Santa Maria General Plan

imagine

Safety Element

Final Draft | February 12, 2026

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Introduction

The Safety Element is one of the required elements of the General Plan, focusing on identifying and mitigating hazards that may affect the city, with the goal of minimizing risk to people and property.

The Safety Element addresses risks associated with seismic and geologic hazards, wildland and urban fires, flood and dam inundation, hazardous materials and solid waste, airport hazards, and climate change. In addition, the Element highlights the City's emergency response and preparedness capabilities, and emergency access and evacuation capacity.

This Element consists of three main sections: Background, Issues and Opportunities, and Safety 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 *Safety Policies* section outlines the City's Safety goals, policies, and implementation actions.

The Safety Element illustrates how Santa Maria will maintain and strengthen essential infrastructure and emergency services to protect the community. It supports the establishment of robust development standards to better protect people and buildings in hazard zones and retrofitting existing structures to withstand potential hazard events. The Element also encourages coordinated planning efforts among local and regional entities and promotes diverse community education programs to ensure the City can continue to mitigate hazard risks and provide efficient emergency response services.

Santa Maria Fire Department Station No. 5

Santa Maria Police Department

Santa Maria Police vehicle

Background

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

Hazards

Seismic and Geologic Hazards

Although Santa Maria has a high risk for seismic hazards and a low risk of liquefaction, the complexity of the local geotechnical landscape and limited available historical data suggest that existing information may significantly underestimate the true level of risk. However, areas near the Santa Maria Public Airport do have potential for liquefaction due to perched groundwater in the area (see Figure S-1). There are several active faults in proximity to Santa Maria, including the Santa Maria Fault, the San Luis Range Fault (South Margin), the Bradley Canyon Fault, and the Casmalia Fault (see Figure S-2), although the risk of seismically induced ground rupture from these faults is expected to be minor. Significant ground shaking can occur from these and larger faults in the region due to the soil type in the Santa Maria Valley. Most areas within City limits are unlikely to have expansive soils; however, there are areas of the city that have the potential to be at risk to expansive soils, including areas near the northeastern and western city boundary and the Planned Annexation Area (see Figure S-3).

Earthquake causes major damage to roadway.

Figure S-1: Liquefaction Potential

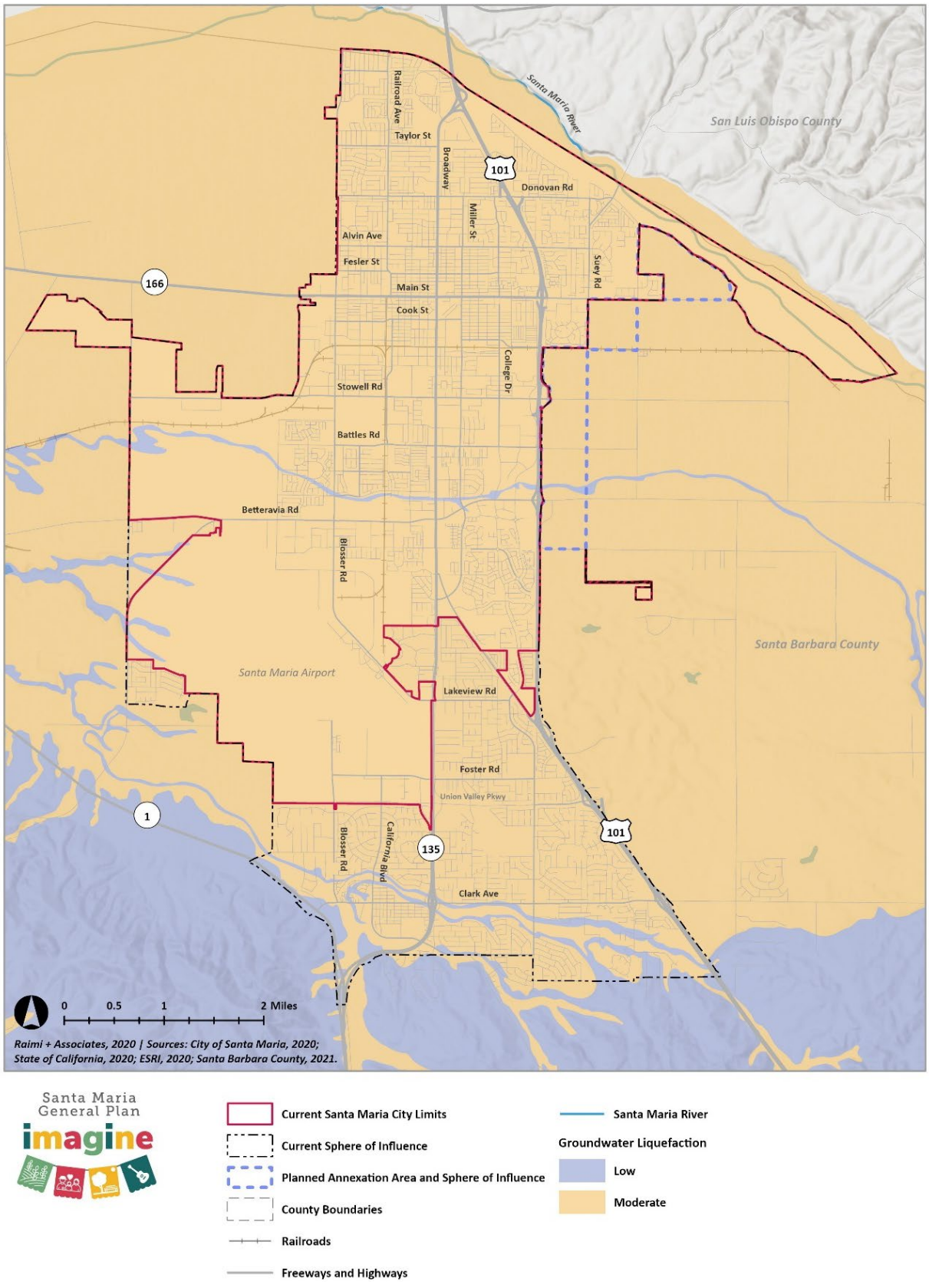


Figure S-2: Earthquake Faults

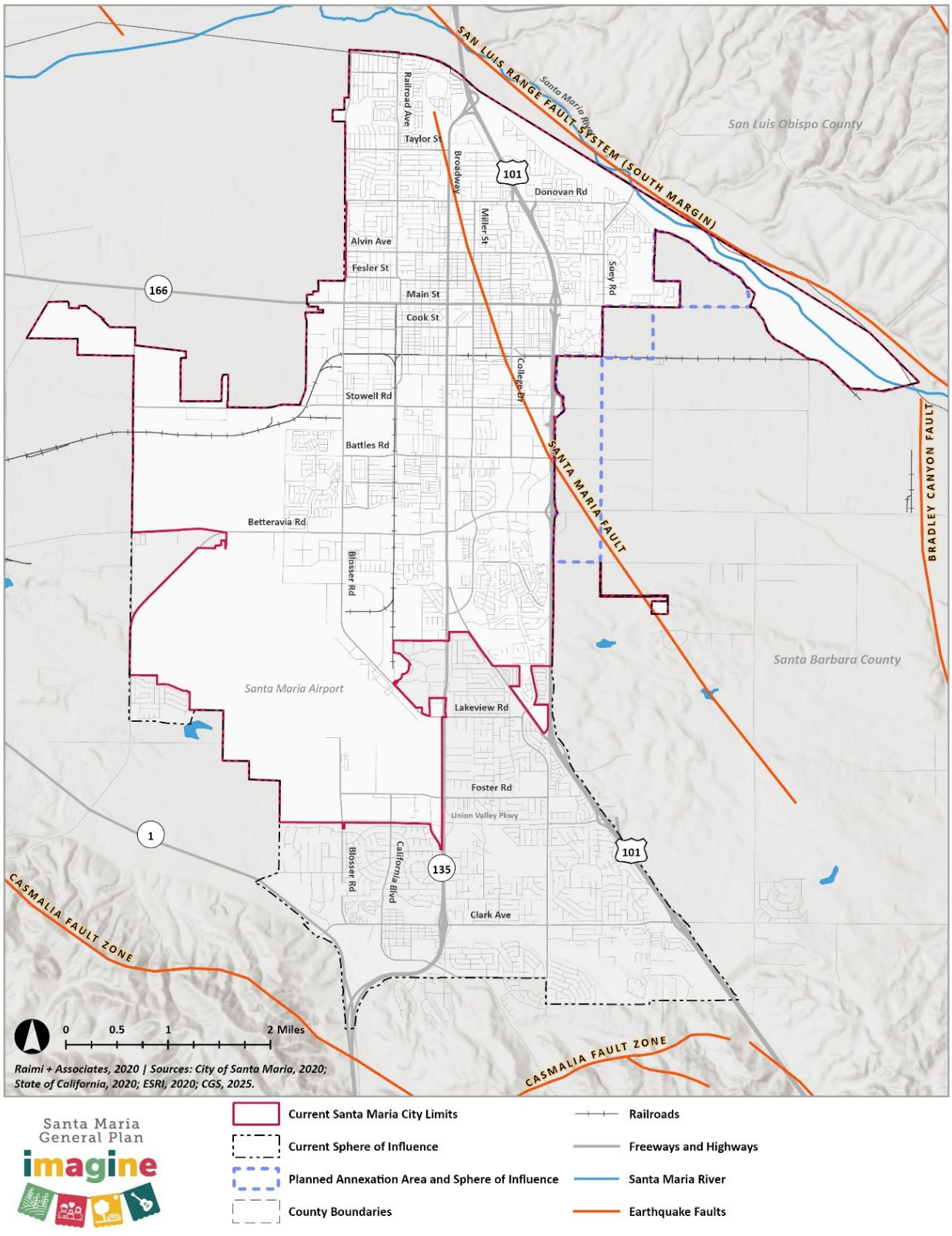
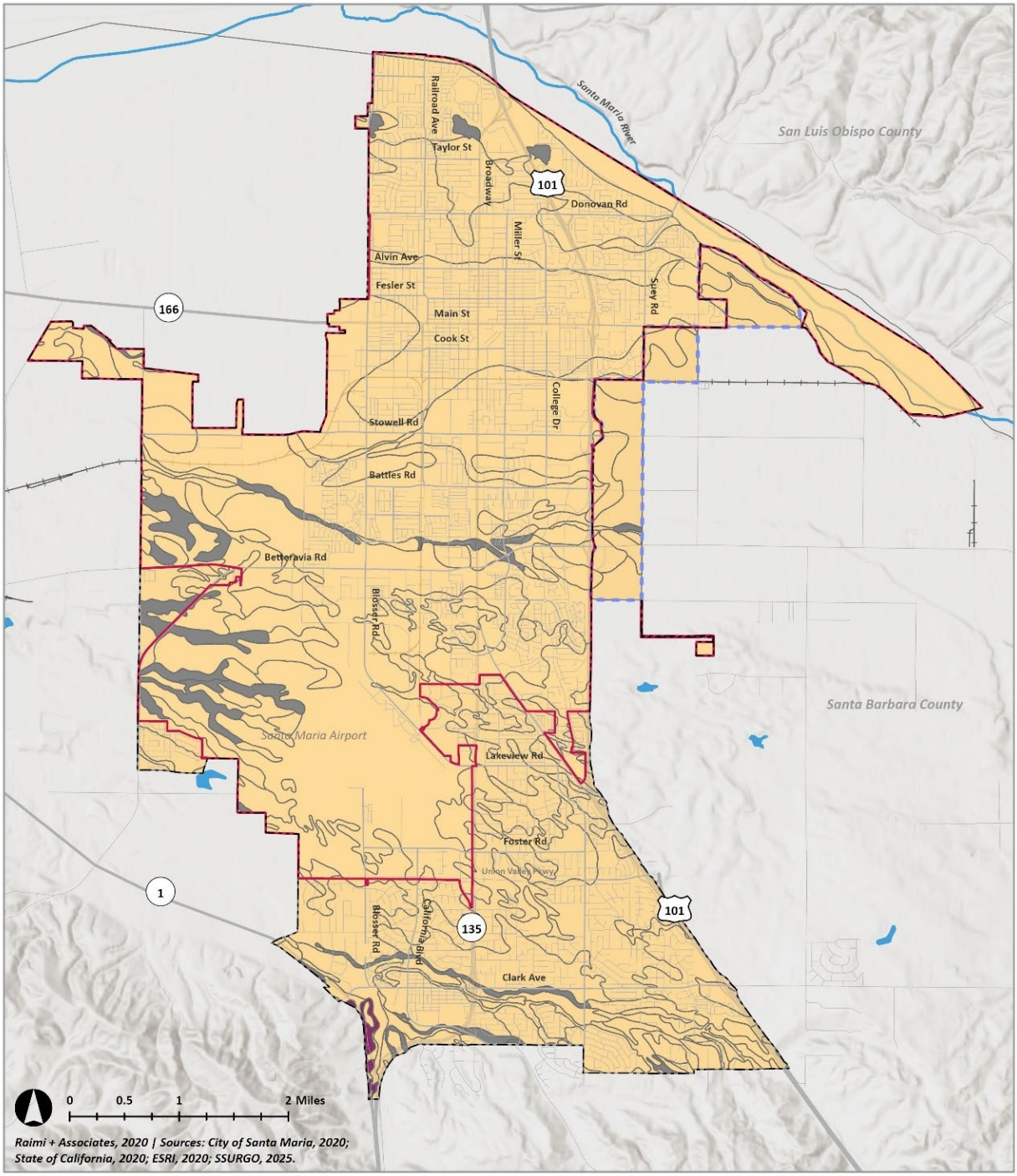


