

May 1, 2026

Mayor Alice Patino
Members of the City Council
110 Cook Street
Santa Maria, Ca 93454

RE: Santa Maria General Plan Comments
Response to Staff changes

Dear Members of the City Council:

First and foremost, thank you so much for directing staff to review the comment letters that were submitted for the February 18, 2026 Planning Commission. These comment letters were provided to the Planning Commission after the complete record was posted on the city website the Thursday afternoon prior to the meeting. The full record is over 1,000 pages. There was very little time to review and prepare comments for you to review by the following Wednesday meeting.

After your action to continue this to the March 4th meeting, we reached out to staff several times to meet with them to go over the comments and come to resolution to our concerns. Unfortunately, no time was made available to go over the letters. The 37-page staff report was posted on Thursday afternoon February 26th. Again this resulted in a long weekend of trying to understand what staff is suggesting for changes.

After reviewing this staff report and the previous staff report it is clear that most of the comments and suggested edits have not been accepted. We do not understand why. Over the last six years and many thousands of hours of volunteer time reviewing documents and attending meetings, it is disappointing that most public comments were dismissed or disregarded with no explanation. This included comments provided for the EIR. It is clear that even this last set of comments were determined not to be accepted.

In order to respect your time and effort as Planning Commissioners, here are our comments that have risen to the top as most critical. We are requesting that you provide your recommendations to the City Council on these items.

1. Los Flores Ranch

For whatever reason, staff has not include this very important 1,500 acre city “Open Space” property anywhere in this General Plan or EIR. This property was purchased by the city almost 20 years ago for a new landfill and in April of 2010 an eir was adopted by the city council for this ladfill project. even in the Public Facilities Section of the Gernerall plan there is no mention of this plan that most likely will be needed over the next 20 years.

Also the Recreation and Park Element and the conservation and Open Elment make no mention of Los Flores Ranch even those it is listed on the website and contains many miles of trails and recreational programs which are held there. The city has spent millions of dollars on improvements and staff time at Los Flores Ranch and yet they do not count it as a city park.

I am including these maps and exhibits in this letter so that it is in the public record but the documents would have been clearer if staff had included these exhibits in the EIR and the General Plan Elements.

Please recommend that these maps and exhibits are included in the General Plan Elements

2. State that 5 acres per 1,000 is aspirational but has never been met and will never be met.

Over the last 35 years since this policy was adopted by the City Council, the Recreation and Parks Deparmtent has never required that this policy be met. They have only required 2.5 acres per 1,000 resulting in 250 acres of city parks. To continue with this aspirational number of 5 acres is inconsistent with city history and shows that the department did not follow the City Council policy.

As stated in many hearings and letters, when the population of the City of Santa Maria reaches 160,000 people in the next 20 years, the city will need 800 acres of parks based on the 5 acre per 1,000 standard. There is no plan in the R&P Element on where these parks would be located nor is there any budget for purchase of these parks or long term maintenance. This is an infeasible standard.

Holding on to this aspirational standard would also raise Developer impact Fees to a exorbitate amount and would have a huge negative impact on future city budgets.

It is hard to imagine that staff would continue to press this aspirational standard when the city can not afford to purchase 100's of acres of parkland and fund the mainentance of future parks.

We request that the Planning Commisison make a recommendation to the City Council to amend the park standards in this new General Plan to 2.5 acres per 1,000.

3. Delete reference to “Complete Streets “ in Private roads or driveways in HOA projects.

Complete streets with wide travel lanes, bike lanes, landscaping and sidewalks on both sides will take up too much real estate in multifamily and cluster developments. Also these project will have private roads and driveways that are maintained by Homeowner’s Associations and would not be open to the public.

This would hamper how future projects are designed as it will cost too much money to have these wide streets within private projects. Projects like Bellecrest, La Vigna, Centenial Townhomes and Blosser Ranch would not be proposed.

Please delete all reference to “Complete Streets “ in Private Projects in the Circulation and Land Use Elment.

4. Delete reference to Floor Area Ratio

It is one thing to have a general reference to FAR for EIR, but to keep this standard in the General Plan will assure that projects like Cook Street Apartments and the Vernon projects will not be developed in the future.

