THE PLANNING CENTER DC&E

Infill Standards Background Report

for the County of San Luis Obispo

April 30, 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Luis Obispo County is beginning a number of projects that will help carry out the County's policies to focus growth into urban areas. One of these projects, the Infill Design Standards project, aims to implement the County's Strategic Growth principles by promoting high-quality infill development within unincorporated communities.[1]

The Infill Design Standards project will recommend amendments to development regulations contained in a number of County plans and ordinances. These amendments will not emphasize the creation of additional regulations, but rather will encourage investment in communities by removing barriers, creating incentives, and improving existing standards to encourage high-quality infill development.

Over the next year, the County will develop specific amendments for review and consideration by County residents and decision-makers. This report provides background information about areas of the County with infill development potential, and presents preliminary recommendations and options for amendments to some of the County's plans and ordinances. These options generally relate to the following key ideas:

- **Target Areas for Infill Development**. The County should consider identifying specific priority areas for infill development within unincorporated communities. The County could then encourage infill development in these areas with incentives such as streamlined permitting, relaxed development standards, and increased allowable density.
- **Design Character of Infill Development**. The County's development regulations must ensure appropriate infill development that is compatible with the unique character of individual communities. Development regulations must remain sensitive to the existing scale of development and

[1] Infill development is defined as development on vacant or underutilized land within urban areas that is surrounded by existing development and served by existing public infrastructure.

reflect the needs and preferences of residents. The County should ensure that clear and consistent design standards for infill development are in place for all communities.

- **Development Standards**. Some of the County's standards for building height, minimum lot size, off-street parking, and residential density may prevent certain desired forms of infill development. The County should remove these barriers while also ensuring high quality design and minimal impacts on neighboring properties.
- **Required Permits**. The County should streamline the approval process by allowing more types of projects with ministerial permits, such as Site Plan Review. The County should clarify the development review process to provide for greater certainty and predictability, particularly for projects subject to a discretionary permit and public hearing.[2]
- **Ease of Use**. The County's development regulations are comprised of multiple layers of plans and ordinances. Regulations should be amended to eliminate inconsistencies, reduce redundancies, and increase clarity.

The Infill Design Standards project is intended to make it easier for project applicants to "do the right thing" and receive approval for infill development consistent with the Strategic Growth principles. This infill development will support County goals to help residents to enjoy a high-quality way of life now and in the years to come.

[2] Ministerial permits are approved or denied based on fixed standards or objective measurements and do not require the exercise of discretion. Discretionary permits are actions by which individual judgment is used as a basis to approve or deny a project. A Conditional Use Permit is an example of a discretionary permit.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Infill Design Standards Project Overview

1. Project Description

San Luis Obispo County is beginning a project to amend its development regulations to improve the ability to implement the County's Strategic Growth principles. The goal is to encourage high quality infill development within unincorporated urban areas in a manner consistent with the unique character of these communities. Appropriate infill development will help to preserve natural resources and open space, support the vitality of historic downtowns, and facilitate a higher-quality way of life within the county.

The Infill Design Standards project will look for opportunities to amend development regulations in the following County ordinances and policy documents:

- Land Use Ordinance (Title 22)– Countywide Provisions (Articles 1 through 8)
- Land Use Ordinance (Title 22) – Community Planning Standards (Article 9)
- Growth Management Ordinance (Title 26)
- Chapter 7 of the Estero Plan (Local Coastal Plan) – Community Planning Standards for Los Osos
- Table N, Chapter 6 of Framework for Planning – Density, Building Intensities and parcel Size Ranges
- Real Property Division Ordinance (Title 21)
- Countywide Design Guidelines
- Community Design Plans and Specific Plans

Amendments will encourage high quality infill development by removing regulatory barriers, providing incentives, and improving existing standards. The goal of the project is not to establish addition layers of new standards and regulations. Instead, the aim is to make it easier for applicants to "do the right thing" by improving the permitting process and clarifying requirements for projects consistent with County's Strategic Growth principles.

The Infill Design Standards project is part of a larger suite of grant-funded initiatives focused on promoting community-focused growth in the County's unincorporated areas. These projects, funded by a State of California Sustainable Communities Planning Grant, include the following:

- A **Complete Communities Survey**, which will identify needed infrastructure and public facilities, and their costs and funding, for a "complete community" to meet the daily needs of residents.
- A **Community Design Model** to calculate the impact of different land use scenarios on water demand, infrastructure needs, greenhouse gas emissions, and other features of strategically-planned communities.
- An **Illustrative Design Model** to visualize the design of new neighborhoods that are compatible with existing neighborhoods and consistent with Strategic Growth principles.
- A **Land Use Economics Study** to examine the land use, economic, and fiscal effects of possible measures to direct growth from rural to unincorporated urban areas.
- The **San Miguel Community Plan Update** which will serve as a model for community plan updates for other areas within the county.

The Infill Design Standards project will be carefully integrated with these related initiatives.

The current schedule for the Infill Design Standards project envisions the completion of specific recommendation for development regulation amendments by the summer of 2012, with opportunities for public comment at two workshops. Additional time may be added to the schedule to accommodate required environmental impact review. Draft amendments will be completed in late 2012 with public hearings expected by the summer of 2013. Information about all public meetings and draft products will be posted on the County's website.

2. Strategic Growth Principles Overview

In 2009 the Board of Supervisors adopted Strategic Growth principles, policies, and strategies as part of the General Plan. These principles encourage planning for compact, efficient, and environmentally-sensitive development to better utilize energy, land, water, and fiscal resources. They emphasize community-centered growth that provides people with additional travel, housing, and employment choices throughout the county.

As described in the County's General Plan, The Strategic Growth principles envision communities with:

- Adequate resources, services, and facilities for long-term growth (20 years)
- Inter-connected street systems, bicycle, and pedestrian ways.
- Neighborhood areas that can accommodate a variety of housing types that are affordable to all income groups, which are located close to focal points serving daily needs.
- Adequate areas for commerce, employment, education, recreation, civic, and social life.

The Board-adopted Strategic Growth principles are as follows:

1. Preserve open space, scenic natural beauty, and sensitive environmental areas.
2. Conserve energy resources.
3. Conserve agricultural resources and protect agricultural land.
4. Strengthen and direct development towards existing and strategically planned communities.
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
6. Create walkable neighborhoods and towns.
7. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
8. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
9. Encourage mixed land uses.
10. Take advantage of compact building design.
11. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.

12. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.
13. Strengthen regional cooperation.

These principles are accompanied by more specific policies and implementing strategies, which can be found in Appendix B of this report.

B. Report Purpose and Organization

The first phase of the Infill Design Standards project evaluates the extent to which existing County development regulations accommodate Strategic Growth principles. This report presents the findings of this evaluation. These findings will serve as a basis for future recommendations for specific development regulation amendments.

To provide context for these findings, this report summarizes existing conditions in five unincorporated urban areas with potential for infill development: San Miguel, Templeton, Los Osos, Oceano, and Nipomo. These summaries describe the unique design characteristics of these communities and the physical conditions that may impact infill development opportunities.

Following these community summaries are preliminary recommendations on how the County's development regulations could be modified to more effectively accommodate high quality infill development. These recommendations will be further developed and refined through the course of the project.

Appendix A of this report presents case studies of successful infill development in other small communities in California. These case studies provide examples of infill development that has respected the village-like character of communities in low density areas. They illustrate the design characteristics of appropriate infill and provide lessons on how development regulations can encourage high quality infill development in San Luis Obispo County.

It should be noted that this report focuses on how the County's development regulations can be amended as part of the Infill Design Standards project.

This report does not examine other factors that might constrain infill development in the county, such as water supply, development fees, public infrastructure costs, and State and federal regulations that the County does not directly control. Many of these factors are being addressed through other County Strategic Growth planning initiatives and should be examined as part of a comprehensive effort to accommodate infill development within the county.

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II. COMMUNITY SUMMARIES

This chapter presents summaries of the communities of San Miguel, Templeton, Los Osos, Oceano, and Nipomo. These summaries provide a general description of each community, describe their unique design character, and identify physical conditions related to future infill development. A map showing the general location of these communities is provided in Figure 1.

A. San Miguel

1. Overview

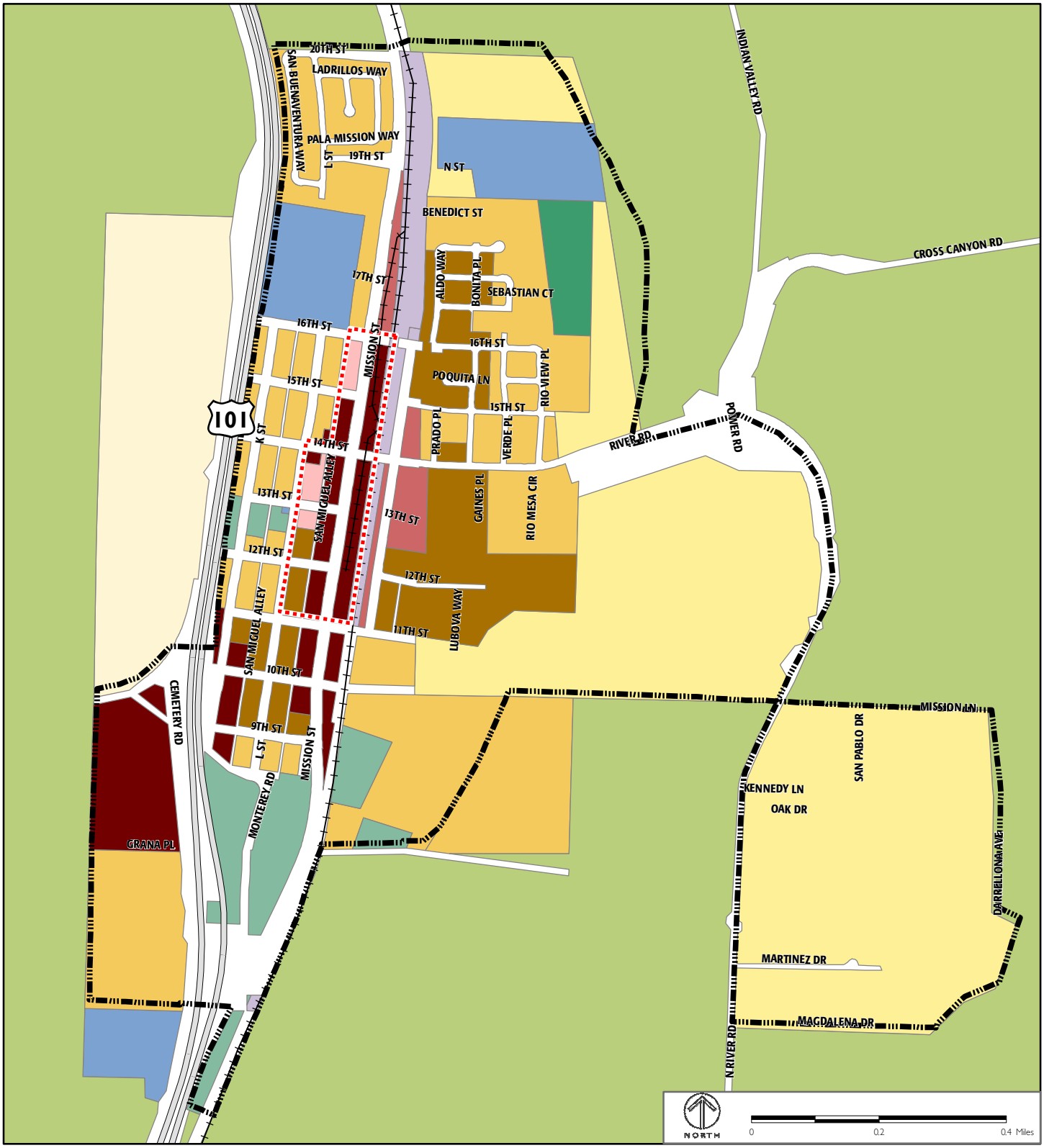
San Miguel is located near the northern boundary of the county, approximately 8 miles north of Paso Robles. To the west, the community is bordered by Highway 101 and the steep hillside along the highway's western edge. To the east, the Salinas River defines San Miguel's eastern boundary. The Union Pacific railroad tracks run through the middle of San Miguel, almost parallel to the highway. The older, more fully developed part of the community, which consists of modest-sized homes in small blocks with alleys, lies between the highway and the railroad. The commercial core has been developed along Mission Street, which runs immediately west of the railroad. Industrial uses are located along the east side of the railroad right-of-way, and beyond the railroad are conventional residential subdivisions which have been developed since the 1950s. Figure 2 shows the land use designations that apply within San Miguel, and Figure 3 provides an aerial image identifying existing development within the vicinity of the Central Business District. Currently, San Miguel's population is 2,337 (San Luis Obispo County based on 2010 Census).

Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Unincorporated Urban Area
Incorporated City
San Luis Obispo County Boundary

FIGURE 1

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY



Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Land Use Designations

- 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 2

SAN MIGUEL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Urban Reserve Line
Central Business District

FIGURE 3

SAN MIGUEL CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT & SURROUNDINGS

2. General Design Character

Sam Miguel can be characterized as a small, rural community with low-intensity development that conveys an open, spacious feeling. There are a number of historical properties throughout the community, which contributes to a unique sense of place. In particular, at the south entrance from Highway 101 to the town, old mission walls and a bell tower reflect the town's distinctive history.

Mission Street between 11th and 16th Streets is the main street of the town, which projects a rustic, western character. The west side of the street has been developed, while the east side has remained mostly vacant. The west side of the street contains sidewalk-oriented storefronts, one- and two-story buildings, and occasional vacant lots between buildings. Architectural elements include mission style houses, western-style commercial frontages, terracotta walls, red tile overhangs, and articulated roof lines. The west side of the street has a recently improved streetscape, with widened sidewalks, benches, landscaping, and street lights. Some large buildings, featuring architectural styles contrasting with surroundings, have been built on the east side of the street. A single-story industrial structure on the railroad right-of-way is visible from the main street beyond vacant lots. On the hillsides west of the commercial area there are single-family homes featuring a variety in building forms, placement, sizes, ages, setbacks, and architectural styles. Several vacant structures in this area are in need of remodeling and rehabilitation.

3. Physical Conditions Related to Infill Design Standards

San Miguel has a relatively large supply of vacant and underutilized land located within and near the Central Business District. Many of the properties are located within walking distance of existing stores, services, and community facilities. The east side of Mission Street in particular represents a key infill opportunity site. The far western part of San Miguel, in contrast, is on sloping hillsides and in the vicinity of Highway 101, which may restrict residential development due to toxic emissions from the highway traffic. These conditions may represent a physical constraint to infill development in this area.

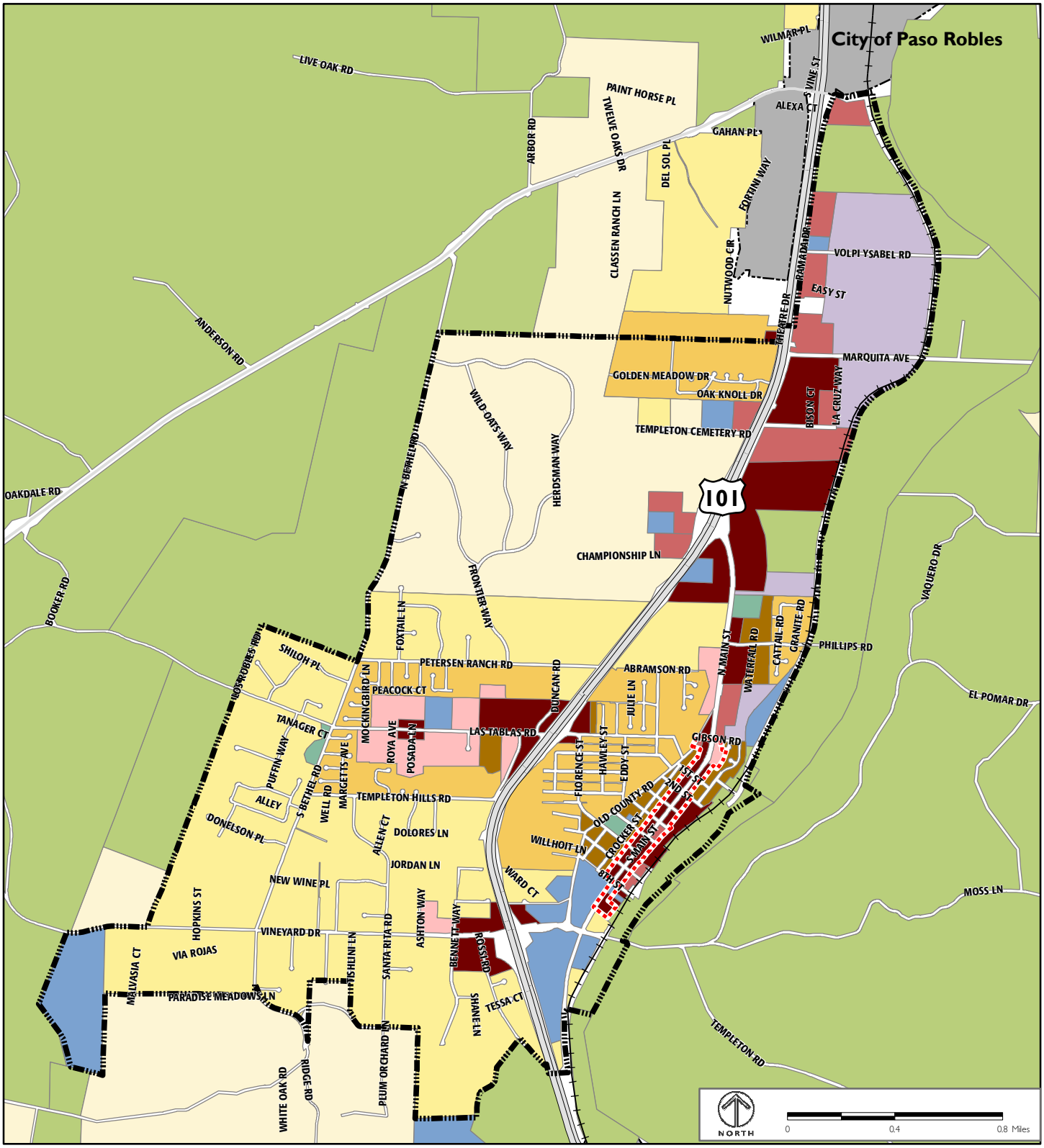
B. Templeton

1. Overview

Templeton is located roughly 6 miles south of Paso Robles. Highway 101 runs north and south through the middle of the community. The Union Pacific railway and the Salinas River run roughly parallel to the highway to the east of the town. Templeton is surrounded by agricultural land and the west part of town is largely developed as residential. Commercial development has occurred along the highway and along Main Street. The old Central Business District is located between the highway and the railroad, which defines the town's eastern boundary. Across the highway to the west, recent commercial development has occurred along Las Tablas Boulevard, surrounded by residential subdivisions. Figure 4 shows the land use designations that apply within Templeton. Figures 5 and 6 provide an aerial image identifying existing development within the vicinity of the Central Business District and Las Tablas Road. Currently, Templeton's population is 6,976 (San Luis Obispo County based on 2010 Census).

2. General Design Character

South Main Street, between Gibson Road and 8th Street, is the historic core of Templeton. This area conveys the rural character of a western town with a cohesive, intact, concentration of historic structures. Along both sides of South Main Street there are one- and two-story buildings oriented toward sidewalks. Mature street trees add to a pedestrian-scale environment with vibrant ground-floor retail activities. Buildings feature western-style architectural details such as sloped roofs, wood siding, balconies, and gallery-style frontage. Moreover, the old western-style signage along the main street enhances the sense of place. A dominant presence within the Central Business District is the Templeton Feeds and Grain building, featuring a height and mass at a different scale from surrounding structures. In contrast, along North Main Street, most land is vacant except for a few structures.



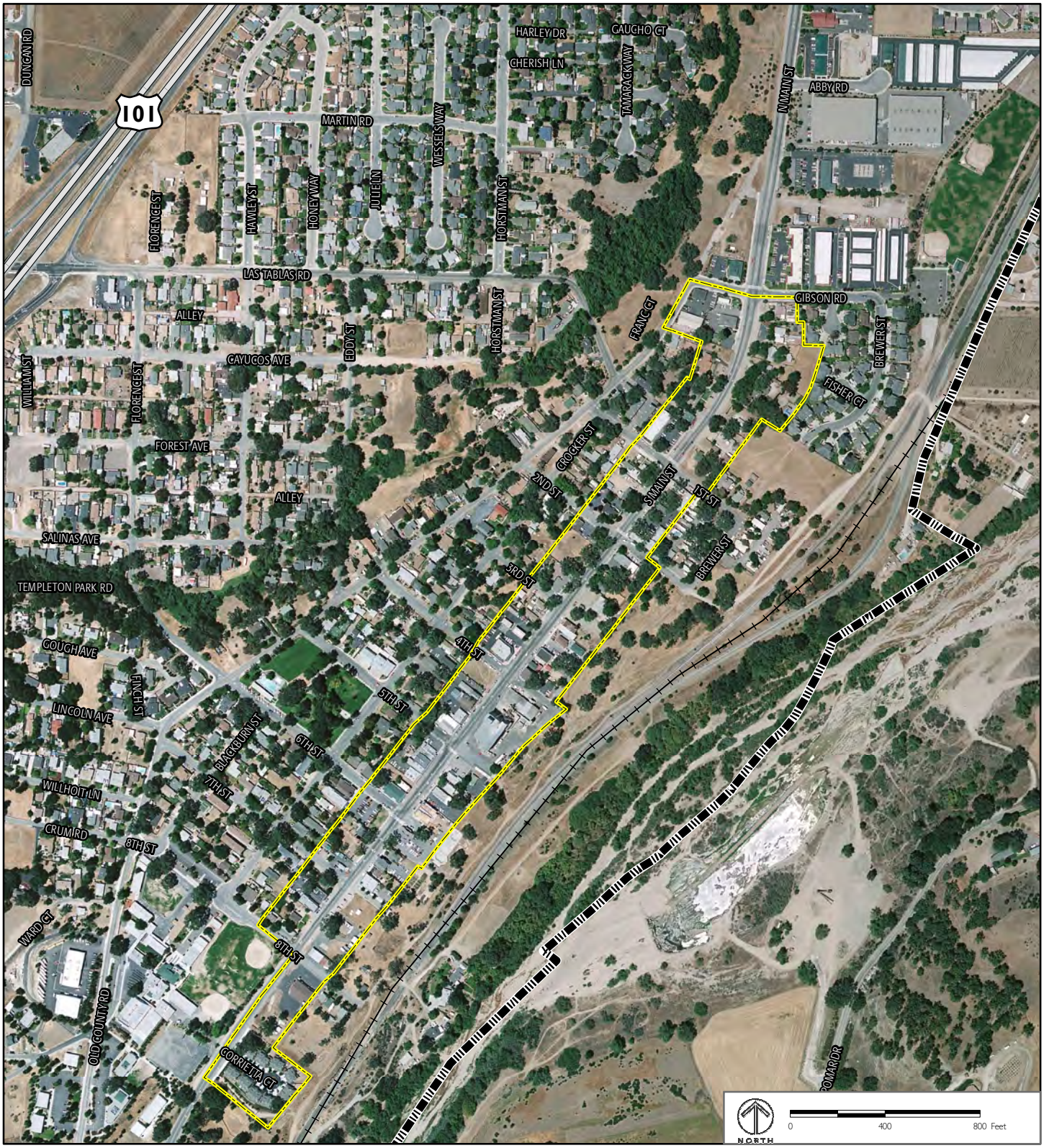
Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Land Use Designations

- 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 4

TEMPLETON LAND USE DESIGNATIONS



Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Urban Reserve Line
Central Business District

FIGURE 5

TEMPLETON CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT & SURROUNDINGS

Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Urban Reserve Line

FIGURE 6
LAS TABLAS ROAD AREA

The west side of Highway 101 features a different design character. This area has been recently developed with larger modern structures. A ½-mile stretch of Las Tablas contains mostly medical and institutional uses, such as the Heritage Oaks Bank, Twin Cities Community Hospital, and Templeton Medical Plaza. These buildings are two or three stories tall and have either large front setback areas or front parking lots. Building styles reflect a modern design aesthetic: concrete white walls or brick walls with red roofing.

