Santa Margarita Community Plan

[Planning Commission Recommended]

August 8, 2013

This page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction 1-1

1.1 Purpose 1-1

1.2 Relationship to General Plan 1-1

1.3 Features of the Plan 1-1

1.4 Setting 1-3

Chapter 2: Population and Economy 2-1

2.1 Population 2-1

2.2 Housing 2-1

2.3 Economy 2-1

Chapter 3: Public Facilities, Services, and Resources 3-1

3.1 Introduction 3-1

3.2 Status of Public Facilities, Services, and Resources 3-1

3.3 Community Service Programs 3-4

Chapter 4: Land Use 4-1

4.1 Introduction 4-1

4.2 Distribution of Land Uses 4-1

4.3 Santa Margarita Development Capacity 4-2

4.4 Major Land Use Issues 4-2

4.5 Santa Margarita Land Use Categories 4-3

4.6 Land Use Programs 4-5

Chapter 5: Circulation Element 5-1

5.1 North County Circulation Issues and Objectives 5-2

5.2 Roads 5-2

5.3 Other Means of Transportation 5-5

5.4 Circulation Programs 5-6

Chapter 6: Combining Designations 6-1

6.1 Introduction 6-1

6.2 Santa Margarita Community Plan Combining Designations 6-1

6.3 Proposed Public Facilities 6-1

6.4 Combining Designations and Proposed Public Facilities Programs 6-2

Chapter 7: Santa Margarita Community Design Plan 7-1

List of Figures

Figure 1-1: Regional Map 1-3

Figure 3-1: County Waterworks District No. 6 3-2

Figure 3-2: Projected Water Demand - Santa Margarita 3-2

Figure 3-3: Public School Enrollment - Santa Margarita 3-3

Figure 4-1: Santa Margarita Development Capacity 4-2

Figure 5-1: Circulation Element 5-2

Figure 5-2: El Camino Real Improvements - Santa Margarita 5-4

List of Tables

Table 2-1: Housing and Income Information 2-1

Table 3-1: Schedule for Completing Public Facilities, Services, and Resources Programs 3-5

Table 4-1: Land Use Category Acreage 4-1

Table 4-2: Schedule for Completing Land Use Program 4-5

Table 5-1: Schedule for Completing Circulation Programs 5-7

Table 6-1: Schedule for Completing Combining Designation and Public Facilities Programs 6-3

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Santa Margarita Community Plan establishes a vision for the future that will guide land use and transportation over the next 20 years.

1.2 Relationship to General Plan

This community plan is part of Part III of the Land Use Element and Circulation Elements (LUCE) of the County General Plan. This plan is consistent with the other elements of the County General Plan. All other County plans, policies and programs that involve the community of Santa Margarita and are subject to the County General Plan are to be consistent with and implement this plan. In addition, where applicable, all public and private development is to be consistent with the LUCE, including this community plan. It should be recognized, however, that this plan is subject to higher legal authority; for example, federal and state statutes, case law, and regulations.

> ***Note:*** The terms "Land Use and Circulation Elements (LUCE)" and "Land Use Element (LUE)" are used interchangeably throughout this document and the County Land Use Ordinance.

The Framework for Planning (LUCE Part I) is the central policy document, while this plan contains policies and programs more specifically applicable to this community. In accordance with the Framework for Planning, allowable densities (intensity of land use) are established. In addition to the Framework for Planning, the North County Area Plan contains regional land use and circulation goals, policies, and programs that apply to Santa Margarita.

The Land Use Ordinance contains development regulations that are applicable countywide, as well as standards and guidelines for local communities that may be different than the county-wide regulations. The Santa Margarita Design Plan was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors on October 9, 2001 and is incorporated by reference into the Land Use Ordinance, Title 22 of the County Code.

1.3 Features of the Plan

This plan describes County land use and transportation policies for a 20-year time frame in the community of Santa Margarita, including regulations also adopted in the Land Use Ordinance and Land Use Element. All information contained in this plan is taken from the Salinas River Area Plan, which was last updated on January 2, 1996. Only non-substantive edits have been made to this text for consistent formatting and to reflect the new organization of the LUCE. No changes have been made to reflect current conditions in Santa Margarita.

This plan includes the following major features:

Background Information

This plan provides information on land use, population, availability of resources and public services, and environmental characteristics. This information (current as of 1996) is the basis for many of the plan recommendations.

Policies, Programs and Standards

In addition to countywide policies in Framework for Planning, the North County Area Plan contains areawide land use and circulation policies affecting the community of Santa Margarita. These policies are implemented in Santa Margarita through the recommended programs in Chapters 3 through 6 of this plan and the standards in Article 10 of the Land Use Ordinance (Chapter 22.104 - North County Area Communities and Villages).

Proposed programs listed at the end of Chapters 3 through 6 are non-mandatory actions that may be initiated by the County, communities, or other agencies to correct or improve local problems or conditions, and to otherwise help implement the goals and policies of the North County Area Plan. Since many recommended programs involve public expenditures, their initiation depends upon availability of funding. Areawide programs listed in the North County Area Plan may also affect the community of Santa Margarita.

Specific, mandatory development standards are included in Article 10 of the Land Use Ordinance that address special conditions in communities and neighborhoods and help implement the goals and policies of this plan. These standards address land use, public services, circulation, sensitive resources, and natural hazards (the latter two overlays are called "combining designations"). The standards provide criteria for detailed evaluation of development projects.

Chapter 7 provides reference information for the Santa Margarita Community Design Plan, which is incorporated by reference into the Land Use Ordinance, Title 22 of the County Code.

Resource Management

Chapter 3 describes the existing and future status of water supply, sewage disposal, schools, and other public services in the Santa Margarita. Included are estimates of population thresholds at which potential resource capacity problems may occur. Chapter 6 includes descriptions of flood hazards and historic resources. While this plan focuses on public facilities, services, and resources within the Santa Margarita urban area, the North County Plan addresses these topics on a regional scale.

Area Plan Maps

Land use, circulation and combining designation maps are shown following Chapters 4, 5 and 6, respectively. They illustrate:

- **Land Use Categories** – which determine the uses that are allowable on a piece of property, including density and intensity of development.

- **Combining Designations** – which identify areas of flood hazards, historic sites, and public facilities.

- **Circulation** – which consists of roads and pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian facilities.

Due to scale limitations, the maps in this plan are for reference purposes only. The official maps (LUCE Part IV) are available at the County Department of Planning and Building.

1.4 Setting

The unincorporated community of Santa Margarita is home to approximately 1,279 residents (1995) and is located in the North County planning area about five miles south of Atascadero, in the Salinas River sub-area.

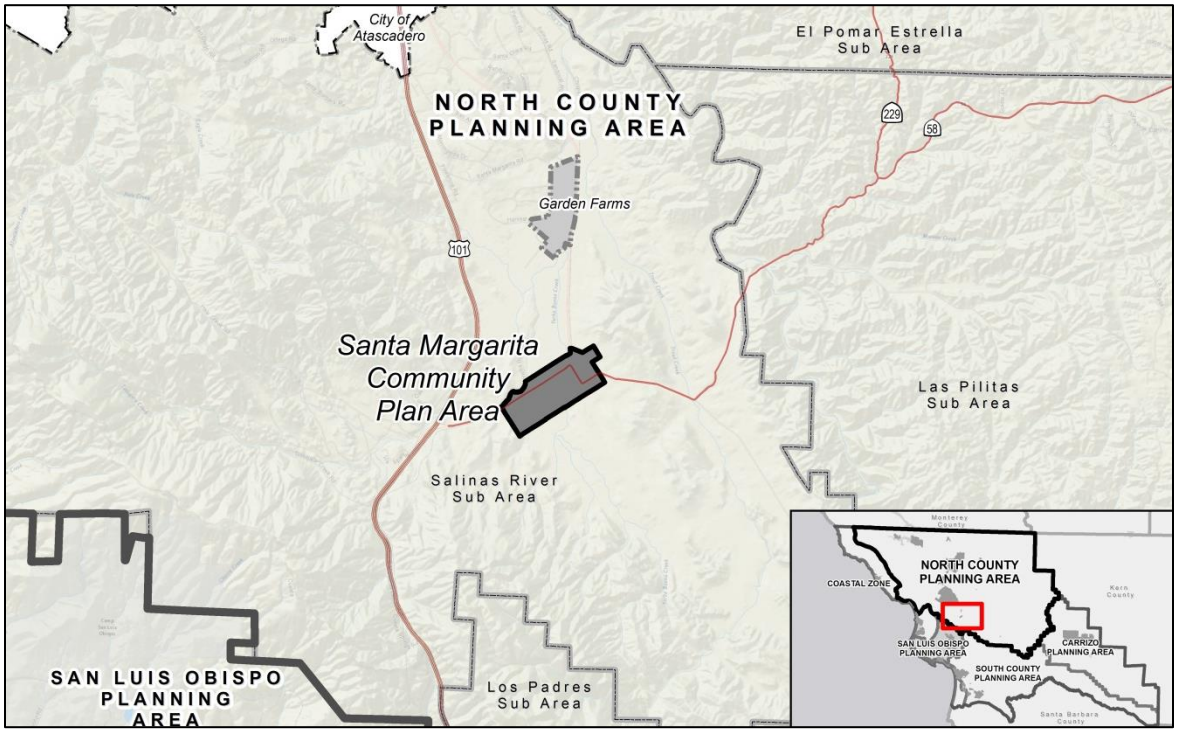


Figure 1-1: Regional Map

This page intentionally left blank.

