CHAPTER 6. ZONING BALANCE

A. Zoning Balance

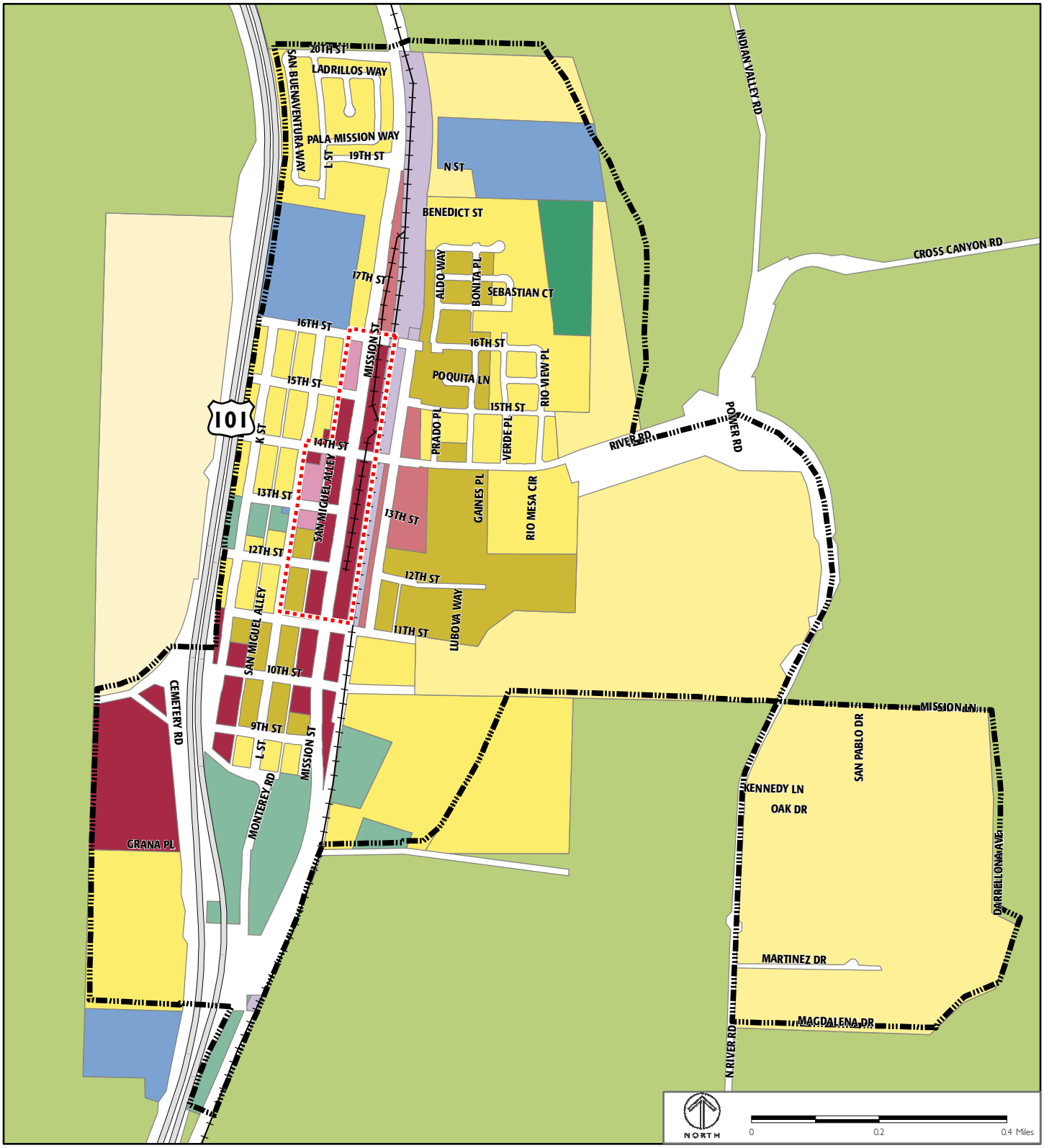
A complete community should contain a diversity of residential, retail, and employment land uses. A diverse land use pattern supports convenient access to goods and services, transportation alternatives, job growth and economic investment, and affordable housing choices.

Land uses within San Luis Obispo County are largely determined by land use designations established in the County's General Plan and Land Use Ordinance. These designations limit permitted land uses and the maximum residential density or intensity of development. The location and boundaries of these land use designations are shown on the County's Land Use Map. Land use designations that apply within San Miguel, Templeton, Oceano, and Nipomo are shown in Figures 6-1 through 6-4.

