Santa Maria General Plan

imagine

# Conservation and Open Space Policy Framework

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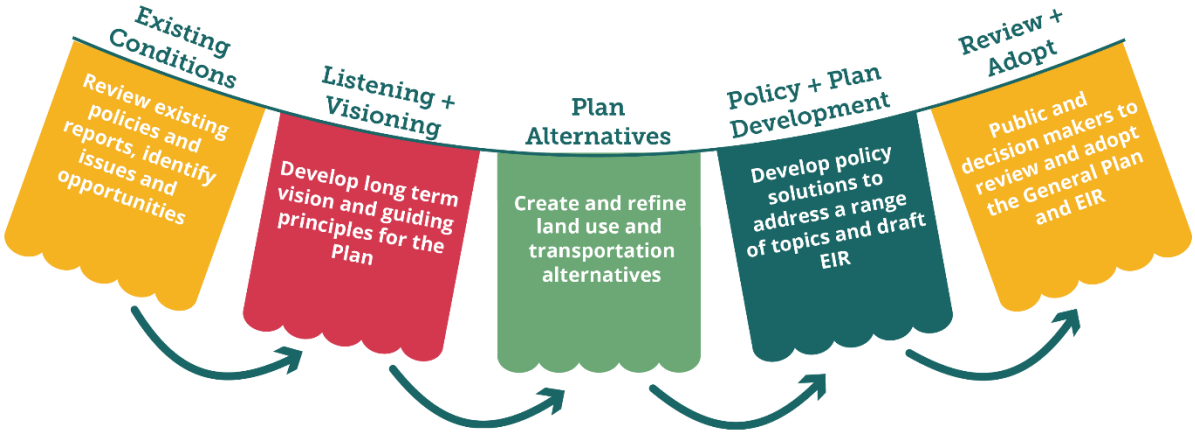
# Conservation and Open Space Policy Framework

## I. Introduction

The City of Santa Maria has embarked on its first comprehensive update to the General Plan, called "Imagine Santa Maria," to create a forward-looking document that will serve as the blueprint for the city through the year 2045. A General Plan is a policy document required by State law that provides long-range guidance for land use, development and other issues such as economic growth, open space, conservation, affordable housing, and employment. The goals, policies, and implementation actions in the General Plan will serve as a compass for decision-makers and will shape future plans and actions of the City. This revised policy document will replace the existing General Plan.

The General Plan Update has five major phases, which are designed as step-by-step building blocks (see the image below). The project is currently in the "Policy and Plan Development" phase.




During the Existing Conditions phase, City staff worked closely with the consultant team to identify trends, issues, opportunities, and priorities, which are summarized in seven existing conditions reports that are available on the project website, www.ImagineSantaMaria.com. Throughout the Listening + Visioning Stage, community members shared their vision for the future, qualities of Santa Maria to preserve, and issues to address. This feedback was incorporated in the Vision, Guiding Principles, and Areas of Change and Stability. From there, City staff and the consultant team developed Plan Alternatives to identify different land use, mobility, and urban design options the City has to achieve the community's Vision and implement the Guiding Principles. City Council approved a Preferred Land Use Alternative in 2023.

This Conservation and Open Space policy framework is a step in the General Plan Update process prior to drafting General Plan Elements. This framework highlights the key direction for the Conservation and Open Space Element and includes goals, policies, and implementation activities to achieve that direction. This policy framework was developed by incorporating findings from previous project phases, including

technical analysis, relevant content from the existing General Plan, current planning best practices and requirements from State law, and feedback from community members, Technical Advisory Committee members, Planning Commission, City Council, and City staff. Nine policy frameworks have been prepared covering the following topics: Conservation and Open Space, Safety, Land Use and Community Design, Circulation and Mobility, Public Facilities and Services, Recreation and Parks, Economic Development, Noise, and Health and Environmental Justice. Community feedback on the frameworks will shape goals, policies, and implementation actions in the General Plan.