Figure S-3: Expansive Soils



Wildland and Urban Fires

According to the City of Santa Maria Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, there is a low probability of wildland fires in the city (see Figure S-4). Santa Maria is surrounded by irrigated row crop farms and has not experienced a wildfire within or immediately adjacent to the city since the very early 20th Century. The most significant wildland fire hazards in Santa Maria are associated with the coastal sage scrub and grass-covered slopes in the Casmalia and Solomon Hills area, south of the City limits. While a large urban fire is rare, it has the potential to have greater adverse effects to property and life. Low humidity, high temperature and high wind events can cause an urban fire to spread rapidly, especially given the close proximity of buildings and the multiple ignition points commonly found in modern construction and landscaping.

Firefighters fighting a structure fire.

Flood and Dam Inundation

Santa Maria is exposed to a low risk of flood hazards related to Twitchell Dam, the Santa Maria River, levee breaches, and agricultural runoff; however, flat topography can result in localized incidents of flooding during rain events. The Santa Maria River Levee, originally constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1963 and heavily retrofitted in 2010, provides flood protection for the Santa Maria Valley and includes a system of levees along both sides of the river. Areas of the city within a 100-year flood zone are concentrated along the city's northern border, near the Santa Maria River. Areas within the 500-year flood zone are concentrated near Main Street (SR-166) and Orcutt Creek (see Figure S-5).

Credit: Noozhawk.com

The City's stormwater system has repeatedly been overwhelmed by winter storms, leading to flooding of roadways. Agricultural practices exacerbate local flood issues by causing pooling, reducing ground absorption, and blocking drainage systems. Furthermore, the increased frequency and intensity of storm events due to climate change will intensify existing flood issues throughout the city.

United States Geological Survey (USGS) technician measures streamflow in the Santa Maria River. Credit: USGS

Santa Maria River following the February 2024 rain events. Credit: KSBY

Figure S-4: Fire Hazard Severity Zones

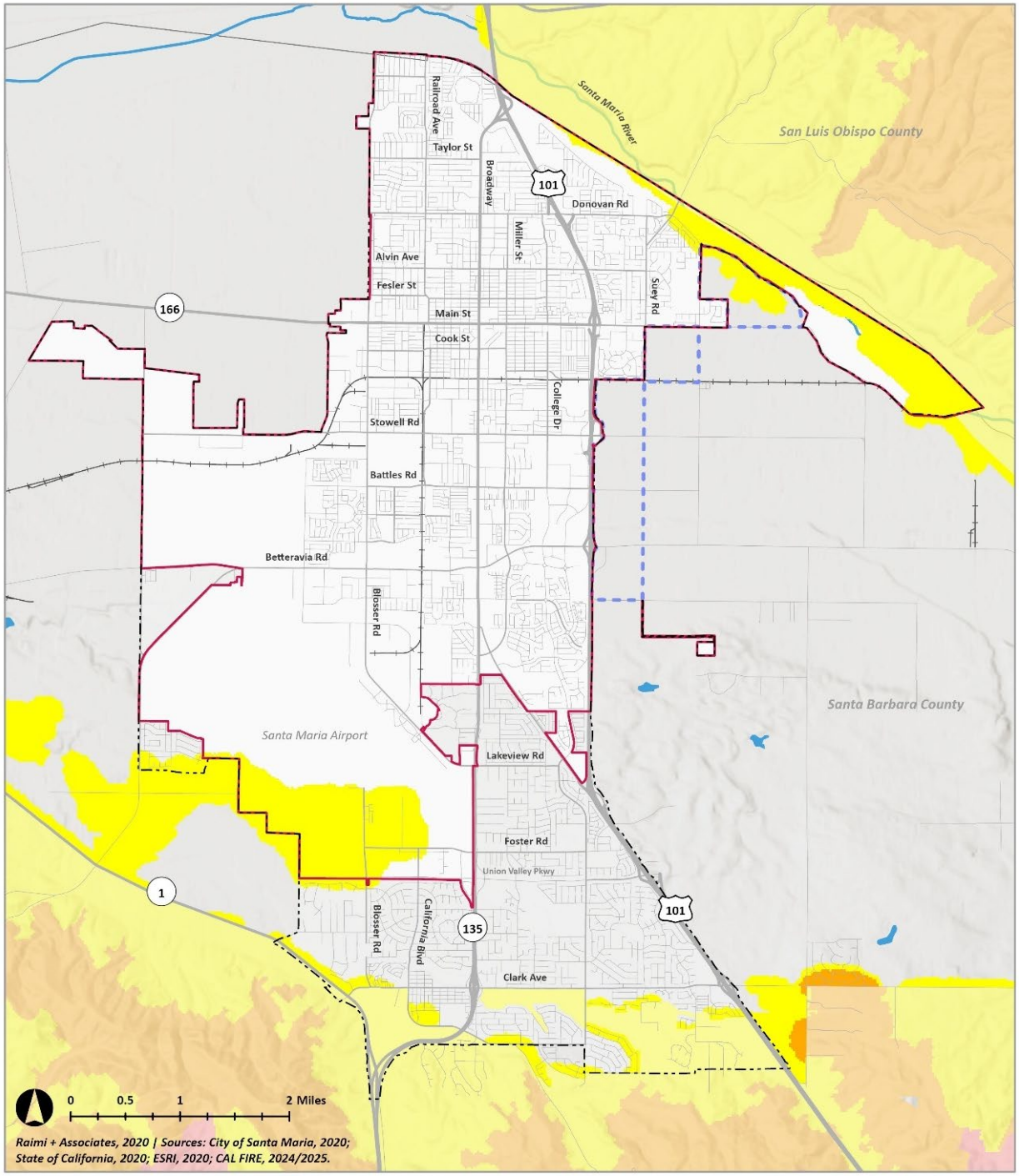
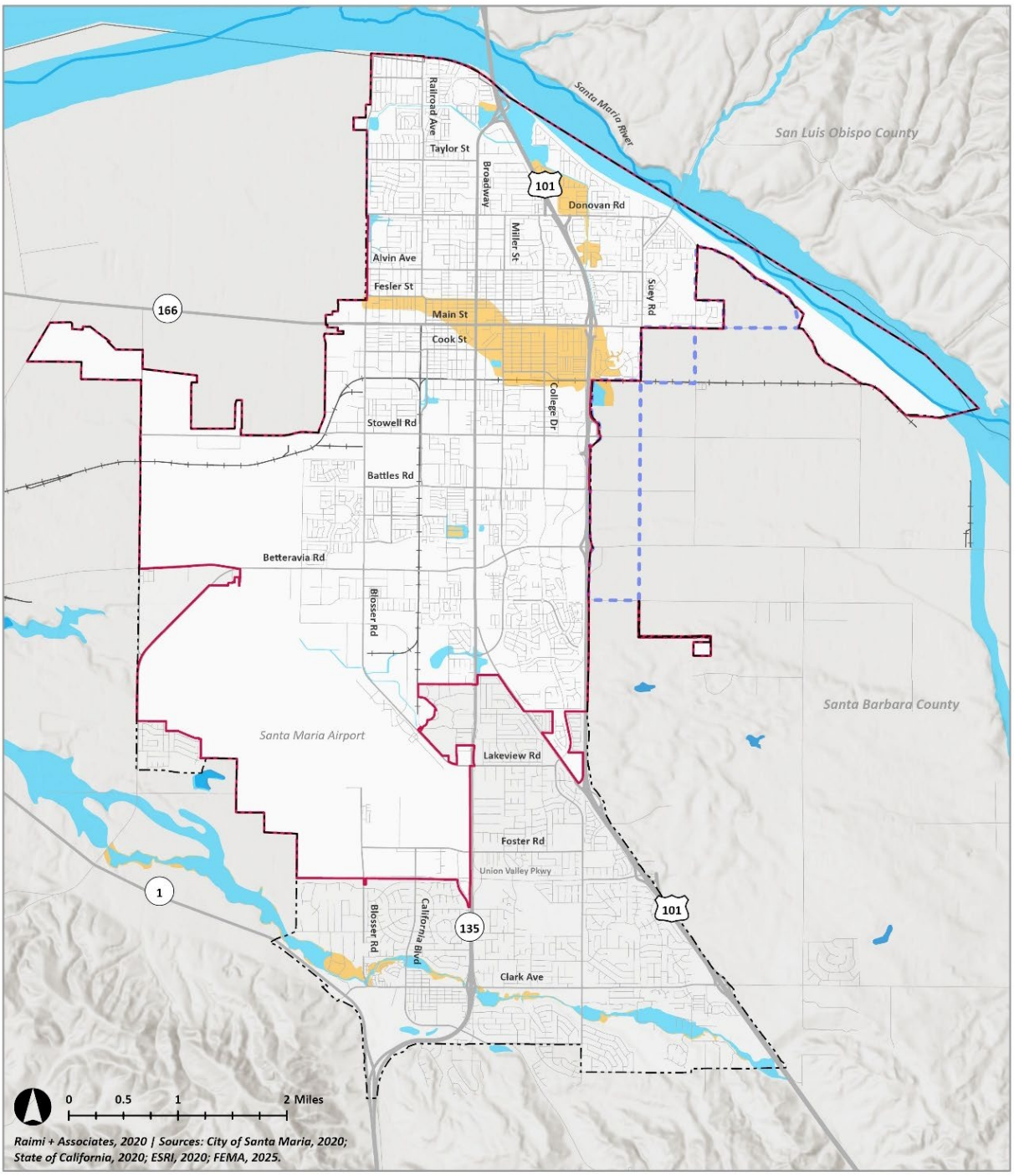


