

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

DATE: February 18, 2025

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 Santa Maria General Plan Update

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
(805) 925-0951 ext. 2444

CONSULTANT:

Firm Name: Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Street Address: 1530 Monterey Street, Suite D

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

Contact: Chris Bersbach
Senior Supervising
Environmental Planner
cbersbach@rinconconsultants.com

Project Title: City of Santa Maria General Plan Update

The City of Santa Maria (City), as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is preparing an update to the Santa Maria General Plan that will guide growth and development of the city through 2045, and has determined that preparation of a programmatic EIR is necessary to evaluate potential environmental impacts of the 2045 General Plan and associated Zoning Code amendments pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City is the CEQA Lead Agency and is requesting input on the scope of the EIR from responsible and trustee agencies, interested public agencies and organizations, and the general public (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082).

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) provides a summary of the plan, the City's preliminary identification of the potential environmental issues to be analyzed in the programmatic EIR; and information on how to comment on the scope of the EIR. This NOP and background documents associated with the 2045 General Plan are available for review on the Santa Maria 2045 General Plan webpage at: <https://www.imaginesantamaria.com/>.

EIR NOP Public Comment Period: February 18 to March 19, 2025

The City requests your review and consideration of this notice and invites input and comments from interested agencies, persons, and organizations regarding the preparation of the 2045 General Plan EIR.

NOP Written Comments: Comments must be submitted via mail or email with “NOP Comments: Santa Maria 2045 General Plan EIR” in the subject line and the name and physical address of the commenter in the body of the comment to the Lead Agency Contact at the following address or e-mail by **5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 19, 2025:**

Dana Eady, Planning Division Manager
Community Development Department
110 South Pine Street, Suite 101
Santa Maria, California 93458
deady@cityofsantamaria.org

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. If applicable, please indicate a contact person for your agency or organization.

EIR Public Scoping Meeting: The City will hold a public EIR scoping meeting in-person to provide an opportunity for agency staff and interested members of the public to submit verbal comments on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR. The scoping meeting will be held on **Thursday, February 27th at 9:00 AM at Shephard Hall in the Santa Maria Library (421 S. McClelland Street, Santa Maria, California 93454)**. 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.

Plan Location: The Santa Maria 2045 General Plan encompasses the entirety of the City of Santa Maria and its Sphere of Influence. Figure 1 in the Plan Description (Attachment 1) below shows the regional location and Figure 2 shows the Santa Maria 2045 General Plan boundary.

Proposed Plan: The 2045 General Plan would serve as a long-term framework for future growth, reflect issues identified from community input and changes in State law, and update all elements of the General Plan including the Land Use Element, Circulation Element, Safety Element, Environmental Justice Element, Conservation and Open Space Element, Noise Element, Public Facilities and Services Element, Recreation and Parks Element, and Economic Development Element. The update to the General Plan would include, but is not limited to, revisions to policies, narratives, data, and figures to reflect the new buildout period. The Zoning Code would also be amended to ensure consistency with the General Plan.

EIR Environmental Impact Areas: The EIR will provide a programmatic evaluation of potential environmental impacts of the plan. The EIR also will evaluate the cumulative impacts of the plan when considered in conjunction with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The City anticipates that the plan could result in potentially significant environmental impacts with regard to the following topic areas, which will be further evaluated in the EIR.

- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems

EIR Plan Alternatives: The EIR will also evaluate a reasonable range of plan alternatives that could reduce or avoid potential environmental effects identified in the EIR, including a required “No Plan” Alternative.

When the Draft EIR is completed, it will be available for review at the City's offices located 110 South Pine Street, Suite 101, Santa Maria, California 93458 and online at: <https://www.imaginesantamaria.com/>. The City will issue a Notice of Completion and Notice of Availability of a Draft EIR at that time to inform the public and interested agencies, groups, and individuals regarding how to access the Draft EIR and provide comments. Additional information about the proposed plan can be accessed at the <https://www.imaginesantamaria.com/> webpage and the City website at <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/>.

If you have questions regarding this NOP or the EIR public scoping meeting, please contact Dana Eady, Planning Division Manager at (805) 925-0951 or via email at Deady@cityofsantamaria.org.



Dana Eady, Planning Division Manager

February 17, 2025

Date

Attachment 1 – Plan Description

Attachment 1 - Plan Description

The plan analyzed in this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the City of Santa Maria (City) 2045 General Plan Update, hereafter referred to as the “plan.” This section of the EIR describes the key characteristics of the plan, including the plan proponent/lead agency, the geographic extent of the plan, plan objectives, required approvals, and the development forecasted by the plan.

Plan Purpose

The plan is an update to the City’s current General Plan, which includes the following chapters: Land Use Element, Circulation Element, Safety Element, Health and Environmental Justice Element, Conservation and Open Space Element, Noise Element, Public Facilities and Services Element, Recreation and Parks Element, and Economic Development Element. The plan establishes the City’s vision for future development through the horizon year of 2045. The plan will serve as the City’s primary guide for future land use and development decisions in a way that meets the community needs and priorities while serving as a key tool for influencing and improving the quality of life for residents and businesses. As such, it serves as the “blueprint” for future development and conservation of a community. The 2045 General Plan Update will help the City plan for important community issues, such as community growth; housing, mobility, and infrastructure needs; climate change; and environmental protection. It will also set the stage for future social, physical, and economic development of the city.

Plan Proponent/Lead Agency

The City of Santa Maria is both the plan proponent and the lead agency for the proposed plan. The City’s Community Development Department (located at 110 South Pine Street, Suite 101, Santa Maria, California 93458) prepared this EIR with the assistance of Rincon Consultants, Inc. and Raimi + Associates.