Staff explained that the FAR is not being used in the Downtown Specific Plan which is very important to have on the public record . What about the rest of the CMU properties along Broadway and Main Street and other CC properties that would like to use the Mixed Use Ordiancne. According to the FAR the maximum would be 2 , this will limit the height and design of future projects.

We recommend deleting the FAR in the CMU sand CC standards on page 16.

5. Delete refence to “NO NET LOSS” use mitigate instead.

Page 19 of the Consevation and Open Space Element Action COS 1.1.1 should be deleted. These words have been used to sue projects in other jurisdictions. Why set up the city for a potential lawsuit in the future? **Delete this Action.**

Conclusion

As noted above there were hundreds of other comments provided to help expand the quality of information in both the EIR and the General Plan for the future of the City of Santa Maria. Although many comments were included in the EIR and the General Plan we are disappointed that more were not included.

We do appreciate the work and effort put into the General Plan by the Planning Staff and other city staff. This effort would not have been completed without Dana Eddy’s leadership.

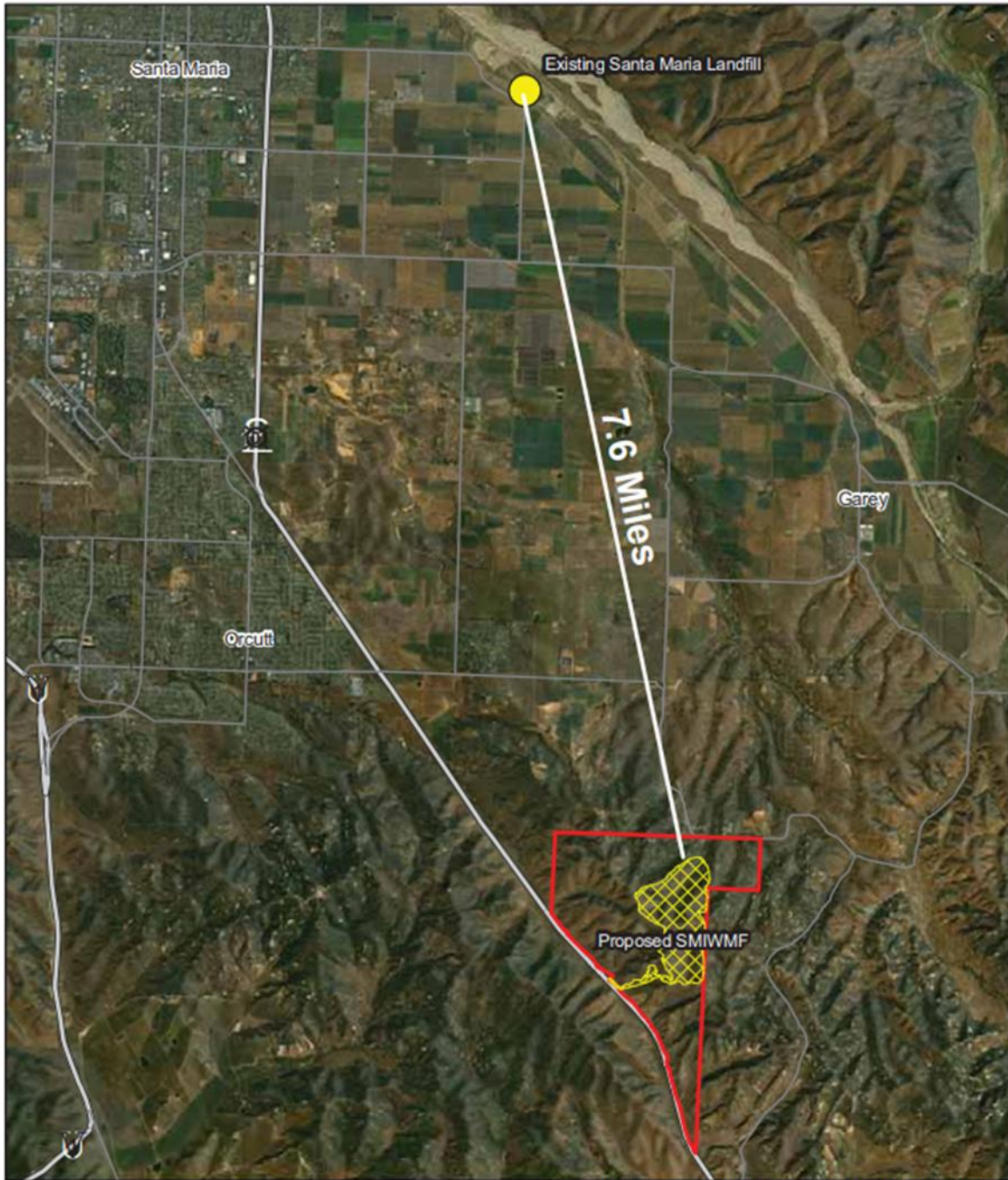
Please forward these final recommendations to the City Council. Thank you for all of your time and effort on the 2045 General Plan.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie Tamura". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Laurie Tamura , AICP
Principal Planner