This section addresses the question of whether these four communities have "balanced" zoning that supports the County's Strategic Growth Principles. To address this question, we considered the location and size of different land use designations within the communities and the specific land uses permitted within each designation.

B. Amount and Location of Land Use Designations

San Miguel, Nipomo, Oceano, and Templeton all have land designated for residential, commercial, and public use. Table 6-1 identifies the percentage of land with these designations in each community. Key observations from this data include the following:



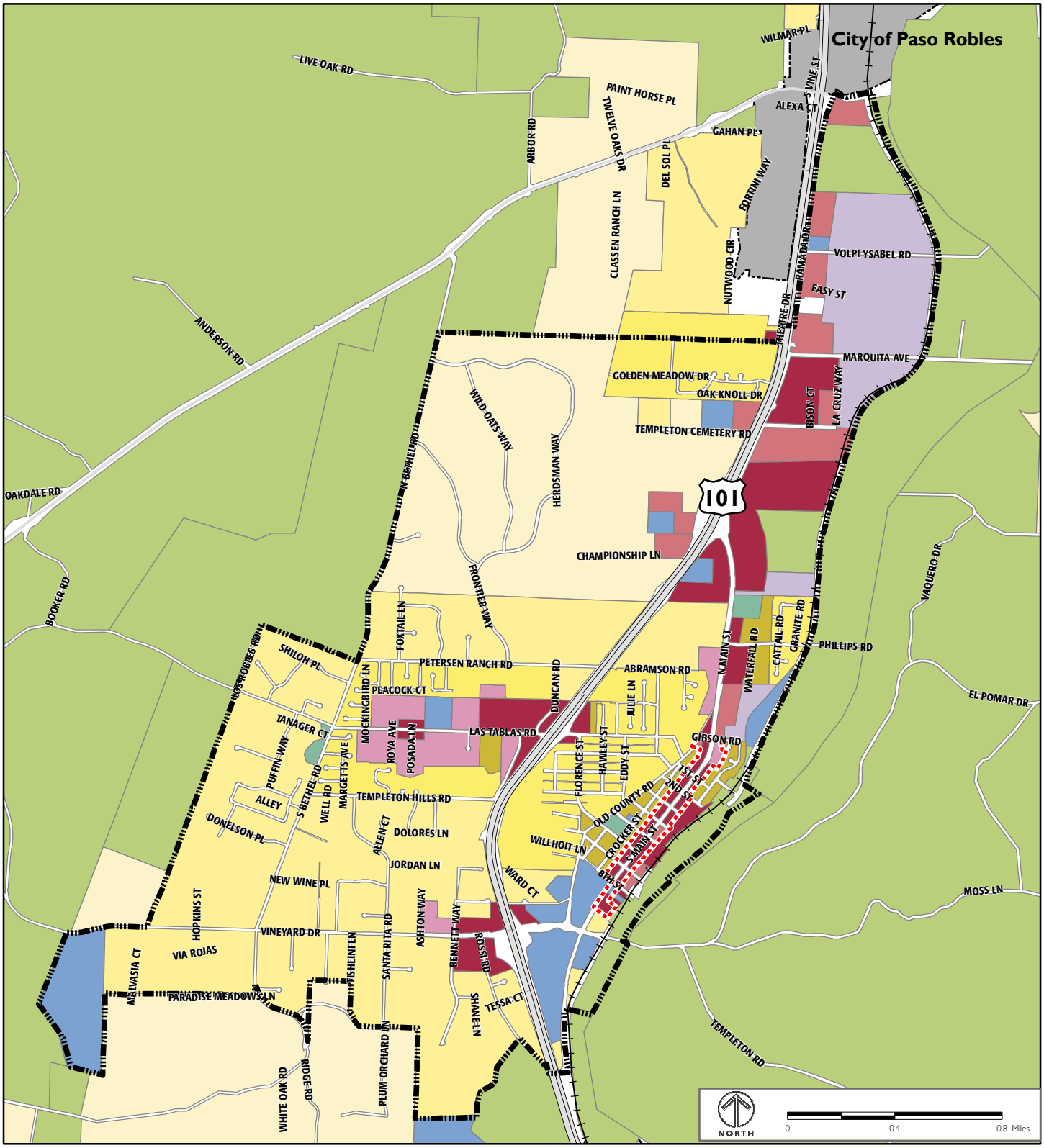
Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Land Use Categories

