



# Notice of Preparation Environmental Impact Report City of Los Banos

**Date:** January 18, 2022

**To:** State Clearinghouse  
State Responsible Agencies  
State Trustee Agencies  
Other Public Agencies  
Interested Organizations

**From:** Stacy Souza Elms, Community & Economic Development Director  
City of Los Banos  
Community & Economic Development Department  
520 J Street  
Los Banos, CA 93635

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan 2042

**Lead Agency:** City of Los Banos Community & Economic Development Department

**Project Title:** General Plan 2042

**Project Area:** City of Los Banos

Notice is hereby given that the City of Los Banos (City) will prepare an EIR for the Los Banos General Plan 2042 (proposed project) and will hold a public meeting to receive comments on the scope of the EIR, as detailed below. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15206, the proposed project is considered a project of statewide, regional, or areawide significance. The City, acting as the lead agency, determined that the proposed project could result in potentially significant environmental impacts and that an EIR is required.

The City will prepare an EIR to address the potential environmental impacts associated with the project at a programmatic level consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. The program-level EIR will evaluate the proposed project for potential impacts on the environment and analyze the proposed policies to determine the potential environmental consequences of future change. An evaluation of project alternatives that could reduce significant impacts will be included in the EIR. The proposed project, its location, and potential environmental effects are described below.

The City is requesting comments and guidance on the scope and content of the EIR from interested public agencies, organizations, and individuals. With respect to the views of Responsible and Trustee Agencies as to significant environmental issues, the City needs to know the reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that are germane to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than the close of the 30-day NOP review period at **5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 16, 2022**. If you submit comments on the scope of the EIR, you will automatically be added to the City's distribution list for future notices and information about the environmental review process for proposed project. If you do not wish to submit comments on the scope of the EIR, but would like to be added to the City's mailing list, you can submit your contact information, including email address with a request to be added to the mailing list.

Please send your written comments to Stacy Souza Elms, at the address shown above or email to [stacy.souza@losbanos.org](mailto:stacy.souza@losbanos.org) with "Los Banos General Plan 2042 EIR" as the subject. Public agencies providing comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

A Scoping Meeting to accept oral comments regarding the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR will be held before the Los Banos Planning Commission on **Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 6:00 pm**. The City Hall Council Chambers remain closed to the public. In accordance with Assembly Bill 361, all members of the Planning Commission and City staff will join the meeting via phone/video conference and no teleconference locations are required. The public can attend the scoping meeting and provide comment virtually using the instructions included in the agenda and provided on the City's website at <https://losbanos.org/category/planning-commission/>.

## **PROJECT LOCATION, DESCRIPTION, AND OBJECTIVES**

This section describes the location, project description, and overall objective of the proposed project. A copy of this NOP, information about the project, including relevant documents, information on upcoming meetings, and ways you can provide feedback can be viewed: 1) on line at <http://losbanos2040.org/>, or 2) City Hall (520 J Street, Los Banos, CA 93635). The Community and Economic Development counter is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### **Project Location**

Los Banos is an incorporated city situated in western Merced County. The project encompasses the Los Banos all land within the city limits, urban growth boundary, and adjacent land in the City's proposed 2042 Sphere of Influence (SOI) boundary.

### **Lead Agency Contact**

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Community & Economic Development Department  
520 J Street  
Los Banos, CA 93635  
(209) 827-2433  
[stacy.souza@losbanos.org](mailto:stacy.souza@losbanos.org)

### **Project Sponsor**

City of Los Banos

### **Project Description and Objectives**

Often described as each city's "constitution," general plans are required by State law to guide land use and development, typically within a 20-year horizon. General plans must be periodically updated to respond to new state laws, changing conditions, and emerging issues and opportunities. Los Banos' existing General Plan was adopted in 2009 with a horizon year of 2030. This general plan update is being prepared over 10 years since that document with a new horizon year set to 2042.

The proposed General Plan 2042 is a targeted update to the current General Plan 2030 and will bring the general plan up to date with latest State and federal legislation around urban development, transportation, climate resilience, and safety and address the city's growth, economic development, sustainability, and conservation of open space and land resources. The plan intends to respond to local and regional housing needs, promote economic growth, foster local job creation, enhance quality of life, and protect natural and agricultural resources. In addition to citywide planning issues, General Plan 2042 will provide goals and policies for enhancing downtown Los Banos as the vibrant center of the city and community.