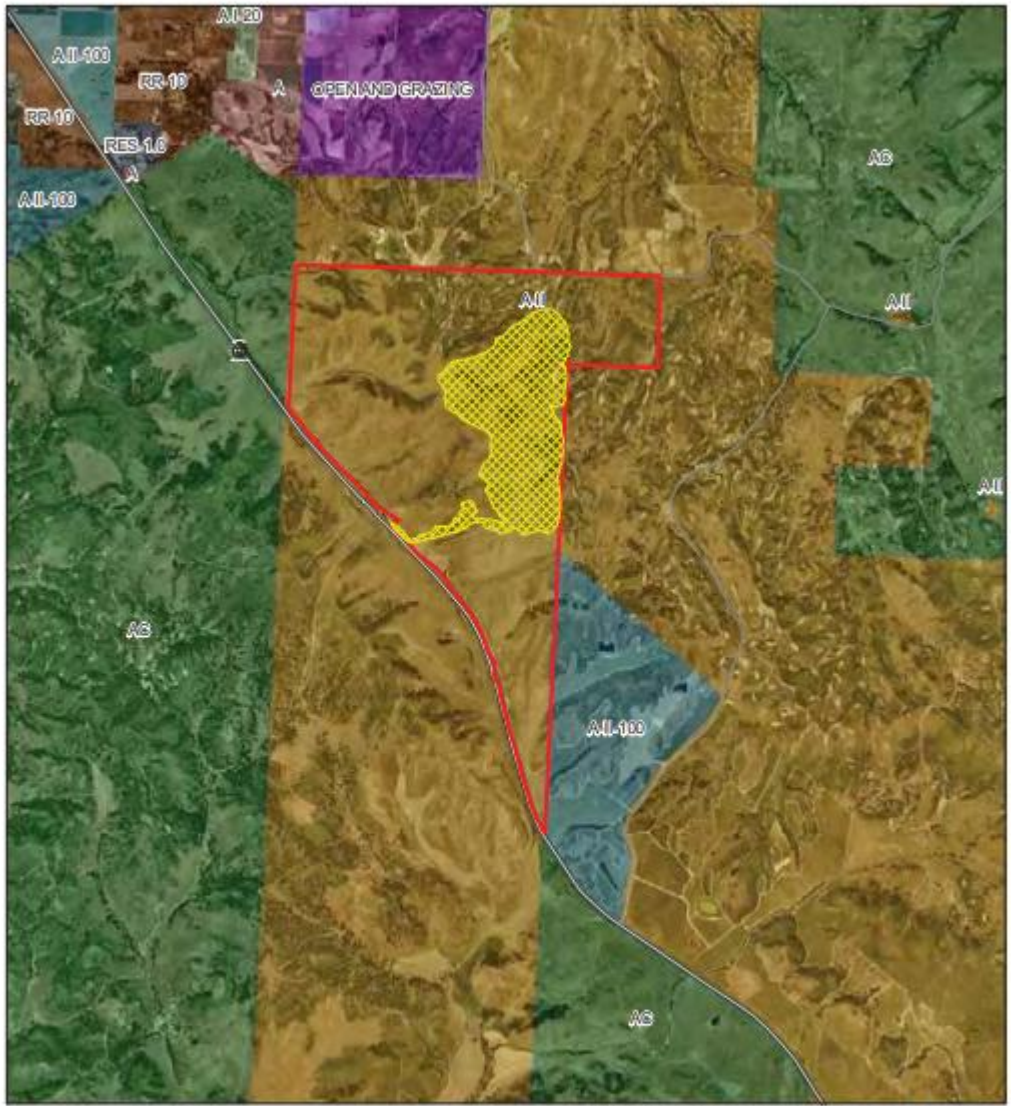
Santa Maria Integrated Waste Management Facility EIR
Section II Project Description



