



**CITY OF SANTA MARIA  
NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
AND SCOPING MEETING**

**DATE:** February 8, 2022

**TO:** Governor's Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

**SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and a Scoping Meeting for the Richards Ranch Annexation Project (AN2021-0001)**

**LEAD AGENCY:**

**Agency Name:** City of Santa Maria  
Community Development  
Department

**Street Address:** 110 South Pine Street,  
Room 101

**City/State/Zip:** Santa Maria, CA 93458

**Contact:** Dana Eady  
Planning Division Manager  
[deady@cityofsantamaria.org](mailto:deady@cityofsantamaria.org)  
(805) 925-0951 ext. 2444

**CONSULTANT:**

**Firm Name:** SWCA Environmental  
Consultants

**Street Address:** 1422 Monterey Street,  
Suite B-C200

**City/State/Zip:** San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

**Contact:** Bobbette Biddulph  
Senior Project Manager  
[bobbette.biddulph@swca.com](mailto:bobbette.biddulph@swca.com)

As the Lead Agency, the City of Santa Maria (City) will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Richards Ranch Annexation Project (project). The EIR is being prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is being distributed to applicable interested, responsible, and trustee agencies and interested parties as required by CEQA. Comments from agencies and interested parties are requested on the scope and content of the environmental analysis to be included in the EIR.

**Project Title:** Richards Ranch Annexation Project

**Project Location:** The project consists of four parcels located in Santa Barbara County to the northeast and southeast of the intersection of State Route (SR-) 135 and Union Valley Parkway. These parcels, Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN) 107-250-19, 107-250-20, 107-250-21, and 107-250-22, are within the City of Santa Maria Sphere of Influence (SOI) and adjacent to the southeastern limits of the city of Santa Maria and total approximately 44 acres. The project description and an initial identification of the probable environmental effects leading to the determination to prepare an EIR are included in the PROJECT SUMMARY ATTACHMENT provided on page 3.

**Public Comment Period:** February 8 to March 9, 2022

Written comments or questions concerning the EIR for the proposed project should be directed to Dana Eady, Planning Division Manager, at the addresses shown above. Please indicate a contact person for your agency or organization. Due to the time limits mandated by state law, written comments must be sent via United States Postal Service or email **no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 9, 2022.**

All comments provided should identify specific topics of environmental concern and the reason for suggesting the study of these topics in the EIR. All comments will be considered in defining the scope of the EIR in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines.

**Scoping Meeting:** The City will hold a virtual EIR scoping meeting on **February 22, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.** To maximize public safety while still maintaining transparency and access, all interested parties are invited to attend the virtual scoping meeting to assist with identifying issues to be addressed in the EIR. The scoping meeting will include a brief presentation of the project to be addressed in the EIR and will provide attendees with an opportunity to provide input on the scope of the EIR.

Register in advance for this meeting to attend and to make public comments during the meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ff15hBbQQX2v8uo3cVwGog](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ff15hBbQQX2v8uo3cVwGog)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Date: February 8, 2022**

**Signature:**

**Name and Title:** Dana Eady, Planning Division Manager

**Attachment 1 – Richards Ranch Annexation Project Summary**

## ATTACHMENT 1

### RICHARDS RANCH ANNEXATION PROJECT NOTICE OF PREPARATION PROJECT SUMMARY

#### Project Location

Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN) 107-250-19, 107-250-20, 107-250-21, and 107-250-22  
Northeast and southeast intersection of State Route (SR-) 135 and Union Valley Parkway  
Santa Barbara, CA 93455

#### Lead Agency

City of Santa Maria  
Contact: Dana Eady, Planning Division Manager  
Community Development Department  
110 South Pine Street, #101  
Santa Maria, CA 93458  
(805) 925-0951 ext. 2444  
[deady@cityofsantamaria.org](mailto:deady@cityofsantamaria.org)

#### Project Sponsor

MD3 Investments  
Contact: Michael D. Stoltey, MBA  
[Md3investments@gmail.com](mailto:Md3investments@gmail.com)

