

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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup>. 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 landfill project. even in the Public Facilities Section of the General 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 Element 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 Department 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.

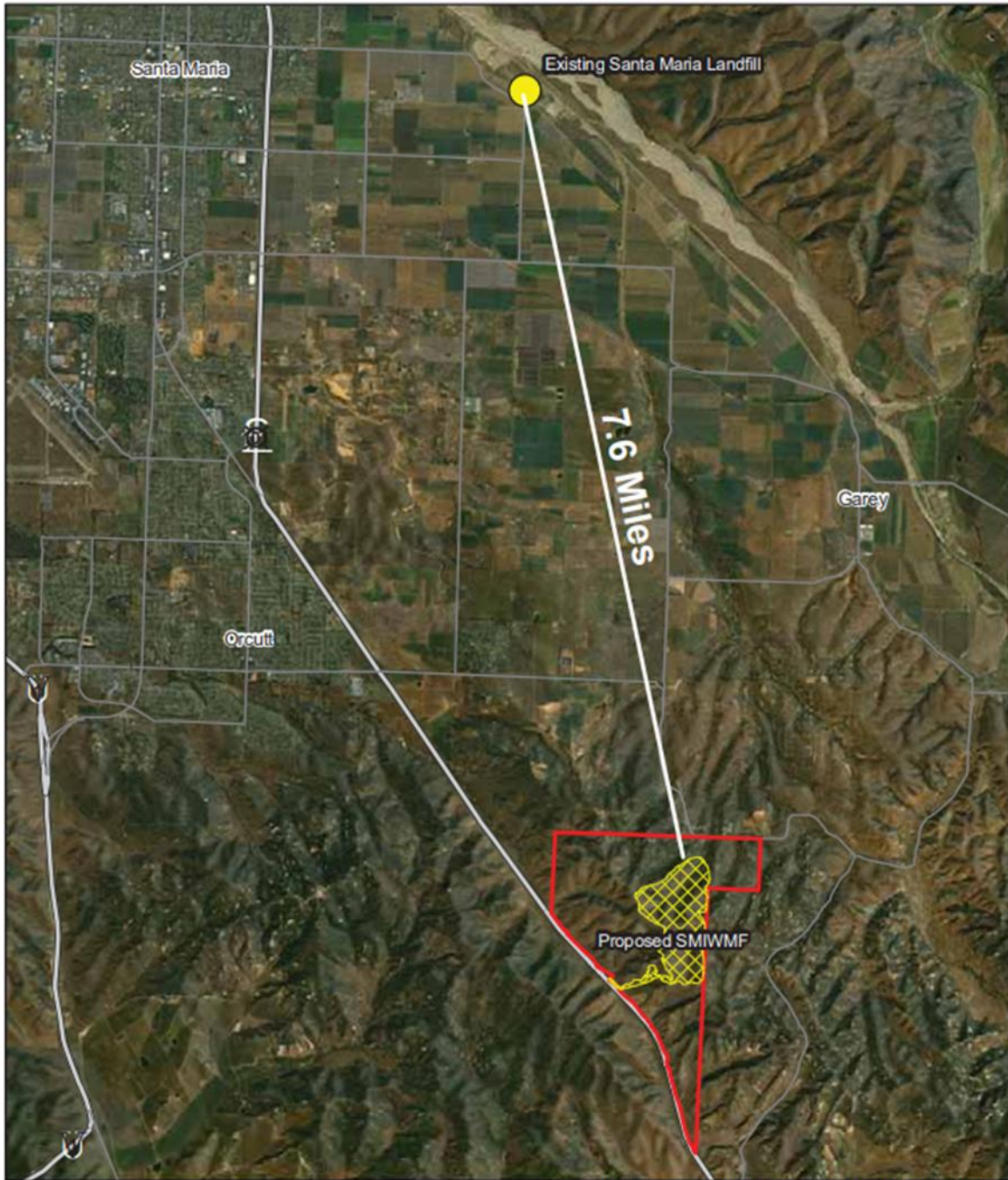
Please forward these final recommendations to the City Council. Thank you for all of your time and effort on the 2045 General Plan.