3. Physical Conditions Related to Infill Design Standards

South Main Street within the Central Business District has been almost fully developed with limited infill opportunity. However, there are some large vacant lots along North Main Street within close proximity to the Central Business District, which are well suited for infill development. Several large, vacant commercial properties are also available along Las Tablas Road west of Highway 101. Given that Highway 101 acts as a physical barrier within Templeton, it may be challenging for new development west of the highway to connect with the old Central Business District and the new medical center. Moreover, parcels in the vicinity of Highway 101 have limited potential for residential development due to toxic emissions from the highway traffic.

C. Los Osos

1. Overview

Los Osos is a coastal community with about 14,000 residents. The Morro Bay shoreline defines the northwesterly boundary of the town. Los Osos Valley Road is a major east-west street which connects to Highway 101 in San Luis Obispo to the east. South Bay Boulevard is a major north-south street which connects to Highway 1 to the north. Los Osos has two commercial areas: a pedestrian-scale commercial area along 2nd Street in Baywood Park, and an auto-oriented commercial along Los Osos Valley Road in the Central Business District. The Baywood Park commercial area contains small restaurants and markets, which are well integrated with the residential neighborhood along the bay. Along a ½-mile stretch of Los Osos Valley Road between South Bay Boulevard and Bush Drive, auto-oriented shopping centers

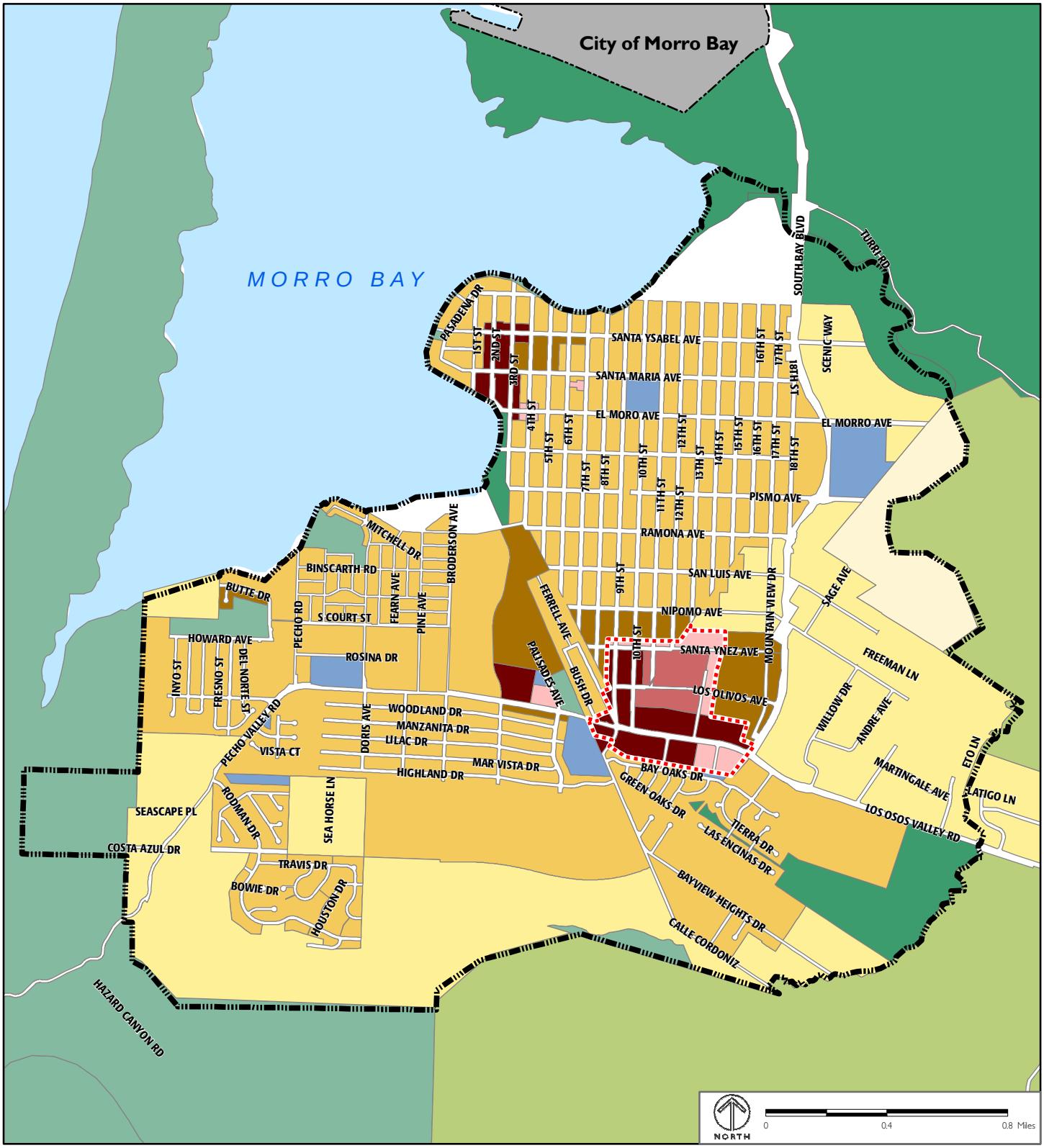
are clustered, with these shopping centers separated from the surrounding residential areas. Most residential development is located in the town of El Moro, which was subdivided into 25-foot-wide lots around the turn of the 20th century. Other subdivisions have been developed to the south and west of the Central Business District. To the east of South Bay Boulevard, there are suburban residential properties surrounded by agricultural land and open space. Figure 7 shows the land use designations that apply within Los Osos, and Figure 8 provides an aerial image identifying existing development within the vicinity of the Central Business District.

2. General Design Character

The design character of the Los Osos Central Business District is defined primarily by auto-oriented shopping centers located behind large parking lots. Buildings are generally one story high. South of the street, there are more vacant parcels than there are structures. Because Los Osos Valley Road (LOVR) is a 5-lane wide street, it is difficult to create an enclosed, human-scale environment along LOVR. North of LOVR, areas along 9th and 10th Streets are more pedestrian-friendly. The architectural styles within the Central Business District vary and do not convey a unified or distinctive character. The Central Business District is surrounded by multi-family homes to the northeast and single-family homes to the north and south.

3. Physical Conditions Related to Infill Design Standards

As shown in Figure 8, there are presently numerous large commercially-designated, vacant parcels within the Los Osos CBD. The northern part of town and the areas immediately surrounding the Central Business District have been developed with single-family houses. There are some vacant or under-developed parcels in these areas, but they are mostly small and scattered. Within the Central Business District, pedestrian-oriented infill development is constrained by a lack of pedestrian amenities, such as sidewalks, benches, and street lights, and a lack of infrastructure, including paved roads and sewer systems.



Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Land Use Designations

- 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 7

LOS OSOS LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Central Business District

FIGURE 8

LOS OSOS CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT & SURROUNDINGS

D. Oceano

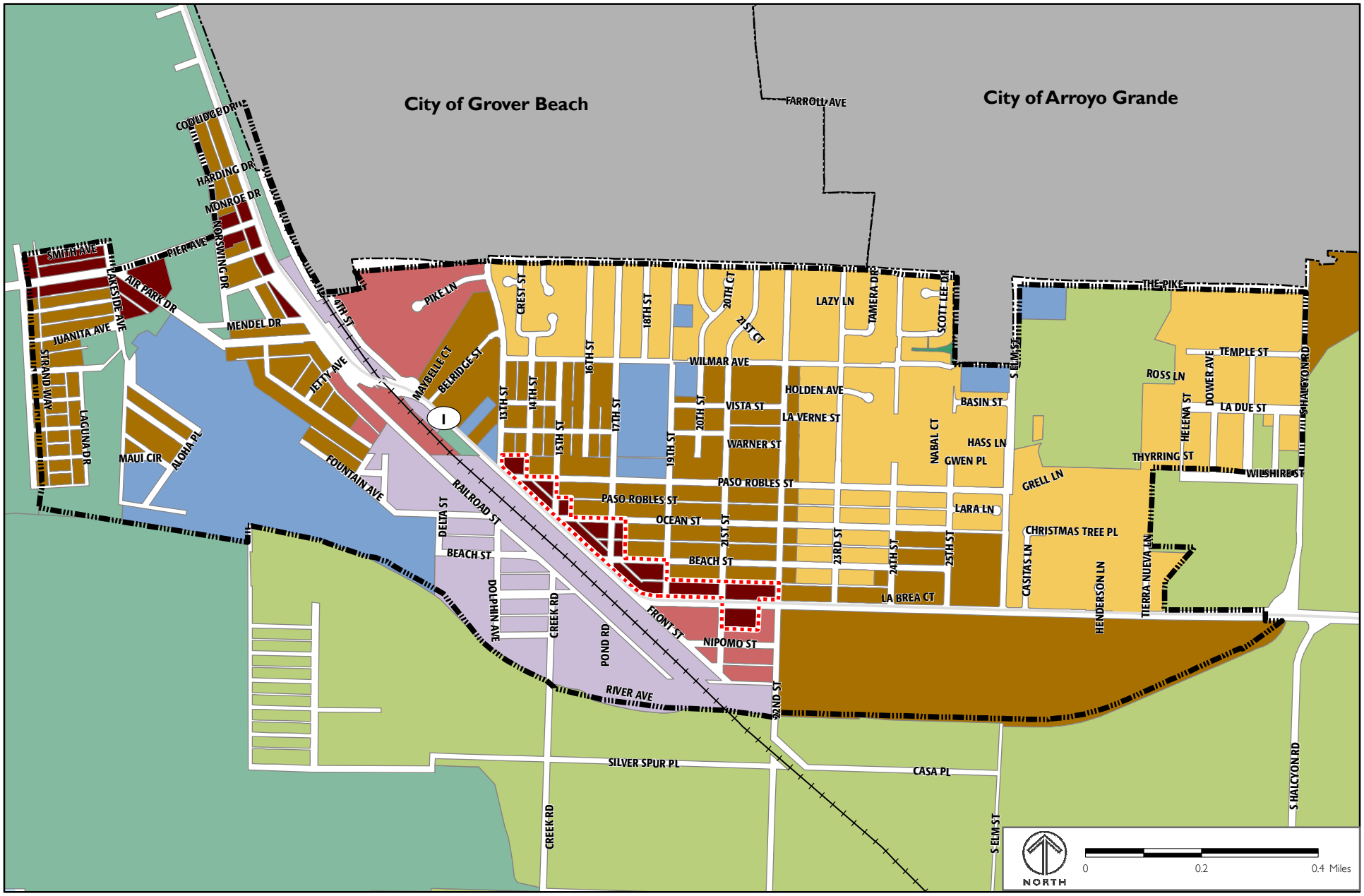
1. Overview

Oceano is a coastal community with approximately 7,100 residents, surrounded by farm fields, dunes, and the Pacific Ocean. Oceano is located immediately south of Grover Beach and Arroyo Grande. The Union Pacific railroad runs north-south on the west side of the town. Highway 1 runs parallel with the railroad until it turns into Cienga Street at 19th Street. North and east of the highway, the town is mostly developed with residential uses. South of Highway 1 there are commercial service uses, an RV park, and a group of mobile home parks. Two commercial areas have developed in Oceano: Highway 1 through the Central Business District, and a small retail area along Pier Avenue. The Oceano Airport is situated approximately 0.2 miles west of the railroad. Figure 9 shows the land use designations that apply within Oceano, and Figure 10 provides an aerial image identifying existing development within the vicinity of the Central Business District.