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Santa Maria Integrated Waste Management Facility EIR
 Section II Project Description



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- LAND USE**
- A Agriculture (Lands with prime soils, prime agricultural land, grazing land existing agricultural land, land under Williamson Act)
 - A-I-20 Agriculture I (Minimum parcel size- 20 acres (5-40 acres minimum parcel size in Coastal Zone))
 - A-II Agriculture II (Minimum parcel size- 40 or more acres inland/ 40, 100 or 320 acres minimum parcel size in Coastal Zone)
 - A-II-100 Agriculture II (Minimum parcel size- 100 acres/ 40, 100, 320 acres minimum parcel size in Coastal Zone)
 - AC Agricultural Commercial (Minimum parcel size- 40-320 or more acres)
 - OPEN/GRAZING Open and Grazing (areas which are at present time unsuited for intensive agriculture due to poor soil, steep slopes etc.)
 - RES-1.0 Single Family Maximum Dwelling Units- 1.0 acre
 - RR-10 Rural Residential (in Coastal Zone, Residential Ranchette inland portion) Minimum parcel size- 10 acres

- Property Boundary
- Landfill and Access Road Boundary





February 16, 2026

Chairman Robert Dickenson
Members of the Planning Commission
110 Cook Street
Santa Maria, Ca 93454

RE Santa Maria General Plan comments

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

Urban Planning Concepts had been actively involved in this General Plan process since 2020. We brought to this process our in-depth knowledge of the 1993 Sphere of Influence and the many annexations and Specific Plans that we have been involved with over the 35 years.

We had hoped that the city would take advantage of the previous concurrent processing of both the SIO and Annexations that proved to be successful with LAFCO. We have to accept that this current effort split the process in two with the General Plan and Sphere of Influence going forward first and then in the future there will be individual annexations and Specific Plan applications. This will add years to the process for future development on the east side of the freeway.

Understand that we are in support of this first half of this process and we will be working hard to move the future annexation applications forward in the next couple of years.

Please know that UPC has attended most of the TAC and Public Workshops. We have read every document prepared by the city and consultants and provided detailed comments. In the February 2025 Draft General Plan, we provided 100's of comments. Again, in the August version of the General Plan, we provided many more comments and recommended edits.

In reviewing the Public Hearing Draft documents released on Thursday afternoon, we are pleased to see that most of the comments were addressed but not all. However, as you will see in this letter, there are items that are still incomplete or have not been resolved adequately. Many of these items can easily be corrected by staff but some of them are policy items so that staff will need your direction and recommendation to the City Council.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Look forward to going over these items at the Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday.

Sincerely



Laurie Tamura, AICP
Principal Planner

Introduction

Pictures There are too many pictures that take up at least 80 pages of this 290-page GP document. As suggested before, these pictures could have been reduced and made into a collage page. Pictures are not required This collage for each element could replace the repeated generic aerial photo that looks like any city. The Goals and Policies section are the most important part of the GP Element. . Request the Planning Commission direct staff to work with the community and consultants to revise the cover page of each element.