- Agriculture
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Industrial
- Office and Professional
- Open Space
- Public Facilities
- Recreation
- Rural Lands
- Residential, Rural
- Residential, Suburban
- Residential, Single-Family
- Residential, Multi-Family
- Urban Reserve Line
- Central Business District

FIGURE 6-1

SAN MIGUEL LAND USE CATEGORIES



Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Land Use Categories

- Agriculture
- Commercial Retail
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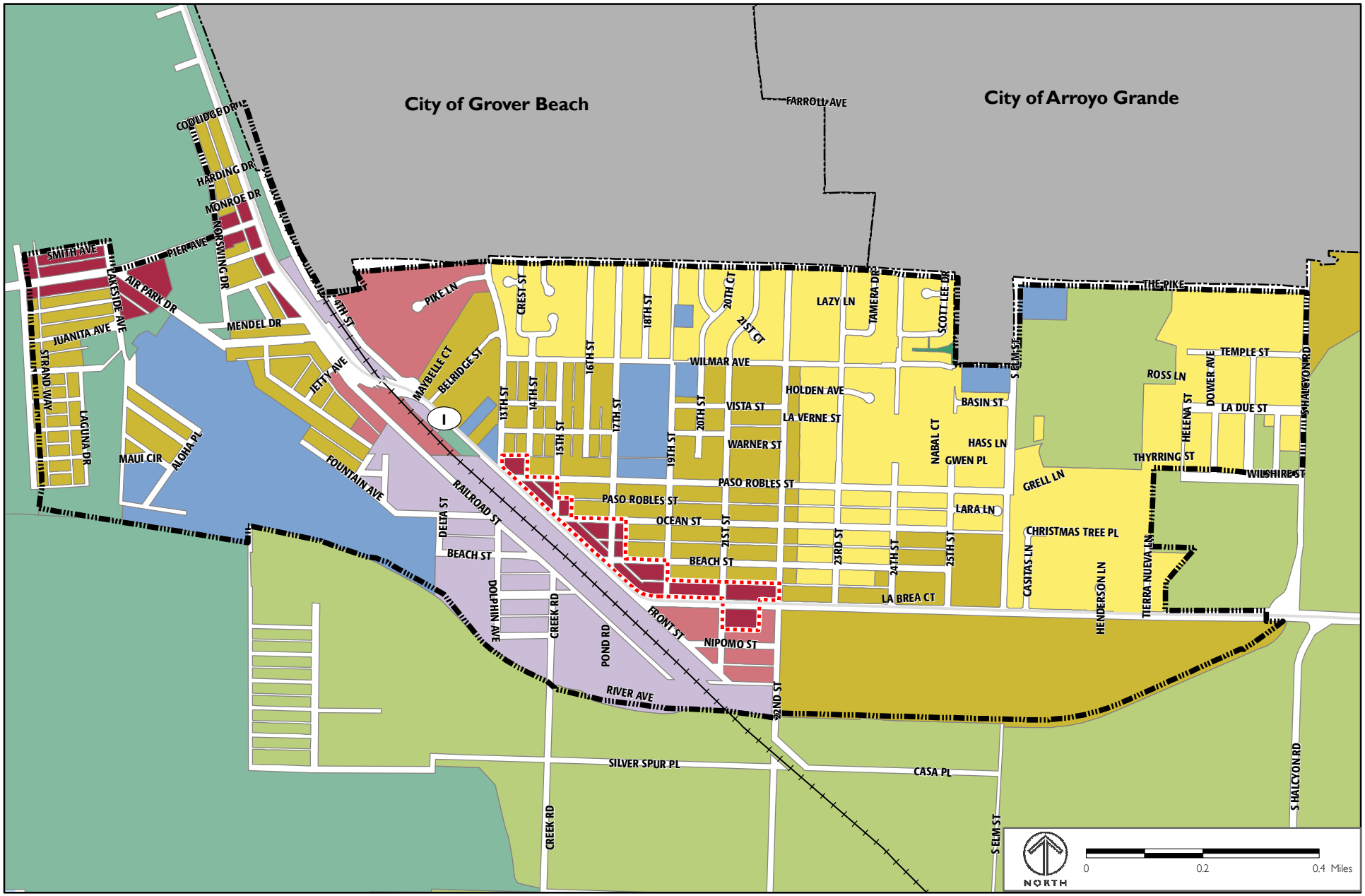
FIGURE 6-2