2. General Design Character

Downtown Oceano extends from 13th Street to 22nd Street along Highway 1. The Community has a general coastal feel, but Downtown Oceano itself lacks a coherent identity. Front Street/Highway 1 is defined by the occasional commercial structure on the northeast side, fronting service commercial, warehousing and vacant railroad right-of-way on the coastal side. The irregular placement and orientation of commercial structures, dominant parking lots, and a lack of pedestrian amenities contribute to an environment that is generally unwelcoming to pedestrians. Commercial structures are mostly one story high, with colorful walls but no consistent architectural styles. Recently developed multi-family buildings lie to the immediate northeast of the Central Business District.

When Highway 1 becomes Cienaga Street, the character of the commercial development changes to a commercial-strip style. Along Cienaga Street to the north, a one-story market and a community health center are situated behind its large front parking lot. The opposite side of the market is mostly auto



Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

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- Residential, Multi-Family
- Urban Reserve Line
- Central Business District

FIGURE 9
OCEANO LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Urban Reserve Line
Central Business District

FIGURE 10
OCEANO CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT & SURROUNDINGS

service areas or vacant lots. The width of the street and vehicle traffic also make this area uninviting for pedestrians. To the east of Downtown Oceano, one- or two-story multifamily houses are aligned along the north side of Cienaga Street.

3. Physical Conditions Related to Infill Design Standards

As shown in Figure 10, there are a number of large vacant parcels within Oceano's Central Business District. Industrial properties on the south side of Highway 1 are generally underutilized. The Residential Multi-Family areas adjacent to the Central Business District contain a number of smaller vacant parcels and underutilized parcels with single-family dwellings. Many of the parcels are narrow and deep and some are substandard relative to the County's minimum parcel size and dimension standards.

E. Nipomo

1. Overview

Nipomo is located near the southern border of the county, approximately seven miles south of Arroyo Grande, four miles north of Santa Maria, and seven miles east of the Pacific Ocean. Currently, the town's population is 15,267 (San Luis Obispo County based on 2010 Census). The core of the town is developed along Tefft Street with commercial development primarily fronting on Tefft Street or Frontage Road west of Highway 101. From the highway heading east through Olde Towne, Tefft Street is partially developed with commercial uses up to where it intersects with Thompson Avenue. Thompson Avenue runs north-south on the east side of town and is also developed with commercial uses. Outside of Tefft Street, Frontage Road, and Thompson Avenue, Nipomo is largely developed with residential uses. Nipomo Regional Park occupies over 100 acres on the west side of town. Beyond the Urban Reserve Line, residential rural parcels and agricultural lands surround the town.

Figure 11 shows the land use designations that apply within Nipomo, and Figure 12 provides an aerial image identifying existing development within the vicinity of the Central Business District.

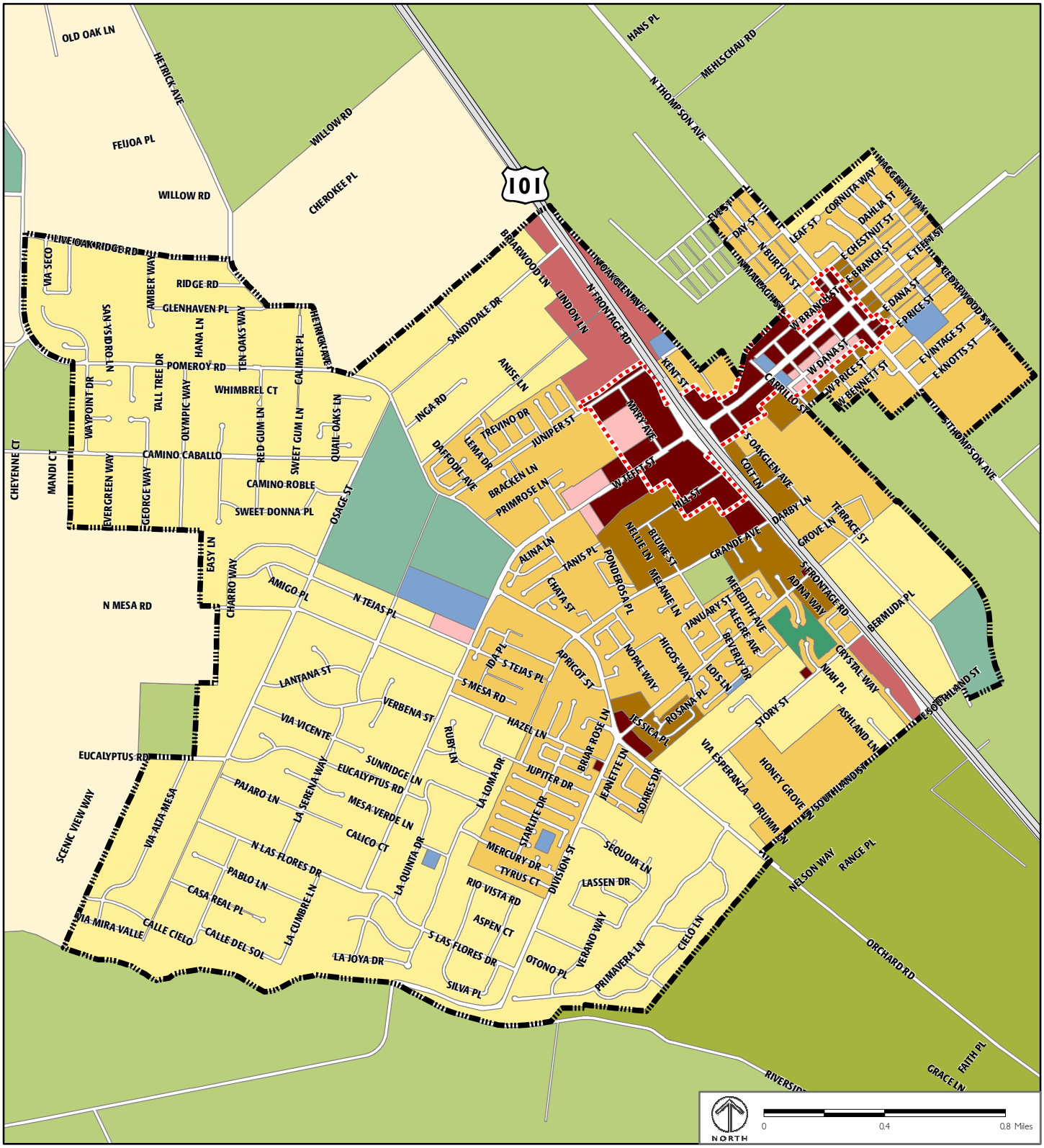
2. General Design Character

Highway 101 divides the core area into two commercial neighborhoods: West Tefft and Olde Towne. Olde Towne is the historic center developed around the intersection of Tefft Street and Thompson Avenue. The main character of this area can be described as an absence of structures while retaining some hints of a historic past. Near the intersection of Tefft Street and Thompson Avenue, there are sparsely located one-story historic structures, such as small restaurants and bars. These structures are facing Thompson Avenue, but because the street consists of discontinuous sidewalks, three travel lanes, and two parking lanes, there is no active street-level presence. The Calvary Chapel of Nipomo is the largest structure in this area, presenting an old western building style. The architectural character of other existing buildings is a mix of a wood version of early Victorian/western commercial and a stucco derivation of earlier Spanish styles. On the other hand, on the five-block stretch of Tefft Street west of Thompson Road, most of land is vacant and only a couple of structures are present. Interestingly, recently improved streetscapes, including widened sidewalks, pedestrian bulb-outs, benches and street lights, highlight the lack of activity along the street.

The West Tefft area is located immediately west of the highway, and contains an assortment of commercial uses in a conventional shopping center setting. Buildings are typically oriented toward large parking lots and feature a unified Mediterranean-themed design aesthetic. Beyond the shopping centers to the north and south, there are mostly large vacant commercial properties, surrounded by single-family homes.

3. Physical Conditions Related to Infill Design Standards

There are a number of vacant or under-developed parcels along South Oakglen Avenue and Tefft Street between the highway and Thompson Avenue. The proximity to the Central Business District creates opportunities for



Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Land Use Designations

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- Residential, Rural
- Residential, Suburban
- Residential, Single-Family
- Residential, Multi-Family
- Urban Reserve Line
- Central Business District

FIGURE 11

NIPOMO LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Source: San Luis Obispo County GIS, 2012.

Central Business District
Urban Reserve Line

FIGURE 12

NIPOMO CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT & SURROUNDINGS

a walkable built environment. In addition, Tefft Street has already improved its streetscapes. Beyond the shopping centers to the north and south, there are also several large vacant parcels that provide opportunity for infill development. These parcels are surrounded by both single-family and multi-family residences. These large vacant properties are zoned either commercial or multi-family residential. Moreover, the proximity to the highway increases the potential for economic development. However, at the same time, residential development is limited in the vicinity of Highway 101 due to toxic emissions from the highway traffic.

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III. ORDINANCE AND DESIGN PLAN ANALYSIS

A. *Land Use Ordinance – Countywide Provisions*[3]

Countywide provisions within the Land Use Ordinance are supportive of the County's Strategic Growth principles in a number of ways. Within urban areas these provisions allow for a mixture of land uses, diversity of housing types, and intensity of land use necessary for vibrant and healthy communities. Specific provisions within Articles 1 through 8 of the Land Use Ordinance that support appropriate infill development include the following:

- **Allowable Land Uses**. As specified in Chapter 22.04, residential uses are allowed in the OP and CR land use designations with a Conditional Use Permit. Within the RMF land use category, retail and service uses are also allowed with a Conditional Use Permit. These land use regulations create the possibility for a fine grain mixture of land uses within commercial and higher density residential areas of the county.
- **Required Permits**. Table 2-3 in Chapter 22.04 allows multi-family dwelling up to 15 dwelling units with ministerial Site Plan review. Retail, service, and other non-residential uses up to 10,000 square feet are also allowed ministerially. Allowing these types of uses without a public hearing or discretionary permit facilitates infill development within urban areas.
- **Height**. Section 22.10.090 allows for modifications to maximum building heights either through an adjustment process or Conditional Use Permit. An increase in permitted building heights in urban areas increases the feasibility of many types of infill development projects.
- **Affordable Housing Incentives.** Chapter 12.12 establishes incentives for the development of affordable housing as required by State law. These incentives are intended to increase the economic feasibility of housing

[3] This report focuses on Title 22, the Land Use Ordinance for the Inland portion of the county. The parallel Land Use Ordinance for the Coastal Zone is Title 23.

affordable for lower-income households while also promoting good project design and compatibility with existing neighborhood character.