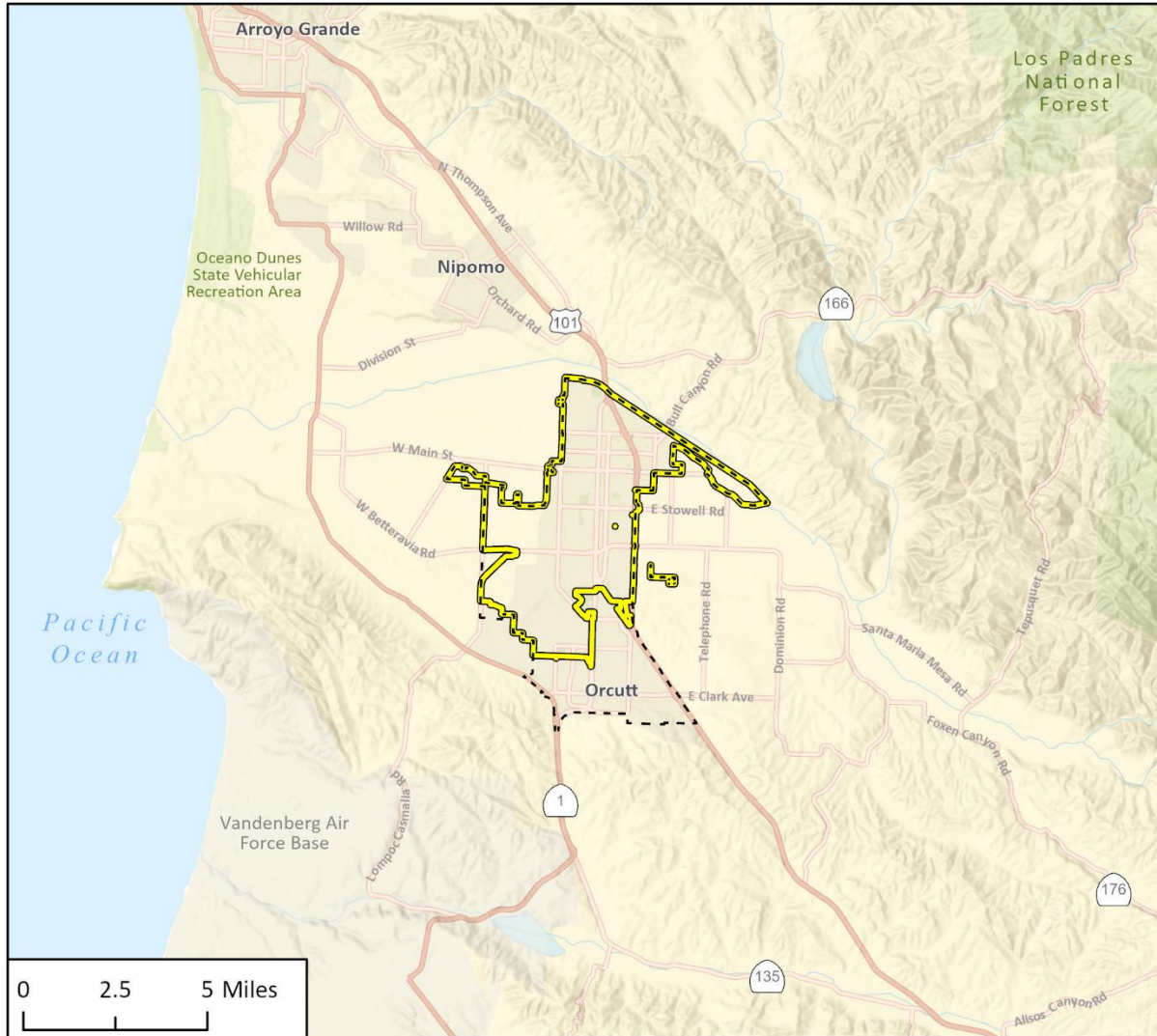
Plan Area Location and Environmental Setting

Regional Location

The City of Santa Maria is located in northern Santa Barbara County, surrounded by the hills of the Santa Maria River Valley (see Figure 1). The General Plan area involves all land within the Santa Maria Sphere of Influence¹ (SOI) and includes the annexation of areas east of the city limits (see Figure 2). The City of Santa Maria is generally bound by the Santa Maria River to the north, agricultural lands to the east and west, and the unincorporated town of Orcutt to the south.




¹ The term “sphere of influence” applies to the area designated by the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) as the probable, future physical boundary or service area of the city. Overall, planning decisions made for the city are assumed to have a bearing on growth and development in these unincorporated adjacent areas. Areas not included as part of the annexation for the 2045 General Plan will continue to be deferred to the County land use designations and regulations in the SOI. Any development or change that happens in the SOI during the lifetime of the General Plan will occur under the jurisdiction of the County. Therefore, this EIR does not evaluate impacts resulting from future growth within the SOI, outside of the proposed annexation, as part of the proposed plan. However, where relevant, this EIR does evaluate potential impacts resulting from future growth within the city limits to lands within the SOI. The SOI is also included in the cumulative setting for this EIR.

Figure 1 Regional Location



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Fig. 1 Regional Location

-  Santa Maria City Limits
-  Sphere of Influence/
General Plan Area
-  Project Location