Figure S-5: 100-Year and 500-Year Flood Zones

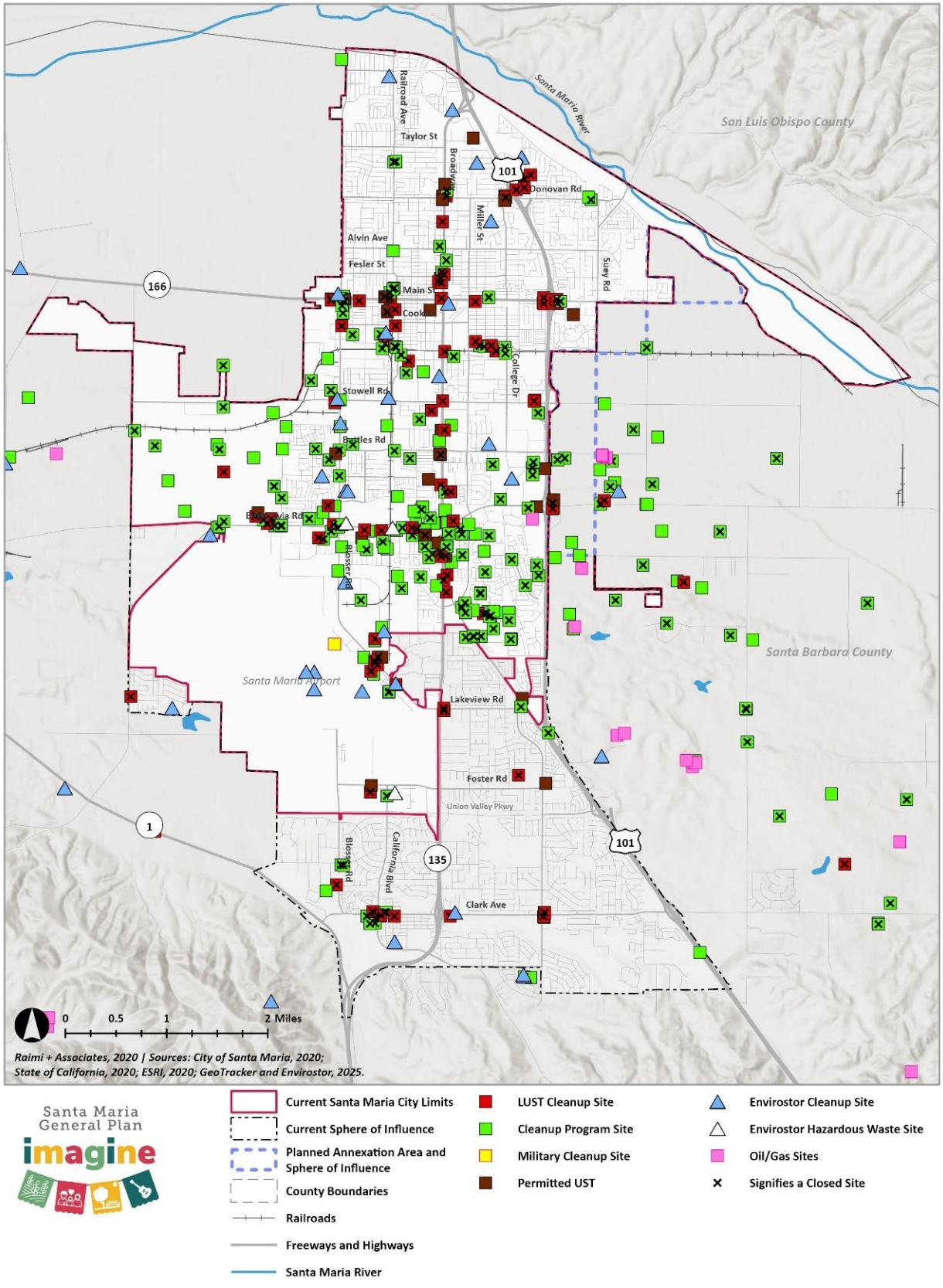


Hazardous Materials

Santa Maria has leaking underground storage tanks (LUST) sites and contaminated groundwater sites (see Figure S-6). Oil operations include an extensive network of oil and natural gas wells, primarily located near the city's southern edge and the Planned Annexation Area, presenting a potential risk for fire, explosion, and water supply contamination (see Figure S-7). Additional hazards are related to industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities that utilize or store hazardous and toxic chemicals; spills or mishandling of these materials can result in site contamination and illicit discharges to the stormwater drainage system, sewer system, and wastewater treatment plant. The transport of hazardous materials is also a potential hazard, as truck and railroad accidents along transportation routes could result in hazardous materials spills. Areas with the highest risk of hazardous materials accidents include major transportation routes (such as US-101 and SR-166), Betteravia Road, Blosser Road, railroads, and airport industrial zones.

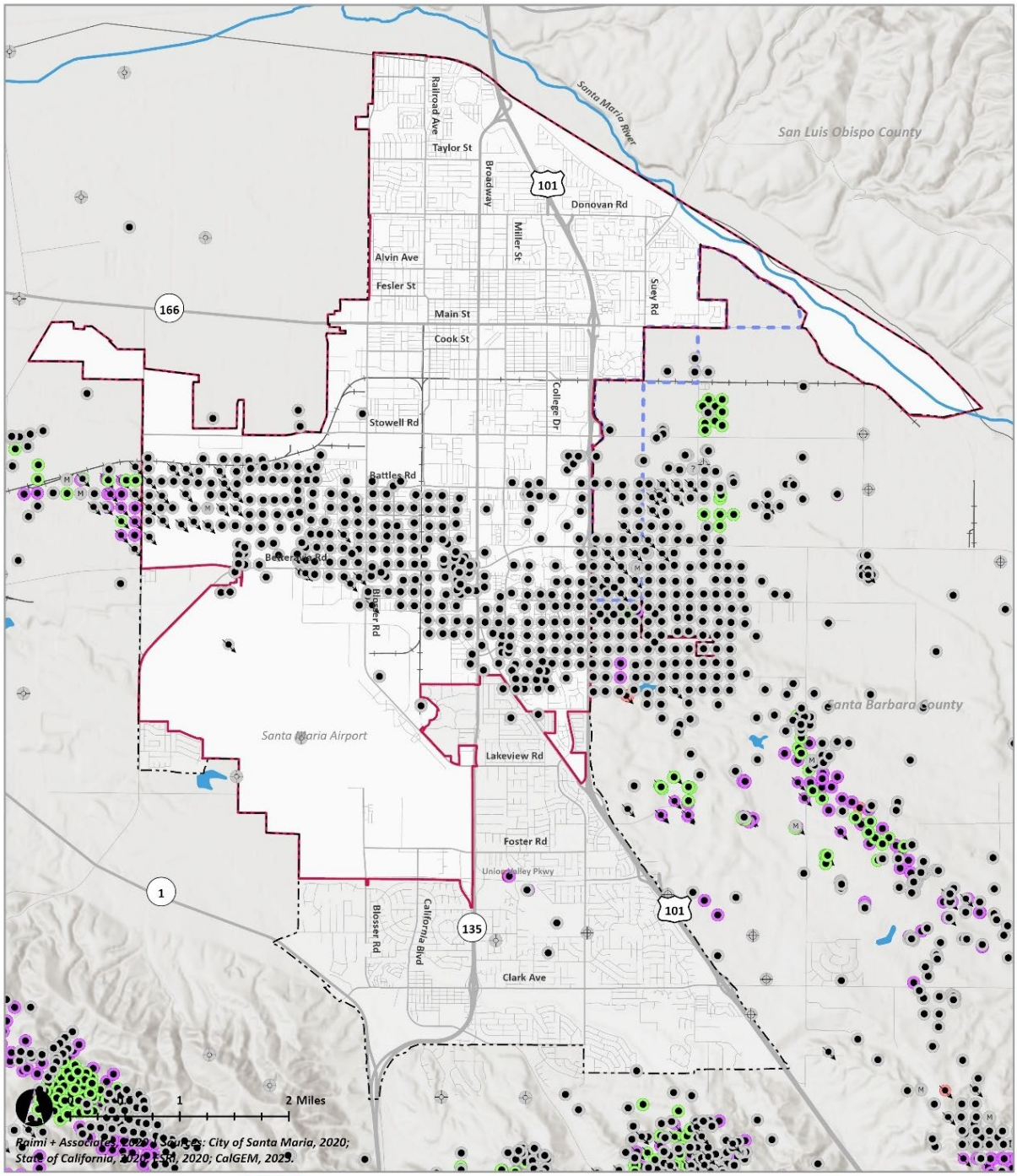
An abandoned underground storage tank is removed as part of the remediation process.