- **Condominiums and Cluster Divisions**. Section 22.22.080 allows for condominium, planned development, or other similar residential unit ownership project with smaller individual parcel sizes. Section 22.22.140 allows for reduced parcel size and a density increase bonus for cluster divisions within urban areas that include permanently protected open space.
- **Parking**. Section 22.18.020 allows for reductions in required off-street parking with the approval of a Minor Use Permit. Reductions in required off-street parking can help to minimize common barriers to infill development in urban areas.

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this report, other County plans and ordinances often supersede Land Use Ordinance provisions such as these which support Strategic Growth principles. The County will need to consider amending regulations in design plans, specific plans, and community planning standards (Land Use Ordinance Article 9) that create barriers to high quality infill development.

In addition, there are some ways that Articles 1 through 8 of the Land Use Ordinance could be amended to better support Strategic Growth Principles. Some specific options to consider include the following:

1. Target Areas for Infill Development

The Land Use Ordinance could incentivize Strategic Growth by identifying specific priority areas for infill development. Development within these priority areas could be eligible for incentives such as expedited permit approvals, relaxed development standards, or increased density. The Land Use Ordinance could include maps that identify the specific location of these priority development areas. The County could also prepare a project-level Master Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for development within these areas to streamline the environmental review for desired forms of infill development.

2. Required Permits for Commercial Projects

Commercial and other non-residential projects which are 10,000 square feet or larger require a Minor Use or Conditional Use Permit (Table 2-3 in Chapter 22.08). Development projects which disturb 1 acre or more of a site or result in 1 or more acres of impervious surface also required a Minor or Conditional Use Permit. A public hearing and discretionary permit process for these projects can be a barrier to infill development. Consider allowing larger commercial projects in OP and CR zones with Site Plan Review, and consider increasing the threshold for site disturbance and impervious surface that requires a minor Use Permit. Establish clear design standards for these projects to minimize environmental impacts and ensure quality design consistent with Strategic Growth principles and the unique character of individual communities.

3. Allowable Land Uses

Table 2-2 identifies allowable land uses in each of land use designations. As mentioned above, many of these regulations support Strategic Growth principles by permitting a mixture of land uses in residential and commercial designations. However, Table 2-2 can also permit certain land uses in urban areas which conflict with a walkable, pedestrian-oriented environment (mini-storages in the RMF designation, for example). Consider prohibiting these uses or establishing permitting requirements to ensure their appropriate location and design.

4. Height Limits

Maximum building heights in Section 22.10.090.C generally conflict with height limits established in the design plans. These height limits should be brought into conformance with any desired height limits for specific communities as established in Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance or the design plans and specific plans. The table in Section 22.10.090.C.1 should also be adjusted to reflect possible changes to the intensity factor system (see section 7 below).

5. Lot Consolidation

Section 22.10.100 establishes a minimum lot area for the sale or transfer of individual parcels. This requirement may prevent the development of some smaller parcels within urban areas. This provision could be eliminated entirely for parcels within targeted infill areas.

6. Minimum Site Area

The minimum site area for multi-family dwellings is 6,000 square feet for two units (Section 22.10.110). This requirement prohibits the development of multi-family homes on many smaller lots in urban areas. This issue is most relevant in communities with a large supply of substandard lots such as Oceano. Consider eliminating or reducing this requirement in certain locations. Establish clear standards to address any neighborhood compatibility issues that may result.

7. Intensity Factors

San Luis Obispo County has a unique intensity factor system to determine the maximum permitted residential density in certain areas. The County should adjust this system to be more consistent with the maximum permitted densities specified in the design plans and specific plans for individual communities. For example, few if any communities permit a residential density of 28 units per acre as allowed under a high intensity factor. It is possible that the high intensity factor could be eliminated entirely, with the maximum units per acre allowed under the low and medium intensity factors increased slightly to be consistent with the design plans, specific plans, and Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance.

8. Setbacks

Section 22.10.140.D establishes a basic front setback requirement of 25 feet for residential uses. This required setback prohibits certain residential building types that are oriented toward the street and contribute to a more pedestrian-oriented environment. It is true that design plans and specific plans generally allow for reduced front setbacks for multi-family projects within certain locations. However, there may be infill opportunity areas within close proximity to a Central Business District where the 25-foot setback would still

apply. The Land Use Ordinance should identify clear criteria, in addition to existing permitted adjustments, where a reduced setback is permitted and allow this reduction ministerially.

9. Density Bonus

The Land Use Ordinance allows basic density bonuses for affordable housing consistent with State law (Chapter 22.12). The County may want to consider allowing a similar density bonus for infill development projects consistent with the Strategic Growth principles. This provision would need to identify areas where the bonus is available, types of projects eligible for a bonus, required project design features, and the specific additional density available. A strategic growth density bonus of this nature would be a powerful incentive for infill development within selected areas. However, additional density would need to be carefully designed to fit in with existing community character and scale of development.

10. Required Parking Spaces

The minimum required off-street parking for multi-family dwellings is over three per unit for three-bedroom units (Section 22.18.050). This requirement is a significant obstacle to infill housing in many situations. The County should consider allowing a reduced parking requirement for multi-family dwellings in certain locations based on clear criteria. Adjustments should be permitted minsterially as part of a Site Plan review process.

11. Subdivision Design

Section 22.22.080 establishes a minimum parcel size for residential single-family and multi-family land use designations. The minimum permitted parcel size under any circumstance is 6,000 square feet; in some instances the minimum permitted parcel size is 20,000 square feet. This requirement prohibits many forms of small lot single-family homes, limits the type of multi-family development in certain areas, necessitates the need for a PUD in many situations, and conflicts with other minimum parcel size requirements found elsewhere in the County's development regulations. The County should consider adjusting these requirements to support a broader range of residential development types within urban areas.

12. Transfer of Development Credits

The transfer of development credits from sending to receiving zones can be an effective way to redirect growth away from rural lands and into urban areas where infill development is desired. The County's transfer of development credits program, however, has not yet produced results and has a number of problems. Redesigning this program could help to produce high quality infill development within urban areas consistent with the County's Strategic Growth principles. A complete revision to this program is out of the scope of the Infill Design Standards. However, as part of this project we can establish some basic guidance on how this program can be made more effective.

13. Second Units

The County has recently tried to encourage second units as a form of affordable housing in a number of ways, including preparing stock plans for second units to encourage their construction. The County may want to consider taking addition steps to encourage second units in areas where additional residential development is desired. Reducing off-street parking requirements or encouraging second units over garages may be an option. Efforts to encourage second units will need to be balanced with community concerns over second units in certain locations.

14. Curbs, Gutters, and Sidewalks

The cost of installing curbs, gutters, and sidewalks can be a significant constraint on infill development in urban areas. Section 22.54.030 establishes a waiver process to approve exceptions to this requirement. The County may want to consider developing waiver criteria that is oriented towards encouraging infill development in certain priority locations. Approval of waivers would, of course, need to be balanced with the need to provide infrastructure in urban areas, and the benefit that this infrastructure provides in supporting walkable and pedestrian-friendly communities.

15. Residential Uses in Commercial Land Use Designations

Section 22.30.490 requires that residential uses in the Office or Commercial Land Use Designation be "subordinate" to the primary office or commercial

use on the site. County staff has interpreted to mean that the floor area of a residential use on the site cannot exceed the non-residential floor area on the site. In some locations it may be desirable for total size of a residential project to exceed the commercial floor area on the site. The County should consider amending the subordinate residential use requirement to provide greater flexibility while still maintaining adequate land for commercial uses.

16. Permitting and Administration

As discussed in Sections B and C below, design plans and specific plans for many urban areas require a Minor Use Permit for most types of new development. Revising this requirement and allowing more types of development in urban areas with a Site Plan Review or Zoning Clearance would be an effective way to encourage infill development. In addition, the County may want to consider an expedited permit process for infill development in certain key priority development areas. This expedited process could be based on criteria similar to the County's 2006 Smart Growth Criteria for Development Projects, or could employ a more straightforward geographic-based criteria.

B. Land Use Ordinance – Community Planning Standards

Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance establishes Community Planning Standards for each of the County's planning areas. Our review of this article focused on the urban area standards for the communities of San Miguel, Templeton, Los Osos, Oceano, and Nipomo.[4]

As explained in Chapter 2 of this report, the County should consider relocating many land use regulations, development standards, and operational requirements currently in the design plans into Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance. This will locate typical "zoning" regulations together in the Land Use Ordinance, with design standards and guidelines found in the design plans and specific plans.

[4] Community Planning Standards for Los Osos are located in the Estero Area Plan of the Local Coastal Plan instead of Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance.

Another general recommendation for Article 9 is to allow more types of development with a ministerial Site Plan Review instead of a Minor Use Permit or Conditional Use Permit. This change would need to be coordinated with revisions to the design plans and accompanied by specific design standards and criteria to ensure high quality projects.

More specific options and recommendations for individual communities are provided below.

1. San Miguel Urban Area

San Luis Obispo County will soon begin a process to update the San Miguel Community Plan. Once that process is complete, the San Miguel Urban Area Standards should be updated to be consistent with the policy direction established in the Community Plan. Updated standards should examine the existing noise setback from the railroad (Section 22.104.070.A.8). This setback may not be necessary in light of noise attenuation technologies available. The existing setback requirement would likely prohibit most forms of residential development on the east side of Mission Street.

2. Templeton Urban Area

The maximum permitted residential area in the RMF category between Old County Road and Main Street is 12 units per acre. Higher residential densities in this area could enhance the vitality of Downtown Templeton. The County should explore amending both the Land Use Ordinance and the Templeton Design Plan to allow greater density in this area. Increased density would need to comply with specific design criteria to ensure compatibility with existing development in the community.

Section 22.104.090.G requires a Conditional Use Permit for mixed use development on Los Tables Road. The County may want to allow mixed use development in this area either with a Minor Use Permit or Site Plan Review subject to clear standards and criteria.

3. Oceano Urban Area

A Minor Use Permit is required for all new construction in CR and RMF designations. The County should consider amending both the Land Use Ordinance and the Oceano Specific Plan to allow more types of development with a Site Plan Review. Clear development standards and criteria for infill development could be developed to ensure high quality infill development that is compatible with surrounding uses.

Section 22.106.070.G establishes a maximum residential density of 15 units per acre and a 48 percent floor area ratio. Increased permitted residential densities could help to increase the vitality and development feasibility of commercial areas in Oceano. The County should explore amending both the Land Use Ordinance and the Oceano Specific Plan to allow greater density in RMF designations, subject to specific design criteria to ensure compatibility with existing development in the area.

4. Nipomo Urban Area

A Minor Use Permit is required for all new development within the Nipomo Central Business District and West Tefft Design Plan area. The County should consider allowing more types of development in these areas with Site Plan Review.

Section 22.112.080.H.1 establishes maximum permitted residential density of 10 or 15 units per acre in the Residential Multi-Family category. This section also requires further reductions in permitted residential density for smaller parcels west of Highway 101. The County should review these density reductions to ensure that they remain appropriate in light of the County's desire to redirect growth into existing urban areas.