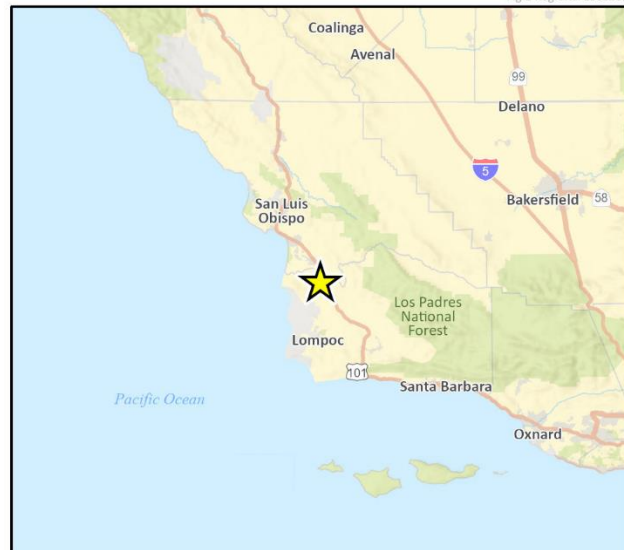
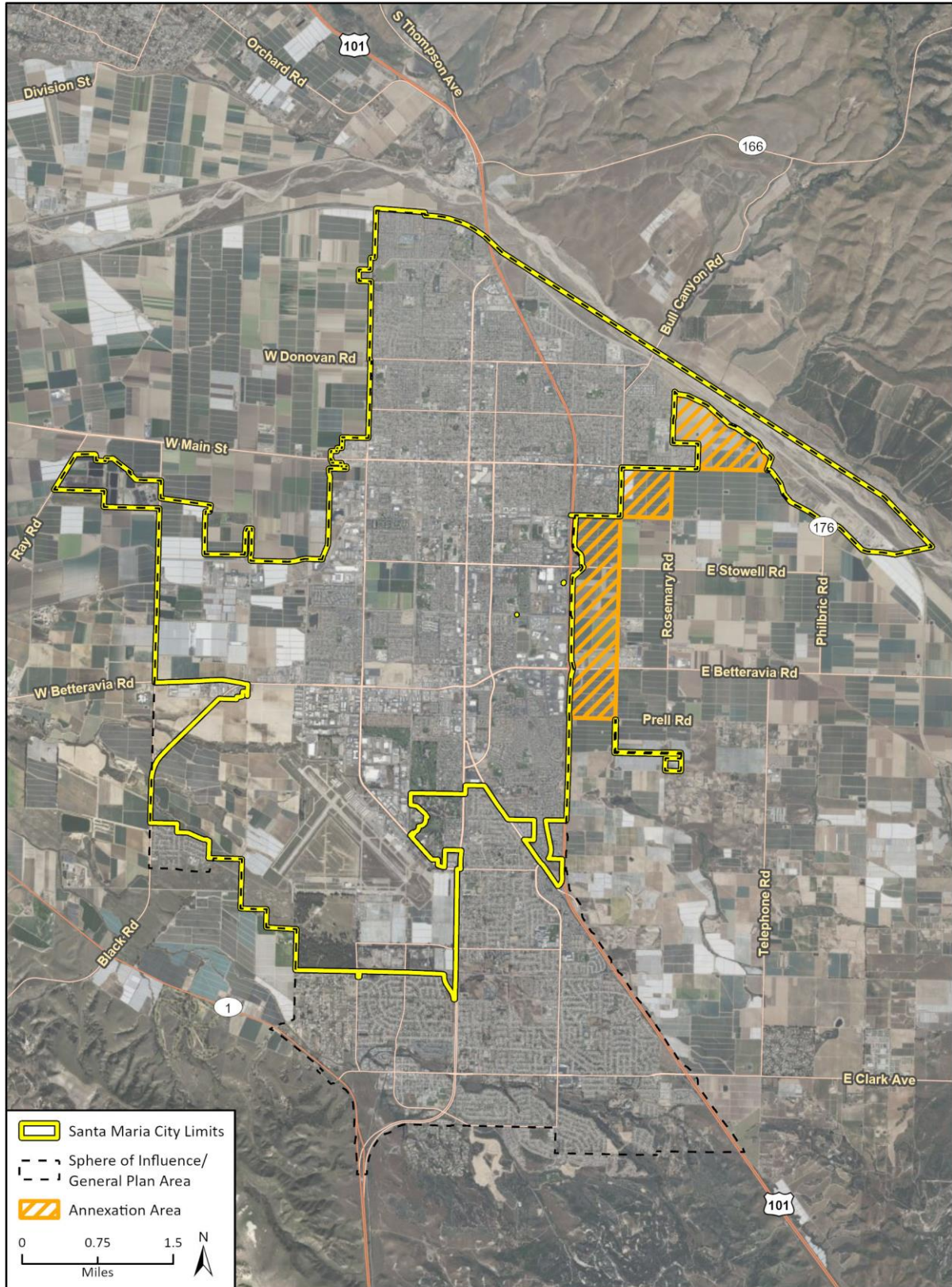


Figure 2 Plan Area Location



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Fig 2 Project Location

U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101) forms the eastern edge of the city. A linear portion of Santa Maria is also located to the west of U.S. 101. This portion of the city extends south from Vineyard Trail Road then extends east along an internal farm road. Santa Maria is located approximately 25 miles south of San Luis Obispo, 50 miles northwest of Santa Barbara, 250 miles south of San Francisco and 170 miles north of Los Angeles.

Principal regional transportation facilities serving Santa Maria are U.S. 101, State Route 135 (SR 135), State Route 166 (SR 166), and the Santa Maria Valley Airport. Regional transit is provided by Clean Air Express and the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority. Regional rail is provided by Amtrak.

Local Setting

The City of Santa Maria is characterized as a suburban residential community. The plan area covers approximately 17,200 acres within the city limits and approximately 4,500 acres within the SOI (City of Santa Maria 2020). Approximately 27 percent of land within Santa Maria is occupied with residential uses, primarily consisting of single-family residences (22 percent). Agricultural uses occupy 14 percent of the city, airport uses occupy 11 percent, public and institutional uses occupy 8 percent, and commercial uses occupy 7 percent. Approximately 19 percent of the city is comprised of vacant land. Residential land uses are distributed throughout the city. Non-residential land uses, including industrial and commercial, commonly line major corridors in Santa Maria, including Broadway, Main Street, and Betteravia Road. Agricultural and vacant uses are located at the periphery of the city. The city is underlain by the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Subbasin. The local climate in Santa Maria is identified as a Mediterranean climate characterized by warm, dry summers and cool, moist winters.

Existing Plan Area Characteristics

The 2045 Santa Maria General Plan area covers approximately 17,200 acres, which includes 12,700 acres within the city limits and 4,500 acres within the Sphere of Influence (SOI). Approximately 110,608 people live within the General Plan area as of January 2024, resulting in population density of approximately 640 people per square mile. There are 34,412 residential units within the General Plan area as of 2024 (California Department of Finance 2024).

The annexation area evaluated in the plan (discussed in detail in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**) covers 985 acres east of the City of Santa Maria's limits.

Regulatory Setting

State law (Government Code Sections 65300 through 65303.4) requires each municipality to adopt and periodically update its General Plan, and requires that a General Plan include the following mandatory subject areas, or "elements": Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Open Space, Conservation, Noise, Safety, and Environmental Justice. Municipalities may also prepare optional elements that can be organized or combined at the municipality's discretion.