Figure S-6: Hazardous Materials Sites



Santa Maria General Plan imagine

Figure S-7: Oil and Natural Gas Network



Santa Maria General Plan imagine

- Current Santa Maria City Limits
- Current Sphere of Influence
- Planned Annexation Area and Sphere of Influence
- County Boundaries
- Railroads
- Freeways and Highways
- Santa Maria River
- Active Oil and Gas
- Active Injectors
- Canceled Oil and Gas
- Canceled Injectors
- Idle Oil and Gas
- Idle Injectors
- Idle Water Source
- Plugged Oil and Gas
- Plugged Injectors
- Plugged well of Unknown type
- Plugged Multipurpose
- Plugged Dry Hole
- Plugged Core Hole

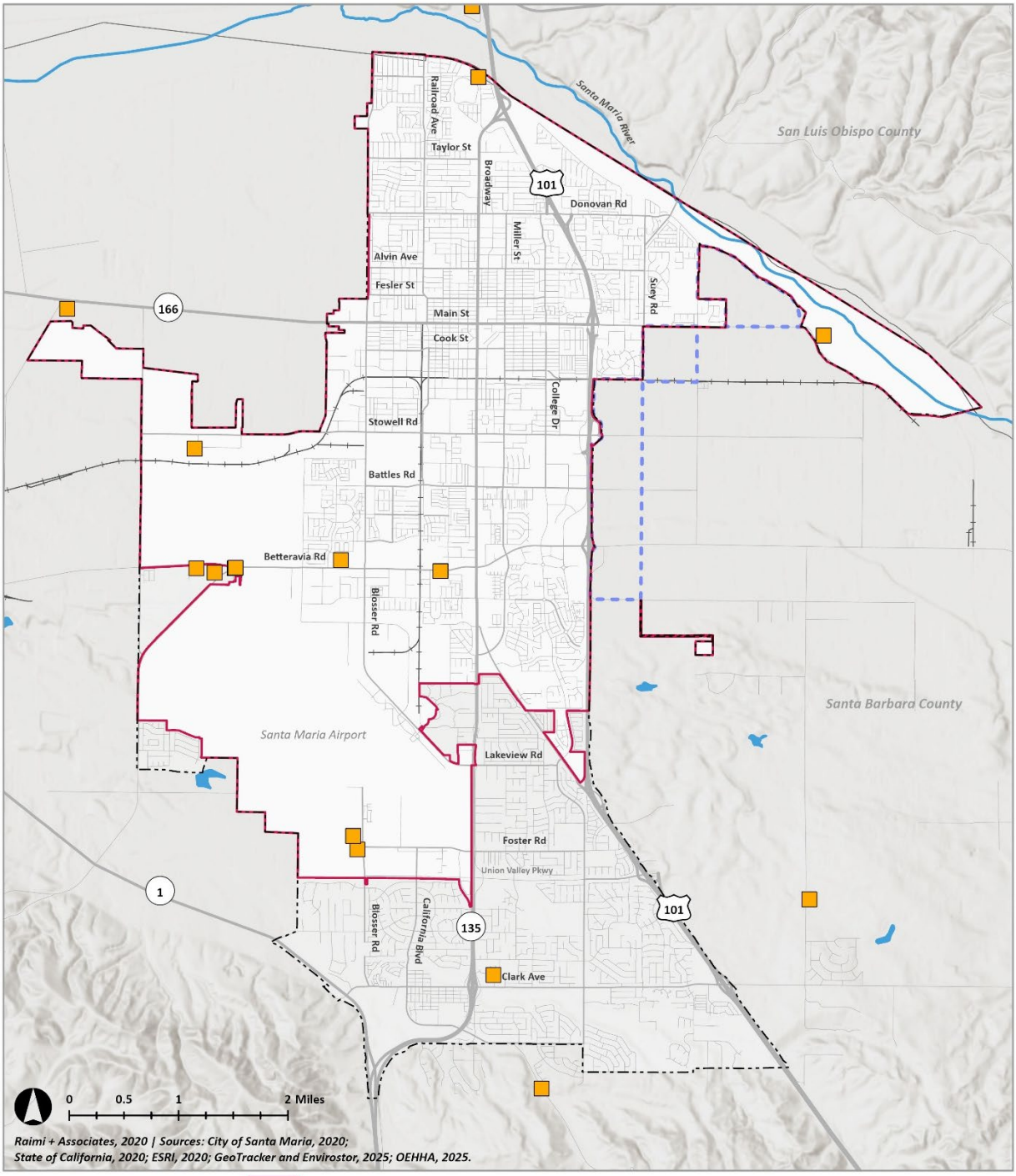
Solid Waste

Solid waste sites, including landfills, recycling facilities, transfer stations, and composting facilities, collect, process, and/or store household garbage and other types of waste from industry or commercial sources. There are three disadvantaged communities impacted by three regulated solid waste sites in the city: Santa Maria Regional landfill, Engel & Gray composting site, and the Santa Maria Recycle Facility (see Figure S-8). The City's former landfill is located at the site of Preisker Park. The landfill ceased operations in the 1950s and was converted to a 40-acre park which opened in 1968. In addition, other unidentified former waste sites may be located on former military sites outside City limits in areas. Potential odors, waste gases, and fires can all threaten the health and well-being of nearby residents.

Airport Hazards

The Santa Maria Public Airport is in the southwestern corner of Santa Maria. Airport hazards include those related to obstructing landing and approach zones, airplane accidents, and noise. Noise concerns related to the Santa Maria Airport are covered in the Noise Element. The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments' Airport Land Use Commission released an updated Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) for the Santa Maria Airport in 2023. The ALUCP provides land use compatibility policies and criteria to promote the orderly growth of the airport without significant impacts to the welfare of the community. The ALUCP includes airport safety zones, land use and development standards and policies, and overflight notification and real estate disclosure zones to mitigate safety hazards related to airport uses. The City's land use designations in the area of the Airport are consistent with the updated ALUCP; however, updates to the Airport area zoning designations may be necessary to maintain consistency between the ALUCP and the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Figure S-8: Solid Waste Sites



Climate Change

Based on the findings in California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment and the 5th National Climate Assessment, in the coming decades, Santa Maria will likely have increases in average maximum and minimum temperatures, increases in extreme heat events, changes in precipitation patterns, more severe storms, more urban flooding, more frequent and severe wildfires and associated poor air quality, and prolonged periods of drought.

Santa Maria is projected to experience more extreme heat conditions with an anticipated increase in the number of extreme days per year. This could result in increased public health risks, particularly to vulnerable populations like farm workers, through heat-related diseases, air quality degradation, more vector-borne illnesses, and an increase in harmful algal blooms.

Projections show that Santa Maria will likely experience fewer but more severe rainfall events, resulting in intense stormwater runoff that may overwhelm percolation ponds at the sewer and treatment facilities, and potentially adversely impact riverine and coastal water quality. Low-lying areas throughout the city may experience more frequent flooding and an increase in the extent of 100-year floods. The potential for flash flooding and debris flows, particularly after wildfires, will increase.

Climate change will also increase the likelihood of drought due to higher average temperatures and changes in precipitation. However, the specifics of projected drought conditions are not currently available for California or Santa Maria.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Response

Emergency preparedness and response are primarily the responsibility of the Santa Maria Fire Department and Police Department. As of 2020, the City's Police and Fire Departments have identified that staffing and equipment for these departments are currently at capacity. However, increased risk of various hazards due to climate change could result in increased service needs, which will result in insufficient service levels from emergency responders. In addition, the City has noted language and technology barriers that can make it challenging to disperse information equitably to the entire community.

In the event of an emergency, the City will need to rely on temporary shelters and coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions and private organizations to provide adequate shelter and resources for affected residents. Furthermore, Santa Maria is anticipated to experience the largest increase in population in the county, which will result in a substantial increase in demand for emergency response resources.

Emergency Access and Evacuation

Hazard events such as flooding, fire, dam failure, and hazardous materials incidents can necessitate the need for evacuation of individuals from a particular area or the entirety of the city. The Police Department is primarily responsible for coordinating evacuation efforts in the event an evacuation is needed, including the management and allocation of mutual aid resources per the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The main evacuation routes out of the city are US-101 and SR-1 (see Figure S-9). Without proper evacuation protocol and preparation, inadequate evacuation capacity could threaten the safety of residents. Recent State legislation encouraging the development of housing near transit and reduced parking requirements for housing is likely to result in more residents parking on the street and may reflect reduced dependence on personal vehicles, and in turn increase dependence on public transit. This shift will introduce additional evacuation challenges, including potential roadway obstructions and greater reliance on public or community transportation resources during an emergency evacuation.

