkability.

Action LU-3.5.1: Allow temporary events, art installations, and food truck vendors to use underutilized surface parking lots for activities that promote community and add to the local economy.

Policy LU-3.6: Shared parking facility. ~~Continue to identify and develop~~ Explore developing a shared parking ~~structure facilities with~~ in the Downtown Specific Plan area area to support future mixed-use developments in the area.

Policy LU-3.7: Pedestrian priority. Promote pedestrian walkways, sidewalks, paseos, plazas, and courtyards away from vehicular traffic to enhance walkability and pedestrian comfort within Downtown.

Goal LU-4: Mixed-use corridors. Lively corridors enhance the quality of life through mixed-use development.⁵

Policy LU-4.1: Corridor revitalization. Prioritize revitalization of the Main Street and Broadway corridors, focusing efforts to shape declining shopping centers into a vibrant, urban core offering housing, jobs, and entertainment in the center of Santa Maria.

Action LU-4.1.1: Revise the Entrada Specific Plan to prepare a comprehensive land use plan for an active, mixed-use corridor along Broadway and Main Street, consistent with the General Plan Land Use Map.

⁴ Please see the Economic Development Element for policies related to the downtown.

⁵ Please see the Economic Development Element for policies related to corridors.

Action LU-4.1.2: Work with Caltrans to improve the pedestrian amenities, access, and safety within the Downtown area and to investigate truck route alternatives that ~~do not interfere with~~reduce impacts on the pedestrian-focused environment in Downtown.

Policy LU-4.2: Industrial on major corridors. Prohibit new industrial, manufacturing, and heavy polluting uses in the Main Street and Broadway Corridor Mixed-use designated areas, as they detract from creating a walkable mixed-use environment.

Policy LU-4.3: Mixed-use development. Support vertical and horizontal mixed-use development, integrating residential uses along Broadway and Main Street to promote a pedestrian-focused environment in the core of the city and reduce vehicle trips.

Policy LU-4.4: Shared parking. Promote shared, flexible parking within the Corridor Mixed-use land use designation to encourage alternative modes of transportation and maximize land utility in the urban center of the city.

~~Action LU-4.3.1:~~ **Action LU-4.4.1: Update the zZoning eCode to allow shared, flexible parking within zones corresponding with the Corridor Mixed-use designation.**

Goal LU-5: Housing stock. An adequate supply of high-quality local housing stock is available to residents of all ages and abilities.⁶

Policy LU-5.1: Housing variety. Continue to support a variety of housing types, unit sizes, and building densities in Santa Maria to support residents at differing life stages and socio-economic statuses.

Policy LU-5.2: Siting of infill development. Promote new infill housing in areas that are underutilized and in close proximity to parks, recreation, public amenities, and local goods and services.

Policy LU-5.3: Location of new housing. Discourage single-family housing production directly adjacent to high-intensity commercial and industrial uses, in favor of land use transitions and buffers between differing intensities of development.

Policy LU-5.4: Mobile homes as affordable housing. Maintain existing mobile home parks within the High-Density Residential land use designation as a means of affordable housing.

⁶ Please see the Housing, Economic Development, and Health and Environmental Justice Elements for policies related to the housing stock.

Action LU-5.4.1: Investigate the provision of a new City ordinance that restricts the conversion of senior-only category mobile home parks to all-ages mobile home parks in compliance with State Fair Housing laws.

Policy LU-5.5: High density near transit. Work with developers to provide higher-density residential near existing and planned transit as a means of reducing vehicle trips and improving connectivity.

Goal LU-6: Commercial areas. Commercial areas provide jobs, goods and services, hospitality, and office spaces while supporting a diversified local economy.

Policy LU-6.1: Community character. Maintain and improve the existing character of Santa Maria as a thriving community and the industrial and commercial center for northern Santa Barbara County and southern San Luis Obispo County.

Policy LU-6.2: Visitor-serving uses. Foster hospitality and tourism through new hotels, restaurants, wineries, taprooms, and entertainment – including museums, amphitheaters, and event spaces – within the Downtown area, along Broadway and Main Street, and at major US-101 interchanges.

