



**CITY OF SANTA MARIA  
PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

NOVEMBER 6, 2024

**5.a.**

**SANTA MARIA AIRPORT DISTRICT GENERAL PLAN LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT  
AND ZONE CHANGE**

**Property Location: 1494 Fairway Drive**

Review of a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment and Zone Change (GPZ2023-0001) for RRM on behalf of the Santa Maria Public Airport District to change the land use designation on a 6.95-acre site FROM A-AS (Airport -Airport Service) and the zone district of OS (Open Space) TO LI (Light Industrial) land use designation and PD/M-1 (Planned Development/Light Manufacturing) zone district.

Environmental: Environmental Review for this project was completed through the preparation of an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH #2024070374) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Take the following actions:

1. By resolution, recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program prepared for the project; and
2. By resolution, recommend that the City Council approve the General Plan Land Use Map Amendment and Zone Change, GPZ2023-0001.

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**BACKGROUND**

The project site is located at 1494 Fairway Drive and is currently undeveloped except for a City water well and fenced yard. The site was previously part of a golf course with managed turfgrass and a man-made decorative water feature, however the golf course has closed, and the water feature no longer exists. Many years prior to the golf course use, the project site was utilized as part of military operations for the airport.

The site is bordered to the north, south and west by a flood control channel regulated by Santa Barbara County (Attachment A – Vicinity Map). Beyond the flood control channel

to the north is a business park used by VTC Enterprises. Further to the south of the flood control channel are open space areas adjacent to the Santa Maria Public Airport runway. Across the flood control channel to the west is additional open space used for row crop production. To the east of the site, across A Street, is a business park with various industrial, warehouse and manufacturing uses. The zoning immediately to the north, south, and west of the site is OS (Open Space), with PD/M-1 designations across A Street and along Fairway Drive. (Attachment B-Land Use and Zoning Map).

#### Santa Maria Public Airport District

The project site is owned by the Santa Maria Public Airport District. The General Plan Amendment and Rezone for future industrial uses has been reviewed for consistency with the Airport District's Master Plan which guides the internal operations and development for the airport. The project was also reviewed in conformance with the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments' (SBCAG) Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) which is the governing document used by the Airport Land Use Commission to ensure that all airports countywide are developed safely. A detailed discussion of how the project complies with the ALUCP is included below. The City's Airport Business Park Specific Plan only encompasses areas on the southern side of the airport and therefore does not apply to this project site.

#### Planning Commission Study Session

The project was presented to the Planning Commission at the September 19, 2024, study session public meeting. Commissioners discussed the proposed Land Use and Zone designation change and the potential future uses that could be established on the site if this amendment were approved.

### **DISCUSSION**

The applicant, RRM Design Group on behalf of the Santa Maria Public Airport District, is requesting a General Plan Amendment and Zone Change to allow for future industrial development of the project site. No site development is proposed currently. Any future development of the site would be subject to Planning Commission approval of a Planned Development Permit application.

In order to analyze the proposed Land Use and Zone change, the project applicant has provided an estimate of the development likely to occur under the proposed industrial designations, which includes up to 100,000 square-feet of industrial or manufacturing floor area.

#### General Plan Amendment and Zone Change

The proposed project includes a General Plan Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment that would change the land use and zoning designations on the site as follows:

- A. General Plan land use map amendment from A-AS (Airport-Airport Service) to LI (Light Industrial); and
- B. Zoning Map amendment from OS (Open Space) to PD/M-1 (Planned Development/Light Manufacturing).

The purpose of the LI designation, as described on page LU-19 of the City’s General Plan Land Use Element, is “To accommodate industrial uses which contain the process primarily within the building, do not generate negative environmental impacts, and which are most compatible with adjacent nonindustrial uses.”

Changing the land use designation and zoning on the project site from A-AS to LI and from OS to PD/M-1 would enable the future industrial and/or manufacturing use of the site not permitted under the current Open Space designation. The proposed LI land use designation and PD/M-1 zoning would match that of the adjacent properties east of the project site, across A Street and along Fairway Drive. There are no adjacent sensitive land uses, such as residential developments, that could create potential conflicts. All of these factors make this site an appropriate location for future industrial or manufacturing development.

### Santa Maria ALUCP

The Santa Maria ALUCP was adopted by SBCAG in January of 2023. The purpose of the ALUCP is to promote airport land use compatibility. Specifically, the plan provides for the orderly growth of the Airport and the areas surrounding the Airport and safeguards the general welfare of the inhabitants within the vicinity of the Airport and the public in general.

The ALUCP requires General Plan Amendments to be reviewed by the Airport Land Use Commission for determination of compatibility with the ALUCP. On September 19, 2024, the Airport Land Use Commission and SBCAG determined that the proposed project, and the industrial Land Use and Zone designations proposed, is consistent with the noise, safety, and airspace policies listed in the ALUCP (Attachment C).

The project is outside of the noise contours identified in the ALUCP and is therefore consistent with the noise compatibility criteria. The site is located within two safety zones, 3 and 6. Light Industrial and Manufacturing are *conditionally compatible* land uses in Safety Zone 3, with the condition being that future development does not exceed the maximum intensity (150 people per acre) and lot coverage limits (60 percent) on-site.

The 100,000-square-feet of floor area estimate for potential future development of the site equates to approximately 33 percent lot coverage and an intensity of approximately 63 people per acre. Therefore, the project would facilitate future industrial development consistent with the safety policies in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Any future Planned Development application for this site will be analyzed for consistency with these population density and lot coverage limits, with corresponding conditions applied.

### Environmental

The conceptual description for 100,000 square-feet of future industrial or manufacturing uses is used to analyze the potential environmental effects of the proposed GPZ, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared by the City as Lead Agency. This document identifies potential project impacts in the topic areas of air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, and tribal cultural resources. Mitigations are incorporated in the draft MND to reduce any of the potential impacts identified to less than significant levels.

The draft MND was circulated for public review from July 11, 2024, to August 9, 2024. Two comment letters were received during the public review period. One letter was submitted from the California Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) and another from the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD). The CalGEM letter clarified that no known oil wells are located on the property, but also recommended procedural steps to take if a previously unknown oil well is discovered on the property during construction. The comments provided by SBCAPCD were primarily technical clarifications related to emissions quantifications and regulatory thresholds. Staff addressed each of these comments as appropriate, with changes depicted in strike-out/underline text in the MND attached to this staff report (Attachment D). For reference, the public comment letters are attached to the MND.

A resolution for the Planning Commission to adopt the MND and Mitigation Monitoring Program is included with this staff report (Attachment E).

#### Attachments

- A – Vicinity Map
- B – Land Use and Zoning Map
- C – SBCAG ALUCP Consistency Report
- D - CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration with Public Comment Letters
- E – Mitigation Monitoring Program