The 2045 General Plan has been organized into the following elements: Land Use; Circulation; Safety, Health and Environmental Justice; Conservation and Open Space; Noise; Public Facilities and Services; Recreation and Parks Element; and Economic Development.² Together, these elements

² General Plan element titles and organization of required content in the General Plan is currently in draft status and subject to change.

cover all topics required to be included in a General Plan under State law. The City of Santa Maria City Council adopted the 6th Cycle Housing Element on December 5, 2023. The 2045 General Plan may require additional updates to the adopted Housing Element, although such updates are anticipated to be for consistency with the 2045 General Plan.

Under State law a property's zoning is required to be consistent with its General Plan land use designation (Government Code Section 65860). Section 65860(c) of the Government Code requires that when a General Plan is amended or updated in a way that makes the Zoning Ordinance inconsistent with the General Plan, "the zoning ordinance shall be amended within a reasonable time so that it is consistent with the general plan as amended."

Plan Objectives

The 2045 General Plan will serve as a long-term framework for future growth and development, represents the community's view of its future, and contains the goals and policies upon which the City Council, Planning Commission, and the entire community will base land use and resource decisions. The 2045 General Plan will provide a contemporary plan that will guide Santa Maria through the next 20 years. The primary objective of this plan is to update the existing Santa Maria General Plan in order for it to be compliant with State law.

The 2045 General Plan would implement the following vision to guide development.

Vision. Santa Maria in 2045 is a community where families can establish and maintain multi-generational roots. It is close-knit, culturally diverse, and economically inclusive. This is possible, in part, because Santa Maria offers affordable, safe, attractive, and healthy homes and neighborhoods for all residents. This is also possible because of the availability of high-quality education, jobs, and economic opportunity. Building from a strong foundation in the agricultural, retail, healthcare, and business services industries, Santa Maria has continued to diversify by expanding the training and skills of residents and by adapting to new technologies and broader economic trends. People are proud of their history and heritage. This is reflected in the diverse, well-preserved historical resources and the attractive, inviting streets and public gathering places. Museums, art venues, a strong civic sector, and the many welcoming community events and celebrations are all evidence of a vibrant local culture. Residents have convenient access on foot and by car, bus, and bicycle to jobs, schools, community amenities like parks and sports fields, and the region's natural environment. Public services are reliable, inclusive, and efficient, and the community is well-served by equitable, modern, and sustainable infrastructure, facilities, and utilities.

The City identifies the following 11 guiding principles, which also serve as the proposed plan objectives for the purposes of complying with CEQA.

- **Agricultural Identity.** Continue to support the agricultural industry and its workforce. Balance the protection of prime agricultural land with the development necessary to support continued population growth and the diversification of the local economy.
- **Culture, History, and Art.** Celebrate and share Santa Maria's multicultural heritage and contemporary diversity. Preserve historic resources, foster the arts, maintain a strong sense of community through cultural festivals, and invite visitors to enjoy the richness of local expression and resources.
- **Community Design.** Create public spaces that reflect the community identity, foster civic pride, and invite community members to gather, both informally and for events. Design streets, buildings, and landscaping that reflect the community's history, culture, and natural

environment. Use lighting, street trees, benches, and other amenities to make sidewalks and public spaces safe and welcoming, with a focus on the Downtown and along the Main and Broadway corridors.

- **Community Health.** Grow and expand physical and mental healthcare services to meet the needs of all residents. Improve community health by addressing the environmental justice priorities of disadvantaged communities, including seniors, low-income households, linguistically isolated families, the homeless, and youth, who comprise 35 percent of residents. Minimize residents' potential for exposure to noise, pesticides, and industrial pollution. Foster healthy lifestyles by expanding safe and attractive options for physical activity and by expanding healthy food access.
- **Natural Environment and Resilience.** Conserve water resources in the city and support efforts to maintain the Santa Maria River. Expand opportunities to enjoy the area's natural resources and the region's beauty. Safeguard the community from natural hazards, including those exacerbated by climate change.
- **Housing Quality and Choice.** Develop a high-quality and diverse housing supply at all levels of affordability that preserves Santa Maria as a place where families can establish roots and today's youth can afford to stay. Balance the growth of housing and the economy so that people can live and work in Santa Maria. As new housing types are introduced, (e.g., accessory dwelling units (ADUs)), adapt parking, transportation, and other community features. Develop workforce housing solutions that provide safe, healthy, and comfortable homes for workers and their families.
- **Resilient Economy.** Cultivate a diverse and resilient economy in which local businesses and families thrive and job growth keeps pace with housing development. Grow the existing economic base in agriculture, retail, healthcare, and business services, and expand into new industries. Ensure access to high quality education that is aligned with local industries and entrepreneurship.
- **Connected Growth.** To accommodate projected population, housing, and jobs growth, focus on improvements to existing neighborhoods along with infill and vacant site development. Expand beyond current city limits when needed, weighing the short and long term environmental, economic, infrastructure, public service, and fiscal trade-offs. Establish strong cultural, design, and physical connections between newly developed areas and the rest of Santa Maria.
- **Transportation Innovations.** Develop a balanced, equitable, affordable, and reliable transportation network where pedestrians, cyclists, trucks, cars, rail, and transit can safely and efficiently navigate to destinations within Santa Maria. Focus on maintaining existing roadways, expanding walking and biking options, and reducing congestion and maintenance costs. Transform corridors and streets from points of conflict among people, cyclists, cars, and trucks into places that bring neighborhoods and families together. Prepare for and expand regional connections with enhanced bus, rail, and air service. Prepare for technological advances like autonomous vehicles and remote work, and take advantage of opportunities and incentives to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- **Infrastructure, Utilities, Facilities, and Services.** Provide residents and businesses with equitable access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable infrastructure and utilities, including water, wastewater, flood control, gas, phone, cable, and broadband internet. Deliver high-quality services and facilities for all community members, including expedient emergency response, accessible health care, high-quality education and career training, and convenient and equitable access to well-maintained parks and recreational facilities.

- **Governance and Engagement.** Continue to conduct and increase meaningful and inclusive civic engagement that empowers a diversity of perspectives in public decision-making. Provide residents and businesses with high-quality, equitable, and accessible customer service, including City communications and events in multiple languages and interpretation services. Partner with community organizations and institutions to build trust and increase participation, including among youth, who will be the City leaders in 2045.

Plan Characteristics

2045 General Plan Update Organization

The elements included in the 2045 General Plan are further described in this section.