Chapter 2: Population and Economy

This chapter focuses on the population and economy of Santa Margarita. The discussion in this chapter is current as of the last major update to the Salinas River Area Plan (1996).

2.1 Population

In 1995, the population is estimated at 1,279, or 9 percent above the population of 1,173 in 1990, which was an average annual growth rate of 1.8 percent. This population represents 2.1 percent of the total Salinas River sub-area population. The 1990 population was 32 percent above 1980, growing at an average annual rate of 3.2 percent. Santa Margarita's population is projected to increase 20 percent from 1995 to 2015, at a rate lower than the total projected county population.

2.2 Housing

The 1990 census estimated that the housing stock consisted of 429 dwellings, of which 35 or 7.5 percent were vacant. Santa Margarita's housing information is shown in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Housing and Income Information	
Occupied Households	429
Vacant Households	35
Vacancy Rate (percent)	7.5

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

2.3 Economy

Santa Margarita's economy is intertwined with and, in many ways, inseparable from the economy of the larger North County region. The North County Area Plan (LUCE Part II) describes Santa Margarita's role in the North County economy and establishes regional economic goals. The achievement of these goals will depend on the cooperation of all North County communities, including Santa Margarita.

While the area is expected to retain a stable economy mainly oriented toward the convenience needs of local residents, commercial growth is expected to be slow. Major shopping needs are satisfied by regional commercial centers in San Luis Obispo and Atascadero. Similarly, employment needs of the local labor force are met in San Luis Obispo, and to a lesser extent in Atascadero.

This page intentionally left blank.

Chapter 3: Public Facilities, Services, and Resources

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 provides a description of public facilities, services and basic resources within Santa Margarita. It identifies capacities and compares them with current and projected demand levels, based on 1995 information. It then identifies appropriate program options that the County might use to deal with current and potential deficiencies. In addition, this chapter identifies programs for improving our basic understanding of existing and potential resources.

> ***NOTE:*** This chapter describes service levels and available resource capacities as of the last major update to the Salinas River Area Plan (1996). More recent data is available in the County's Resource Summary Report, which is updated every two years.

Appropriate levels of service for urban, suburban and rural areas are discussed in Framework for Planning (LUCE Part I). Appropriate development levels within Santa Margarita are addressed in Chapter 4 of this plan. The intent of Chapter 3 is to provide the public and decision makers with basic information and a range of options to be considered when evaluating growth and development issues. Where appropriate, resource narratives are augmented by graphs indicating estimated resource demand as the population increases toward build-out. Projections of future demand are by the Department of Planning and Building, based upon 1995 per capita demand and a constant annual growth rate.

In addition to the discussion in this chapter, the North County Area Plan describes regional facilities and services that are not necessarily based in Santa Margarita but are available to North County residents. The Area Plan also describes natural resources and environmental characteristics in the larger North County region, including geological resources, groundwater, soils and agriculture, biological resources, visual resources, and air quality.

3.2 Status of Public Facilities, Services, and Resources

Santa Margarita is an unincorporated community under the administration of the County. Two County districts and one independent district presently service the area with water, a cemetery and street lighting. Fire protection is provided by an independent district.

Water Supply

County Waterworks District No. 6 (refer to Figure 3-1) provides water to the residents of Santa Margarita from three wells located in the Paso Robles groundwater basin. Long term water availability is a function of the total amount of water extracted from this basin by all users. However, the basin has not yet been studied to the extent necessary to provide an accurate estimate of dependable yield for the Santa Margarita area. System capacity is approximately 256 acre-feet per year.

In September 1990, declining water levels in the district's wells created concern that the community could run out of water before the beginning of the rainy season. Residents were asked to reduce consumption by 20 percent until the wells were replenished by rain.

With funding provided by a state construction loan, the district's third well was completed in 1993 and a new 150,000 gallon storage tank was finished in 1994. Current and projected

water demand for Santa Margarita is shown in Figure 3-2, below. Waterworks District No. 6 is participating in the Lake Nacimiento project and has submitted a request for 100 acre-feet of supplemental water.