#### Project Site Location and Setting

The Richards Ranch Annexation Project (project) site includes four parcels located to the northeast and southeast of the intersection of SR-135 and Union Valley Parkway in the unincorporated community of Orcutt in Santa Barbara County (Figure 1, Project Vicinity Map). The project site is adjacent to the southeastern limits of the city of Santa Maria and is lies within the City's Sphere of Influence. The project site is approximately 1.5 miles west of U.S. Route (US-) 101 and 2.3 miles northeast of SR-1. The Santa Maria Airport District property is located to the west of SR-135 and northwest of the project site, with the terminus of the main runway approximately 0.75 mile to the northwest. The project site is also partially overlain by the Santa Maria Airport Flight Approach and Clear Zones. The project site is undeveloped and relatively flat. Vegetation on the site includes non-native grassland and coastal scrub habitats, as well as stands of non-native eucalyptus and ornamental trees. As identified in the Santa Barbara County Orcutt Community Plan, the current land use designation is Mixed Commercial/Residential, which provides for general commercial, office and professional, and residential uses. All four parcels have a zoning designation of Retail Commercial (C-2).

Land uses surrounding the site include the following:

North: Existing residential lots

South: Existing church and residential lots

East: Multifamily developments know as Northpoint and Mariposa with their open space.

West: SR-135 and Orcutt Road run parallel along the west property line and further west is the Santa Maria Airport and the Foxenwood Townhomes

## Project Description

The project would involve the pre-zoning of four parcels located in unincorporated Santa Barbara County by the City of Santa Maria and annexation of the property into the Santa Maria City limits. Table 1 summarizes the parcels proposed to be annexed, acreages, and the proposed pre-zone designation.

The project would require approval from the Santa Barbara County Local Agency Formation Commission (SBLAFCO) for the annexation of the parcels. The EIR prepared for this project is intended to meet SBLAFCO requirements for annexation.

**Table 1: Project Site Parcels and Proposed Pre-Zone Designations**

APN	Acreage	Proposed Pre-Zone Designation
107-250-19	2.33	General Commercial (PD/C-2)
107-250-20	1.86	General Commercial (PD/C-2)
107-250-21	12.16	General Commercial (PD/C-2)
107-250-22	27.40	High Density Residential (PD/R-3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.75</b>	

Note: Acreage totals for APNs obtained from the property Title Report prepared by Stewart Title Guaranty Company Commercial Services (San Diego) for Michael D. Stoltey, an individual, dba MD3 Investments on July 2, 2021.

Pre-zoning is a required component of the annexation process. California Government Code Section 65859 allows the City to adopt (i.e., pre-zone) a zoning designation for land outside its city limits in anticipation of annexation and development. Under the code provisions, the zoning designation adopted by the City would not become effective unless and until the land is annexed to the City. As outlined in Table 1, the project proposes to pre-zone the parcels in the project site as either General Commercial (C-2) or High Density Residential (R-3). The parcels would also be located within the Planned Development (PD) Overlay District, which is designed and intended to provide for the orderly development of land in conformance with the City’s General Plan by permitting a flexible design approach to the development of a total community development equal to or better than that resulting from traditional lot by lot development.

A conceptual layout for future development of the project site has been created to include retail commercial, mini-storage, and high-density residential uses (Figure 2, Proposed Richards Ranch Concept Plan). As summarized in Table 2, the concept plan would allow a maximum buildout of 160,800 square feet (sf) of commercial uses on 16.35 acres of the project site, as well as 400 apartments and 95 townhomes on the remaining 27.4 acres. This concept plan show the potential future development that could occur consistent with the project’s proposed pre-zone designations and will be used for the purposes of the environmental analysis in the EIR.

**Table 2: Summary of Proposed Richards Ranch Concept Plan**

Proposed Zoning Category	Acreage	% of Total	Potential Development
General Commercial (C2)	16.35	37%	106,800 sf
High Density Residential (R3)	18.20	42%	400 apartments
High Density Residential (R3)	9.20	21%	95 townhomes
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.75</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Sources: RRM Design Group Site Plans 2021; Title Report 2021.

## **Probable Environmental Effects and Scope of the EIR**

The City has completed a preliminary review of the project, as described in Section 15060 of the State CEQA Guidelines and has determined that a comprehensive EIR will be required for the project. Therefore, all of the topics identified in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines (the initial study checklist) will undergo study, the findings of which will be presented in the EIR.