In addition, neighborhoods with only one evacuation route are likely to experience evacuation constraints. Thirteen neighborhoods within the City's Sphere of Influence have a single entry or exit point, of which seven are located within City limits and six are located outside City boundaries (see Figure S-10).These include neighborhoods at the following cross streets:

Within City limits:

- Santa Maria Way & College Drive
- Whippoorwill Drive & South College Drive
- Sunrise Drive, between Santa Maria Way and Santa Barbara Street
- Knightbridge Drive & San Ysidro Street
- East McCoy Lane, between South Broadway Street and South Miller Street
- East Riddering Street & South College Drive
- Stonebridge Drive & Concord Avenue

Within the City's Sphere of Influence:

- Del Cielo Estates Trail & Santa Maria Way
- Larch Avenue & South Bradley Road
- Oakridge Park Road & East Clark Avenue
- Ashbrook Lane & Stillwell Road
- Jensen Ranch Road & Stillwell Road
- Canyon Creek Road & Stillwell Road

Figure S-9: Evacuation Routes

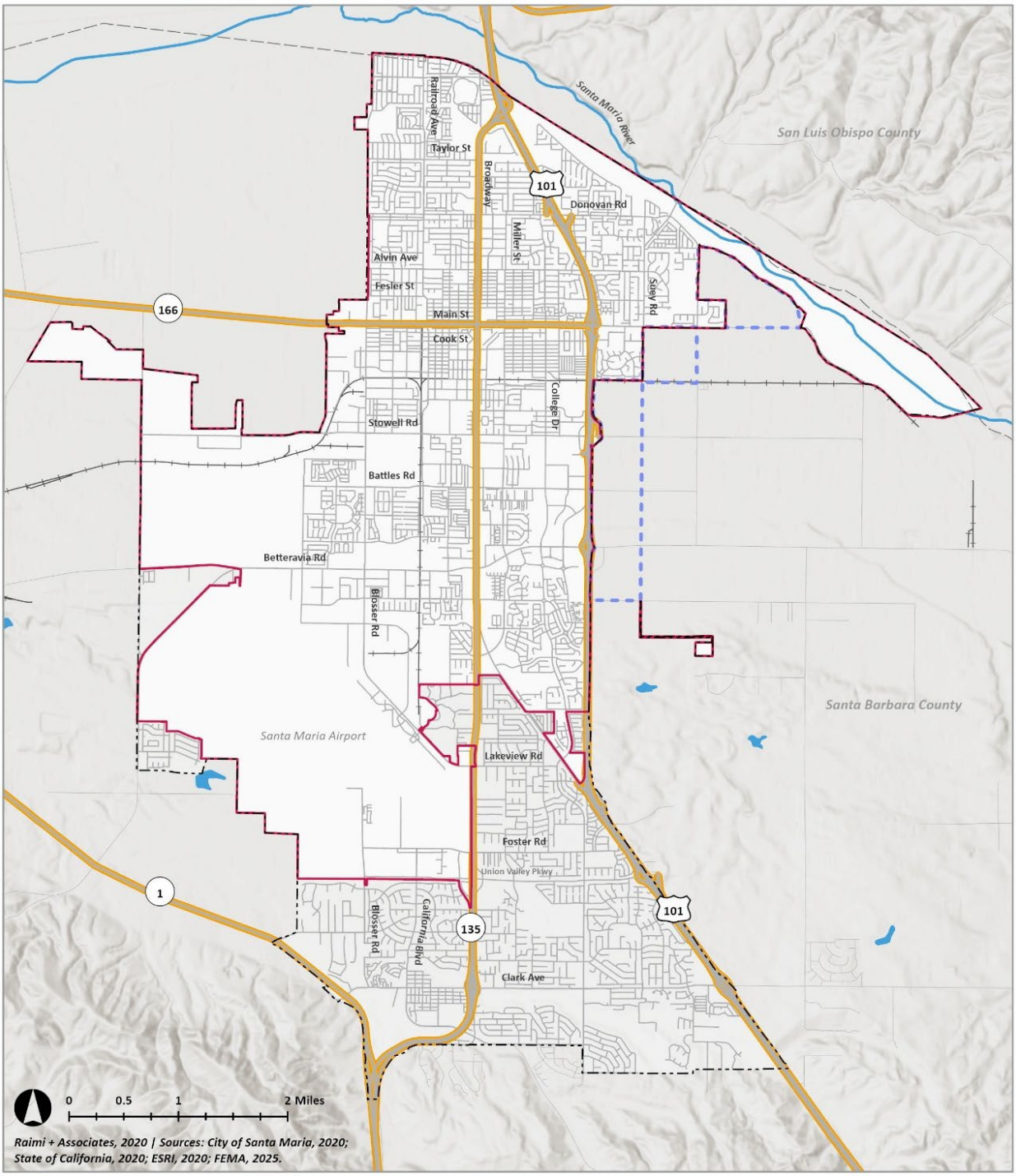
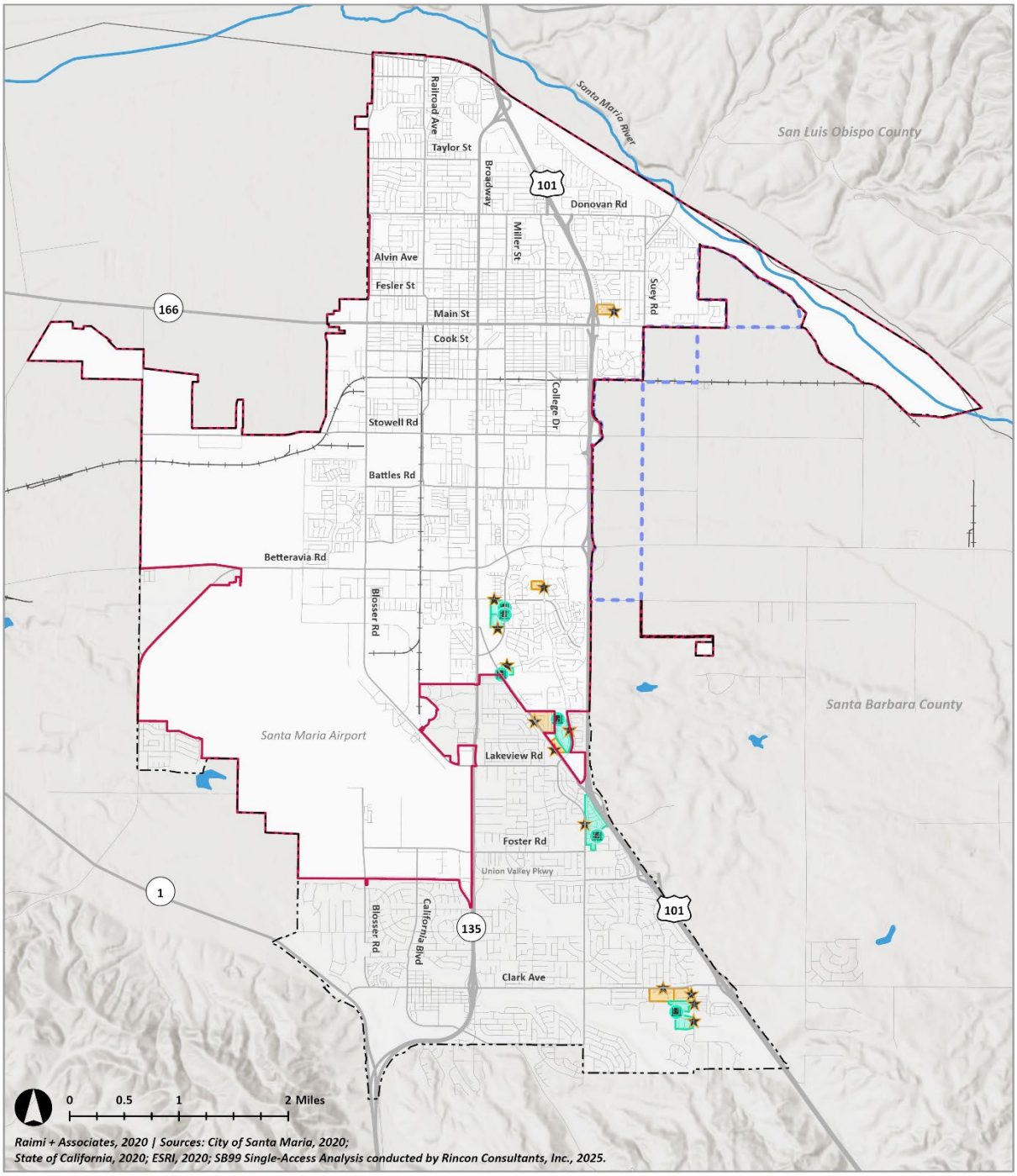


Figure S-10: Single-Access Point Neighborhoods



Local and Regional Hazard Plans

Santa Maria has several existing plans that evaluate existing risk and community capabilities, as well as identify resources and mitigation to reduce risk and better prepare the city for a potential disaster. The City of Santa Maria Annex to the Santa Barbara County Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan was developed in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) and follows FEMA's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan guidance.[1] The Hazard Mitigation Plan incorporates a process where hazards are identified and profiled, the population and facilities at risk are analyzed, and mitigation actions are developed to reduce or eliminate hazard risk. The implementation of these mitigation actions, which include both short and long-term strategies, involves planning, policy changes, and the implementation of programs, projects, and other activities.

The Integrated Regional Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Plan was adopted in 2016 and developed by the Santa Maria Fire Department. The goal of the plan is to clearly delineate the procedures and policies applicable to responding to a major emergency event, and the plan was designed to be applicable to all emergency incidents. The plan provides direction for the coordinated response efforts between the Santa Maria Police Department and Fire Department, including guidance for different types of emergency incidents. The City is in the process of updating the Emergency Response Plan.

The Fire Department also prepared the Community Risk Assessment: Standards of Cover, which is periodically updated every few years. This Report evaluates current conditions of the Fire Department and the city and identifies critical issues and future challenges associated with providing adequate emergency response services to the community.

Santa Maria Fire Department Station No.1. Credit: Randy De La Peña

[1] https://www.countyofsb.org/510/2022-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-Update

Issues and Opportunities

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

Risk assessment and infrastructure vulnerability. Proper construction and ongoing maintenance of existing structures can effectively mitigate impacts from seismic, wildland and urban fire, flood and dam inundation, hazardous materials, and airport hazards. Existing structures built prior to modern building codes and those in need of maintenance may be in need of retrofits and upgrades to enhance protection from hazards. By conducting risk assessments, vulnerabilities and appropriate improvements to structures and infrastructure can be identified.