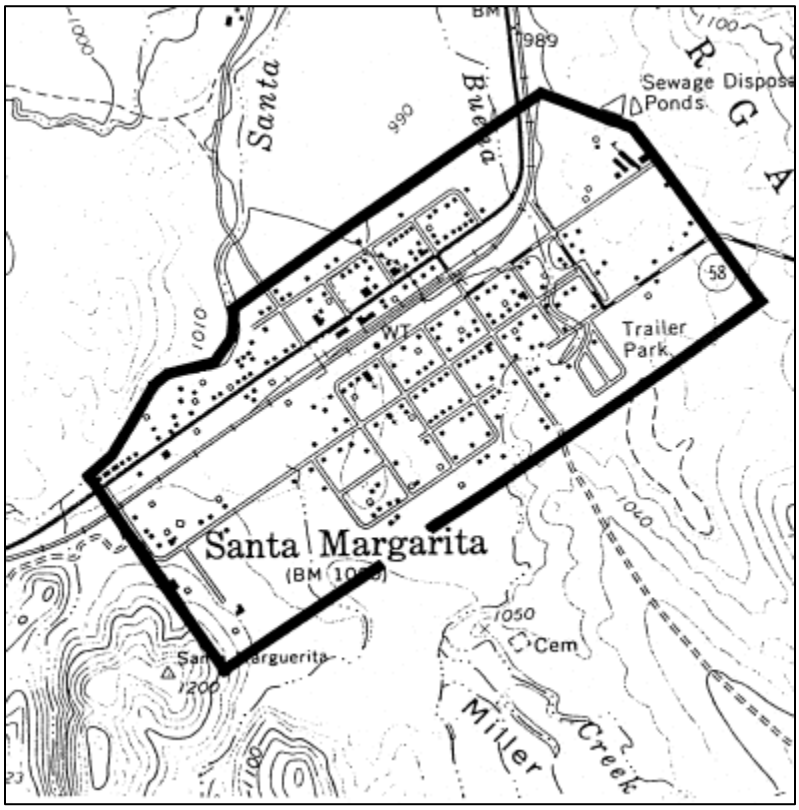


Figure 3-1: County Waterworks District No. 6

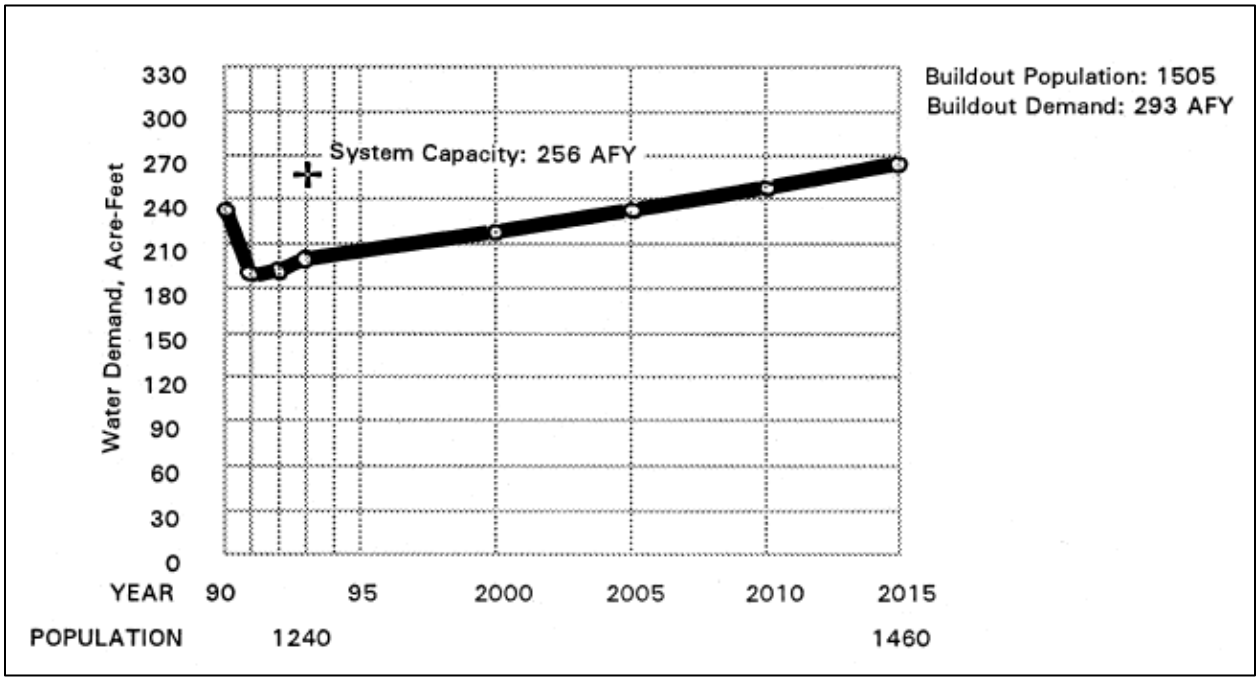


Figure 3-2: Projected Water Demand - Santa Margarita
Source: County Department of Planning and Building

Sewage Disposal

The community of Santa Margarita has no community-wide sewage collection and treatment system. Instead, on-site septic systems are used. The location of urban densities on clay soils, combined with poor storm drainage, have created problems for successful septic system operation. In the 1970's, septic systems in Santa Margarita had a 19 percent failure rate during periods of seasonal flooding. Since then, engineered septic systems have been required by the County, and they have shown better performance. However, the Health Department does not administer an annual septic maintenance inspection program, and the current failure rate is not precisely known.

According to the county Environmental Health Department, drainage problems still exist in Santa Margarita. However, with suitable drainage control, the long term use of septic systems could be feasible if the systems are properly maintained by owners. Development of existing lots should provide adequate areas for leach fields and drainage control. Formation of a flood control zone of benefit would enable the community to pay the necessary costs to resolve flooding problems.

In the meantime, annual inspections for faulty septic systems would reduce potential health hazards.

Schools

The Santa Margarita Elementary School is operated by the Atascadero Unified School District. For 1993-94, the school had an enrollment of 455 students compared to a capacity of 435. The School District anticipates that short term enrollment increases can be accommodated by the addition of re-locatable classrooms. Enrollment projections are shown in Figure 3-3.

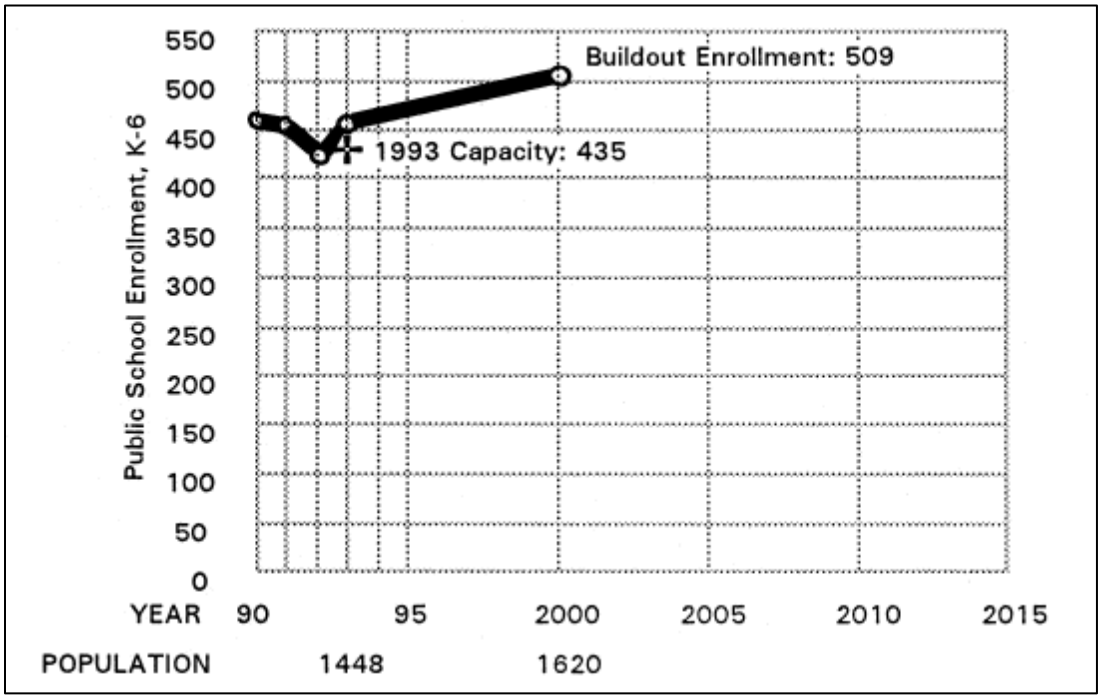


Figure 3-3: Public School Enrollment - Santa Margarita

Source: Atascadero Unified School District; County Department of Planning and Building

Parks

Santa Margarita County Park and the elementary school are Santa Margarita's principal recreation facilities. In addition, the county recreation area at Santa Margarita Lake is approximately ten miles away.

Fire Protection

Fire protection for Santa Margarita is provided by a volunteer fire company under the direction of a paid fire chief. The department, located on El Camino Real in the center of town, has two fire engines to serve the community, which provides a minimum level of service. CDF/County Fire provides dispatching service to the department and has an automatic and mutual aid agreement.

Police Protection

Uniformed patrol Santa Margarita is provided by the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department through the north county Station.

Drainage

The community is vulnerable to flooding because the soils are clay and significantly inhibit surface water percolation. Additionally, Santa Margarita Creek and Yerba Buena Creek are identified as flood prone creeks. However, there currently is no county flood control zone of benefit in place to deal with the resolution of flooding problems.

3.3 Community Service Programs

"Programs" are specific non-mandatory actions or policies recommended by the Land Use Element to achieve community or areawide objectives identified in this community plan. The implementation of each LUE program is the responsibility of the County or other public agency identified in the program itself.

Because programs (some of which include special studies) are recommended actions rather than mandatory requirements, implementation of any program should be based on consideration of community needs and substantial community support for the program and its related cost.

NOTE: In addition to the programs listed here, the North County Area Plan contains regional programs that may also affect the community of Santa Margarita.

The following public service programs apply to Santa Margarita. Table 3-1 identifies the responsible agencies, potential funding sources and the preferred time-frames for completion.

1. **Flood Control in Santa Margarita and Garden Farms.** The Public Works Department should work with the communities of Santa Margarita and Garden Farms to identify the extent of flooding problems and their consequences on individual sewage disposal systems. Formation of a flood control zone should be considered, if appropriate, as a means to resolving the identified problems.

2. **Development of a Sewage Disposal Maintenance Program.** A study of failure rates of individual sewage disposal systems should be conducted to determine the need for a regular maintenance program.

3. **Consolidation of Service Districts.** Either a County Service Area (CSA) or a Community Services District (CSD) should be considered to consolidate the provision of services and provide a focal point for public involvement in local decisions.

Table 3-1: Schedule for Completing Public Facilities, Services, and Resources Programs

Title	Responsible Agency	Potential Funding[1]	Timeframe (years)[2]	Priority[3]
1. Flooding Study in Santa Margarita and Garden Farms	County Public Works	Flood Control District	3-5	High
2. Sewage Disposal System Maintenance Study	County Health Department	N/A	5-10	Low
3. Consolidation	County Public Works, Planning	Flood Control District	1-3	High

Notes:

1. N/A in "Potential Funding" column means that the work would be performed by County staff as a part of the normal agenda of a County department. No special funding is required.
2. Timeframes are from 1996, the date of the last major update of the Salinas River Area Plan.
3. Priority listings are the relative importance within each timeframe.

This page intentionally left blank.

Chapter 4: Land Use

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses land use issues affecting the community of Santa Margarita and contains programs intended to achieve the community's vision, consistent with the areawide land use goals and policies described in the North County Area Plan.

The Land Use Element official maps separate the community into land use categories, which define regulations for land uses, density and intensity of use. The program at the end of this chapter recommends actions by the County to address land use and growth-related issues in the community of Santa Margarita. Other land use programs are listed in the North County Area Plan for the rural portions of the planning area.