Section 22.112.080.H.3 also establishes site planning criteria for the Residential Multi-Family category. Criteria relating to private outdoor space and active recreation area requirements may be a barrier to infill development in certain areas. The County should consider reducing these requirements, particularly for multi-family projects within proximity to public open spaces and recreational areas.

5. Los Osos

Community Planning Standards for Los Osos are located in the Estero Area Plan of the Local Coastal Plan instead of Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance. The County should consider relocating these standards to the Land Use Ordinance so that all community planning standards are located in the same place.

The Community Planning Standards for Los Osos contain site and building design standards that apply to the north side of Los Osos Valley Road between South Bay Boulevard and Fairchild Way. These standards are now largely obsolete as this property has recently been developed. The County should eliminate or revise these standards to reflect current built conditions. The County should also establish new design standards for other key development areas of the Central Business District to mandate high quality design and guide future development in these areas.

C. Subdivision Ordinance

The contents of the County's Real Property Division Ordinance (Title 21) are largely prescribed by the California Map Act. Much of the ordinance therefore cannot be modified if it is to remain in compliance with State law.

The one section of the ordinance that should be examined as part of the Infill Design Standards project is Chapter 21.03: Design Criteria. This chapter contains standards relating to the design of new neighborhoods, subdivisions, streets, and other public infrastructure associated with subdivided property. Section 21.03.010, for example, identifies parcel and site design standards, many of which could impact land divisions within urban areas and priority infill areas. Standards which the County may want to examine as part of this project include the following:

- Section c.3 which requires a minimum parcel width of 60 feet. This standard could prohibit certain forms of townhomes and small lot single-family homes.

- Section d.1 requires a minimum street width of 40 or 50 feet. This requirement would preclude certain types of narrow residential streets that would support a pedestrian-oriented environment within new communities and subdivisions.

D. Countywide Design Guidelines

The Countywide Design Guidelines establish recommendations for the design of buildings, sites, and streetscapes within urban areas of the county. Overall, these guidelines provide good recommendations consistent with Strategic Growth principles. Guidelines address pedestrian orientation of new development and compatibility with the existing design character of individual communities.

As would be expected, some of these guidelines are not consistent with standards and guidelines contained in the Land Use Ordinance and community design plans and specific plans. These inconsistencies should be corrected as part of the Infill Design Standards project. Inconsistences that we have identified in our initial review of these documents include the following:

- Page 31 of the Design Guidelines call for a setback of 40 feet for portions of buildings 16 feet or higher when located on deep lots. This guidance is not reflected in the setback requirements of the Land Use Ordinance.
- Page 60 of the Countywide Design Guidelines encourages varied setbacks of up to 5 feet. This conflicts with the Templeton Community Design Plan, which requires a min of 7-foot difference.
- Page 46 of the Countywide Design Guidelines encourages multi-family buildings to contain six to ten units. The San Miguel Design Plan requires no more than 6 units per structure (page 45) and the Templeton Plan encourages clustering of 3 to 6 units in a single structure.
- Page 49 of the Countywide Design Guidelines call for private and shared open space for multi-family residences that conflict with the Nipomo Community Planning Standards.

- Page 15 of the Countywide Design Guidelines calls for at least 60 percent of ground floor street facade to be transparent glass (windows or doors) in downtown. Community plans require different percentage of transparency (e.g. Nipomo 40-50 percent).
- Page 29 of the Design Guidelines allows large anchor stores outside of downtown to be located behind sufficient parking areas. Land Use Ordinance Section 22.18.030 does not allow parking in front setback area.
- The Countywide Design Guidelines require a minimum of one landscaped planter with a tree for every six vehicle stalls. Olde Towne Nipomo Plan (page 30) requires different amounts of parking lot landscaping.

The County should also consider translating some guidelines into standards that apply either countywide or to individual communities.

E. Community Design Plans and Specific Plan

We have focused our review on design plans for San Miguel, Templeton, Nipomo Olde Towne, and Nipomo West Tefft, and the Specific Plan for Oceano. Many of these plans are consistent with Strategic Growth principles and aim to promote active, mixed-use communities with high quality architecture that enhances a unique sense of place. Others, such as the Templeton Community Design Plan, are older documents and are in some ways not fully consistent with current policies relating to strategic growth in the county.

As discussed previously in this report, many of the design plans contain land use regulations, development standards, and operational regulations that may be more appropriately located in the Land Use Ordinance. As part of the Infill Design Standards project we will consider if some of if these typical "zoning" provisions should be relocated to Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance.

Design Plans and specific plans were prepared with careful attention to the desires of community residents. In many cases these plans aim to limit development potential in order to maintain the low density, rural character of these communities. For many communities, the maximum permitted residential density is considerably lower than permitted in the Land Use Ordinance, and building heights are generally limited to no more than two stories.

The Infill Design Standards project should carefully consider whether permitted densities and building heights in certain locations could be increased. During public workshops and meetings we will explore options for how increased development capacity could be accommodated in a way that enhances the existing community character. We will also explore a number of approaches to permitting increased height and density, such as third-story step backs, density bonuses, graduated density, and site-specific height exceptions. Visual representations of development at different densities will also be presented to demonstrate how higher density projects can be compatible with the small town and rural character of the county.

Revisions to design plans and specific plans will be tailored for each individual community. Below are our preliminary recommendations and options for amendments to these plans.

1. San Miguel Design Plan.

The San Miguel Design Plan allows for a reduced off-street parking requirement for commercial uses of 1 space per 1,000 square feet of floor area (page. 34). The Plan does not however provide a similar reduction for multi-family residential uses. The County should consider allowing reduced parking requirements for multi-family residential projects within priority development provided that these reductions will not negatively impact adjacent residential neighborhoods. The Design Plan should also include improved standards for the design of new surface parking facilities.

One of the components of the vision for Downtown San Migue is a Town Center concept for the east side of Mission Street. The concept is described

well in the Obejctives and Strategies chapter of the plan but is not implemented through specific standards, guidelines, and programs. If this concept continues to be part of the vision for downtown San Miguel, the Design Plan should include incentives to encourage its development, standards, and guidelines to ensure that it is well designed.

Page 36 establishes a maximum building height of two stories. As discussed above, the County should consider if increased building heights may be desirable in certain locations within San Miguel.

2. Templeton Community Design Plan

The Templeton Community Design Plan contains a large number of guidelines but few mandatory standards. Certain design guidelines that are critical for well-designed infill projects should be changes to standards. These include guidelines relating to building placement, parking location and design, entrance orientation, and the use of front setback areas.

Section V.B of the Design Plan establishes site planning guidelines for multi-family residential uses. The guidelines do not address how multi-family housing should relate to the public street and support an active, pedestrian-oriented public realm. This section could be revised to address this issue.

The Templeton Design Plan includes guidelines for non-residential areas outside of downtown (page V26). These guidelines call for development in "campus-like clusters" that are inwardly-focused and do not support an active pedestrian environment. These guidelines could be revised to be more consistent with the Strategic Growth principles.

3. Oceano Specific Plan

As mentioned in Section B above, the Oceano Specific Plan limits residential densities to no more than 15 units per acre. This limitation was the result of community participation in a planning process focused on preserving and enhancing the small town coastal character of Oceano. However, a maximum residential density of 15 units per acre prevents certain forms of infill development that would enhance the community and encourage additional

investment and improvement consistent with the vision of the Specific Plan. As discussed above, the Infill Design Standards projects should explore ways to allow additional residential densities in ways that are consistent with the desired characteristics of the community.

4. Nipomo Olde Towne Design Plan

Like the Templeton Community Design Plan, the Nipomo Olde Towne Design Plan contains a large number of guidelines but few mandatory standards. Critical design guidelines relating to building form and placement, parking location and design, and treatment of front setback areas should be changed to standards.

Some guidelines in the Plan also could be improved to better implement goals to promote active pedestrian spaces. For example, page 26 of the Plan calls for a 0-foot setback along Tefft Street and Thopmson Avenue, with no flexibility provided for outdoor dining and other publicly accessible uses of front setback areas. In this case, building placement standards for Olde Towne should be brought more into alignment with standards in the San Miguel and West Tefft design plans.

5. Nipomo West Tefft Corridor Design Plan

The West Tefft Corridor Design Plan establishes a vision for the West Tefft corridor that is consistent with the County's Strategic Growth principles. However, some of the development standards and regulations are confusing and complicated and could inhibit implementation of the Plan. For example, building setback standards on page 5-4 are difficult to understand, with the illustrations adding to the confusion. Existing standards should be simplified to the greatest extent possible.

The Plan also is not always clear about what is mandatory or advisory. "Shall" and "should" are not always used consistently and should be clarified. The Plan also requires discretionary permits for many types of smaller-scale projects, and the preparation of visual and cultural resources reports. The County should consider relaxing or adjusting these requirements.

Finally, the plan frequently calls for the County to encourage certain forms of development within the corridor. On page 5-3, for example, mixed use is described as a "highly encouraged" form of development. On page 5-8 plazas, courtyards, and outdoor dining are "strongly encouraged." The County should consider if some elements that are currently encouraged should instead be required. If they remain advisory, the Plan could incorporate additional incentives to encourage desired but not required forms of development.

APPENDIX A: CASE STUDIES

This appendix presents the following three case studies of recent infill development in small communities in California:

- Affordable housing and main street commercial projects in the small Napa County town of Yountville
- Townhomes adjacent to a town square in the Central Valley town of Lindsey
- Recent redevelopment in Avila Beach

These case studies provide examples of infill development that maintains and enhances the unique character of small communities. These case studies demonstrate how infill development can contribute to the vitality of commercial centers and illustrate design characteristics of successful projects that are an asset to the community. These case studies offer lessons that can be applied to the Infill Design Standards project to accommodate high quality and appropriate infill development in San Luis Obispo County consistent with the County's Strategic Growth Principles. Some of these case studies also highlight particular challenges to achieving well-designed infill development in small communities which should be considered when revising the County infill development regulations.

YOUNTVILLE, NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Yountville is a small town of 2,900 residents in the heart of Napa County wine country. Yountville is known for its historic small town charm and a local economy focused on agriculture and tourism.

Two infill development projects have been completed in Yountville's downtown area within the past several years. One project is a multi-family development on Finnell Road (Arroyo Grande Villas), and the other is a commercial building on Washington Street. These projects are well-liked by town residents, contribute to an active downtown, and complement Yountville's unique small-scale character. The locations of these projects are shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Yountville Infill Project Locations

Arroyo Grande Villas, at 1911 Finnell Road, is an affordable housing development completed in 2010 by Napa Valley Community Housing. The development features townhome-style buildings with individual unit entrances fronting Finnell Road. Surface parking is located behind the street-facing buildings. The project targets farm workers, individuals, and families earning up to 50 percent of the area median income for Napa County. Arroyo Grande Villas is located adjacent to Yountville's elementary school and is within close walking distance to the town's community center and other downtown amenities.

TABLE 1 ARROYO GRANDE VILLAS PROJECT SUMMARY

Development Type	Residential Townhomes
Site Area	1.25 acre
Number of Units	25
Residential Density	20 dwelling units per acre
Unit Size	530 – 1,035 square feet
Unit Mix	10 one-bedroom; 7 two-bedroom; 8 three-bedroom
Number of Parking Spaces	38 (1.5 per unit)
Zoning	PD (Planned Development)
Permits and Approvals Required	Planned Development, Development Agreement, Design Review

Unit entrances are oriented toward the street to support a pedestrian-friendly environment.

A multi-use path provides a pedestrian connection to destinations throughout town.