- **Conservation and Open Space Element.** This element outlines the development, management, and preservation of natural, tribal, cultural, and historic resources within the plan area. Goals, policies, and actions within this element address climate change adaptation and resilience in relation to natural resources, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, urban forestry, and the use of open space for the conservation of natural, cultural, and other resources as well as for hazard mitigation.
- **Safety Element.** This element addresses natural and manmade safety hazards in Santa Maria, including geologic and seismic hazards, fire hazards, flooding, hazardous materials, and emergency response and establishes policies and actions to mitigate hazard impacts to people and property. The Safety Element also evaluates evacuation capacity under a range of hazard scenarios, identifies single-access neighborhoods, and establishes policies and actions to enhance evacuation capacity throughout the city, consistent with Assembly Bill (AB) 747 and Senate Bill (SB) 99. In accordance with SB 379, this element also includes a climate change vulnerability assessment and measures to address climate vulnerabilities and hazard mitigation and emergency response.
- **Land Use.** This element designates the placement and distribution of future development to facilitate orderly growth within the city. This element establishes future land use patterns and specifies appropriate residential density and development intensity. Goals and policies serve as a guide for decision makers to direct the development of the city. Additionally, this element provides an overall design framework for the city with the goal of preserving community character and highlighting community gateways and views.
- **Circulation.** This element provides a framework for the City's multimodal transportation network, addressing the movement of people and goods in and around Santa Maria, while ensuring the orderly improvement of the circulation system in response to the Land Use Element. This element also establishes policies related to the electrification of vehicles and commercial enterprises promoting Mobility as a Service (MaaS), complete streets (AB 1358) and VMT (SB 743).
- **Public Facilities and Services Element.** This element evaluates existing and future conditions related to the provision and maintenance of public buildings and services, including parks, schools, libraries, police, fire, and water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure. This element presents goals, policies, and actions related to public facilities and services in order to sustain existing households and businesses and accommodate future growth in population, employment, and development.

- **Recreation and Parks Element.** This element inventories existing park and recreational resources throughout the city and evaluates future conditions and needs related to parks and recreation. Goals, policies, and actions within this element aim to facilitate equitable distribution of resources and investments to meet the recreational needs of all community members.
- **Economic Development Element.** This element includes goals, policies, and actions related to the retention and expansion of existing business sectors, as well as diversifying the economy to develop new kinds of businesses in Santa Maria.
- **Noise Element.** This element identifies and evaluates sources of noise and groundborne vibration and aims to minimize excessive noise exposure and noise conflicts. This element would be consistent with the Santa Maria Public Airport Master Plan and include new noise contours.
- **Health and Environmental Justice Element.** This element identifies disadvantaged communities within the city and includes goals, policies, and actions to reduce pollution exposure, promote access to food, public facilities, and safe housing, and strengthen civic engagement in City planning and decision making.

The City recently updated its Housing Element, which was adopted on December 5, 2023. The Housing Element provides the City's action plan for meeting the City's 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of 5,418 dwelling units for the 6th Cycle Housing Element (2023 to 2031). The Housing Element has undergone separate CEQA review and for that reason is not part of the plan being evaluated in this EIR. The Housing Element and Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration were adopted on December 5, 2023.

Land Use Designations

The current Santa Maria General Plan Land Use Element establishes 30 separate land use designations to provide a mixture of land uses for the City. The existing City of Santa Maria Land Use Designations Map is shown in Figure 3.

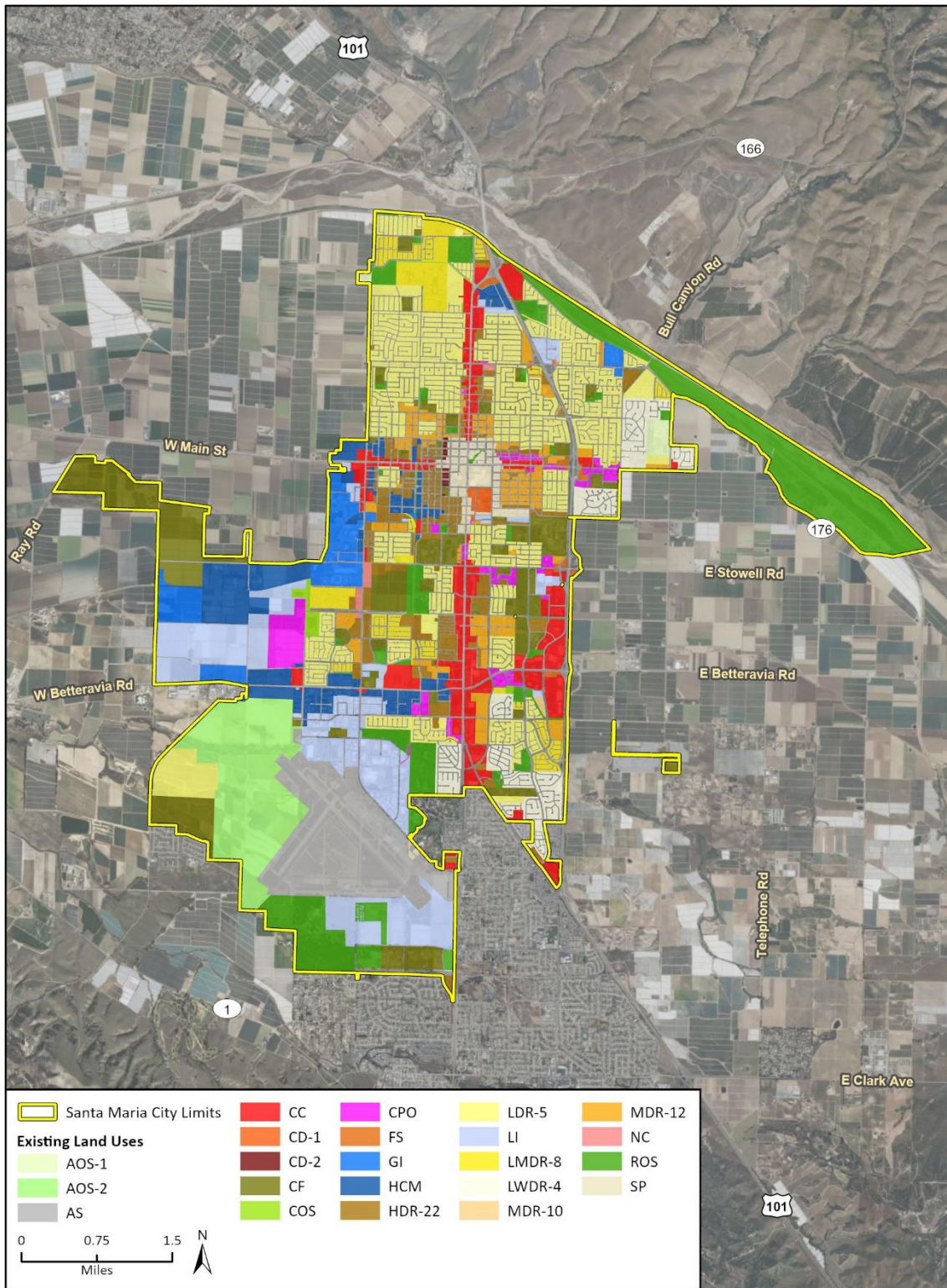
The plan would change some of the land use designations; including planned land use changes that resolve inconsistencies between existing uses and the General Plan land use designations. Land use conflicts primarily consist of industrial, heavy commercial, agricultural, and airport uses in proximity to residential uses. In addition, the plan includes the following land use designation changes:

- Revise the High Density Residential (HDR) land use designation to increase the maximum allowed density from 22 dwelling units/acre to 30 dwelling units/acre.
- Eliminate the Medium Density Residential-10 (MDR-10) land use designation and reassign all parcels currently designated MDR-10 to MDR-12, which would have an allowed density of 12 dwelling units/acre.
- Add two new land use designations, Downtown Specific Plan (SP) and Planned Annexation (PA).

Land use changes for the proposed annexation areas east of the city limits (the planned annexation areas are discussed in detail in the Annexation subsection that follows. Figure 4 shows the changes in land use designations compared to the current General Plan. Proposed changes from the existing General Plan land use pattern include the following:

- A parcel along North Broadway from Low Density Residential and Community Commercial to Community Facilities (CF);
- Parcels along Main Street from Community Commercial to Main Mixed Use (MMU);

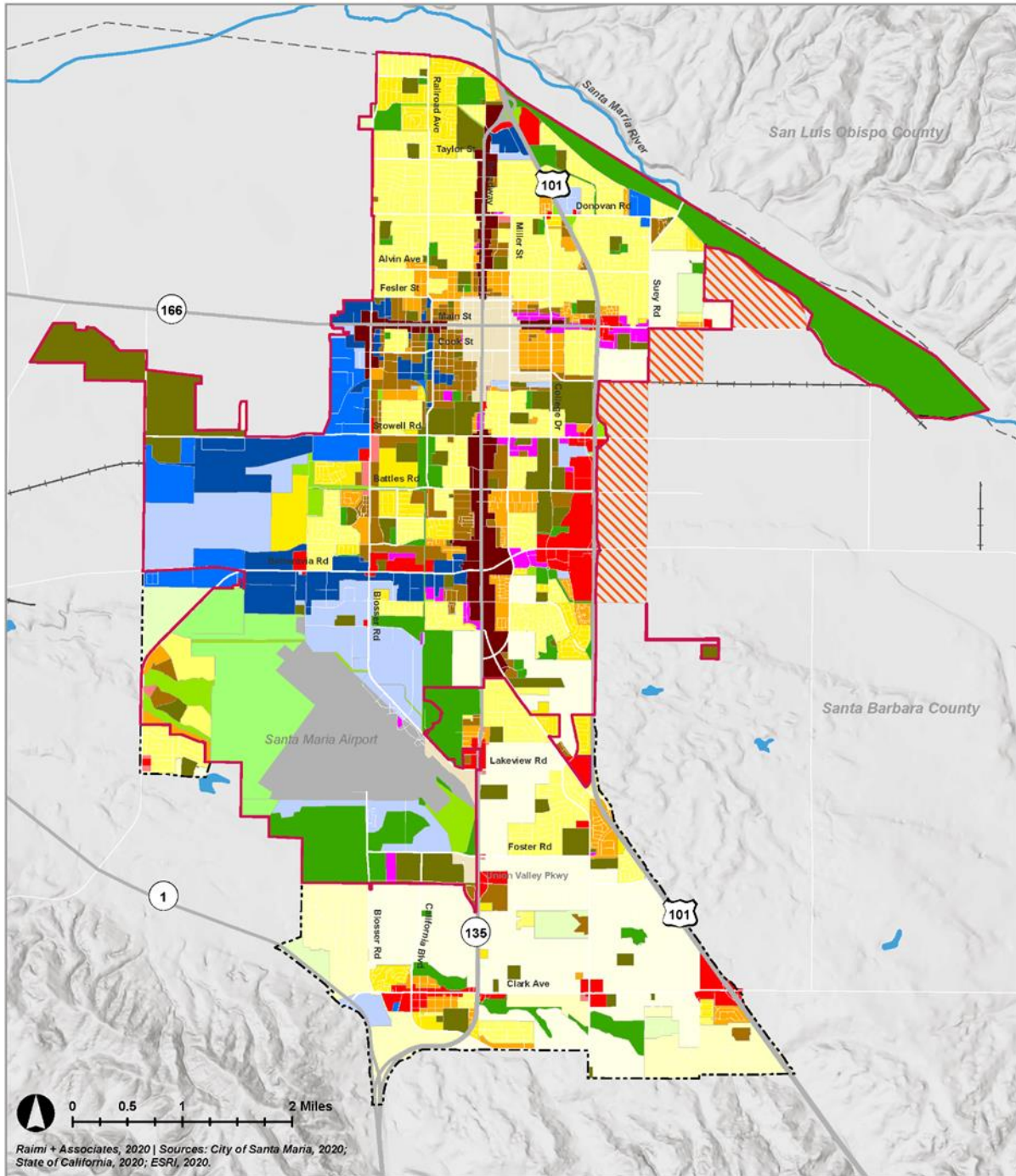
Figure 3 Existing Land Use Designations within the City of Santa Maria



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 Additional data provided by the City of Santa Maria, 2025.