Fig INT -2	<p>All of the regional maps in this GP must include the 1500-acre city owned Los Flores Park and future Landfill. It is referred to many times, so people need to know where it is located.</p> <p>All city maps should clearly note the SMAPD boundaries. This will make it clear to LAFCO that 2,500 acres are not available for housing.</p>
Fig INT-3 Page 11	<p>We requested that on this map that includes the PA areas be Identified as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PA 1 Guggia and DeBarnerdi PA 2 Cal Giant PA 3 the rest of the PA areas. <p>As noted on Page 11, We had asked that this paragraph bullet these Planning Areas and provide more information about each one and what is being proposed as Prezoning.</p> <p>This will help refer future PA's and Specific Plans maps that go along with them.</p>
Page 13	<p>Project History should have been expanded to include a summary of the 1993 Sphere of Influence and Annexation Study that planned the annexation of 3,000 acres and helped the City grow from 65,000 people to 110,000.</p>
Page 15	<p>Delete word Implementation as it is not used in the rest of the General Plan. Only use the ACTION.</p>

Land Use Element

Page 11	<p>The last sentence refers to the Entrada Specific Plan (1976) . this plan needs to be retired as it is inconsistent with the Objective Desing Standards, and the city has not used this SP in years.</p>
Page 12	<p>We will be asking that all reference to the old FAR standards be deleted.</p>
Page 13	<p>The third PAR needs to be changed to SOI and annexation.</p>
Page 14	<p>This is an old planning method that most cities are retiring. It is not consistent with the ODS, and most high density /mixed use projects will not meet this standard. Delete all references in the LUE to FAR's</p>

Page 15	Delete Residential Agricultural (RA) designation. It has never been used in the city. Include in all the residential Designations JADU's and ADU's.
Page 16-17	Delete all reference to FAR as this is no longer a valid Planning Tool.
Page 21	Bullet 7 needs to be revised to require 2.5 acres per 1,000 in order to be consistent with the current park land standard.
Page 21	Policy LU-2.2 Deleted this provision as it does not make sense. What kind of Connection and what core of Santa Maria? Are you asking to have pedestrian bridges over 101???
Page 22	Policy 4.1.1 retire Estrada Specific Plan and delete this Policy or revise it to refer to the Objective Design Standards (2025)
Page 23	Policy LU-3.5 this policy should be revised to support the parking structures as it exists. Policy LU 3.6 is in conflict with 3.5 . need to delete one of them.
Page 24	Action LU-4.12 This action is conflicting with the main and Broadway being designated State highway Truck Routes. Suggest deleting it.
Page 24	Policy LU 5.2 it is important to note that 10,000= infill units will not be close to parks, schools, etc. Suggest deleting the last part of this sentence to be honest.
Page 24	Action LU 6.5-1 and Action LU-6.6-1 we agree with these actions but also need to make sure to delete FAR requirements.
Page 28	Policy Lu -12.1 add this phrase...gathering places should be placed to be protected by the wind.
Page 12	We will be asking that all reference to the old FAR standards be deleted.
Page 13	The third PAR needs to be changed to SOI and annexation.
Page 15	This is an old planning method that most cities are retiring. It is not consistent with the ODS, and most high density /mixed use projects will not meet this standard. Delete all references in the LUE to FAR's

Circulation Element

Page 5	There is only one heliport in Santa Maria at Marian Hospital, The other three listed here are located on the oil platform over 3 miles off the coast.
Page 10	There is no comment on parking in local streets and neighborhood because of ADU's. this is a huge challenge for the future.
Page 10	Short- and long-Term transit This paragraph should include SMOOTH and other local transits operations besides SMRT. Uber. Lyft. Etc.
Fig CRC-1 Fig CIRC-2	This figure shows no road patterns for the Planning Area on the east side of Santa Maria. There should be something planned for these annexation areas. Fig CIR 2 shows no bike trails in the annexation areas.

Page 16.	Multi-Use Paths Class 1 are in the Specific Plans of street trails add to this paragraph The class III bike trails are becoming more of a problem because fo the parking demand for ADU's
Page 19	Is there a need for charging stations for these micro bikes?
Page 21	Again no plan on CIR -4 for the east side of the freeway for pedestrian trails.
Page 22	CIRC 1.1 What is a Complete Street??? need to have exhibits. Action CIR 1.1.1 Delete Too costly to convert exiting streets to complete streets. CIR 1.3 Delete as there is not enough space to do this design in private projects.
Page 22	CIRC 1.2 delete reference to private streets. There is not enough road width to do complete street designs.
Page 26	Delete the last sentence. Projects are already overtaxed and this would need the vote of the city.