# II. Statutory Requirements

## General Plan Requirements

### Conservation

California Government Code Section 65302(d) establishes specific requirements for a jurisdiction's conservation element, which outlines the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources. The Conservation Element must identify rivers, creeks, streams, flood corridors, riparian habitats, and land that may accommodate floodwater for purposes of groundwater recharge and stormwater management. The Conservation Element is required to include natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals. In addition, AB 1889 now requires Conservation Elements to also address the impact of development on wildlife movement and habitat connectivity. The Conservation and Open Space Policy Framework addresses wildlife and natural resources as well as water quality and the protection of water resources, while the city's water supply and water, wastewater, and stormwater systems are addressed within the Public Facilities and Services Framework.

### Open Space

California Government Code Section 65560 requires local jurisdictions adopt an open space element that outlines long range planning and preservation of open space lands and provides an inventory of open space lands relevant to the jurisdiction. Open space elements are required to address open space for natural resources, managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and tribal resources. Open space for natural resources includes rivers, streams, watershed lands and areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life. Open space for the managed production of resources includes rangeland, agricultural land, areas required for recharge of groundwater basins, and important areas for major mineral deposits. Open spaces requiring specific regulation or management due to the presence of hazardous or special conditions, such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil, flood plains, high fire risk, and water and air quality protection areas. In addition, Senate Bill 1425 now requires Open Space Elements to include policies and programs that address open space for climate resiliency, rewilding opportunities, and environmental justice. Outdoor recreational open spaces including parks, are addressed within the Recreation and Parks Element, along with areas with scenic, historic, and cultural value.

## Regulatory Setting

Regulations that affect policy direction of this Element include:

Federal Endangered Species Act. The Federal Endangered Species Act, also known as the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, is the primary national legislation for the conservation of threatened and endangered plants and animals and their respective habitats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S. FWS) and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service help to implement the ESA by ensuring that what they authorize, fund, and carry out is consistent and compliant with the ESA.

California Endangered Species Act. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) has remained the State's leading wildlife protection act for plant and animal species that are listed as "threatened" or "endangered" in the state. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) enforces the CESA and is responsible for permitting and maintaining the State's endangered species list.

Clean Water Act. Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq. (1977) is the primary federal law regulating water pollution. Section 303(d) of the Federal CWA requires states to identify waters that do not meet water quality standards. The CWA created the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), a permit program that addresses water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants to waters of the United States. The State of California is responsible for implementation of the NPDES program through the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs). Local municipalities are required to obtain NPDES permit coverage and implement programs to reduce and eliminate pollutants from entering their municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4). The city is covered by the State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2013-0001- DWQ, NPDES General Permit No. CAS000004.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), passed in 2014, created a framework for sustainable, local groundwater management in California. SGMA directed the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to identify priority groundwater basins for the purpose of implementing SGMA. Only high and medium priority basins are currently subject to SGMA requirements, including the requirement of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) to develop Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) for groundwater basins. Adjudicated groundwater basins, like the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, are not subject to SGMA requirements.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act requires that the waters of the State be protected and that any activities affecting them be regulated to maintain the highest possible water quality. The SWRCB is given authority to enforce the Porter-Cologne Water Control Act, and SWRCB regulations mandate a "non-degradation policy" for state waters, especially those of high quality. Under the authority of the SWRCB, the protection of water quality in the Santa Maria River and its tributaries is under the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB. The RWQCB establishes requirements prescribing the quality of point sources of discharge and establishes water quality objectives. These objectives are established based on the designated beneficial uses for a particular surface water or groundwater.

**Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018.** In June 2018, voters in the State of California passed the Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018. This proposition allocated $4 billion to put towards California's most pressing water, park, and natural resource needs. Funding has gone toward issues such as regional water supplies and water quality, stormwater management, water recycling, flood protection and repairs, ocean and coastal protection, local parks and open districts, and clean water and drought preparedness. Many of the specific issues targeted by this bill are prevalent in the city, such as the need for flood protection and repairs, regional water supplies, and local parks and open space districts. Many cities like Santa Maria continue to rely on State and Federal funding in addition to local funding programs for the protection of natural resources.