Policy LU-6.3: Freeway-oriented commercial. Consolidate large format chain shopping retailers, known as “big box”, and auto sales along the US-101 corridor for easy access by the regional population.

Policy LU-6.4: Revitalized commercial shopping centers. Support public and private revitalization of old shopping centers into mixed-use pedestrian-oriented hubs that promote community and local businesses.

Policy LU-6.5: Expand medical offices. Work with property owners to provide a variety of office types, especially medical offices, in Commercial/Professional Office designated areas ~~west-east~~ of ~~Highway US~~-101 in an effort to expand healthcare outside of the Regional Medical Center.

Action LU-6.5.1: Evaluate the existing height limit for the Commercial/Professional Office zone designation and consider amending the ~~z~~Zoning ~~e~~Code to raise the maximum height limit in the zone to accommodate additional floors of office uses.

Policy LU-6.6: Neighborhood commercial. Design neighborhood commercial centers to serve the needs of the surrounding residents.

Action LU-6.6.1: Evaluate the existing height limit in the Convenience Center (CC) zone designation and consider amending the ~~z~~Zoning ~~e~~Code to lower the maximum height limit to reflect the appropriate neighborhood scale.

~~Action LU-6.6.2:~~ Revise the Zoning Code for consistency with the adopted Active Transportation Plan to facilitate the accessibility of neighborhood commercial uses with active transportation (walking, biking).

Goal LU-7: Industrial districts. A strong industrial sector contributes to the local economy and job base in a manner that does not conflict with residential areas.

Policy LU-7.1: Employment diversity. Support a diverse mix of industrial, manufacturing, food processing, viticulture, research and development, laboratories, and other employment uses within the General Industrial, Light Industrial, and Heavy Commercial/Manufacturing land use designations.

Policy LU-7.2: Non-polluting industries. Encourage new, clean industries within the General Industrial and Light Industrial land use designations that do not produce significant air, water, or noise pollution.

Policy LU-7.3: Industrial infill. Promote infill of industrial, manufacturing, and warehousing development between Hanson Way and Blosser Road, and surrounding the Santa Maria Airport, consistent with the Airport Master Plan.

Goal LU-8: Santa Maria Public Airport. A thriving airport supports local tourism, public and private air travel, and business opportunities.⁷

Policy LU-8.1: Airport-related infill. Allow airport-related industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics infill in areas surrounding the Santa Maria Public Airport, consistent with the Santa Maria Airport Business Park Specific Plan, the Santa Maria Public Airport Master Plan, and the Santa Maria Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

Action LU-8.1.1: Collaborate with Airport officials to ensure any revisions to the Airport Master Plan are compatible with the General Plan Land Use Map and do not adversely affect established residential neighborhoods in the periphery.

Goal LU-9: Agricultural areas. Thriving agricultural lands generate fresh produce for the State and preserve Santa Maria's history as a farming community.

Policy LU-9.1: Agricultural resources. ~~Accommodate future city growth while making every feasible effort to preserve agricultural resources in the city on land not proposed for future development, specifically those with State or local importance. Annexation into areas utilized for agriculture shall occur in an orderly and planned manner, consistent with the General Plan and LAFCO policies.~~

Action LU-9.1.1: ~~As a part of the LAFCO Sphere of Influence boundary change and annexation process, the City will establish and maintain a stable Urban Growth Boundary to provide certainty for both urban development and agricultural operations.~~

⁷ Please see the Safety and Noise Elements for additional policies and actions related to areas in proximity to the airport.

Policy LU-9.2: Agricultural land use conflicts. Support ongoing agricultural activities by discouraging land uses that conflict with adjacent farming activities.

Policy LU-9.3: Agricultural buffers. Update the Municipal Code to require buffers between new development and lands designated for~~active~~ agricultural uses. Examples of buffers include, but are not limited to, roadways, stormwater basins, and landscaped or open space areas.