### **Environmental Review**

The Los Banos General Plan 2042 EIR will determine whether implementation of the proposed project may result in environmental impacts that require mitigation measures to offset potential impacts. General Plan 2042 itself will incorporate implementation provisions (goals, policies, and actions) that focus on reducing environmental impacts in order to reduce the need for separate EIR mitigation measures, improve the efficiency of implementation, and increase the likelihood that development within the study area will be environmentally sustainable. In accordance with CEQA, the cumulative impacts discussion will be based on review of other plans shaping development outside of the study area. CEQA requires that an EIR evaluate alternatives to a project that could reasonably attain the project objectives while reducing any significant impact of the project, as well as considering the "No Project" Alternative (i.e., what could happen if the project were not approved).

## Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The EIR will address the proposed project's potential impacts to the following environmental topics:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources/Tribal Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Date 1/14/22

Signature 

Title Community Development Director

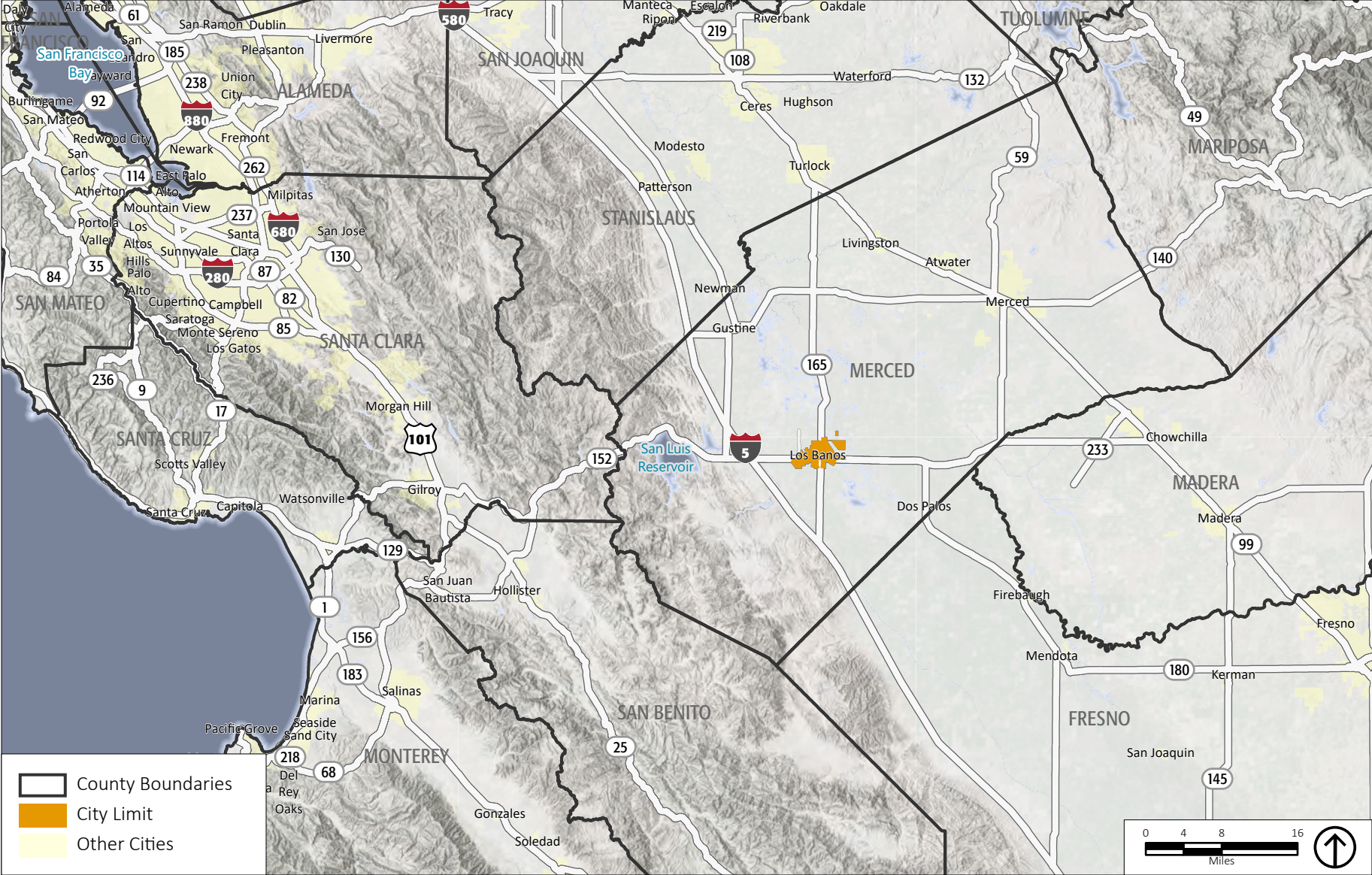
### Attachments:

Figure 1: Regional and Vicinity Map

Figure 2: EIR Study Area



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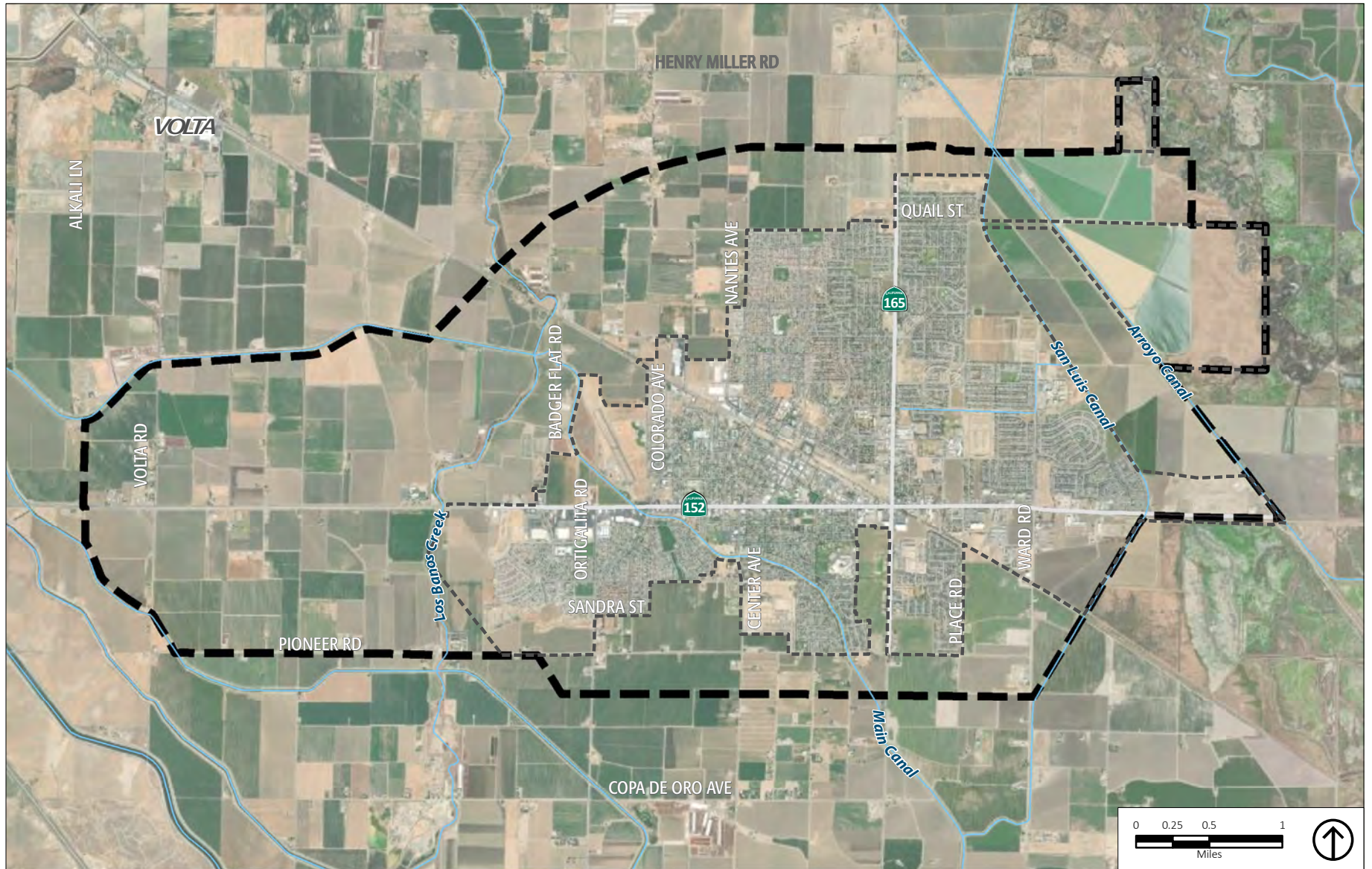


Source: Merced County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2020.

Figure 1  
Regional and Vicinity Map



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Source: California Department of Conservation, 2016; ESRI, 2018; Merced County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2019.



-  City Limits
-  EIR Study Area

Figure 2  
EIR Study Area

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