**National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.** The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) was the first national policy governing preservation, establishing permanent institutions and a clearly defined process for historic preservation in the United States. It created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and National Register of Historic Places, an official list not only of individual buildings and structures, but also of districts, objects, and archaeological sites that are important due to their connection with the past. Individual states were also required to take more responsibility for historic sites in their jurisdiction. The California Office of Historic Preservation administers both federal and state historic preservation programs, with the goal of furthering the identification, evaluation, registration, and protection of California's historic resources.

**Senate Bill 18.** Senate Bill (SB) 18, passed in 2004, establishes responsibilities for local governments to contact, provide notice, refer plans to, and consult with tribes prior to the adoption or any amendment of a general plan or specific plan. It also states that tribes must be consulted before the designation of open space if the affected land contains a cultural place. A local government must notify the appropriate tribes of the opportunity to conduct consultations for the purpose of preserving, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places located on land within the local government's jurisdiction that is affected by the proposed plan adoption or amendment. The provisions of SB 18 apply only to city and county governments and not to other public agencies.

**Assembly Bill 52.** Assembly Bill (AB) 52, passed in 2014, requires a lead agency to begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project prior to determining whether a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or environmental impact report is required for a project. The bill required an update to Appendix G (Initial Study Checklist) of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines to include questions related to impacts to tribal cultural resources. These changes to Appendix G were approved by the Office of Administrative Law on September 27, 2016.

**Mills Act.** The Mills Act is a self-directed economic incentive program designed to provide private property owners the opportunity to actively participate in the restoration of their properties while receiving property tax relief. If a homeowner's property is listed on the City landmark register, they may qualify for property tax relief by pledging to rehabilitate and maintain the historical and architectural character of a property for at least a 10-year period. Mills Act participants may realize a property tax savings of up to approximately 50 percent each year for newly improved or purchased older properties.

**Assembly Bill 32.** AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, requires California to reduce its statewide Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) to 1990 levels by 2020. Under AB 32, the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the lead agency responsible for implementing AB 32, was granted the authority to develop regulations and mechanisms to reduce GHG emissions and is required to prepare a Scoping Plan to outline strategies for achieving the emissions reduction target. AB 32 also outlines provisions for a state cap-and-trade program that enables major polluters to buy and sell GHG emissions credits, decreasing the number of allowances over time to reduce GHG emissions.

**Senate Bill 32.** SB 32 builds on previous state legislation on reducing GHG emissions, setting a goal to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. SB 32 directs CARB to expand on and develop regulations aimed at achieving this goal.

**Senate Bill 1425.** SB 1425 requires Open Space Elements to include policies and programs that address the following topics:

- Access to open space for all residents in a manner that considers social, economic, and racial equity, correlated with the environmental justice element or environmental justice policies in the general plan, as applicable
- Climate resilience and other benefits of open space, correlated with the Safety Element
- Rewilding opportunities, correlated with the land use element

**Senate Bill 1000.** SB 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Action, requires jurisdictions with disadvantaged communities to develop an environmental justice element, or related environmental justice goals and policies, as part of their general plans. The goal of SB 1000 is to help identify and reduce risks in communities disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.

**Assembly Bill 1889.** AB 1889, passed in 2024, requires jurisdictions to consider the impact of development on wildlife movement and habitat connectivity within their general plan conservation element. During the next general plan element update on or after January 1, 2028, jurisdictions must update their conservation element to identify and analyze existing or planned wildlife passage features and consider the impacts of development and the barriers caused by development to wildlife, as defined, and habitat connectivity.