Policy LU-9.4: Agricultural land impact avoidance and minimization. Require projects adjacent to agricultural land to prevent the spread of invasive plant species during construction.

Community Design and Public Realm

Goal LU-10: Architecture and building design. Building design and architecture enhance Santa Maria's character.

Policy LU-10.1: Objective Design Standards. Implement the Objective Design Standards to achieve visually interesting residential and mixed-use building designs that reflect the character of the Santa Maria Valley.⁸

Policy LU-10.2: Older building rehabilitation. Incentivize rehabilitation of older structures, especially within Downtown, to maintain quality neighborhoods, corridors, and centers.

Action LU-10.2.1: Advertise information on government programs that offer home repair and energy efficiency assistance, such as the Housing Improvement Program, at Santa Maria public offices such as City Hall, the Santa Maria Public Library, and Elwin Mussell Senior Center.

Action LU-10.2.2: Continue to administer Federal and State grant programs that support affordable housing, public services, public and non-profit facilities, and housing revitalization.

Policy LU-10.3: Passive energy-efficient design. Work with developers and property owners to encourage passive design techniques that reduce energy consumption and environmental impacts through building orientation, shading, ventilation, and other strategies.

⁸ Please see the Noise and Safety Elements for additional policies and actions related to building design.

~~Policy LU-10.3:~~

Goal LU-11: Urban Design. High-quality urban design enhances Santa Maria's character.

Policy LU-11.1: Arts and culture in the public realm. Integrate arts and cultural experiences into public spaces through temporary installations, permanent facilities such as museums and exhibits, and cultural events and programming throughout Santa Maria.

Action LU-11.1.1: Work with property owners and developers to activate and improve public-facing alleyways through temporary or permanent public art.

Policy LU-11.2: Gateways. Establish new gateway signage that marks the entrance into Santa Maria with a unique design that reflects the local community. Consider signage at the following locations:

1. Broadway and US-101
2. West Main Street and Blosser Road
3. Betteravia Road and US-101
4. East Main Street and US-101
5. Northbound Santa Maria Way at US-101

Goal LU-12: Pedestrian-focused public spaces. High-quality pedestrian-oriented public and quasi-public spaces enhance daily life in Santa Maria.⁹

Policy LU-12.1: Gathering places. Work with private developers to provide outdoor gathering places such as plazas, paseos, or courtyards in the Downtown, within the mixed-use corridors, and shopping centers across Santa Maria.

Action LU-12.1.1: Continue to support and sponsor Downtown Friday and similar regular community events in Downtown Santa Maria.

Policy LU-12.2: Pedestrian and bicycle connections. Work with private developers to provide pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity within neighborhoods and public spaces through complete sidewalks, designated bicycle lanes, sufficient secure bicycle parking for customers and tenants, and bus shelters, among other techniques.

Action LU-12.2.1: Implement the ongoing Safe Routes to Schools program and provide regular updates as needed.

Action LU-12.2.2: Investigate the possibility of a new Slow Streets Program to reduce vehicle speed on neighborhood streets and prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety within neighborhoods.

⁹ Please see the Health and Environmental Justice Element for additional policies and actions focused on community spaces the promote physical activity.

Policy LU-12.3: Pedestrian amenities. Require pedestrian amenities and enhancements, such as street trees, lighting, street furniture (including benches and trash receptacles), ~~widened~~ sidewalks, curb extensions, and landscaped strips, in all new and redeveloped commercial projects. Require the pedestrian amenities included in the Objective Design Standards for all residential and mixed-use development projects.

Action LU-12.3.1: In public and private development, identify design techniques that can improve outdoor pedestrian comfort and minimize wind exposure.

Policy LU-12.4: Walking paths as buffers. Utilize walking paths and linear parks as a transition and/or buffer between non-compatible uses or noticeable changes in building scale or density.