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 Fig X Existing Land Use

Figure 4 Proposed Land Use Changes



Raimi + Associates, 2020 | Sources: City of Santa Maria, 2020; State of California, 2020; ESRI, 2020.



General Plan Land Use

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Santa Maria City Limits - - - Sphere of Influence - - - County Boundaries — Railroads — Santa Maria River — Water — Residential Agricultural (RA) or Very Low Density (VLDR) — Lower-Density Residential (LWDR) — Low-Density Residential (LDR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Low-Medium Density Residential (LMDR) — Medium Density Residential (MDR) — High Density Residential (HDR) — Corridor Mixed Use (CMU) — Neighborhood Commercial (NC) — Community Commercial (CC) — Commercial/Professional Office (CPO) — Light Industrial (LI) — General Industrial (GI) — Heavy Commercial/Manufacturing (HCM) — Airport Service (AS) — Primary Agricultural Open Space (AOS-1) — Secondary Agricultural Open Space (AOS-2) — Conservation Open Space (COS) — Recreational Open Space (ROS) — Community Facilities (CF) — Specific Plan (SP) — Planned Annexation (PA) |
|---|--|

- Parcels along Broadway from Community Commercial to Broadway Mixed Use (BMU); and
- Allow Low Density Residential in Area 9 along A Street in the western portion of the city.

Changes in land use designations within the General Plan would also necessitate revisions to the following Specific Plans:

- Amend the Entrada Specific Plan to reflect the new Broadway and Main Mixed Use land use designations.
- Amend the Area 9 Specific Plan to allow low density residential uses along A Street, consistent with the LMDR-8 designation.

Annexation

The 2045 General Plan would include the annexation of areas east of the city limits and SOI. There are three separate areas (shown in Figure 5) that would be included as part of the proposed annexation (“annexation area”) that would total 985 acres.

The first area proposed for annexation is generally bound by Panther Drive to the west, E. Main Street to the south, and the city limits to the north and east. The second area proposed for annexation is generally bound by S. Suey Road to the west, E. Main Street to the north, E. Jones Street to the south, and Rosemary Road to the east. The third area proposed for annexation is generally bound by E. Jones Street to the north, U.S. 101 to the west, Vineyard Trail Road to the south, and Rosemary Road to the east. Much of the annexation area is vacant or agricultural land.

Existing zoning and land use designations within the annexation area are determined by the County of Santa Barbara and consist primarily of agricultural land use designations (Agriculture II with a minimum lot size of 100 acres [AG-II-100] and Agriculture II with a minimum lot size of 40 acres [AG-II-40]). Land use changes for the annexation area would include the establishment of a new land use designation, Planned Annexation, which would allow for a mix of commercial, residential, industrial, and public land uses in annexed land outside of current city limits.

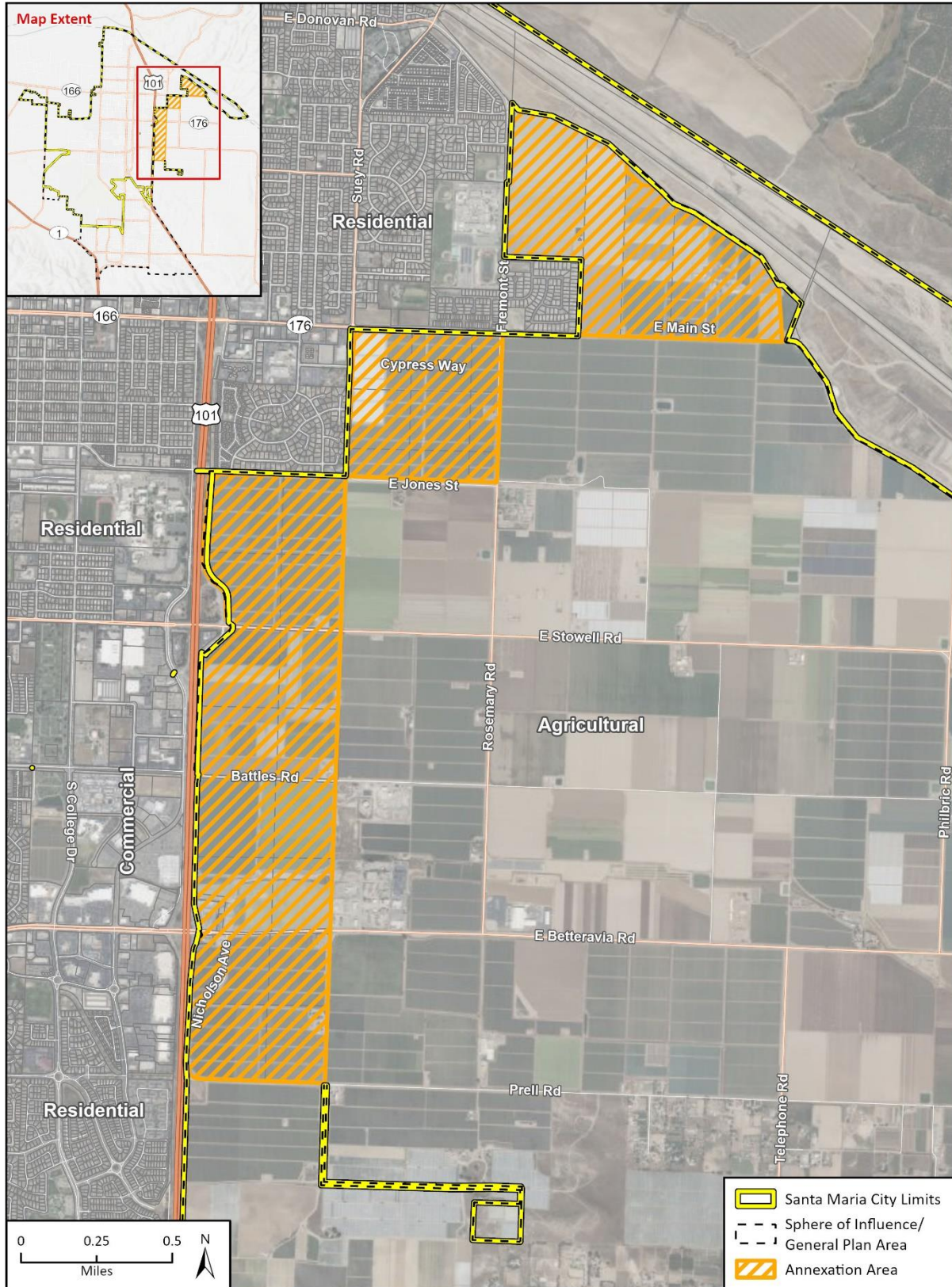
Noise Contour Revisions

The City of Santa Maria noise characteristics are described within the 2045 General Plan Noise Element including descriptions of common sources of noise as well as goals and policies to lessen noise for sensitive land uses (e.g., residences, schools, medical facilities). As required pursuant to the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Guidelines, the Noise Element also includes a map of noise contours as depicted via lines that represent equal levels of noise exposure across the city. Noise contours information informs planning decisions, including siting of potential future sensitive land uses.