TEMPLETON LAND USE CATEGORIES



Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Land Use Categories

- Agriculture
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Industrial
- Office and Professional
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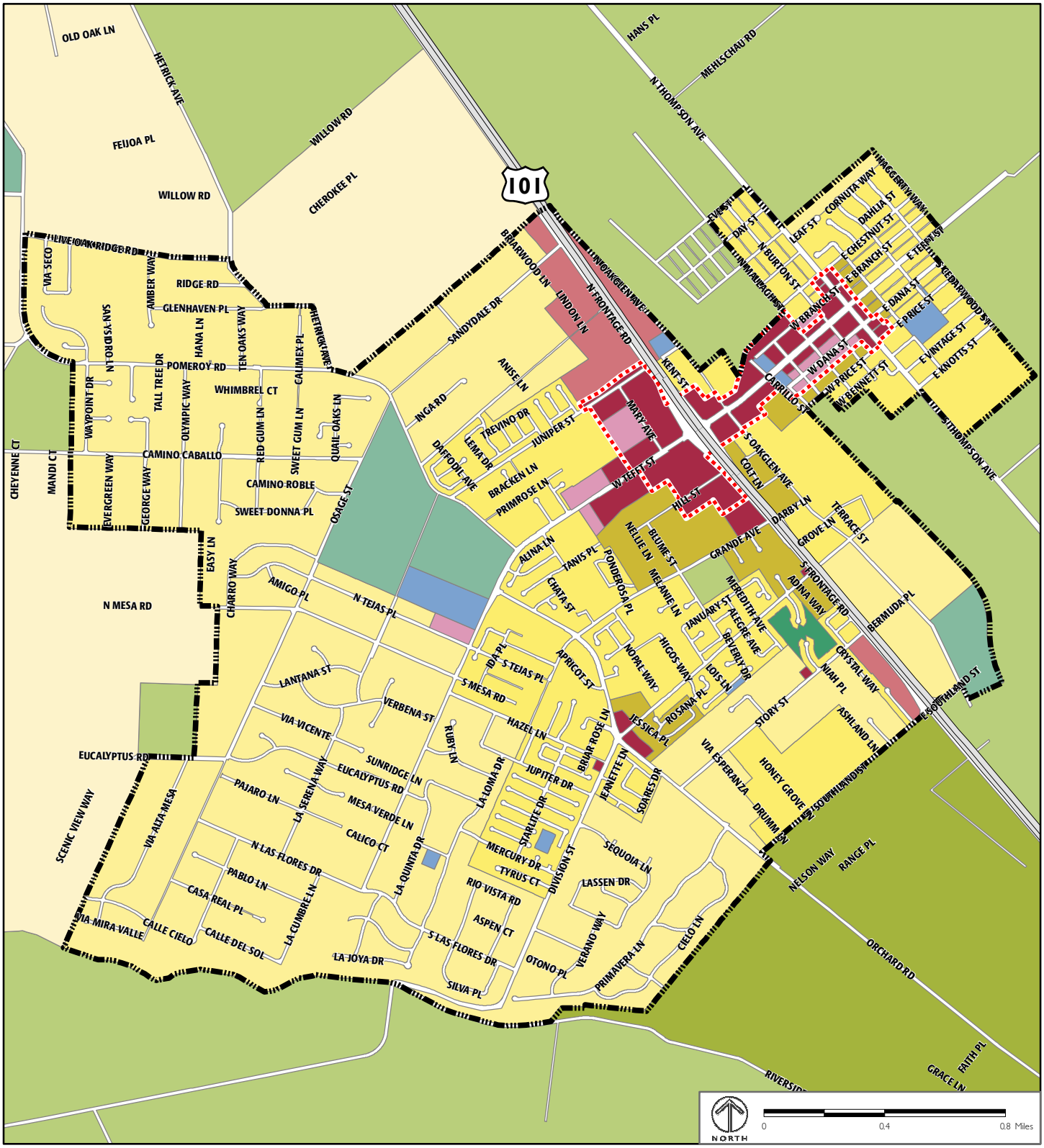
- Urban Reserve Line
- Central Business District

FIGURE 6-3

OCEANO LAND USE CATEGORIES



Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Land Use Categories

- Agriculture
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Industrial
- Office and Professional
- Open Space
- Public Facilities
- Recreation
- Rural Lands
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- Residential, Suburban
- Residential, Single-Family
- Residential, Multi-Family
- Urban Reserve Line
- Central Business District