Conservation and Open Space

Page 12	Correct the last paragraph the groundwater basin is NOT in overdraft. This has been determined by the courts.
Page 13	The percentages do not add up right... Correct this paragraph.
Page 14	Historic District ...the city needs to change the 50-year standard to ...a year. anything before 1960 may need to have a historic review report
Page 20	What mining operations ???are you talking about the riverbed? Is that in the SLO county?
Page 19	Delete reference to "NO NET LOSS" this is very bad wording delete Action COS 1.1.2
Page 20	Delete the words "coordinate with the county" Delete COS 1.2 and Action1.2.1 give county too much control over annexations.
Page 20	Policy COS 1.3 and Action COS 1.3.1 the city does not have money to do this, and the priority should be on active recreation.
Page 21	Delete all of COS 1.-4 and the action items Urban wilding the city does not have money to do this.
Page 21	Delete all of COS 2.1 Why would the city collaborate with the county on ag land in the city??? Delete Action COS 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 Tthis whole action item needs to be deleted
Page 22	Delete COS 2-3 and all the action items as there is no mining in the city of Santa Maria
Page 22	Policy COS 3.1 the urban canopy only applies to the developed parts of the city. Not SMAP D or area 7 or 9 until they are developed

Noise

Fig N-1	Insert the new ALUC noise maps from 2023 smx_alucp_v2_final.pdf
Page 9	This section should make it clear that the Railroad and the SMAP do not run at night
Fig N-3	Replace this map with the Noise contour map from the EIR Fig..._____
Page 13	Action N 1.2.1 The way this action is written every project would be required to have a noise study? Revise to only apply to those projects with noise generating uses.
Page 15	Action N-2.1.4 revised this action to state that exterior noise levels are allowed to be at 75dB along major corridors (Ord 12-7.14a)

Safety Element

	There should be a paragraphs and references in this Element of the Safety support agencies. Highway Patrol, sheriff, county fire, AMR, Marian Hospital, Heliport, etc. this is so important to know what the resources are in this region.
Page 14	Solid Waste This paragraph needs to include a sentence on the future landfill site at Los Flores. The city purchased this ranch about 15 years ago for a new landfill stie after the existing one closes.
Page 7	Flood and Dam...It paragraph and other sections and policies should clearly note who is responsible for the Dam. TMA, SMWCD, BLM. And then FCD
Page 26	Goals and Policies on this page related to the Twitchell Dam should list Twitchell Management Authority (TMA) and Santa Maria Water Conservation District (SMWCD) and BLM. Flood Control does not have authority on the Dam. These policies should be corrected.
Page 31	These policies S-6.6 to S-6.9 should include reference to all other local support services listed above.

Environmental Justice.

Page 7	There is now an added sentence in the H2 A paragraph about ADU's. It would seem that ADU's and their known benefits and impacts to the community warrant a separate paragraph The city has issued over 2,000 ADU permits. There is no comment on parking in local streets and neighborhood because of ADU's. This is a huge challenge for the future and no of these neighborhood streets will ever be Complete Streets.
Page 17	Goal HEJ -3, Policy HEJ 3.1 and 3,2 Remove reference to " Complete Streets ". There is no definition of what that means and the city does not