Two commercial buildings at 6490 Washington Street were completed 2010 in the heart of Yountville's downtown. The total floor area of the two buildings is 3,150 square feet, with one building containing a 600 square-foot apartment. The buildings are served by 13 on-site surface parking spaces located to the rear of the site. Building entrances are oriented toward the street, with buildings setback from the front property line to allow space for outdoor dining. Overall, the project is an inviting and active presence on the street with an architectural design that is rich in details and visual interest.

Table 2 Commercial Project Summary

Development Type	Main Street Commercial
Site Area	0.33 acre
Floor Area	3,150 square feet
Floor Area Ratio	0.21
Number of Parking Spaces	13 (4 per 1,000 square feet)
Zoning	Residential Scaled Commercial
Permits and Approvals Required	Master Development Plan, Use Permit, Design Review

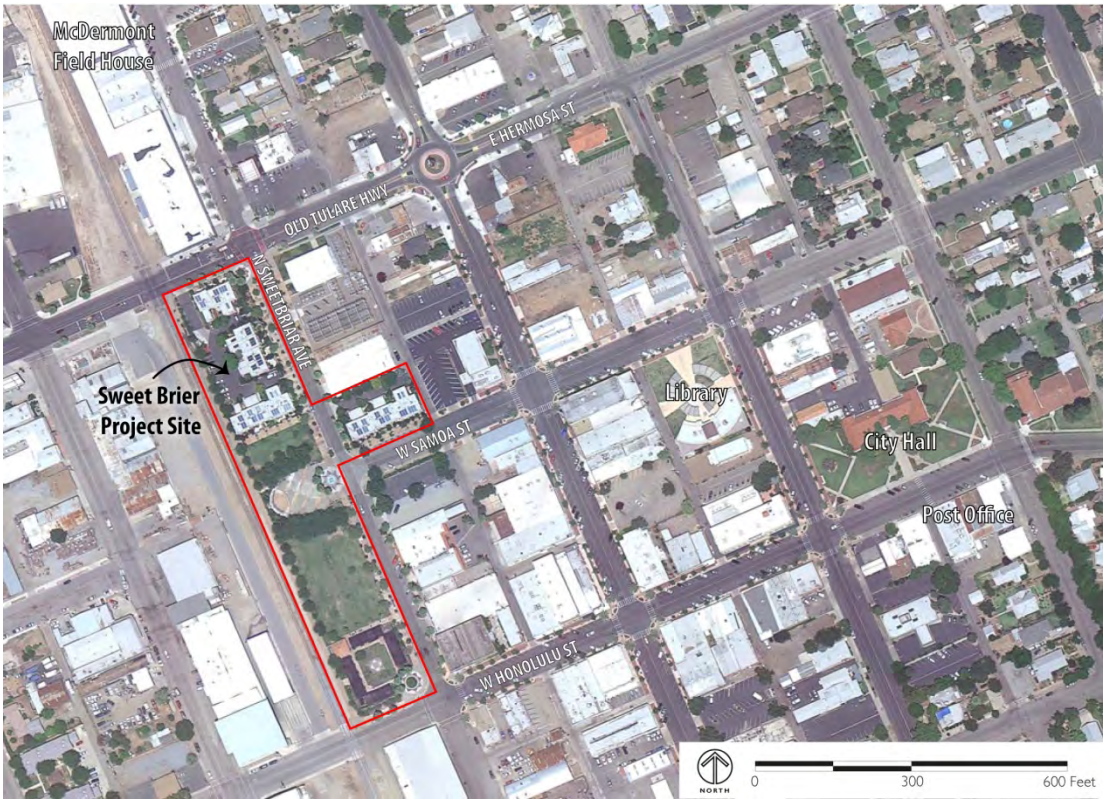
Two-story buildings are in keeping with the small-scale town character.

Outdoor dining and architectural details create an inviting scene for pedestrians.

LINDSAY, TULARE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Lindsay is a small city of 11,768 residents, located at the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in San Joaquin Valley. Similar to other towns in Tulare County, Lindsay is dependent on seasonal agricultural industries. A small-scale town-house development, located at the intersection of Sweet Brier Avenue and Samoa Street in downtown, has been completed on a former brownfield in 2002 by TDM Enterprises. As shown in Figure 14 below, the adjacent 1.3-acre park and the related amenities were also part of this project.

Figure 14: Lindsay Infill Project Location



The townhomes are constructed as a gated community because there was a desire to incorporate private outdoor space for each home. The townhomes present a Mediterranean architectural style with colorful walls and red tile overhangs, while featuring the latest in energy conserving devices such as dual pane windows and a photovoltaic energy generation system. Each home includes an individual, fenced backyard, a front yard patio, and a rear garage. The garages can be accessed through driveways at the back of the structures. Overall, even though the houses face the streets, due to highly-fenced front patios, the sidewalk feels the absence of eyes on streets.

Adjacent to the Sweet Brier Town Homes, the City of Lindsay constructed the Sweet Brier Plaza, which consists of a 1.3-acre park, open space, a sidewalk promenade, a central community plaza, and interactive water features. As a result, each townhome benefits from a very short walk to parkland, open space, the McDermont Field House sports and recreation center, and a Friday Night Market.

Table 3: Sweet Brier Town Homes Project Summary

Development Type	**Residential Townhomes**
Zoning/Land Use	MXU (Mixed Use)
Site Area	1.32 acre (residential); 1.84 acre (open Space)
Number of units	18
Residential Density	13.6 dwelling units per acre
Size of units	large 3 and 4 bedroom units (1,400 -1,700 square feet)
Number of parking spaces	2 garaged spaces per unit plus 1 per unit overflow
Permits and Approvals Required	PUD, Variance, and Subdivision Map

Colorful facades and decorative architectural styles increase visual interests on the street, but walled front patios do not contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Some units are facing the public park, which provides a range of amenities, such as open space, a sidewalk promenade, a community plaza, and interactive water features.

AVILA BEACH, SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Avila Beach is a small beach town of 1,454 residents in San Luis Obispo County. Avila Beach lies in a bay formed by Point San Luis. With a pleasant climate and warmer ocean than other towns, the town's main industry is tourism. The town is also known for a commercial fishing pier and hot springs. A mixed use project, located on a sloping site at the corner of First Street and San Miguel Street, presents an exemplary small-scale development. This project was completed in 2006 by Avila Beach Partners, and consists of a total of 6,144 square feet of commercial space, 10 residential units, a courtyard, and a below street-level or underground parking garage. The location of this project is shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Avila Beach Infill Project Location

The development generally faces the street with pedestrian-friendly storefronts on the ground and residential balconies on the second floor. Particularly, the design of the round tower at the northeastern corner of the site provides a prominent sense of place for visitors and residents, pursuant to the Avila Beach Community Plan. The building presents a interesting architectural feature, including a mix of geometric shapes and Mediterranean colors while maintaining congruity or harmony in-line with the surrounding building styles. Given that the structure is on a slope, the below street-level or underground parking structure was allowed with a 1/4 story above grade at the street side. Only the residents are allowed to use the on-site parking garage, which is accessed through a driveway from First Street. On-site commercial parking is required to pay in-lieu fees. The residents use an interior courtyard to access the units, not interfering with commercial frontage.

Table 4 Avila Beach Mixed Use Project Summary

Development Type	Mixed Use
Site Area	0.39 acre
Number of Units	10
Residential Density	26 dwelling units per acre
Unit Size	796 – 1,675 square feet
Commercial Area	6,144 square feet
Number of Parking Spaces	22 (2.2 per unit; resident only)
Zoning	CR (Commercial Retail)
Permits and Approvals Required	Subdivision and Conditional Use Permit

A dynamic mix of building forms decreases the bulkiness of the structure. The ground-floor retail with transparent storefronts enhances pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.

A unique design of the corner tower, which contains a café on the ground and a studio on the second floor, gracefully holds the corner of the site.

APPENDIX B: STRATEGIC GROWTH PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Preserve open space, scenic natural beauty and natural resources. Conserve energy resources. Protect agricultural land and resources.

Policies

1. Maintain and protect a living environment that is safe, healthful and pleasant for all residents.

2. Keep the amount, location and rate of growth allowed by the Land Use Element within the sustainable capacity of resources, public services and facilities.

3. Preserve and sustain important water resources, watersheds and riparian habitats.

4. Preserve and protect the air quality of the county by seeking to exceed or at least maintain the minimum state and federal ambient air quality standards.

5. Conserve energy resources by:
   a. Planning for energy efficiency and conservation in land use and transportation, and in subdivision and building regulations.

   b. Decreasing reliance on environmentally costly energy sources, increasing conservation efforts, and encouraging use of alternative energy sources.

6. Encourage the protection and use of agricultural land for the production of food, fiber and other agricultural commodities, and support the rural economy and locally-based commercial agriculture.

7. Give highest priority to avoiding significant environmental impacts from development through site and project design. Where such impacts cannot be avoided, minimize them to the maximum extent feasible.

Implementing Strategies

1. Revise the Land Use Element, Land Use Ordinance and the Growth Management Ordinance to assure sustainable resource capacities for long-term growth.

2. Develop and refine effective techniques for land conservation, such as land banks, density transfers and agricultural and conservation easements, and pursue grants and innovative financing tools to acquire and preserve open space.

3. Establish a program that links rural land conservation with agricultural economic development; supports locally-based commercial agriculture, preserves scenic rural landscapes and sustains resources. Form a committee of agricultural, conservation and advisory committee representatives to assist the program.

4. Create an urban and rural forestry program that encourages property owners, developers and communities to plant, maintain and protect trees to enhance air quality and help offset carbon dioxide emissions.

5. Revise the Land Use and Conservation and Open Space Elements and County ordinances to give incentives for energy-efficient construction that minimizes its carbon footprint, especially in rural areas.

Principle 2: Strengthen and direct development toward existing and strategically planned communities.

Policies

1. Maintain rural areas in agriculture, low-intensity recreation, very low-density residential uses, and open space uses, that preserve and enhance a well-defined rural character.

2. Avoid establishing or expanding Residential Rural and Residential Suburban areas outside urban or village reserve areas.

3. Plan for most future development to be within existing and strategically planned cities and communities.

4. Create complete communities with appropriate areas for housing, commerce, civic uses, schools, recreation and open spaces.

5. Create active and vital urban and village environments that are attractive, compact and orderly arrangements of structures and open space, appropriate to the size and scale of each community.

6. Plan adequate and convenient areas within communities for employment and economic development near transit and residential areas.

7. Phase urban development in a compact manner, first using vacant or underutilized "infill" parcels and lands next to or near existing development.

8. Consider urban expansion Land Use Element amendments when the available inventory of suitable internal or "infill" land is largely developed and only when resources, services and facilities to adequately accommodate the associated growth can be assured.

9. Give high priority to funding needed infrastructure improvements in a timely manner within existing and strategically planned urban and village areas.

10. The cost of additional services and facilities will be fairly shared among those who most immediately benefit and the entire community.

11. Provide adequate community amenities, parks, natural areas and trails in support of new development, which will support a high quality of life and a compact form of community development.

Implementing Strategies

1. Amend the Land Use Element and Ordinance to 1) maintain rural areas in low-intensity uses, 2) avoid expanding Residential Rural and Residential Suburban categories in rural areas, and 3) preserve and enhance a well-defined rural character.

2. Revise the Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) program to more effectively shift potential rural development to communities with adequate infrastructure and conserve rural lands.

3. Work with communities to create and maintain distinct urban boundaries next to rural areas, while allowing for compact community expansion.

4. Work with agencies, cities, special districts, unincorporated communities and their advisory councils, to identify suitable strategic growth opportunity areas within and adjacent to existing communities for compact, affordable development, where supported by sustainable resource capacities.