**Executive Order N-82-20.** Executive Order N-82-20 established the California Biodiversity Collaborative to bring together other governmental partners, California Native American tribes, experts, business and community leaders and other stakeholders from across California to protect and restore the state's biodiversity. To support global biodiversity and climate conservation efforts, N-82-20 sets a goal of protecting at least 30 percent of California's lands and waters by 2030. The 2022 Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy outlines the State's approach to implementing N-82-20 and establishes the framework for prioritizing and aligning state and regional efforts impacting natural and working lands under one cohesive strategy.

# III. Related Vision and Guiding Principles

The General Plan Vision Statement describes Santa Maria as the community would like to see it in 2045.[1] The Guiding Principles establish the direction the community should follow and the major ideas that the General Plan Update will put forward to achieve the community's shared Vision for 2045. The full Vision, Guiding Principles, and Areas of Change and Stability, approved by the City Council in 2021, are available on the Imagine Santa Maria project website. The following full-sentence excerpts from the Vision and Guiding Principles informed the preparation of this policy framework:

## Vision

*People are proud of their history and heritage. This is reflected in the diverse, well-preserved historical resources and the attractive, inviting streets and public gathering places. Museums, art venues, a strong civic sector, and the many welcoming community events and celebrations are all evidence of a vibrant local culture.*

*Residents have convenient access on foot and by car, bus, and bicycle to jobs, schools, community amenities like parks and sports fields, and the region's natural environment.*

## Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles establish the direction to follow to achieve the community's shared Vision for 2045.

### *Agricultural Identity*

*Continue to support the agricultural industry and its workforce. Balance the protection of prime agricultural land with the development necessary to support continued population growth and the diversification of the local economy.*

### *Culture, History, and Art*

*Celebrate and share Santa Maria's multicultural heritage and contemporary diversity. Preserve historic resources, foster the arts, maintain a strong sense of community through cultural festivals, and invite visitors to enjoy the richness of local expression and resources.*

### *Community Design*

*Create public spaces that reflect the community identity, foster civic pride, and invite community members to gather, both informally and for events. Design streets, buildings, and landscaping that reflect the community's history, culture, and natural environment. Use lighting, street trees, benches, and other amenities to make sidewalks and public spaces safe and welcoming, with a focus on Downtown and along the Main and Broadway corridors.*

### *Community Health*

*Grow and expand physical and mental healthcare services to meet the needs of all residents. Improve community health by addressing the environmental justice priorities of disadvantaged communities, including seniors, low-income households, linguistically isolated families, the homeless, and youth, who comprise 35% of residents. Minimize residents' potential for exposure to noise, pesticides, and industrial pollution. Foster healthy lifestyles by expanding safe and attractive options for physical activity and by expanding healthy food access.*

### *Natural Environment and Resilience*

*Conserve water resources in the city and support efforts to maintain the Santa Maria River. Expand opportunities to enjoy the area's natural resources and the region's beauty. Safeguard the community from natural hazards, including those exacerbated by climate change.*

### *Utilities, Facilities, and Services*

*Provide residents and businesses with equitable access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable infrastructure and utilities, including water, wastewater, flood control, gas, phone, cable, and broadband internet. Deliver high-quality services and facilities for all community members, including expedient emergency response, accessible health care, high-quality education and career training, and convenient and equitable access to well-maintained parks and recreational facilities.*

# IV. Setting the Scene: Issues and Opportunities

The sections below outline opportunities, strengths, issues, and challenges that drove the direction of the Conservation and Open Space policy framework. This policy framework builds on the opportunities and strengths and identifies strategies to remedy the issues and challenges.

Opportunities, strengths, issues, and challenges were identified based on existing conditions, the Vision and Guiding Principles, technical studies, community engagement results, and conversations with City staff. Links to past project work may be found on the project website: https://www.imaginesantamaria.com/resources.