Proposed 2045 General Plan Buildout

For reasonable analysis purposes in this EIR, the City assumes maximum 2045 General Plan buildout (of both residential and non-residential uses) within the city would occur by 2045. Maximum buildout of the General Plan is assumed to be a locally appropriate projection of development within the plan area based on updated land use designations and the proposed annexation rather than development of every parcel within the city. While complete buildout is not likely to occur by 2045, the maximum buildout assumption represents the most conservative approach to evaluating the plans potential environmental effects and satisfying the requirements of the CEQA Guidelines.

Figure 5 Proposed 2045 General Plan Annexation Area



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Fig X Annexation Area

For the purposes of this EIR, “General Plan Area” would refer to the City of Santa Maria, the proposed annexation area, and the Sphere of Influence.

Table 1 indicates the net change from 2022 conditions in Santa Maria to maximum buildout of the plan by 2045.

Table 1 Existing and Proposed Plan Land Uses Components Summary

	Existing (2022)	Proposed (2045)	Net Change from Existing to Proposed
Acreage within City Limits	15,058 acres	985 acres	16,043 acres
Residential Units	28,200 units	44,340 units	16,140 units
Jobs	43,050 jobs	66,800 jobs	23,750 jobs

The 2045 General Plan would add 985 acres of land to the city limits and would provide the framework for development of up to 16,140 net new³ primary and accessory dwelling residential units, including the development of 1,300 accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

The 2045 General Plan would provide the framework for development of up to 1,504 net new non-residential acres, with the following composition (numbers in parentheses indicate a reduction in acreage):

- (463) acres of commercial uses
- 452 acres of mixed uses
- 7 acres of Industrial/airport uses
- 33 acres of public and open space
- 1,012 acres of planned future development (specific plan and planned annexation areas)

Approximately 32 percent of the city remains undeveloped. The undeveloped areas of the city are classified as vacant (19 percent) and agricultural (13 percent). The existing General Plan indicates that 43 percent of the land is classified Open Space, and the remaining 32 percent is classified as industrial. Many of the vacant parcels within the city, clustered between Battles Road, Betteravia Road, and U.S. 101 are either already slated for development or are located within a Specific Plan.

Specific land use designations proposed for the 2045 General Plan area are designed to ensure consistency with the updated Housing Element and existing land uses, such as industrial, heavy commercial, or agricultural. These land use changes would allow for increased residential density along Main Street and Broadway, as well as on opportunity sites with a high potential for redevelopment. Areas of the city with the most potential for change are concentrated in Downtown, neighborhoods in the City Core, Main Street and Broadway, Southwest Neighborhoods (northwest, west, and south of the airport), and areas proposed for annexation. The 2045 General Plan serves as the City’s long-term development blueprint through 2045, contains goals and policies guiding land use and infrastructure decisions through 2045, and brings the General Plan up to date in response to latest State and regional plans and regulations related to climate-related hazards,⁴ emergency evacuation routes and access, water supply, and mobility.

³ Net new means the change from City of Santa Maria existing (2024) development to full buildout of the proposed plan (i.e., 2045 General Plan) by 2045; this EIR analyzes the net change in terms of potential physical environmental impacts.

⁴ Pursuant to SB 379, which amended California Government Code Section 65302.

Intended Use of this EIR

This EIR provides a programmatic environmental review of implementing the City's 2045 General Plan Update. Subsequent activities falling under the City's 2045 General Plan Update will utilize this EIR to focus the environmental review of these consequent activities and to determine their effects. If a new project is proposed that is not anticipated by the 2045 General Plan Update, or that may result in project-level environmental effects not addressed in this program-level EIR, the future project would be evaluated as required under CEQA. This EIR is not intended to prohibit consideration of future projects or CEQA analysis of future projects.

Plan Implementation

Following adoption of the 2045 General Plan Update by the City Council, all subsequent activities and development within the City would be guided by the goals and policies in the 2045 General Plan Update. Therefore, the 2045 General Plan provides specific policy guidance for implementation of plan concepts. The City would also need to coordinate with Santa Barbara County, the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), and other public agencies to implement policies that affect their respective jurisdictions, or would affect the region. Implementing these policies in accordance with new development (residential, commercial, or industrial) would be subject to the City's established review and approval processes, with final review and approval by the appropriate departmental staff, as well as the appointed and elected officials. The principal responsibilities that City officials and staff have for plan implementation are briefly summarized below:

- Updating the City of Santa Maria Zoning Ordinance to achieve consistency with the adopted General Plan Update.
- Rezoning properties, as dictated by future development proposals.
- Approval of tentative maps, variances, planned development and conditional use permits, and other land use permits and entitlements.
- Approval of development agreements and issuance of related permits and approvals consistent with the 2045 General Plan Update.
- Analyzing and planning for public infrastructure such as roadway improvements, other capital improvements, and natural/capital resource preservation and/or restoration.
- Conducting or considering further focused planning studies, as appropriate to future development in the city.

Required Approvals

With recommendations from the City's Planning Commission, the Santa Maria City Council would need to take the following discretionary actions in conjunction with the plan:

- Certification of the Final EIR and adoption of required findings, including required findings under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15090, 15091, and 15093.
- Santa Barbara County LAFCO must approve the City's annexation application, which would include certification of this Environmental Impact Report.
- Approval and adoption of the 2045 General Plan Update.