Santa Margarita is a community that provides a pleasant small-town living environment with tree-lined streets and a traditional neighborhood layout. It is planned to contain businesses for daily shopping needs and area services. Employment will be scaled to the size of the town and its location between the north county urban corridor and the rural areas to the south and east. Any development decisions about the surrounding Santa Margarita Ranch will be integrally related to the community.

4.2 Distribution of Land Uses

The primary method of allocating land uses within Santa Margarita is through the mapping of 14 land use categories. The uses that are allowed within each category are shown in Article 2 of the Land Use Ordinance. Further limitations on allowable uses may be imposed by standards located in Article 10 of the Land Use Ordinance (Chapter 22.104 – North County Area Communities and Villages).

The location and distribution of the land use categories is shown in the official maps on file in the Department of Planning and Building and on the informational report map at the end of this chapter.

Table 4-1 summarizes the acreage of each land use category in Santa Margarita. Rural land use is summarized in the North County Area Plan.

Table 4-1: Land Use Category Acreage

Land Use Categories	Acreage
Agriculture	0
Rural Lands	0
Recreation	18
Open Space	0
Residential Rural	0
Residential Suburban	82
Residential Single Family	78
Residential Multi-Family	5
Office and Professional	0
Commercial Retail	9
Commercial Service	5
Industrial	13
Public Facilities	11
Dalidio Ranch	0
Total	**221**

4.3 Santa Margarita Development Capacity

Santa Margarita is close to being built-out in its residential areas. It has enough land designated for a 100 percent increase in commercial development.

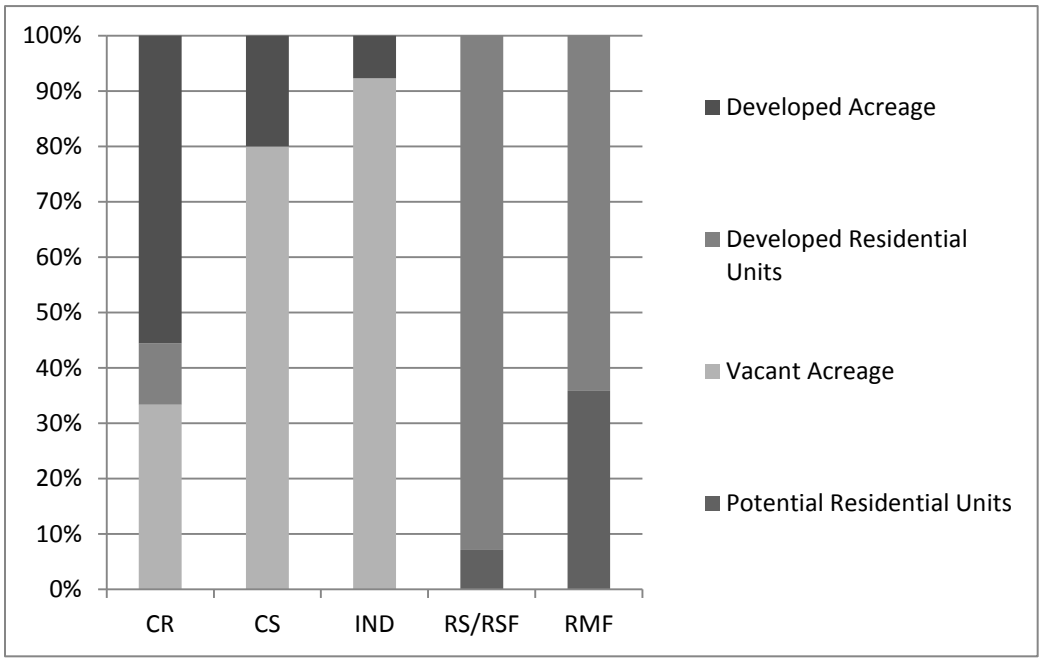


Figure 4-1: Santa Margarita Development Capacity

4.4 Major Land Use Issues

The following are issues concerning residents and property owners of Santa Margarita. Each issue is addressed by the response desired by the community.

1. **Development on the Santa Margarita Ranch will have impacts on the quality of life within the community.** Before any significant development of Santa Margarita Ranch, a specific plan must be prepared and address impacts on Santa Margarita, as required by standards in Article 10 of the Land Use Ordinance (Chapter 22.104 – North County Area Communities and Villages).

2. **Santa Margarita has problems maintaining its rural character and a neat appearance.** New development within Santa Margarita could be incompatible with the character of the area. Potential changes to the identity of Santa Margarita will be minimized by standards in Article 10 of the Land Use Ordinance (Chapter 22.104 – North County Area Communities and Villages) that require non-residential development to have historical and pedestrian-oriented design features. Any change to expand the urban area as part of a Santa Margarita Ranch development should be carefully scaled to the existing community, as required by standards in Article 10.

3. **Water supply and quality are limited and subject to a decline.** Monitoring of the water supply and its quality is ongoing through the operation of the county water district. Any necessary growth limitations will be addressed by the Resource Management System through its annual report or any necessary alerts.

4.5 Santa Margarita Land Use Categories

The following sections discuss land use within each land use category on the plan maps.

Residential Suburban

Residential Suburban areas are in the southwest and eastern portions of the Santa Margarita urban reserve line. This land use category recognizes the predominant one to 10 acre lot sizes and the advisability of maintaining lower densities until drainage and sewage disposal concerns are resolved. This category will help maintain the suburban character and will allow keeping larger animals such as horses.

Residential Single Family

Existing residential uses include single family residences on substandard lots (25 by 150 feet) throughout the community. Most lots, however, have been consolidated to create larger homesites that reflect a suburban village atmosphere. There are also scattered secondary dwellings behind single family dwellings and a mobile home park.

Poor drainage, a high groundwater table and the use of septic systems all combine to create potential problems in the community. Therefore, the minimum building site should be 6,000 square feet with 50 feet of frontage.

Tall residences could be out of scale with neighborhood character, but they should be allowable with a review of their impacts on privacy and consistency with other structures. Features of development that make an architecturally significant neighborhood should be included in new projects, such as varied front building setbacks, placement of garages behind the fronts of houses or on alleys, and attractive fencing.

The residential areas are generally served by adequate paved streets. Equestrian, pedestrian and bicycle traffic utilize the street rights of way. In keeping with the informal suburban character of the community, sidewalks are not necessary in residential areas. Existing lots will continue to allow small animals, but under some necessary constraints so they will not become nuisances. Residences should be continuously upgraded as the community grows, with substandard and dangerous structures being corrected or abated.

Flooding is a recurring problem in flat areas. Water often is retained on site and homes are flooded. To prevent this, a drainage plan may be required for new construction.

Residential Multi-Family

Multi-family residences are needed in Santa Margarita to provide affordable rental housing. Two locations in the Residential Multi-Family category identify existing development and some opportunities for additional units. Two half blocks along El Camino Real east of Wilhelmina Avenue, and one half block along H Street are designated for multi-family development. Criteria in the Land Use Ordinance for areas with septic systems will limit residential density to 15 units per acre.

Recreation

Recreation facilities in Santa Margarita include a small community park and passive recreation area with a community building on Pinal Street. A horse arena at Maria Avenue is used for equestrian events. Acquisition of the arena site and a parkway between the community park and arena should be considered before other development occurs. The elementary school

occupies about 14 acres and is comprised largely of open areas devoted to playground equipment and field sports. Tennis facilities are located at the community library site.

Commercial Retail

Retail commercial uses in Santa Margarita should be concentrated along El Camino Real between Murphy and Pinal Streets. Existing businesses mainly provide local convenience goods and services because Santa Margarita is approximately midway between San Luis Obispo and Atascadero, where most residents shop for both major and convenience items.

Presently, an "Old West" theme or building character exists in the commercial area. The area is underutilized and the small-town character is dwarfed in scale by the 100 foot right of way of El Camino Real. Commercial uses are spread along El Camino Real and several are in a poor condition with little available off street parking.

It is envisioned that the central commercial area will expand to serve the basic shopping needs of the community as well as becoming a tourist attraction if many improvements are made to create a western town center. In time, additional commercial and tourist uses will locate in the "downtown" as the community grows and improvements are made. Plans should be prepared for rehabilitation or restoration of existing structures and offsite improvements such as parking and landscaping.

New development should be located at the street front, with parking at the rear with improved alleys to provide vehicular access. This arrangement will be critical for retaining a "downtown" atmosphere that encourages walking and interaction. Circulation programs in Chapter 5 include a sketch showing how parking facilities and community appearance along El Camino Real can be improved for the benefit of residents and the business community.