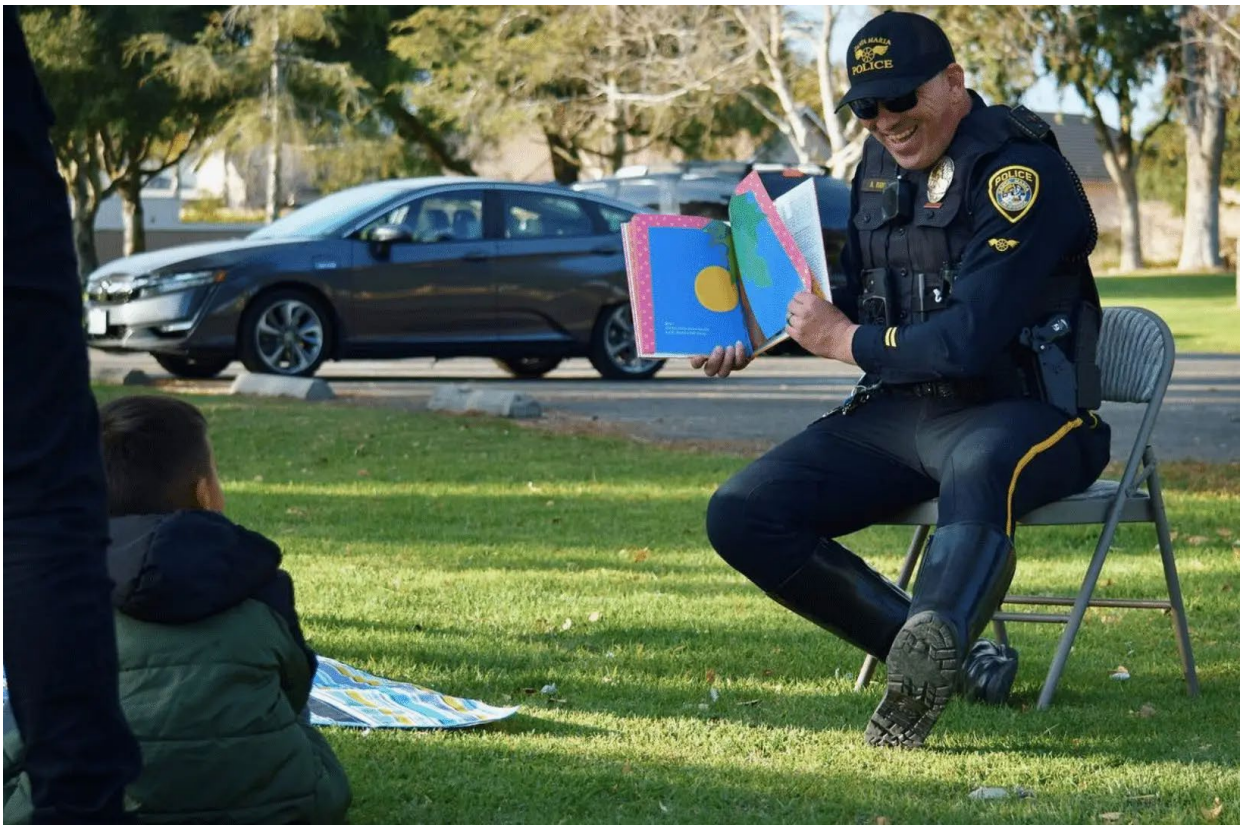
Development in hazard-prone areas. Existing and future development in hazard-prone areas, including within flood zones, very high wildfire hazard severity zones, and on and near fault lines, increases risk to people and property. Implementing hazard-specific development standards, such as restricting the siting of structures and requiring implementation of protective building and maintenance methods in these zones, can improve safety and reduce potential losses.

Emergency response and preparedness. Effective emergency response relies on the efficient allocation of resources, maintaining organized response systems, and coordinated planning and implementation efforts with internal City departments, neighboring jurisdictions, and regional, state, and federal agencies. Strengthening coordination among local, state, and federal agencies, improving resource allocation, and investing in training programs can enhance the overall response capacity. Public preparedness programs and drills also play a crucial role in increasing community resilience.

Emergency access and evacuation capacity. The ability for emergency responders to access affected areas and residents to evacuate during emergencies is critical for preserving lives and property. Access and evacuation constraints, such as poorly maintained roads, congestion, poor signage, and unclear communication, can result in delays that can increase the risk to life and property. The City can employ a variety of strategies to enhance emergency responder and public mobility in the event of a disaster or evacuation, such as updating roadway design standards, creating secondary access routes for neighborhoods with only one point of access, maintaining unobstructed roadways and clear signage, and educating residents on evacuation procedures.

Climate change adaptation. Climate change is anticipated to increase the frequency and severity of natural hazards, including flooding, wildfires, and extreme heat, increasing risks to people and property. Existing infrastructure and development are often unprepared for climate change impacts, having been built prior to the adoption of land use and zoning regulations that account for future climate scenarios. Proactively adopting climate adaptation measures, such as expanding green infrastructure, implementing climate-resilient development standards, and retrofitting vulnerable structures, can significantly reduce community vulnerability to climate change impacts. Critical facilities should be prioritized for the implementation of climate adaptation retrofits, due to their role in minimizing disruptions in essential services and providing shelter to affected residents. Certain populations are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, so targeted outreach and education, as well as ensuring equitable access to climate resilience resources, can improve resiliency.

Public education and preparedness. A lack of awareness and preparedness among the public can result in panic and confusion during an emergency event, potentially reducing the effectiveness of response efforts. Preemptive and effective public education efforts can strengthen the community's preparedness and resiliency to hazards of all types. Programs should include encouraging residents to create emergency kits and sign up for emergency notification systems, informing property owners and residents how to secure their homes from various hazards, distributing emergency evacuation routes, and publicizing resources for staying informed and connected in the event of an emergency.



Police officer reads to children in the park as part of Santa Maria Police Department's ongoing community engagement efforts.

Safety Policies

The *Policy Framework* addresses the key issues and opportunities identified above and outlines Safety 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

Four of the eight goal areas in the Policy Framework focus on the mitigation of specific hazards. The first two include strategies for refining and enforcing development standards to mitigate seismic, geologic (Goal S-1), and wildland and urban fire hazards (Goal S-2). To mitigate flood hazards, the third goal area advances resilient land use and site design, maintenance and upgrades to stormwater and flood control infrastructure (e.g., levee), and coordination with regional partners for dam inundation (Goal S-3). To reduce hazardous materials exposure, the fourth goal area identifies needed enhancements to regulations for crude oil operations, active and closed landfills, and hazardous materials and waste management (Goal S-4).

Two of the goal areas focus on preparedness. The Policy Framework highlights strengthening emergency response by growing emergency response capacity, ensuring the resilience of critical facilities, expanding emergency training and planning efforts, and intensifying community education and outreach (Goal S-6). Likewise, the Framework improves emergency access and evacuation capacity with a focus on infrastructure improvements, effective traffic management, community education, and providing evacuation assistance to vulnerable populations (Goal S-7).

The Policy Framework also addresses airport hazards by ensuring consistency with the Santa Maria Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (Goal S-5) and aims to create a climate-resilient community, with a focus on vulnerable populations, natural cooling solutions, retrofits to existing structures and critical facilities, and water conservation measures (Goal S-8).

Standards

This section establishes standards and levels of service that determine the provision and improvement of public safety services in Santa Maria. These standards ensure equity, efficiency, and quality in service delivery while supporting the City's long-term goals.

Public Safety Standards

The City's Police Department service ratio is **1.3 officers per 1,000 people** (Policy S-6.3).

The Fire Department service standard is a **5-minute response capability** to all areas within the City limits (Policy S-2.1).

Policy Framework

Goal S-1: Seismic and geologic hazards. Impacts to people and property from geologic and seismic hazards are minimized.

Policy S-1.1: Mitigate seismic and geologic hazards. Ensure new development is designed and constructed to adequately mitigate seismic and geologic hazards through compliance with the City's Municipal Code.

Action S-1.1.1: Update the Municipal Code as new versions of the California Building Code are published, and review and adopt seismic safety standards as needed to reflect current, updated information on seismic hazards in relation to the city.

Action S-1.1.2: Review and update seismic and geologic hazard assessments and policies within the Safety Element and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) as new data becomes available.

Action S-1.1.3: Utilize the land use review processes to identify seismic and geologic hazard risk associated with proposed development and condition projects to mitigate risk to an acceptable level (acceptable level shall be consistent with the current California Building Code).

Action S-1.1.4: Enforce the Unreinforced Masonry Ordinance to require the rehabilitation of identified unreinforced masonry buildings in accordance with the "adopted by" dates outlined in the ordinance.

Policy S-1.2: Seismic and geologic safety standards. Establish enhanced seismic and geologic safety standards to be applicable to development in high-risk seismic and geologic hazard zones.

Action S-1.2.1: Update the Municipal Code to require development projects in high seismic and geologic risk areas conduct a geotechnical investigation and analysis by a state-licensed engineering geologist or civil engineer, with the resulting report to be included as a part of the land use and/or subdivision permit application. The geotechnical investigation report shall assess hazard risk and identify appropriate mitigation measures to reduce identified risks to an acceptable level.

Action S-1.2.2: Update the Municipal Code to prohibit the redevelopment of sites where habitable structures are significantly damaged or destroyed by a geologic hazard event unless findings can be made by a state-licensed geologist that the proposed redevelopment would adequately mitigate future geologic hazard risks.

Policy S-1.3: Public information on seismic hazards. Inform the public of existing seismic and geologic hazards through community engagement efforts, along with actions they can take to protect themselves and their property from these hazards.

Action S-1.3.1: Publish a guide that outlines the permitting process for retrofitting older structures that do not adhere to current seismic and geologic building standards.

Goal S-2: Wildland and urban fires. Impacts of wildland and urban fire hazards to people and property are minimized.[2]

Policy S-2.1: Fire and emergency response capacity. Maintain a five-minute response capability to all areas within the City limits and Planned Annexation Area by ensuring facilities are strategically located and properly resourced for timely intervention.

Action S-2.1.1: Require all development to maintain minimum fire flow requirements established by the California Fire Code.

Action S-2.1.2: Evaluate firefighting capacity and emergency response needs as new land is annexed and developed within the Santa Maria Fire Department jurisdiction.

Policy S-2.2: Weed abatement. Enforce the City's weed abatement program.

Action S-2.2.1: Coordinate with Santa Barbara County and local property owners to ensure proper implementation of the City's weed abatement program, including removing cut-down grass and other vegetation that could be a source of fuel for wildfires or urban fires.

Policy S-2.3: Development review. Require Fire Department review of development plans to ensure compliance with fire codes, safety standards, and best practices for emergency access, incorporating fire prevention and mitigation measures as necessary.