	<p>have funds to make this happen. Also, many existing streets are now impacted by ADU Parking so there is no space to add amenities.</p> <p>Also, these Complete Street Policies do not apply to private driveways or internal roads.</p>
<p>Page 23 DELETE this Policy and Action Item</p>	<p>Policy HEJ-8.6: Develop community benefits agreements. Facilitate the creation of community benefits agreements (CBAs) for major private development projects to provide resources and mitigate pollution impacts for the benefit of local communities, especially when located in a DAC.</p> <p>Action HEJ-8.6.1: Identify potential community benefits, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower levels of environmental pollution • Reduced car and truck traffic • More affordable housing units • Workforce development opportunities • Tree and native species planting • Shade structures for extreme heat events • Green (e.g., trees) or gray (e.g. sound walls) barriers for noise and pollution mitigation • Community gardens and publicly accessible green space • Other investments as suggested by Santa Maria community members.
	<p>All of the DAC areas are located in the existing city and not near the Planning Areas. The PA will not be impacting those areas. This is just adding another layer of costs on future housing and development projects</p> <p>Also, what about large city projects that might be in these areas.</p> <p>DELETE this Policy and Action item</p>

Public Facilities/Service

Page 3	Why did this section include facts? How much state water is the city relying on and how much groundwater. It is critical that this information be in this document.
Page 4	Need to include a full discussion Green Canyon drainage through the middle of the city of Santa Maria
Page 7	Should add AHC that has 4 years college degree.
Page 7 PFS-2	<p>“...future school site”</p> <p>There are no future school sites on the map. with 50,000 people there will need to be 10 more schools and two more high schools. Where are they going to be located?</p>
Page 9	Need to show the number of officers per 1,000 and the number of fire fighters per 1,000.
Fig PFS-3	Need to amend the map to include the Orcutt Fire stations and proposed fire stations in Orcutt And Santa Maria.

	Need to add the Sheriffs Office on foster road. what about police station on the east side of the freeway. This is for the future not just what is there today.
Page 12	Solid Waste Chapter needs to include a discussion on Los Flores landfill. What is the schedule for this landfill to be constructed?
Page 13 Page 3	Annexation talks about WWTP capacity is sufficient for present needs projected flows at full buildout will exceed that capacity???? There is nothing in the General Plan that details what is the current capacity, current design and what is needed for future 16,000 units. Is the current plant able to serve all of the future 160,000 people??? Give us some facts???
Page 17	Delete Action PFS 3.1.2 . we do not need additional fees for development
Page 17	Policy PFS- 4.3 Schools....How many schools has the city determined will be needed and where will they be located for the infill development and the annexation areas?
Page 18	Library standards are listed on Page 15 and then again in Policy PFS S-1 Why maintain this old ratio when the libraries are being used 30-40 % less? Need to update these standards in light of the internet.
Page 18	Goal PFS-6 and Policy PFS-1. All of these Public Facilities policies need to be revised as most public buildings are not open to the public anymore and they have security, cameras and locked spaces. These policies should reflect what is happening now.
Page 19	Policy PFS 6.5 this is not allowed by State law. All school sites are fences, secured, and have cameras to monitor the public. Delete this provision.
Page 19	No information on how many Fire fighters are needed for now and at full build out? How many fire stations will be needed on the east side of town and to added infill development.
Page 20	No mention on the Los Flores Landfill. When is that going to be needed.
Page 26	Schools. All of the school policies should have already been done with this plan. Policy PFS-10.1 does not list Santa Maria High School District? Do they have enough high schools for the full build out of the city.?