Commercial Service

Service commercial uses are planned for the westerly portion of El Camino Real adjacent to the railroad. These blocks have a shallow depth that will limit the extent of development. However, it may be possible to abandon some side-street rights-of-way to provide additional land for required parking, as shown in Figure 5-2. New buildings should be located at the front setback to narrow the wide appearance of El Camino Real, with vehicular access and parking located at the rear. Discretionary permit review is needed to evaluate the compatibility of proposed uses with neighboring commercial businesses and residential uses across El Camino Real.

4.6 Land Use Programs

"Programs" are specific non-mandatory actions or policies recommended by the Land Use Element to achieve the objectives of this community plan. The implementation of each LUE program is the responsibility of the County or other public agency identified in the program itself. Because programs (some of which include special studies) are recommended actions rather than mandatory requirements, implementation of any program should be based on a consideration of community needs and whether substantial community support exists for the program and its related cost.

NOTE: In addition to the programs listed here, the North County Area Plan contains regional programs that may also affect the community of Santa Margarita.

The following program applies within the Santa Margarita Urban Reserve Line. The North County Plan should also be referenced for a list of areawide land use programs that may affect Santa Margarita.

1. **El Camino Real Design Plan.** Work with the community to prepare a design plan for El Camino Real. The plan should include specific standards for siting of structures, building materials, signing, landscaping, parking, lighting, walkways, street furniture and types of uses that would create a desired community character. The design plan should also include recommended means for implementation.

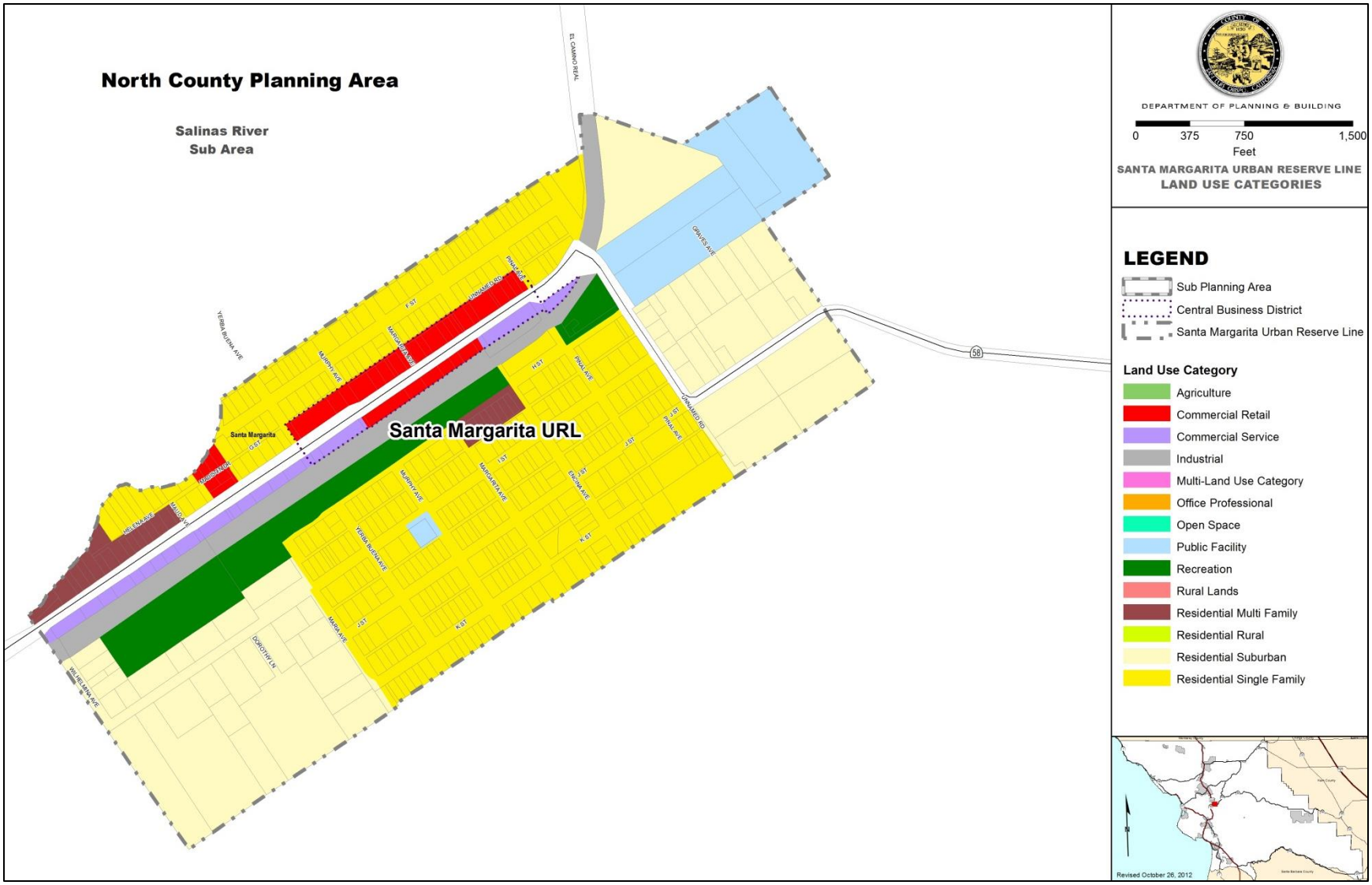
Table 4-2: Schedule for Completing Land Use Program

Title	Responsible Agency	Potential Funding[1]	Timeframe (years)[2]	Priority[3]
1. El Camino Real Design	Co. Planning	N/A; volunteers	High	1-3

Notes:

1. N/A in "Potential Funding" column means that the work would be performed by County staff as a part of the normal agenda of a County department. No special funding is required.
2. Timeframes are from 1996, the date of the last major update of the Salinas River Area Plan.
3. Priority listings are the relative importance within each timeframe.

This page intentionally left blank.


North County Planning Area
Salinas River
Sub Area
Santa Margarita URL
Santa Margarita
EL CAMINO REAL
VERBA BUENA AVE
MURPHY AVE
MARGARITA AVE
F ST
UNNAMED RD
PINAL AVE
GRAVES AVE
H ST
I ST
J ST
K ST
ENCINA AVE
MALUDA AVE
HERMANO AVE
DOROTHY LN
MARIA AVE
WILHELMINA AVE
58
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING
0
375
750
1,500
Feet
SANTA MARGARITA URBAN RESERVE LINE
LAND USE CATEGORIES
LEGEND
Sub Planning Area
Central Business District
Santa Margarita Urban Reserve Line
Land Use Category
Agriculture
Commercial Retail
Commercial Service
Industrial
Multi-Land Use Category
Office Professional
Open Space
Public Facility
Recreation
Rural Lands
Residential Multi Family
Residential Rural
Residential Suburban
Residential Single Family
Revised October 26, 2012

This page intentionally left blank.

Chapter 5: Circulation Element

This chapter is the Circulation Element for Santa Margarita. It reflects the countywide goals and policies in Framework for Planning (Part I of the Land Use and Circulation Elements) and regional goals and policies in the North County Area Plan (Part II of the Land Use and Circulation Elements). The circulation map at the end of this chapter shows the existing road network and planned road improvements within the Santa Margarita urban area.

The Regional Transportation Plan, which is prepared by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), is a relevant source document with a countywide perspective and more technical information on transportation. It contains goals and objectives for state highways, major local routes of significance, alternative transportation modes and strategies for transportation system and demand management. The Congestion Management Plan, which is adopted by SLOCOG, has policies for integrating land use planning and transportation planning. These documents, along with the Clean Air Plan as well as supporting technical studies, provide input to making decisions on transportation projects, as illustrated in Figure 5-1.

Land use and circulation planning should support each other so that the pattern of land development is supported by a well-defined system of transportation linkages. Roads, bikeways, airports, railroads and various modes of transportation make up the circulation system. Improvements occur by a combination of public and private measures, including the dedication of land to the public in proportion to the impacts created by development. It is understood that public dedications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to meet nexus and other legal requirements.

The following sections describe transportation management programs, the major features of the circulation system, and alternative modes of travel to the private automobile. System improvements and programs are recommended to implement the circulation needs of the Land Use Element.