Goal S-3: Flood and dam inundation. Impacts from flood and dam inundation to people and property are minimized.[3]

Policy S-3.1: Santa Maria River Levee development buffer. Require new development and sites undergoing redevelopment to provide a non-development buffer of 60 feet, measured from the toe of the Santa Maria River Levee, to provide access to the Santa Maria River levee for maintenance and repairs.

Policy S-3.2: Agricultural runoff reduction. Work with the County of Santa Barbara to reduce off-site and urban flooding caused by agricultural runoff.

Action S-3.2.1: Work with the County of Santa Barbara to educate agricultural operators on best management practices to address runoff and irrigation control and the implementation of efficient onsite drainage systems.

Action S-3.2.2: Collaborate with local agricultural operators and the Cachuma Resource Conservation District to implement and enforce agricultural runoff control measures.

[2] Please see the Public Facilities and Services Element for additional fire policies and actions.
[3] Please see the Public Facilities and Services Element for additional stormwater management policies and actions as well as the Recreation and Parks Element for policies focused on flood resilience in parks.

Policy S-3.3: Low-impact design. Require new development and redevelopment projects to incorporate low-impact design measures for stormwater management, such as bioswales, permeable pavement, and onsite detention ponds.

Action S-3.3.1: Update the Municipal Code to adopt stormwater site design standards as required by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, based on low-impact design principles and best practices. These standards should emphasize reducing impervious surfaces and maximizing open space and landscaped areas that support stormwater filtration and groundwater recharge.

Action S-3.3.2: Partner with State agencies and local conservation organizations, design professionals, and local nurseries to develop an outreach program to educate the public on low-impact design practices.

- Develop fact sheets and publicize resources and example projects that implement low-impact design practices for homeowners and property owners, such as rain gardens, rainwater storage, and permeable driveways.
- Create demonstration projects to showcase the successful implementation of low-impact design installations.

Policy S-3.4: Stormwater drainage system. Maintain and upgrade the City's stormwater drainage system to increase the system's capacity and reduce flooding.

Action S-3.4.1: Regularly evaluate the efficiency and capacity of the City's stormwater system for current and future projected increases to storm events and update the City's Stormwater Management Plan accordingly.

Action S-3.4.2: Identify and develop capital improvement projects to improve system deficiencies and capacity constraints.

Action S-3.4.3: Coordinate with the County of Santa Barbara on flood management activities outside the City limits and to mitigate peak flows from east of US-101, including the maintenance and management of the regional channel and basin system, storm pipes, and the Santa Maria River Levee.

Policy S-3.5: NFIP participation. Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Policy S-3.6: Dam and levee inundation safety. Coordinate with the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District (SBCFCD) and other local and state agencies as required to remain current with dam and levee safety protocols.

Action S-3.6.1: Support the SBCFCD in maintaining and monitoring dam and levee infrastructure. Encourage the District to conduct regular assessments to identify potential maintenance needs, monitor the conditions during significant storm events and evaluate infrastructure afterward to identify any damage.

Action S-3.6.2: Utilize current hazard information for the levee and dam received from SBCFCD and other local, state, and federal agencies to update and maintain the City's Emergency Response Plan and LHMP.

Action S-3.6.3: Incorporate emergency response protocol for potential flood inundation into the Integrated Regional Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Plan.

Goal S-4: Hazardous materials and waste. Public exposure to hazardous materials and waste is minimized.[4]

Policy S-4.1: Crude oil extraction, production, and postproduction. Maintain and, as needed, update local land use regulations pertaining to crude oil extraction, production, and postproduction well site abandonment and closure.[5]

Action S-4.1.1: Update the City's Petroleum Ordinance to maintain consistency with regulations and standards established by the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) and Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Division pertaining to petroleum extraction, processing, storage, and transport.

Action S-4.1.2: Update the minimum no-build easement buffer surrounding abandoned and existing oil wells to be consistent with current CalGEM policies for unimpeded access to well heads.

Action S-4.1.3: Update the Municipal Code to require responsible parties to remediate abandoned oil sumps and contaminated soils, and to plug and abandon (or re-abandon) oil wells in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations upon termination of the associated contaminating use or facility. For abandoned sites, these requirements must be met prior to any new site development.

Action S-4.1.4: Refer development applications for oil extraction, production, storage, or transport uses and sites to the City Petroleum Engineer —or to the County Petroleum Engineer, Energy, Minerals and Compliance Division, if authorized by the City Council—for review and approval. This includes sites with existing or former operations related to oil extraction, production, storage, or transport.

Action S-4.1.5: Update the Municipal Code to require new development and redevelopment projects on sites with existing or abandoned oil wells, or a history of oil drilling operations, to conduct a Phase I Environmental Assessment.

Action S-4.1.6: Conduct an environmental assessment prior to the development of newly annexed areas containing or in proximity to active and plugged oil and gas wells to identify potential public health concerns. Based on the findings of the environmental assessment, require site remediation or restrict development in areas near active, idle, and/or abandoned oil and gas wells that could expose people to contamination.

[4] Please see the Public Facilities and Services Element for additional policies and actions related to solid waste and the Health and Environmental Justice Element for policies and actions related to brownfield site remediation and household hazardous waste.

[5] Please see the Conservation and Open Space Element for policies related to groundwater contamination from oil extraction.

Policy S-4.2: Hazardous materials. Ensure the safe use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials.

Action S-4.2.1: Continue to enforce regulations of hazardous materials established by the Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services Division and State Health and Safety Code.

Action S-4.2.2: Enforce and periodically review hazardous materials transport routes designated by the City and the California Highway Patrol to ensure routes limit exposure to existing sensitive land uses and critical facilities to the greatest extent feasible.

Action S-4.2.3: Maintain local hazardous materials disposal programs for businesses and residents to ensure safe disposal of hazardous materials.

Action S-4.2.4: Coordinate with the County of Santa Barbara Environmental Health Division and the California Highway Patrol to update and enforce local hazardous materials plans, programs, and transport routes.

Policy S-4.3: City hazardous materials usage. Reduce the use of hazardous materials in City operations.

Action S-4.3.1: Evaluate the feasibility of adopting procurement policies that prioritize the purchase of non-toxic and environmentally friendly products for City operations.

Action S-4.3.2: Maintain a list of pesticides and herbicides restricted for use on publicly owned land and implement integrated pest management practices and use of organic pesticides where feasible.

Policy S-4.4: Solid waste sites. Monitor and mitigate hazardous material exposure associated with solid waste site operations.

Action S-4.4.1: Update the Municipal Code to establish buffer zones surrounding solid waste sites to prohibit the placement of sensitive land uses adjacent to solid waste sites. Allowed uses in buffer zones may include green spaces.

Goal S-5: Airport hazards. The risk of aircraft hazards from the Santa Maria Public Airport is minimized.[6]

Policy S-5.1: Santa Maria Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Maintain consistency between the City's General Plan and Municipal Code and the current Santa Maria Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

Action S-5.1.1: Review and update the City's Land Use Element, Safety Element, and Zoning Code upon the adoption of an updated Santa Maria Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan to ensure consistency.

[6] Please see the Land Use Element for policies and actions related to infill development and land use compatibility adjacent to the airport.

Policy S-5.2: Airport Commission and District project review. Ensure new development within the Santa Maria Airport Area of Influence is consistent with the standards, regulations, and processes set forth by Article 3.5 of the Public Utilities Code, as described in the Santa Maria Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

Action S-5.2.1: Refer all applications for General Plan Land Use amendments within the Santa Maria Airport Area of Influence to the Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Commission and the Santa Maria Public Airport District for review, consistent with the processes of Article 3.5 of the California Public Utilities Code.

Goal S-6: Emergency response and preparedness. The City is prepared for and responsive to emergencies.

Policy S-6.1: Emergency preparedness and response coordination. Strengthen the City's emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

Action S-6.1.1: Maintain mutual aid agreements and establish shared resource networks within the Operational Area to provide additional emergency response capacity in the event of a large-scale disaster.

Action S-6.1.2: Participate in updates to the regional emergency, safety, and hazard plans, including the Santa Barbara County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and Santa Barbara Operational Area Emergency Management Plan.

Action S-6.1.3: Engage Operational Area partners and the whole community in the City's emergency planning efforts to ensure a cohesive and coordinated response in the event of a large-scale disaster consistent with Incident Command System (ICS)/SEMS/NIMS. Continue to work with other jurisdictions and regional agencies to develop a multi-jurisdictional emergency preparedness and response team to oversee and advise emergency planning efforts.

Action S-6.1.4: Partner with local organizations and regional agencies to offer a broader range of training and educational opportunities for emergency response personnel, City staff, and residents with the goal of sharing best practices and encouraging cross-collaboration. This can be accomplished by organizing joint training and cross-training sessions and emergency drills with other agencies, organizations, or jurisdictions.

Policy S-6.2: Police response time. Identify minimum standards for police response time and ensure compliance with these standards for all areas within the City limits.[7]

Action S-6.2.1: Continually monitor and report average law enforcement response time.

Action S-6.2.2: On an annual basis, evaluate police resource needs to achieve target response times, and include desired resources as needed.

[7] Please see the Public Facilities and Services Element for policies related to police facilities and services.

Policy S-6.3: Police emergency response capability. Maintain a ratio of 1.3 sworn officers for every 1,000 residents to ensure that the Santa Maria Police Department is sufficiently staffed and equipped to meet the community's safety needs.

Action S-6.3.1: Evaluate law enforcement capacity and emergency response needs as new land is annexed and developed within the Santa Maria Police Department jurisdiction.

Policy S-6.4: Police collaboration and engagement: Continue actively collaborating with other jurisdictions and with community members and organizations to advance community safety.

Action S-6.4.1: Recognizing that community safety is cross-jurisdictional, continue collaborating with the County Sheriff's Department.

Action S-6.4.2: Foster neighborhood safety and collaboration by promoting programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Community-Oriented Policing (COPS), and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) to strengthen relationships between the Santa Maria Police Department and residents.

Action S-6.4.3: Focus on community policing strategies, trust-building activities, and partnerships to enhance public safety awareness and address local concerns together.

Policy S-6.5: Resilient critical facilities. Create resilient critical facilities that minimize the exposure of people and property from disasters.

Action S-6.5.1: Update the Municipal Code to require the siting of new critical public facilities outside of high hazard risk areas, including the 100-year flood zone, wildland urban interface zone, and areas with high liquefaction potential, unless the facilities can be designed in such a way that the risk can be mitigated to an acceptable level.