## Opportunities and Strengths

Regional and local plans play a vital role in managing and protecting Santa Maria's natural, cultural, open space, and recreational resources. These assets enhance residents' health and quality of life by ensuring clean air and water, supporting ecosystems, fostering connections to nature, reinforcing community identity, and offering recreational opportunities. The City of Santa Maria strives to balance resource protection with the needs of a growing city, recognizing that development can pose risks to these resources. Through strategic planning, the City seeks to mitigate impacts while leveraging development to enhance and preserve these valuable community assets.

Central Coast RWQCB Basin Plan. In accordance with the California Water Code, the Central Coast RWQCB developed the Basin Plan, which is designed to preserve and enhance water quality and protect the beneficial uses of all regional waters. Water quality objectives for the Central Coastal Basin satisfy State and federal requirements established to protect waters for beneficial uses and are consistent with existing statewide plans and policies. Ensuring consistency between the Central Coast RWQCB Basin Plan and the City's surface water and groundwater management policies is crucial for maintaining high quality water resources. *(Environmental Background Report)*

Santa Maria Municipal Code. Santa Maria Municipal Code Chapter 9-12 Historical Building Code adopts the provisions of the (2019) California Historical Building Code. The California Historical Building Code provides alternative building regulations in order to preserve California's architectural heritage. Chapter 8-3 of the Santa Maria Municipal Code outlines a process and requirements, which are unique from the State and Federal Historical Resource Status Codes, for the designation of City Historic Landmarks (see Historic District and Landmarks below). Chapter 12-25A of the Santa Maria Municipal Code established a Historic Overlay District. The Historic Overlay District encourages (but does not mandate) preservation of architecturally significant structures by permitting relaxed development standards, such as parking requirements and setbacks, intended to preserve architectural features. The Historic Overlay District accommodates land uses that are compatible with the structure and the adjacent neighborhood, such as professional and administrative offices, home occupations, and limited light commercial activities. Strengthening and enforcing development regulations in the Historic Building Code and Historic Overlay District will provide the framework for preserving the City's historic and cultural resources. *(Environmental Background Report)*

Urban Forest Management Plan. In 2023, the City of Santa Maria prepared a draft Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), which, when adopted, will provide the City with a framework for managing its urban forest over the next 40 years. The plan's goal is to promote a resilient, diverse tree canopy that contributes to long-term environmental benefits such as better air quality and absorbed carbon, creates healthy communities that are connected to nature, and engages Santa Maria's community members in urban forest stewardship through educational and outreach efforts. This plan proposes a a list of native trees that would support shading and greenery for recreation and parks throughout the City, and. expansion of recreation, parks, and open space throughout Santa Maria through the implementation actions and resources provided in the UFMP. The UFMP and the City's landscaping and tree preservation regulations will be aligned, and together will help facilitate the expansion and maintenance of the urban forest, amplifying its natural benefits to the community. *(Santa Maria Urban Forest Management Plan)*

Ordinance No. 2020-04. On June 2nd, 2020, the Santa Maria City Council passed a new ordinance establishing rules of conduct for public parks, plazas, and facilities within the city. The goal of the ordinance was to establish a mechanism for regulating the use of public facilities to protect people's health, safety, and welfare, and respond to complaints about undesirable conditions at some park facilities. The ordinance includes 16 rules for public facilities and penalties for violation. Continued enforcement of Ordinance No. 2020-04 will help ensure existing park and recreational facilities remain safe and accessible. *(Environmental Background Report)*

2022 Ozone Plan. State law requires SBCAPCD to prepare a plan to improve air quality in the district. The 2022 Ozone Plan is the latest update to this plan and describes the air quality setting for Santa Barbara County, including the local climate and meteorology, the regulatory framework of the management of air quality, current and projected air quality, and measures and strategies for reducing emissions and improving air quality. The 2022 Plan addresses State ozone standards only, because the Santa Barbara County portion of the SCCAB was designated "attainment" for the federal 8-hour ozone standard of 0.070 ppm. Ensuring the City's policies and regulations align with the SBCAPCD 2022 Ozone Plan, and future updates to the plan, will serve an important role in improving air quality within the city and region. *(Environmental Background Report)*Issues and Challenges