FIGURE 6-4

NIPOMO LAND USE CATEGORIES

TABLE 6-1 **LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

	San Miguel	Nipomo	Oceano	Templeton
Commercial	**9%**	**7%**	**8%**	**14%**
Commercial Retail	*7%*	4%	3%	7%
Commercial Service	*2%*	2%	5%	4%
Office Professional	*1%*	1%	-	3%
Mixed Use			-	<1%
Industrial	**3%**	**-**	**9%**	**7%**
Recreation & Public Facilities	**10%**	**6%**	**17%**	**6%**
Public Facility	*6%*	1%	13%	6%
Recreation	*5%*	5%	4%	<1%
Agriculture & Open Space	**2%**	**1%**	**7%**	**5%**
Agriculture	*0*	<1%	7%	5%
Open Space	*-2*	<1%	<1%	-
Rural Lands	-	-		-
Residential	**76%**	**87%**	**59%**	**69%**
Residential Rural	-	-	-	20%
Residential, Suburban	*43%*	60%		35%
Residential, Single-Family	*24%*	24%	29%	12%
Residential, Multi-Family	*9%*	4%	31%	2%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

- In all four communities the majority of land is designated for residential use. Nipomo has the largest percentage of land designated as residential (87 percent) and Oceano the least (59 percent).
- San Miguel, Templeton, and Nipomo have less than 10 percent of land designated for multi-family residential. Templeton has the lowest percentage of multi-family land (2 percent). In contrast, 31 percent of land in Oceano is designated as multi-family.
- Templeton has the largest percentage of commercial land (14 percent). In San Miguel, Nipomo, and Oceano slightly less than 10 percent of the land is designated as commercial.

As shown in Figures 6-1 through 6-4, commercial land uses tend to be located within a community's Central Business District, near rail lines, along main arterial streets, and highway interchanges. Multi-family designations tend to be located adjacent to these commercial areas and provide a transition to single-family residential areas. Single-family designations occupy areas between the commercial/multi-family areas and the community's urban reserve line. Single-family areas tend to be homogenous with limited mixing of other land use designations within residential neighborhoods.

C. Permitted Land Uses within Designations

Table 2-2 of the Land Use Ordinance identifies allowable land uses within the land use designations. This table shows that a relatively permissive mixing of land uses is permitted within the commercial and residential designations. For example, within the RS designation small grocery stores and restaurants are permitted with a Conditional Use Permit. Within the RSF designation small grocery stores and certain types of personal services are also permitted with a Conditional Use Permit. In the CR and OP designations multi-family dwellings are permitted with a Conditional Use Permit if they are "subordinate" to the primary commercial use on the site.

D. Conclusions

To become more complete communities, San Miguel, Templeton, and Nipomo should consider increasing the supply of land designated for multi-family residential uses. In the future there will be increased demand for multi-family and attached housing types due to an aging population and the changing housing preferences of younger families. Additional multi-family housing located close to stores and services will reduce reliance on the automobile and increase opportunities for residents to walk to nearby destinations. Additional multi-family housing will also increase the supply of affordable housing choices and expand the customer base for local resident-serving businesses. Additional multi-family zoning may increase demand for infrastructure and community facilities, including water and wastewater systems, streets, and parks. In particular, bedroom communities, such as Nipomo and Templeton, are more likely to have infrastructure strains. As such, the County will likely need to plan for future infrastructure to support growth.

It appears that the four communities have a sufficient supply of land designated for commercial uses. The amount of land designated for commercial uses in these communities is not that different from larger incorporated cities in San Luis Obispo County (see Table 6-2). All four communities have a large supply of vacant land available for commercial development. This commercial land provides opportunities for stores and services to locate within the communities to serve local residents. There is also land designated for public and recreational uses within all four communities.