Action S-6.5.2: Identify existing critical facilities in high-risk hazard zones that require relocation or retrofits. Create a ranked list of critical facilities requiring relocation and/or retrofits based on the degree of hazard risk and the magnitude of adverse impacts to the community in the event the functionality of the facility is reduced or interrupted.

Action S-6.5.3: Develop, prioritize, and implement a list of capital improvement projects to mitigate hazard risk for critical facilities. Prioritize improvement projects based on feasibility and impact, with emphasis on improvements that benefit disadvantaged communities.

Action S-6.5.4: Identify and pursue sources of funding to support critical facility improvement projects. Install backup energy systems, such as generators, renewable energy, and battery storage systems, for existing and new critical facilities to ensure continuity of operation in the event of a disaster or hazard event.

Action S-6.5.5: Conduct annual fire safety inspections for public buildings and recreational and utility infrastructure.

Policy S-6.6: Emergency response training. Prepare and train City staff to support emergency responders in the event of a disaster.

Action S-6.6.1: Update the Emergency Response Plan to designate roles and responsibilities for City staff by department, including non-leadership support roles.

Action S-6.6.2: Designate alternative operating locations for critical City staff in the event that the primary location is inaccessible or unusable during and after an emergency.

Policy S-6.7: Emergency plans. Maintain and update local emergency preparedness and response plans to ensure consistency between state, regional, and local safety requirements and current best management practices.

Action S-6.7.1: Upon adoption of an updated City or Regional Safety Element, Hazard Mitigation Plan, emergency response plan, or airport land use plan, review and update all other relevant City safety and emergency plans and regulations for consistency.

Action S-6.7.2: When updating a local safety or emergency plan, update hazard identification and mapping to include the most current state-approved data sources.

Policy S-6.8: Community emergency preparedness and response. Create opportunities for meaningful community involvement throughout all aspects of emergency preparedness and response planning.

Action S-6.8.1: Implement a community outreach program with diverse engagement methodologies to educate and prepare residents for potential hazards and emergency events that include multiple forms of media, including social media and print media, as well as in-person and virtual events.

Action S-6.8.2: Integrate noticing for community outreach opportunities into a variety of City communications, including the City's website, social media pages, and utility bills.

Action S-6.8.3: Establish community partnerships to assist in engaging disadvantaged and underserved populations.

Action S-6.8.4: Ensure all emergency preparedness and response materials and plans are provided in all languages spoken by at least five percent of the city's population.

Action S-6.8.5: Work with the community and experts to identify and incorporate accessible communications technologies and processes to ensure protective actions are rapidly disseminated to and understood by affected populations.

Action S-6.8.6: Develop an interactive online map of publicly accessible hazards information relevant to Santa Maria that allows residents and property owners to view the location of hazards relative to their own property or location of residence. Integrate links to emergency preparedness and resiliency resources for residents, including assistance programs for home retrofits for reducing hazard risk.

Action S-6.8.7: Create a dedicated webpage on the City's website that provides current information on hazard events, proactive measures residents can make to protect themselves and their property, and resources that can be utilized in the event of a disaster. Use translation software to provide this information in all languages spoken by at least five percent of the population.

Action S-6.8.8: Incorporate clear feedback loops that demonstrate to the community how their input has influenced local planning and programs related to hazards and emergency preparedness, and response.

Policy S-6.9: Emergency response communication. Develop clear, accessible, and reliable communication methods for the entire community to be used in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Goal S-7: Emergency access and evacuation. Effective evacuation procedures ensure the safe and efficient evacuation of people during an emergency.

Policy S-7.1: Emergency access and evacuation capacity. Enhance the emergency access and evacuation capacity of the City's transportation network by mitigating identified evacuation constraints and increasing evacuation roadway capacity.

Action S-7.1.1: Develop a list of prioritized infrastructure improvements and capital improvement projects that address evacuation constraints identified in the Evacuation Capacity Analysis (Appendix E).

Action S-7.1.2: Continue to consider emergency access and evacuation needs in future updates to the Department of Public Works road design standards.

Action S-7.1.3: Continue to enforce a standardized street address and street signage system.

Action S-7.1.4: Regularly inspect and maintain major evacuation roadways to ensure safe road conditions.

Policy S-7.2: Multiple emergency access and evacuation routes. Increase emergency access and evacuation capacity for existing residential developments with fewer than two points of ingress/egress.

Action S-7.2.1: Identify opportunities to create secondary and alternative access/evacuation routes for single-access neighborhoods.

Action S-7.2.2: Provide targeted training and educational materials to residents of single-access neighborhoods to ensure these neighborhoods are informed of evacuation routes and protocol.

Policy S-7.3: Evacuation assistance. Provide evacuation assistance to vulnerable populations in the event of an emergency.

Action S-7.3.1: Develop a plan for providing evacuation assistance for vulnerable individuals. The plan should include strategies for evacuation assistance, including the following.

- Opportunities for utilizing public transit to support individuals who may not be able to self-evacuate, including those without vehicles, with disabilities, commuters, etc.
- Early evacuation warnings for individuals who may require longer to evacuate, including individuals with large animals, medical needs, etc.
- Communication plan for informing non-English speaking and auditory and visually impaired individuals during an evacuation order

Action S-7.3.2: Promote a neighborhood buddy system, including through the City Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, that organizes groups of three to five households to check in, share information, and assist one another with emergency response and evacuation.

Action S-7.3.3: Identify public facilities that can be retrofitted to be used as emergency shelters/centers that comply with FEMA, DOJ, and/or ARC requirements. Partner with community organizations to formalize agreements to establish additional facilities that serve as emergency shelters/centers. Identify and plan for Temporary Evacuation Points (TEPs).

Policy S-7.4: Community evacuation education. Ensure the community is informed of evacuation routes and procedures.

Action S-7.4.1: Develop a City webpage that provides a consolidated source of information related to evacuation, including evacuation routes, evacuation assistance, location of evacuation centers, and evacuation orders and updates.

Action S-7.4.2: Develop targeted outreach programs that provide evacuation information and training to residents in high-risk hazard areas.

Action S-7.4.3: Collaborate with local service providers and community leaders to educate vulnerable populations on evacuation preparedness, including individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals who speak a language other than English, individuals with a disability, and those in disadvantaged communities.

Goal S-8: Climate resiliency and adaptation. Santa Maria is a climate-resilient community prepared to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Policy S-8.1: City sustainability plan. Develop a comprehensive and consistent plan for adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Action S-8.1.1: Develop and adopt a sustainability plan that identifies Santa Maria's climate resiliency and adaptation efforts through a variety of methods, such as hosting interviews, focus group discussions, and reviewing draft plans and policies. Identify climate change impacts on vulnerable populations and include strategies to address disproportionate impacts.

Policy S-8.2: Climate resilient design. Require new development and redevelopment to incorporate climate-resilient design to mitigate the impacts of climate change.[8]

Action S-8.2.1: Adopt regulatory standards such as CALGreen Tier 1 and 2 to encourage energy efficiency and climate-smart design for new development and redevelopment.

Policy S-8.3: Natural cooling solutions. Support natural cooling methods to mitigate increased temperatures and extreme heat events caused by climate change.

Action S-8.3.1: Review and revise City standards to increase requirements for shade trees, canopies, and landscaping cover to promote natural cooling methods.

Action S-8.3.2: Implement natural cooling methods and increased landscaping cover on City-owned sites to demonstrate the effectiveness of alternative methods for mitigating heat. Prioritize implementation on City-owned properties in and near disadvantaged communities and communities with a concentration of vulnerable populations, as identified in the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment.

Action S-8.3.3: Partner with local organizations to pursue grant funding to support a community lending program to provide cooling devices to residents, prioritizing disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations.

Policy S-8.4: Climate resilient public facilities. Incorporate climate-resilient design for all new public facilities with the intent of illustrating successful implementation of green infrastructure.

Action S-8.4.1: Identify and apply for grant funding to support the implementation of climate-resilient and adaptation demonstration projects as part of public facility development and upgrades.

Action S-8.4.2: Prioritize funds for implementing climate adaptation projects in areas where vulnerable populations overlap with increased risk of hazards due to climate change, as identified in the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment.

Policy S-8.5: Community resilience centers. Establish community resilience centers that can provide shelter and distribute resources to residents to provide relief from extreme heat, extreme cold, poor air quality, and other hazards. Ensure disadvantaged communities have access to resiliency centers by locating resiliency centers near these communities and providing free transit options to and from these centers during hazard events.

Action S-8.5.1: Design new community serving public facilities to serve as dual-functioning community resilience centers. Prioritize new and upgraded facilities in disadvantaged communities and areas with a high number of populations vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Action S-8.5.2: Partner with local religious institutions, schools, and other operators of community gathering facilities to serve as community resilience centers during an emergency.

[8] Please see the Land Use and Noise Elements for additional policies and actions related to building design.

Action S-8.5.3: Equip publicly owned community resilience centers with backup power and emergency water supplies to provide continuity of operation during an emergency.

Action S-8.5.4: Coordinate with the County, the schools, and community-based organizations to conduct outreach to residents of diverse backgrounds to connect them to local community resiliency centers, especially for vulnerable populations (such as people with disabilities, farm workers, older adults, unhoused community members, and people with chronic health conditions).

Policy S-8.6: Climate adaptation retrofits. Support retrofit programs for existing buildings to adapt to the impacts of climate change.[9]

Action S-8.6.1: Offer development incentives such as expedited building permit review, fee waivers or deferrals, and technical assistance to encourage building retrofits to support climate adaptation.

Action S-8.6.2: Identify and apply for grant opportunities to initiate a financial assistance program to support building retrofits for low-income households, vulnerable populations, and disadvantaged communities.

Action S-8.6.3: Assess critical and public facilities to evaluate climate resiliency. Identify, prioritize, and implement capital improvement projects that address identified climate vulnerabilities of these facilities. Prioritize projects to address climate change impacts in areas with a high number of vulnerable populations.

Policy S-8.7: Water efficiency and conservation. Continue water efficiency and water conservation efforts to support a stable water supply during periods of drought.[10]

Action S-8.7.1: Continue to update and enforce the various water management planning documents and tools like the Urban Water Management Plan.

[9] Please see the Health and Environmental Justice Element for additional policies and actions focused on housing retrofits.
[10] Please see the Public Facilities and Services and Conservation and Open Space Elements for additional water resources management policies and actions.