Santa Barbara Climate Action Plan. The Santa Barbara Climate Action Plan (CAP), adopted in 2024, provides an inventory of the unincorporated county's GHG emissions as of 2018, and outlines strategies to reduce GHG emissions and enhance climate resilience by 2030. Key components of the CAP include reducing emissions from transportation, energy use, and waste, as well as promoting carbon sequestration through natural and working lands. The plan also emphasizes the importance of community engagement and collaboration with regional partners to achieve its goals GHG emissions reduction goals. While the CAP is focused on unincorporated county and therefore does not include the City of Santa Maria, efforts to implement the CAP will reduce regional emissions.

Habitat. The varied topography and soil types of the Santa Maria Valley have enabled a mix of native plant communities to exist in the region. Each vegetation community exists in areas of preferred soil, slope, exposure, and availability of sub-surface moisture. Major plant associations in the Santa Maria River Valley include chapparal, coastal scrub, riparian scrub, oak woodland, annual grassland (including grazing lands), sandyhill chaparral and agricultural. The plant communities in the region provide suitable habitat for

various species of animals, including populations of some wide ranging and mobile species of raptors, waterfowl, and deer. Habitat loss and fragmentation resulting from development has led to reduced biodiversity and increased human-wildlife conflicts, as animals and humans are forced into closer proximity with humans and one another. *(Environmental Background Report)*

Wetlands. Santa Maria contains a number of U.S. FWS-recognized wetlands, which are registered in the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). These wetlands include freshwater ponds and freshwater emergent wetlands, concentrated in agricultural and open space areas, as well as freshwater forested/shrub wetland and riverine habitat along the Santa Maria River. The wetlands provide habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants and have commercial and recreational value in the form of groundwater recharge, flooding prevention, and providing clean drinking water. However, urban development has resulted in the loss of wetland areas, disrupting natural ecosystems, increasing flooding, and reducing the natural filtration provided by wetlands *(Environmental Background Report)*

Surface Water. The principal hydrologic feature in the Santa Maria River Valley is the Santa Maria Watershed, which drains approximately 1,880 square miles and includes all tributaries of the Cuyama River, Sisquoc River, and the Santa Maria River. The Santa Maria River begins where the Sisquoc and Cuyama Rivers converge. The watershed generally drains to the west where it meets the Pacific Ocean at Guadalupe. In the lower stretches, the Santa Maria River consists of a sandy, braided channel that is leveed along much of its length. Major land uses in the Santa Maria Watershed that may affect water quality and supply include irrigated and dry-land agriculture, oil production, and urban development. The Santa Maria River is included on the Section 303(d) list for nitrate pollutants from agriculture, domestic animals/livestock, natural sources, and urban runoff/storm sewers. In addition, Chloride, Chlorpyrifos, Cypermethrin, DDD, DDE, DDT, Diazinon, Dieldrin, Endrin, E. coli, Fecal Coliform, Malathion, Sodium, Toxaphene, Toxicity, Turbidity are all listed pollutants for the Santa Maria River. For background purposes, decreased surface water quality can degrade natural ecosystems, leading to the loss of protected and special status species. This degradation can threaten biodiversity and pose a public health risk if not addressed, as contaminated water can spread waterborne diseases and impact communities that rely on these water sources for recreation and water supply. At this time the Santa Maria River is not utilized for recreation, however, there are trails adjacent to the river that are used by pedestrians and bicyclists. *(Environmental Background Report)*

Species of Concern. The city has specific species of plants and animals that are of concern either at the federal or state level. Species of state or federal concern within the city include the American badger, burrowing owl, California red legged frog, California tiger salamander, coast horned lizard, monarch, northern California legless lizard, vernal pool fairy shrimp, western pond turtle, western spadefoot dune larkspur, and Blockman's leafy daisy. Urban expansion has drastically altered and reduced protected and special status species habitat and species populations. New development in or near habitats of protected or special status species, or in areas where these species are known to live, can lead to habitat loss, fragmentation, or harm to the species. Special considerations must be taken to protect impacts to protected and special status species and their habitat. *(Environmental Background Report)*