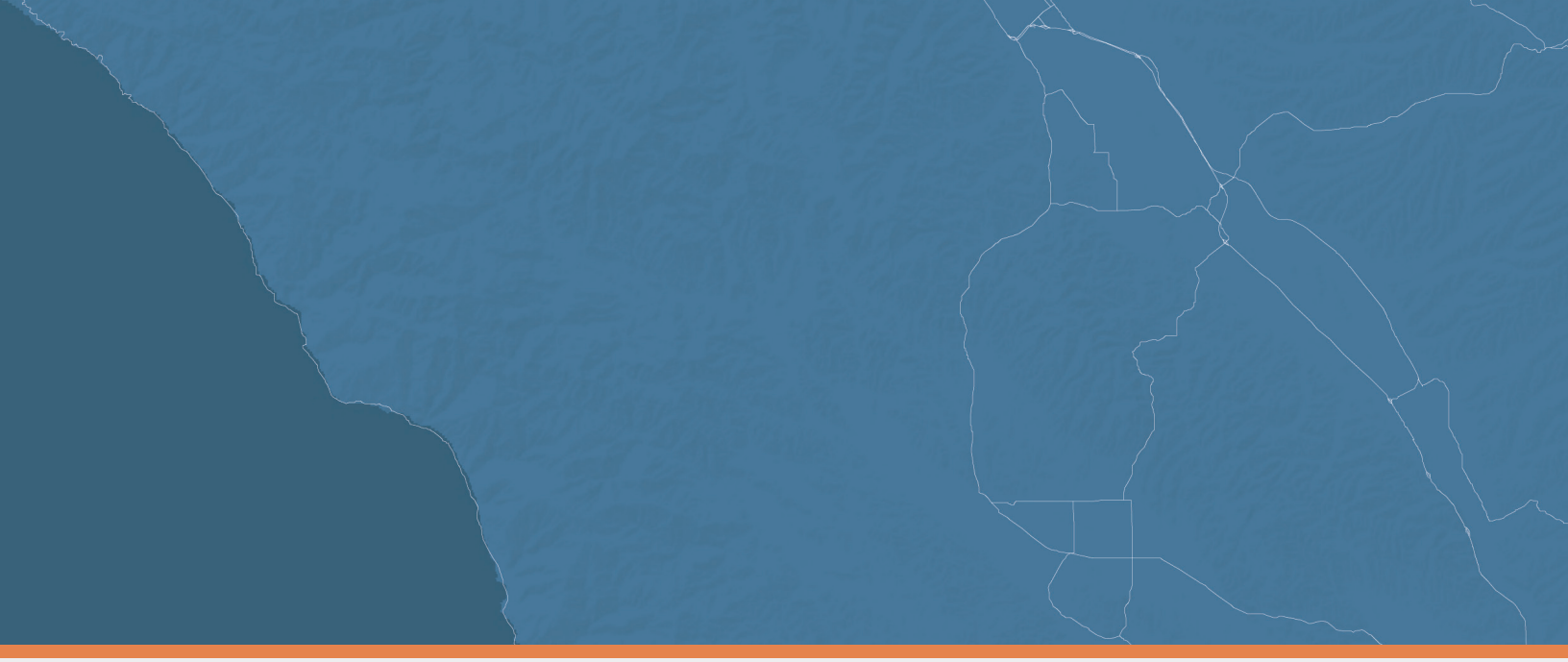
There is, however, a spatial imbalance in regards to the location of commercial areas relative to residential neighborhoods. In Nipomo for example most of the residential neighborhoods west of Highway 101 are not within walking distance of stores and services. In San Miguel, new residential subdivisions planned for the eastern side of the community will be a mile or more from stores and services along Mission Street. While it is true that the Land Use Ordinance

TABLE 6-2 **LAND USE DESIGNATIONS IN PASO ROBLES AND GROVER BEACH**

Land Use Designations	Paso Robles	Grover Beach
Commercial	10%	13%
Industrial	13%	6%
Recreation & Public Facilities	15%	5%
Agriculture & Open Space	20%	18%
Residential	41%	58%
Total	100%	100%

Source: City of El Paso de Robles General Plan, Land Use Element, 2003; City of Grove Beach General Plan, Land Use Element, 2010.

allows small grocery stores and some personal services within the RS and RSF designations, in practice it difficult for these uses to be built within a single-family residential neighborhood. Developers question the economic feasibility of such projects and neighbors are concerned about noise and traffic impacts.

To address this spatial imbalance, the County may wish to encourage the creation of "activity centers" within ¼ mile of every resident within unincorporated urban areas. These activity centers could consist of a park, school, or a neighborhood-serving commercial area. The County's policy documents and implementing ordinances would need to be amended to either require or encourage these activity centers. For new residential subdivisions, the County could require the preparation of a Specific Plan or Master Plan that identifies the specific location of new activity centers. Within developed neighborhoods, the County could identify locations where new activity centers are needed, establish strong policies in support of their establishment, and amend development regulations to the creation of these new activity centers. New policies such as these

would help to bring “complete communities” to all urban neighborhoods within unincorporated San Luis Obispo County.