Land Use Compatibility and Development

Goal LU-13: Land use conflicts. Conflicts between residential land uses, schools, and incompatible non-residential land uses are mitigated.¹⁰

Policy LU-13.1: Land use buffers. Require the use of buffers between incompatible land uses by using context-appropriate buffers such as berms, walls, landscaping, bike paths, and arterial streets, where appropriate and depending on neighboring use, to avoid adverse impacts to either use.

Action LU-13.1.1: Update the City's municipal code to protect sensitive land uses by, for example, requiring a buffer between sensitive uses and local sources of air pollution such as industrial and commercial facilities (e.g., warehouses, processing plants, factories, landfills, hazardous waste facilities). Developments should incorporate appropriate mitigation measures that reduce potential pollution exposure.

Policy LU-13.2: Residential encroachment. Protect residential neighborhoods and schools from encroachment by incompatible nonresidential uses such as light industrial, general industrial, and heavy commercial/manufacturing, and the impacts associated with adjacent nonresidential activities.

Policy LU-13.3: Land use transitions. Require land use transitions of lower intensity commercial or mixed-use on the perimeter of heavy uses when adjacent to residential uses.

Policy LU-13.4: Incompatible neighborhood uses. Prohibit the development of industrial or manufacturing uses within neighborhoods or directly adjacent to established residential neighborhoods or schools.

Policy LU-13.5: Industrial and residential buffers. Mitigate the impacts of industrial land that exists adjacent to residential uses by permitting only light industrial uses in those areas, along with requiring the industrial development to provide appropriate buffers so that the use does not negatively impact the residential development.

Policy LU-13.6: Incompatible uses. Prohibit new residential development, and those retail, commercial, office, and/or consumer-oriented businesses in close proximity to the Airport which the City determines would conflict with the Airport Master Plan and Santa Maria Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP), including through utilizing processes set forth by Article 3.5 of the Public Utilities Code.

Policy LU-13.7: Airport and residential buffers. Require transition zones and buffers between the Airport and new residential development in close proximity to the Airport, as defined by the ALUCP, to mitigate impacts of ongoing airport operations.

¹⁰ Please see the Recreation and Parks, Circulation, Noise, and Health and Environmental Justice Elements for policies and actions related to land use conflicts. Please see the Safety and Noise Elements for additional policies and actions related to areas in proximity to the airport.

Policy LU-13.8: Development compatibility. Ensure that new development within the Santa Maria Airport Area of Influence is consistent with standards and regulations set forth by local and regional Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans.

Action LU-13.8.1: Review new development for consistency with the Santa Maria Airport Safety Zone Compatibility Criteria, Table 3-2, of the Santa Maria Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, and with the regulations and processes set forth by Article 3.5 of the Public Utilities Code.

Goal LU-14: Utilities, facilities, and services. New and existing development within Santa Maria is sustained by high-quality utilities, facilities, and services.¹¹

Policy LU-14.1: Privately funded utilities. Require developers to “pay their fair share” for utilities and services in new development, while continuing to identify funding sources to upgrade and maintain utilities and services within the existing city.

Policy LU-14.2: Public facilities and services. In compliance with State law, eEnsure AB 1600 fees and requirements placed on new development projects are sufficient to provide public facilities and services that maintain pace with housing production and all other development to maintain adequate levels of service across Santa Maria as the city grows.

Regional Coordination

Goal LU-15: Planning coordination. Santa Maria’s growth and land use planning are well coordinated within the region.

Policy LU-15.1: Common goal coordination. Work closely with neighboring agencies to coordinate planning efforts and support planning topics of mutual concern, such as balancing agricultural areas with urbanized areas and development growth, circulation, sustainability, parks, environmental justice, and health.

Action LU-15.1.1: Coordinate with Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, Santa Barbara County, LAFCO, and other regional agencies on an ongoing basis.

Policy LU-15.2: Internal and external coordination. Continue to coordinate planning efforts internally among all City departments and externally with property owners, residents and their representatives, and special districts.

¹¹ Please see the Recreation and Parks and Circulation Elements for additional policies and actions related to development impact and mitigation fees.