Each chapter of this EIR will include a discussion of the existing setting, thresholds of significance, evaluation of potential impacts, and, if necessary, feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts to the applicable resource. Additionally, the EIR will include analyses of alternatives to the project. Alternatives to be analyzed in the EIR will be defined based on their potential to reduce or eliminate significant environmental impacts associated with the project. The specific alternatives may include, but are not limited to, the “No Project” alternative, as required by CEQA.

**Figure 1. Project Vicinity Map**

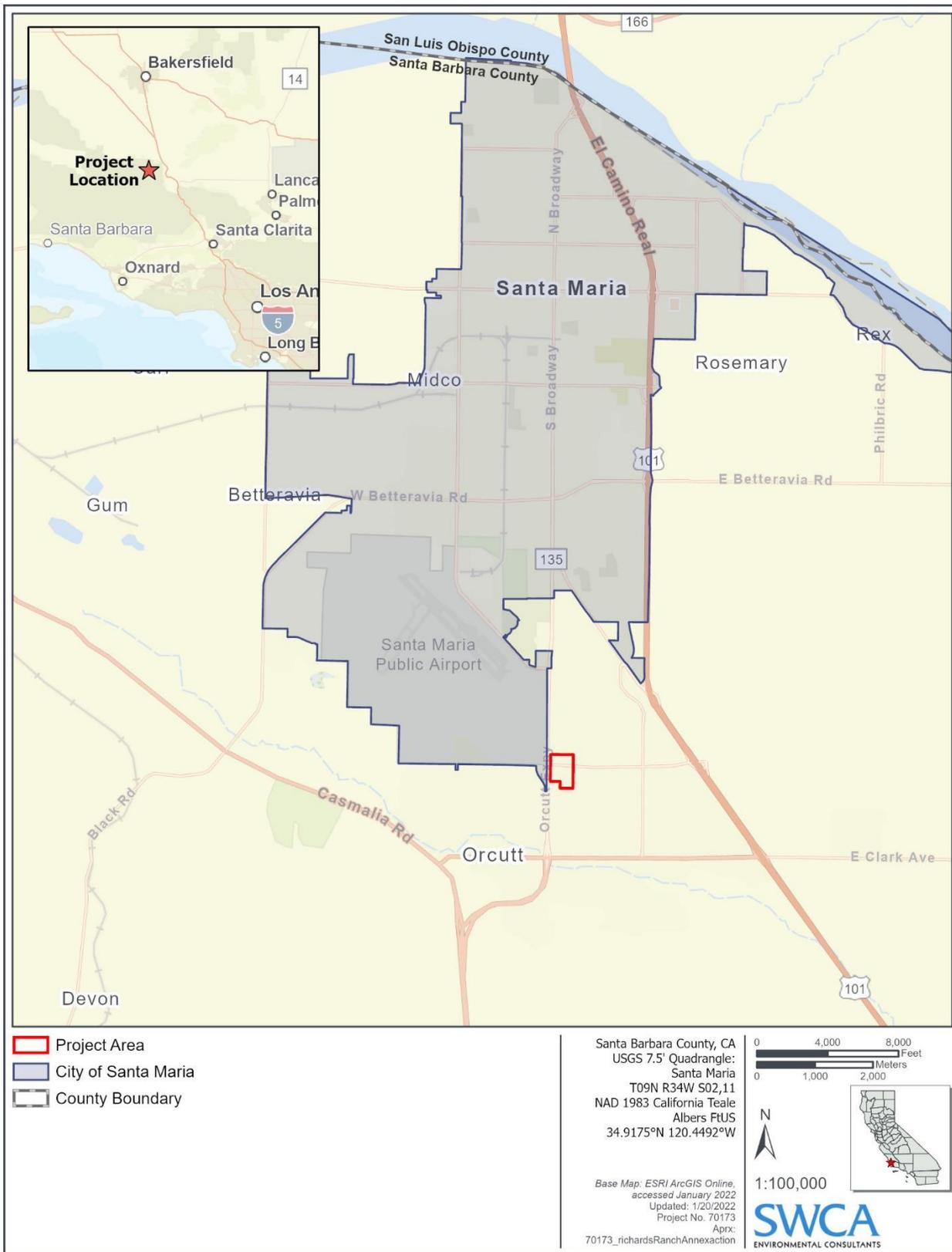


Figure 2. Proposed Richards Ranch Concept Plan