Wildlife Movement Corridors. Wildlife corridors are generally defined as connections between habitat patches that allow for physical or genetic exchange between isolated animal populations. These

connections may serve a local purpose, such as foraging, nesting or denning, or they may be regional in nature. Wildlife corridors form a network that is essential to the regional ecology of an area. There is limited information on the actual use of wildlife corridors in the region. However, there is a potential that the Santa Maria River, Cuyama River and Sisquoc River are used by wildlife to access habitats in the Sierra Madre and San Rafael Mountains. Existing and new development has led to habitat fragmentation and loss, resulting in the isolation of plant and animal populations. Isolated populations can experience overcrowding and competition for resources, as well as decreased genetic diversity and greater risk of extinction. *(Environmental Background Report)*

Urban Forest. Santa Maria hosts a rich urban forest of over 27,800 trees that is managed by its Urban Forestry Program. The City has a tree planting easement in commercial and residential areas and requires tree planting along street frontages with new development. City managed trees are protected and tree removals must be approved by the Recreation and Parks Commission. If healthy trees are removed, they must be replaced at a ratio according to the City's Landscape and Irrigation Standards (2007). In addition, Municipal Code Chapter 12-44 governs the removal and replacement of trees on private and development sites. The City's urban forest provides a number of benefits to the community, including reducing the urban heat island effect, improving air quality, sequestering carbon dioxide, and reducing stormwater runoff and filtering stormwater. Urban trees require proper maintenance and care to ensure these benefits can be materialized. However, the City's existing urban forest does not have the capacity to provide the fullest extent of their benefits to the community. Tree and vegetation cover comprise only a small percentage of the total urbanized area of the city. In addition, urban trees are not evenly spread throughout the city, as some areas have fewer trees than others and, consequently, fewer benefits. *(Environmental Background Report)*

Air Quality: Santa Maria is located in the Santa Barbara portion of the South Central Coast Air Basin (SCCAB), which is under Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD) jurisdiction. The SBCAPCD monitors criteria air pollutant levels in Santa Barbara County, however, the air quality monitoring station in Santa Maria is owned and operated by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Santa Maria has the highest small particulate matter (less than 10 microns in diameter, orPM10) exceedances in the county, and the second highest annual mean PM10 concentrations. The main source of airborne particulate in Santa Maria is local agricultural uses but may also include fugitive dust generated by the Oceano-Nipomo Dunes. The primary sources of toxic air contaminants (TACs) in Santa Maria include gas stations and industrial uses in the eastern portion of the city. While air quality has dramatically improved since the 1990s in Santa Barbara County, extreme climate events, including the spread of wildfire smoke, and the encroachment of residential and sensitive uses on air polluting uses, such as agriculture, air quality conditions may change over the long-term. *(Health + Environmental Justice Existing Conditions Report)*

Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Santa Maria currently has not adopted a CAP. The City has a Community-Wide GHG Inventory for the year 2020 which summarizes the city's GHG emissions and compares them to the city's 2005 GHG emissions. The City of Santa Maria's 2020 Community-wide GHG Inventory totals 441,390 metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO2e). This represents a 20 percent reduction from the 2005 baseline, consistent with the state's GHG reduction target set by AB 32. The City's reduction in GHG emissions between 2005 and 2020 is primary due to emission reductions from the residential, commercial/industrial, transportation, and solid waste sectors. The commercial/industrial sector has

experienced the greatest reduction (44 percent), followed by the residential sector (25 percent) and the transportation sector (12 percent). Overall, the transportation sector is the primary source of GHG emissions in Santa Maria, representing approximately 62 percent of the city's total GHG emissions. This does not include emissions emitted by airplanes at the Santa Maria Airport. Santa Maria continues to work towards the statewide goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 in an effort to reduce climate change impacts. However, meeting this goal will require substantial changes to sources of electricity and other fuel-powered appliances and vehicles.