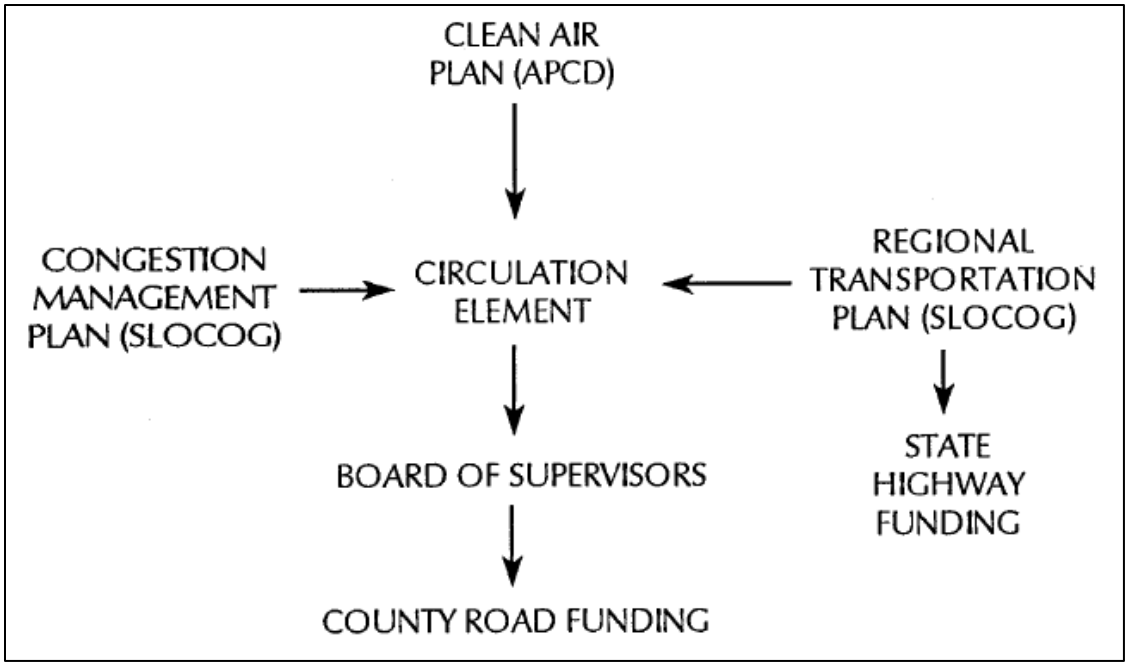


Figure 5-1: Circulation Element

5.1 North County Circulation Issues and Objectives

The North County's various communities and rural areas are connected by a network of state highways and major arterial roadways. The North County Area Plan, Part II of the Land Use and Circulation Elements, describes some key issues that affect the regional transportation system and establishes policies and objectives in response to those issues.

5.2 Roads

Road Improvement Projects

The following sections identify major improvements as the land uses envisioned by this plan develop along with growth in Atascadero, Paso Robles and the larger area. The circulation plan maps show functional classifications of existing and proposed roads within Santa Margarita. Improvements will be required with proposed land divisions by the County Real Property Division Ordinance and planning area standards.

The Resource Management System (RMS), through the annual Resource Summary Report, identifies the necessary timetables for making road improvements with timely funding decisions. It also describes procedures for revising Land Use Element policies if timely funding decisions cannot be reached. The RMS utilizes a level of service "C" in rural areas, which begins at 33 percent of capacity, and level of service "D" in urban areas, which begins at 58 percent of capacity, to identify the threshold at which traffic congestion is of concern. The annual report utilizes an analysis by the Public Works Department to identify those roads nearing or exceeding capacity. The Final Environmental Impact Report for the 1995 Salinas River Area Plan update identifies existing traffic and capacities for major roads in the former Salinas River planning area. Improvement standards are more specifically shown in the Public Works Department's "Standard Improvement Specifications and Drawings." Funding decisions for road improvements will consider the feasible use of County general funds, state and federal grants and funding sources, and development fees.

The following are major proposals for the road system that is shown on the circulation maps at the end of this chapter. The listed order does not imply any priority.

Principal Arterials

Highways 101, 41, 46 and 58 serve as the area's principal arterials, with the function to carry traffic on trips connecting population centers. The North County Area Plan describes anticipated improvements, as listed in the Regional Transportation Plan, for these arterials. Improvements proposed in the vicinity of Santa Margarita are listed here:

1. **Highway 101.** At the Highway 101 Route 58 interchange near Santa Margarita, widen the bridge at the existing northbound on-ramp and extend the on-ramp.

2. **Highway 58.** In Santa Margarita, realign the highway to intersect with El Camino Real and the railroad at a point outside the urban area. At the Highway 58 interchange near Santa Margarita, expand and improve the interchange to a full diamond standard and provide improved access to Tassajara Creek Road.

Arterials

The functional purpose of arterial roads is to carry traffic between principal arterial roads, centers of population, and to serve large volumes of traffic within an urban area or rural area. Several roads shown as existing arterials in the rural area are being used for this purpose. Improvements will be needed to achieve County standards in addition to making the proposed realignments and extensions shown on the circulation plan map. Road improvements that can link Paso Robles, Templeton and Atascadero will need to be considered as important alternatives to widening Highway 101.

Improvements proposed in the vicinity of Santa Margarita are listed here:

1. **Highway 58 - El Camino Real.** Widen the roadway shoulder from Atascadero to Route 58. Highway 58 (El Camino Real) in Santa Margarita should be improved from the Highway 58 intersection with El Camino Real to Wilhelmina Avenue as shown in Figure 5-2. The median strip should use low water-consuming plants and should not be constructed until there is adequate water available and upon the agreement of an appropriate agency to assume maintenance.

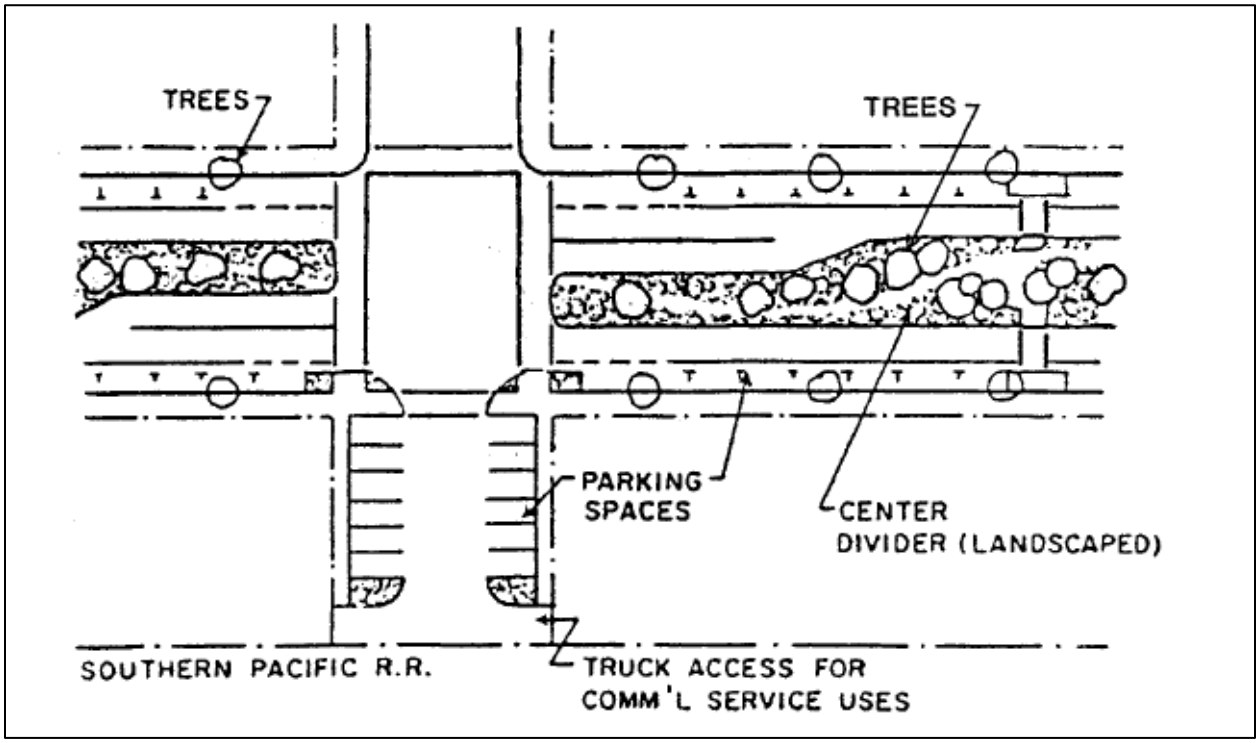


Figure 5-2: El Camino Real Improvements - Santa Margarita

Collectors

Collector roads or streets function to enable traffic to move between minor roads or streets and arterial roads or streets. No specific improvements are identified for collectors in Santa Margarita.

Local Streets

Local roads and streets function to carry traffic and alternative transportation at low volumes within neighborhoods and non-residential areas. No specific improvements are proposed within the larger scope of this plan. Road improvements, including walkways for pedestrians, will be determined at the project and subdivision review stage consistent with adopted plans and regulations.