5. Coordinate with the cities to consider accepting greater shares of overall countywide growth with corresponding reductions in unincorporated area growth. Consider compensating assistance from the County to offset the transportation, financial and other demands from this growth.

6. Develop a regional and sub-regional economic and land use strategy to stimulate creation of head-of-household jobs, improve the jobs-housing imbalance and strengthen the economy within each community.

7. Plan commercial and/or industrial areas that are compatible with overall land use; convenient to patrons, neighborhoods and alternative transportation modes; and reflect market demand and neighborhood needs.

8. Revise the Resource Management System and the Growth Management Ordinance to give higher priority to serving existing and strategically planned communities with adequate resources, streets and infrastructure, over outlying rural areas.

9. Conduct long-term planning (20+ years) to fund and provide additional, sustainable public resources, services and facilities in sufficient time to avoid overburdening existing resources, services and facilities.

10. Coordinate County land use actions with service districts to provide sufficient public resources, services and facilities.

11. Create an infrastructure policy that addresses the following goals:
    a. New development pays its fair share.

    b. The larger community pays its fair share for existing deficiencies and improvements providing general benefit.
    c. Infrastructure is in place or funded concurrent with the need.
    d. Funding mechanisms such as community facilities districts.

12. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to require that amendments to the Land Use Element or Ordinance, which propose increases in density or additional development where critical resource levels exist, shall not be approved unless they provide proof that adequate water and sewage disposal capacities then exist and are available to serve: 1) development resulting from the proposed amendment, 2) existing

development, and 3) the allowed development on vacant parcels within the rural, urban or village areas that are subject to the RMS Levels of Severity.

13. Enact revisions to the Land Use and the Real Property Division Ordinances to revise or introduce regulations that will promote urban infill instead of prevent it. Consider regulations such as, but not limited to parking, height limits, lot coverage, minimum lot size, minimum densities, setbacks, street widths and similar development standards.

Principle 3: Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.

Policies

1. Protect and restore the valuable history, cultures, images and identity of communities and rural areas.

2. Protect rural areas between communities to achieve well-defined communities within an attractive rural setting.

3. Establish and maintain a distinct edge between urban and rural areas to enhance community separation while allowing for appropriate and compact urban expansion at the urban edge.

4. Enhance the commercial identity and viability of down towns.

5. Foster a strong local identity through appropriate design of public spaces and buildings.

Implementing Strategies

1. Prepare and implement policies and programs in the Conservation and Open Space Element to conserve rural visual character within "community separators" that benefit the land owners and adjacent communities.

2. Revise the Land Use Element and Ordinance to 1) retain or create distinct urban boundarie and 2) require development intensities that create a clear difference between urban and rural areas.

3. Revise the Countywide Design Guidelines to encourage appropriate, place-based (locally relevant), pedestrian-oriented designs within communities.

4. Foster a strong sense of place by identifying local, valued aspects within each community ("placemaking").

5. Establish an inter-departmental team to fund and develop public facilities and amenities that preserve community character, such as public buildings, plazas, parks, and public art.

6. Hold an annual downtown improvements workshop and work with downtown stakeholders to form business improvement districts.

7. Encourage property owners to protect and conserve historic buildings and resources using a variety of means such as the Mills Act, an incentive program for the restoration and preservation of historic structures.

Principle 4: Create walkable neighborhoods and towns.

Policies

1. Plan communities with schools, parks, public spaces, transit stops and commercial districts located as focal points within convenient walking distances of neighborhoods.

2. Plan for maximum connectivity between different land uses through walkways or other means.

3. Create attractive street enhancements and public spaces that serve as gathering places on corridors and at connecting locations.

4. Provide parks, natural areas and recreation facilities with new urban development to enhance a community's quality of life and improve public health.

5. Create neighborhoods and non-residential areas that minimize fear and crime through environmental and urban design.

Implementing Strategies

1. Update the Countywide Design Guidelines to create maximum connectivity between neighborhoods, streets and projects for pedestrian and bicycle travel.

2. Revise the Land Use Ordinance and Land Use Element to enhance neighborhoods with smallscale and appropriate commercial areas; parks and recreation areas; public spaces; and family, cultural and civic facilities, all within convenient walking distances from housing. Work with the General Services Agency to plan and implement parks and recreation facilities.

3. Enhance downtowns and commercial areas with attractive civic and pedestrian facilities, events and promotions, and facilitate ways to finance them, for example, through forming business improvement and community facilities districts.

4. Pursue a street tree program on urban streets and public parking lots.

5. Enhance major boulevards and downtown streets with street trees, street furniture, textured crosswalks, planted medians and ornamental lighting.

6. Revise community plans, the Countywide Design Guidelines and the Land Use Ordinance to include features that will minimize fear and crime and strengthen a sense of community by environmental design methods.

Principle 5: Provide a variety of transportation choices.

Policies

1. Design a safe, reliable and effective transportation system that protects natural and scenic resources and minimizes environmental impacts.

2. Reduce and minimize the generation of air pollutants and greenhouse gases from existing and future development, with emphasis on reducing vehicle miles traveled.

3. Coordinate land use and transportation planning to ensure that all transportation demands can be safely and adequately accommodated.

4. Provide public transit, bicycle lanes, multi-use trails and pedestrian walkways that connect destinations within and between communities, to encourage alternative transportation.

5. Make communities more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly with safe and attractive routes.

Implementing Strategies

1. Integrate LUE area and community plans more closely with transit and pedestrian facilities by providing more intensive and diverse land uses near major transit corridors and transit stops and within convenient walking distance between destinations.

2. Give high priority to funding biking, walking and transit facilities and operations within the transportation planning programs of the County and the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments.

3. Give highest priority in the programming of Local Transportation Funds (LTF-TDA) to fully fund public transit operations, multimodal connections to public transportation, and to facilitate strategic growth.

4. Provide multi-use trails (for walking, bicycling and equestrian travel) between and through communities, and connect them with other means of alternative transportation, consistent with the Parks and Recreation Element.

Principle 6: Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.

Policies

1. Plan for most new housing to be within urban or village areas and close to jobs while protecting residential areas from incompatible uses.

2. Provide quality housing choices that are affordable to people with a variety of income levels.

3. Provide a range of housing types within each neighborhood, and avoid creating adverse concentrations of affordable units.

Implementing Strategies

1. Implement the Housing Element to implement these policies.

2. Update the Land Use Ordinance and LUE area plans to encourage a diversity of housing (sizes, types, and costs) within subdivisions and neighborhoods.

3. Revise the Countywide Design Guidelines, community design plans and specific plans to illustrate how to integrate higher density development within existing neighborhoods.

4. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to require site designs for condominium and planned development projects that provide a range of housing sizes, footprints and design features.

5. Modify the Land Use Element and Land Use Ordinance to allow and encourage a diversity of housing (sizes, types, costs) within subdivisions and neighborhoods.

6. Modify the Land Use Element and Ordinance to create a new land use designation, such as "Mobilehome Park (MHP)" to be applied to existing mobile home parks and sites where future mobilehome parks are appropriate.

7. Modify the Land Use Ordinance to allow more affordable units without parking, for residents who do not wish to pay for it.

Principle 7: Encourage mixed land uses.

Policies

1. Integrate residential units designed for affordability with non-residential uses in order to bring workplaces, commercial development and homes closer together for workers, senior citizens and others.

2. Integrate complementary uses within commercial sites, in order to build effective mixed-use neighborhoods.

Implementing Strategies

1. Revise the Countywide Design Guidelines, the Land Use Element and Land Use Ordinance (LUE/LUO) to guide the design of, and offer incentives for affordable mixed-use buildings.

2. Encourage mixed-use development through affordable housing programs and regulations.

3. Revise community plans and Land Use Ordinance standards to encourage the conversion of shopping centers and strip commercial streets into mixed-use developments.

4. Reduce parking standards in the Land Use Ordinance for mixed-use developments, based on their size and location in relation to a central business district or transit stop. Consider creating in-lieu parking fee programs.

Principle 8: Take advantage of compact building design.

Policies

1. Develop compact neighborhoods that contain residential uses that are affordable-by-design and efficient in land and energy consumption.

2. Include public and private amenities with new development to enhance the livability of compact neighborhoods.

Implementing Strategies

1. Revise the Countywide Design Guidelines to illustrate compact neighborhood and building design that fits within existing development visually and functionally.

2. Revise the Land Use and Subdivision Ordinances to encourage 1) compact buildings and subdivisions, and 2) projects that include amenities such as small-scale plazas, formal gardens, playgrounds and natural areas.

3. Reduce the Land Use Ordinance requirements for off-street parking where uses are planned close to each other in compact neighborhoods, to increase the viability of projects and encourage other kinds of transportation.

4. Work with developers and communities to finance and build community parking facilities near compact development.

5. Continue public education efforts about compact residential design and building.

Principle 9: Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective.

Policies

1. Minimize administrative delays and costs to fee payers in the administration of the Land Use Element.

2. Expedite development review procedures and provide incentives, such as reduced fees for facilities and other project-related costs, for projects that implement these principles.

3. Encourage public participation in planning and development review, and consider the needs of all affected persons.

4. Use easy-to-understand language and media to convey proposals and ideas clearly.

Implementing Strategies

1. Simplify and illustrate zoning and design standards within the Land Use Ordinance or similar document in order to make them clear and understandable, for example, through use of a "formbased" code.

2. Identify suitable locations for strategic growth projects that are consistent with these principles to be eligible for expedited review.

3. Convene a task force of staff and stakeholders to streamline the permit process to implement strategic growth policies.

4. Explore whether the use of master environmental impact reports (EIRs) for community plan updates would benefit communities and developers. The Master EIR concept should include addressing impacts at a project level, including on- and off-site mitigation measures, for any strategic growth or expansion site.

Principle 10: Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.

Policies

1. Provide opportunities to incorporate public opinion early and often within the planning process.

2. Cultivate relationships with those having a stake in the outcome.

3. Encourage cooperation between the County, cities and unincorporated communities to avoid and solve growth and development issues early.

4. Work with County departments to achieve compact, mixed-use, walkable communities by coordinating regulations, project review, transportation funding and capital improvement programming.

Implementing Strategies

1. Inform the public and stakeholders about strategic growth by various means, such as forums and the media.

2. Build on previous efforts to create consensus with the public about attaining compact, walkable communities and rural preservation.

3. Involve the public, advisory and other groups, cities and other jurisdictions often and routinely in the planning and development review processes by early outreach, referrals and responses.

4. Provide more access to County media to enhance the public's understanding of planning and project review.

5. Convene an inter-departmental team to integrate strategic growth goals into each County department's work program, and into the County budget, capital improvements program (CIP) and grant funding processes.

6. Expand public notification for discretionary projects in rural areas.

7. Work with communities to avoid approving projects that are not supported by a city or a community services district within its sphere of influence or urban area.

Principle 11: Strengthen regional cooperation.

Policies

1. Work closely with cities and regional agencies to achieve common land use goals.

2. Collaborate with communities, stakeholders and the public to plan according to strategic growth principles, and encourage "ownership" of the process and the outcomes.

Implementing Strategies

1. Promote cooperation between the county and all jurisdictions to form and carry out strategic growth policies based on shared values, develop mutual agreements and implement programs.

2. Develop community and resource indicators to assess what each community needs to be livable and affordable, and to meet community and strategic growth goals.

3. Refrain from approving development in the unincorporated urban fringes that will burden city services or conflict with city-County agreements, unless specific mitigation measures are included.