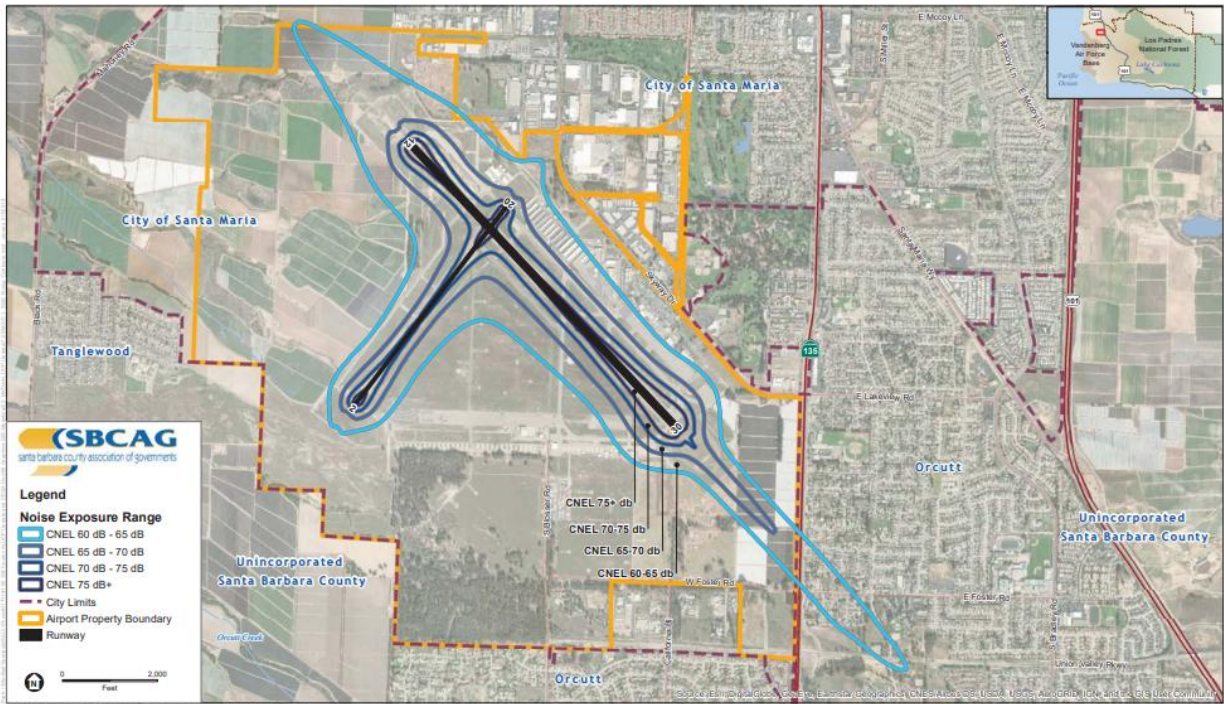
Economic Development Element

Page 3	It should include employment opportunities in VSFB and the growing medical and educational opportunities in the region.
Page	Include HBACC, Marian Hospital and VSFB and the SM Airport

Page 7	This section should refer to the 4-year programs at AHC that have just started
Econ 2-3	Change this policy to start with the word “Encourage “not “Prioritize.” We do not want this policy to be used against the annexation application.
Policy ECON 2.8	This Needs to be a GOAL for the SOI and annexations.

Recreation and Parks

Page 7	Now the total is 30 parks instead of 27...how much acreage is now maintained by the city.
Page 11	Please include the total acreage for the city parks.
Page 13	Delete bullet 4 as there are now two parks Acquistapace and Carman lane and another under construction
Page 13	<p>We agree that for consistent and equity that the city standard be 2.5 acre per 1,000. Also the city can barely afford to maintain the parks that they have.</p> <p>Paragraph 4 Park Quality is poorly written</p> <p>The sentence should state that at 5 acres per 1,000 the city should currently have 550 acres but only have 270. At full build out, the city at 5 acres per 1,000 would need to have 800 acres of parkland to acquire and maintain. If the ratio is 2.5 acres per 1,000 the city would have 400 acres.</p>
Page 14	<p>The table REC- 3 provided is not complete as it does not give the PC and CC information on what is the current level of service for each of these categories and what the city should plan for in the future,</p> <p>Park standard needs to be changed to 2.5 acres per 1,000. Or the city needs to change their inventory and include Los Flores Ranch, school playgrounds including AHC, and the many private cub houses, pools, and play areas.</p>
Page 17	Policy REC-2.1 Revise this policy to only have 2.5 acres per 1,000.
Page 17	Action REC 2.1.1 add to this that the park classification should include schools and private amenities.
Page 18	Action REC 2.2.1 this provision or add another that describe the Landscaping and Lighting District Tax that is paid for by new residents.
Page 18	Policy REC 3.3 and 3.4 3.5 it is too bad that this was not discussed in the body of this element. Could include PCPA, High School program orchestra, Civic theater, etc. also referred to OASIS, and other senior centers



Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Update

Figure 4-1
 Santa Maria Public Airport
 Noise Compatibility Policy Map