Alleys

Alleys in Santa Margarita offer both problems and opportunities. Problems that are typically associated with alleys are security, garbage accumulation and lack of paving. They provide utilitarian corridors for parking, trash collection, utilities, and informal access between houses within a block. They provide access for secondary dwellings located at the back of a lot. Where alleys exist or are planned, minimal levels of improvements are necessary to attract and secure usage. Continuous pavement to driveways, at an adequate width for emergency vehicles, lighting and amenities such as fencing and landscaping are often needed to upgrade alleys. Greater alley usage can lessen street traffic by placing parking and garages at the rear of properties, which also can provide better views of the street from residences.

5.3 Other Means of Transportation

Both the North County Area Plan and Framework for Planning encourage alternatives to single occupancy vehicle travel. These alternatives are described below.

Public Transit

The North County Area Plan describes the benefits of public transit and the current needs and planned improvements for the North County's public transit system. It also contains policies that encourage and guide transit oriented development (TOD) in the North County's urban reserve areas. These policies are implemented by area-wide TOD standards in Article 10 of the LUO.

Carpooling - Park and Ride Lots

The overall goal for park and ride lots is to increase their numbers throughout the county. Park and ride lots are transfer areas where people may drive or carpool to the lot, park their vehicles and continue on with another carpool or transit route. The Clean Air Plan and the Regional Transportation Plan have emphasized park and ride lots as transportation system management measures to shift away from single occupancy vehicle travel. Funding should be obtained for park and ride lots.

Lots proposed for the future should be along busy corridors and highways, where there is high visibility, adjacent to regional transit stops. Currently there are three park and ride lots in Atascadero, located on Curbaril, Santa Ysabel and Santa Barbara Road.

Bikeways

A goal of this plan and the County Bikeway Plan is to provide a framework for establishing a safe and efficient bikeway system. Planned projects should not only include the construction of bikeways, but also consider the installation of facilities such as bike racks, bike lockers, bike and ride racks, signs, showers, the creation of bike maps and safety and education programs. The County Bikeways Plan lists and maps the bikeway system, and includes policies for

integrating bike-related facilities within the transportation system. The North County Area Plan describes the regional bikeway objectives, consistent with the County's Bikeways Plan.

Trails

Proposed equestrian and hiking trails are shown in the County Parks and Recreation Element.

Railroad

Rail transportation provides an important method of conveying goods and people within the transportation system. The railroad, which runs parallel to "G" Street, divides Santa Margarita and is in close proximity to commercial areas. For this reason the railroad should be considered in the central business district design plan recommended by the LUE for Santa Margarita. The County should work with the operator of the railroad line to resolve the issue of blockage of particular crossings so as not to affect the health, safety and welfare of the general public. When the County discovers a health and safety issue concerning the railroad, it should communicate the deficiency to the railroad.

Rail transit should be studied for its feasibility within the North County, and perhaps to San Luis Obispo and other regions. The addition of this mode of transportation could be integrated with the transit-oriented planning policies mentioned above concerning activity centers. It would be necessary to integrate any light-rail trolley system with freight and passenger operations.

Telecommunications

Personal computers enable people to perform work, research and communications at home or other sites that are separate from traditional locations, communicating electronically or "telecommuting." Decentralizing work to people instead of moving people to work has the potential to reduce commuting trips and employer/employee costs. Telecommuting worksites should be established that have computer workstations, electronic network service and teleconferencing capabilities. In conjunction with the Highway 101 Cuesta Grade widening, scheduled for 1996-97, Caltrans has organized a multi-agency project for a telecommute site with connections to city, county and other agency offices and allow access to the general public.

5.4 Circulation Programs

"Programs" are specific non-mandatory actions or policies recommended by the Land Use Element to achieve the goals and objectives identified in this community plan. The implementation of each LUE program is the responsibility of the County or other public agency identified in the program itself. Because programs (some of which include special studies) are recommended actions rather than mandatory requirements, implementation of any program should be based on a consideration of community needs and substantial community support for the program and its related cost. Refer to the North County Area Plan for a list of regional circulation programs.

NOTE: In addition to the programs listed here, the North County Area Plan contains regional programs that may also affect the community of Santa Margarita.

The following circulation programs apply to Santa Margarita:

Roads and Highways

1. **Streetside Improvements in Santa Margarita.** The County should work with residents of Santa Margarita to implement improvements to Highway 58, between El Camino Real and Wilhelmina Avenue as shown in Figure 5-2.
2. **Alley Circulation.** Work with residents to improve alley circulation in general by widening pavement where it is too narrow, provide paved driveway aprons, and assist property owners with lighting, fencing and landscaping alternatives for security and privacy.

Park-and-Ride Lots

3. **Additional Park-and-Ride Lots.** Park-and-ride lots should be developed in accordance with the Caltrans Park-and-Ride Lot Report (May 1993).

Railroad

4. **Railroad Safety at all Grade Crossings.** The railroad should identify hazard areas and correction measures at all grade crossings, such as speed controls, additional warning devices, or fencing or landscaping treatment to reduce railway access and accidents.
5. **Emergency Railroad Crossing in Santa Margarita.** An adequate emergency vehicle railroad crossing in the southerly portion of Santa Margarita should be provided.

Table 5-1: Schedule for Completing Circulation Programs

Program Title	Responsible Agencies	Potential Funding[1]	Timeframe (years)[2]	Priority[3]
1. Street Improvements in Santa Margarita	Co. Planning, Public Works; Cal-Trans	SLOCOG; CalTrans STIP; Assessment District; private funding	3-5	Moderate
2. Alley Circulation	Co. Planning, Public Works	Assessment Districts; private funding	3-5	Low
3. Additional Park-and-Ride Lots	Co. Public Works; SLOCOG; Cal-Trans	Cal-Trans; County	1-3	High
4. Railroad Safety at all Grade Crossings	Railroad Operator	N/A	1-3	High
5. Emergency Rail Crossing in Santa Margarita	Railroad Operator	N/A	1-3	High

Notes:

1. N/A in "Potential Funding" column means that the work would be performed by County staff as a part of the normal agenda of a County department. No special funding is required.
2. Timeframes are from 1996, the date of the last major update of the Salinas River Area Plan.
3. Priority listings are the relative importance within each timeframe.

This page intentionally left blank.

Geographic Technology & Design
0 330 660 1,320
Feet
North County Planning Area
Santa Margarita URL
CIRCULATION MAP
LEGEND
Sub-Area Boundaries
Urban & Village Reserves
Circulation
Classifications
Principal Arterial
Arterial
Arterial - Proposed
Collector
Collector - Proposed
Proposed Bikeways
Existing Regional Bus Routes
Proposed Park and Ride Lot
Principal Arterials
Calf Canyon - Hwy 58
El Camino Real - Hwy 101
Arterials
J
El Camino Real
Estrada
Collectors
Encina
I
Wilhelmina
NOTE: Designations are not shown within city corporate boundaries
December 18, 2012
Salinas River Sub-Area
Santa Margarita
El Camino Real
Estrada Ave
Encina Ave
J St
I St
Wilhelmina Ave
101
58

This page intentionally left blank.

Chapter 6: Combining Designations

6.1 Introduction

Combining designations are special overlay maps and symbols applied in areas of the county with potentially hazardous conditions or special resources, where more detailed project review is needed to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts or effects of hazardous conditions on proposed projects. Symbols denote the vicinity of proposed public facilities such as government uses, parks and schools. The following areas are subject to special combining designations. In some cases, specific standards have been adopted for an area where a combining designation is applied. These standards are found in Article 10 of the Land Use Ordinance (Chapter 22.104 – North County Area Communities and Villages) and apply to development proposals in addition to the standards of Chapter 22.14 of the Land Use Ordinance.

6.2 Santa Margarita Community Plan Combining Designations

The Santa Margarita urban area includes the following combining designations, which are shown on the map at the end of this chapter:

1. **Salinas River Flood Hazard (FH).** The Salinas River and the immediate area are designated on the Combining Designations map as a flood plain.

2. **Santa Margarita Creek, Yerba Buena Creek, Estrella River and Huerhuero Creek Flood Hazard (FH).** These creeks are designated on the plan as flood plains.

3. **Mission Santa Margarita de Cortona – Asistencia Historic Resource (H).** This San Luis Obispo Mission outpost was established around 1775 and is designated as State Historical Landmark

6.3 Proposed Public Facilities

Only those public facilities that have a direct effect on land use and are publicly managed are considered. The public facilities needed for the community are determined by many public agencies. Development guidelines for proposed public facilities are contained in Framework for Planning.