Sincerely

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

Laurie Tamura , AICP  
Principal Planner

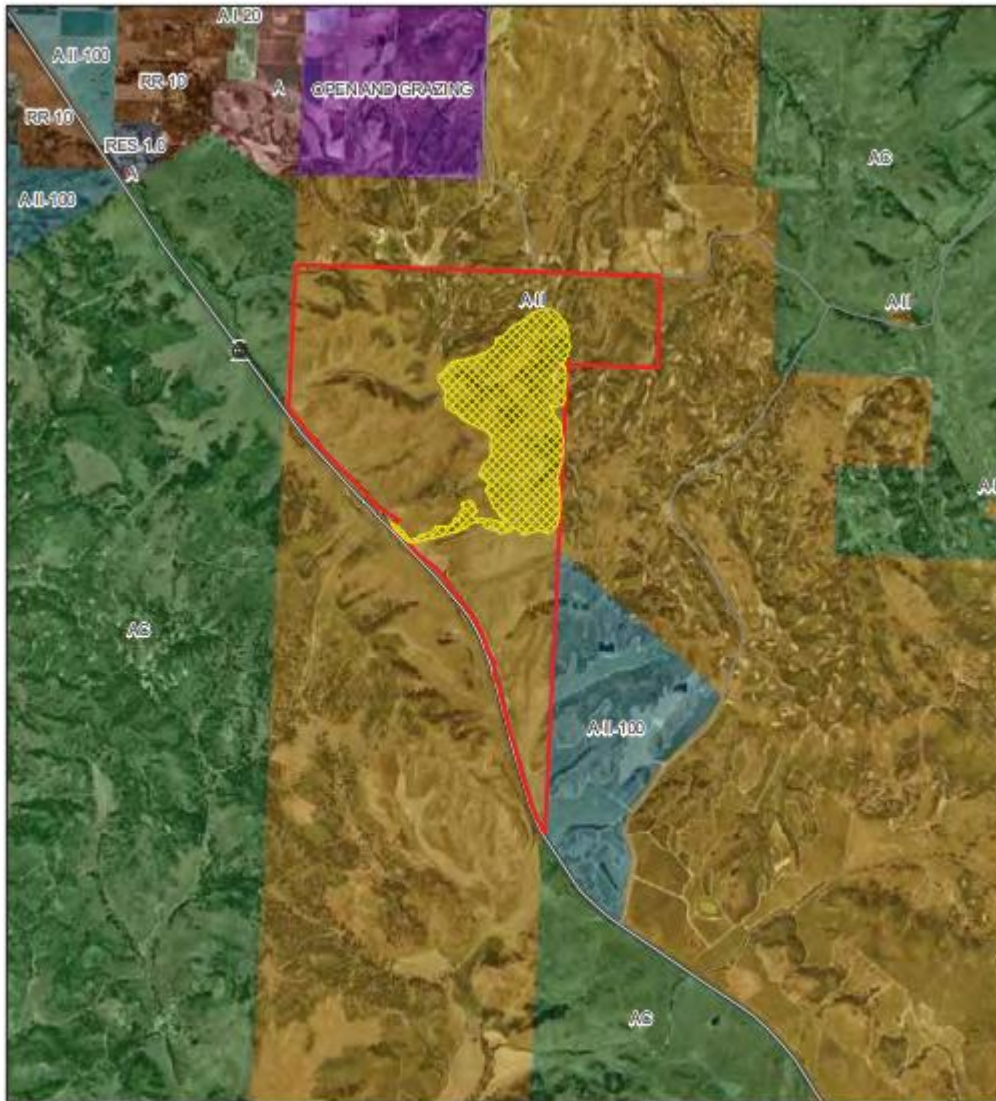
Santa Maria Integrated Waste Management Facility EIR  
Section II Project Description



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 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