The following public facility project is proposed in Santa Margarita:

1. **Santa Margarita Community Building.** The community building should be renovated, landscaped and provided with improved parking.

6.4 Combining Designations and Proposed Public Facilities Programs

"Programs" are specific non-mandatory actions or policies recommended by the Land Use Element to achieve the objectives of this community plan. The implementation of each LUE program is the responsibility of the County or other public agency identified in the program itself. Because programs (some of which include special studies) are recommended actions rather than mandatory requirements, implementation of any program should be based on consideration of community needs and substantial community support for the program and its related cost.

NOTE: In addition to the programs listed here, the North County Area Plan contains regional programs that may also affect the community of Santa Margarita.

The following programs apply to Santa Margarita:

Flood Hazard Area (FH)

Regarding flood hazard areas, the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is one source of funding.

1. **Drainage Control in Santa Margarita.** The County should provide for updating the 1966 report on the Yerba Buena Creek drainage investigation and implementing its recommendations.

   Channel Maintenance in Santa Margarita. The County should obtain maintenance easements for the creekways and initiate a program to remove rubbish, dead and obstructive vegetation and other obstacles that may increase flooding.

Historic Areas (H)

2. **Mission Santa Margarita de Cortona Asistencia.** The County should provide encouragement and support for the preservation and reconstruction of the old rancho headquarters and the mission outpost with the cooperation of the rancho owners.

Public Facilities (PF)

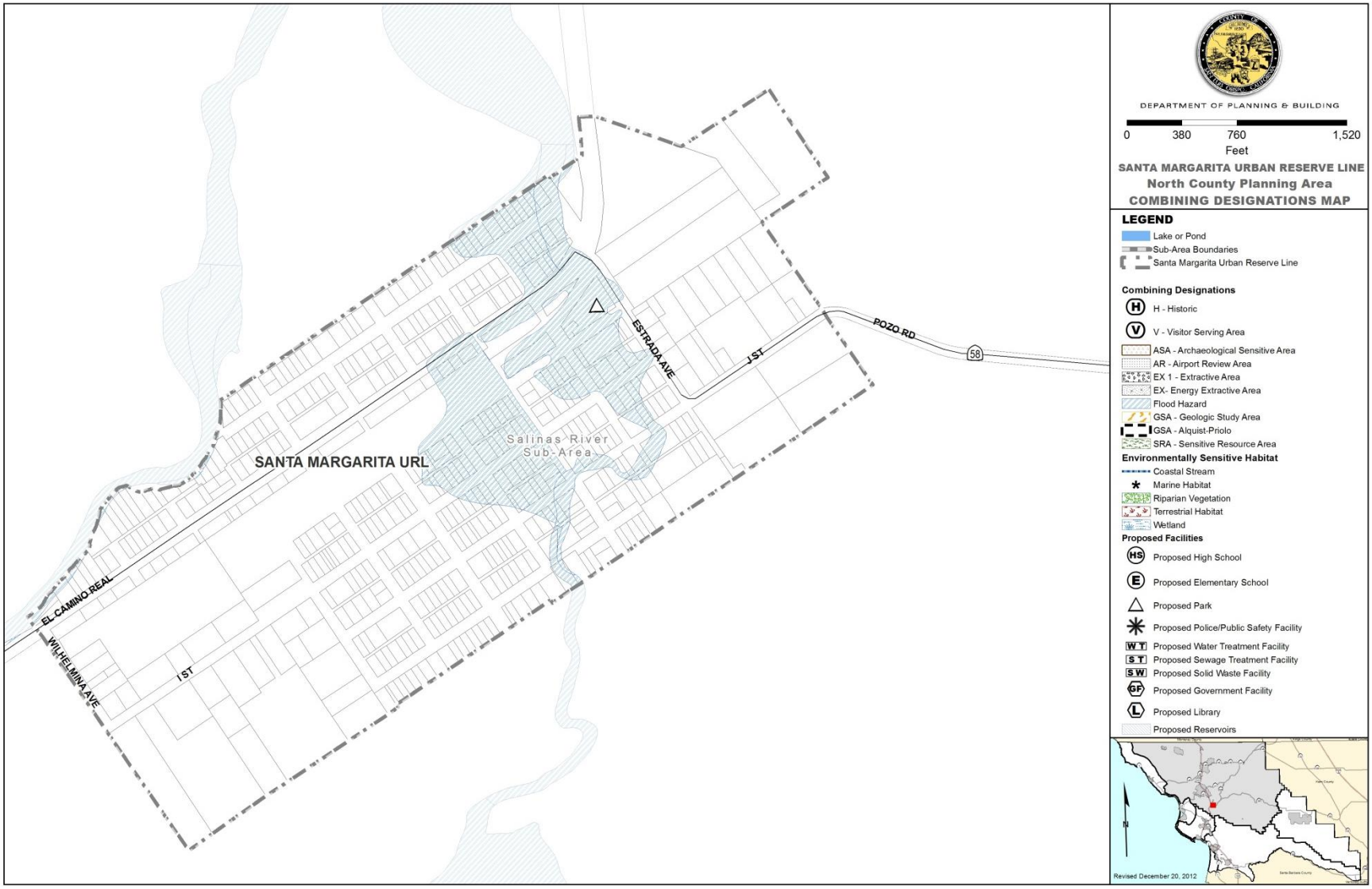
3. **Santa Margarita Community Building.** The community building should be renovated, landscaped and provided with improved parking.

Table 6-1: Schedule for Completing Combining Designation and Public Facilities Programs				
Program	**Responsible Agencies**	**Potential Funding[1]**	**Timeframe (years)[2]**	**Priority[3]**
Flood Hazard Area (FH)				
1. Drainage Control in Santa Margarita	County Flood Control District	Zone of Benefit	1-3	High
2. Channel Maintenance in Santa Margarita	County Public Works	District, Co.	1-3	High
Historic Area (H)				
3. Mission Asistencia	General Services	N/A; grant; private	3-5	Moderate
Public Facilities (PF)				
4. Santa Margarita Community Building	General Services	N/A; fees; grant	3-10	Moderate

Notes:

1. N/A in "Potential Funding" column means that the work would be performed by County staff as a part of the normal agenda of a County department. No special funding is required.
2. Timeframes are from 1996, the date of the last major update of the Salinas River Area Plan.
3. Priority listings are the relative importance within each timeframe.

This pate intentionally left blank.


DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING
0
380
760
1,520
Feet
SANTA MARGARITA URBAN RESERVE LINE
North County Planning Area
COMBINING DESIGNATIONS MAP
LEGEND
Lake or Pond
Sub-Area Boundaries
Santa Margarita Urban Reserve Line
Combining Designations
H - Historic
V - Visitor Serving Area
ASA - Archaeological Sensitive Area
AR - Airport Review Area
EX 1 - Extractive Area
EX- Energy Extractive Area
Flood Hazard
GSA - Geologic Study Area
GSA - Alquist-Priolo
SRA - Sensitive Resource Area
Environmentally Sensitive Habitat
Coastal Stream
Marine Habitat
Riparian Vegetation
Terrestrial Habitat
Wetland
Proposed Facilities
Proposed High School
Proposed Elementary School
Proposed Park
Proposed Police/Public Safety Facility
Proposed Water Treatment Facility
Proposed Sewage Treatment Facility
Proposed Solid Waste Facility
Proposed Government Facility
Proposed Library
Proposed Reservoirs
Revised December 20, 2012
SANTA MARGARITA URL
Salinas River Sub-Area
ESTRADA AVE
J ST
POZO RD
58
EL CAMINO REAL
WILHELMINA AVE
I ST

This page intentionally left blank.

Chapter 7: Santa Margarita Community Design Plan

The Santa Margarita Community Design Plan was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors on October 9, 2001, and is incorporated by reference into Title 22 of the County Code.

> ***NOTE:*** The Santa Margarita Design Plan is available in its entirety at the San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building and on the Department's website: (www.sloplanning.org).

The guidelines in the Design Plan are intended to inform and guide property development in Santa Margarita so that the form and character of the overall community is protected and enhanced. They are available to prospective developers so that early design decisions can be made that are consistent with the plan. The guidelines are both advisory and discretionary, to be used in the review of subdivision and development projects by County staff, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to protect the public welfare and environment. The development review process makes a careful examination of a project's quality of site planning, architecture, drainage design and important details such as signage and lighting. The purpose is to insure that every new development will carefully consider the community context in which it takes place and make a conscientious effort to develop a compatible relationship to the natural setting, neighboring properties and community design goals.

This page intentionally left blank.