Water Quality. In Santa Maria, drinking water is not severely impacted by contamination. Surface water quality in Santa Maria may be impacted by oil, gas, agricultural and urban land uses. Runoff from agricultural areas may carry contaminants such as pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers which are then carried to the Santa Maria River through the drainage system. In more urbanized areas, where vehicle use and urban land use activities are common, water runoff picks up pollutants on the ground surface including heavy metals, hydrocarbons, detergents, fertilizers, and pesticides. Generally, these pollutants are associated with sediments that collect on roadways and are flushed or wind blown into the drainage systems either in dry weather flows, during construction, or by rainfall. Construction activities can also create erosion and cause sediment to be transported offsite, as surface water runs through a construction site.

According to a 2016 Integrated Water Report for Santa Maria, there are four impaired water bodies in the city: Blosser Channel, Bradley Channel, Main Street Canal, and Santa Maria River. Agricultural and stormwater runoff drain into the Blosser Channel, Bradley Channel, and Main Street Canal and are discharged to the Santa Maria River, resulting in the exceedance of water quality criteria. Except for the Santa Maria River, these waterways are not natural watercourses and are intended as flood control stormwater facilities. Known pollutants in these waterways may include ammonia, fecal coliform, and nitrate. The Santa Maria River is a natural watercourse, and known pollutants that have been identified include sodium, dieldrin, endrin, and toxaphene, E. coli, and chloride, in addition to those listed in the channels and canal. The concentrated presence of these contaminants result in dissolved oxygen imbalances, toxicity, and excess algal biomass which degrades potential beneficial uses such as aquatic habitat, drinking water supply, groundwater recharge, and agricultural supply.

In Santa Maria, groundwater threats include cleanup sites (e.g., leaking underground storage tanks, former Santa Maria Army Airport site), oil and gas sites, irrigated lands regulatory program sites, land disposal sites, and permitted underground storage tanks. Nitrate pollution, which has been found in water bodies in Santa Maria, is one example of a groundwater threat that can pose serious health risks, including cancer, birth defects, and thyroid disease, even when nitrate levels are below regulatory limits. *(Health + Environmental Justice Existing Conditions Report, Environmental Background Report)*

Groundwater Basin. The city overlies the Santa Maria Valley Groundwater Basin, which has a surface area of approximately 184,000 acres, or 287.5 square miles. Two reservoirs, Lopez Reservoir on Arroyo Grande Creek in the north, and Twitchell Reservoir on the Cuyama River (a tributary to the Santa Maria River in the south), provide storage of stormwater for recharge of the Basin. Groundwater discharges from the Basin includes consumptive use of groundwater by agricultural users, and municipal and industrial users (e.g., cities and the oil industry for secondary recovery of oil), and groundwater discharges to the ocean. Groundwater discharge to the ocean is required to prevent seawater intrusion into the Basin. The total

groundwater storage capacity of the Basin is approximately 2,300,000 acre-feet. Continued overdraft of the Santa Maria Valley Groundwater Basin could lead to decreased water supply and ground subsidence, decreased water quality, and saltwater intrusion. *(Environmental Background Report)*

Groundwater Quality. Groundwater quality conditions vary within the Santa Maria Valley. Current and historic data in the Santa Maria Valley indicate better quality in the eastern, central, and southern portions and poorer quality in the western portion. Water quality in the basin varies from one area to another due to concentrations of pumping in certain areas. Groundwater quality concerns in the Santa Maria Valley are focused on the increasing mineralization, which has impacted shallower wells more than deeper wells. Increased mineralization is primarily due to salt accumulation in the Santa Maria River, which is a major source of recharge to the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin. Contributors to salt accumulation include naturally occurring concentrations of salt in streams that recharge to Basin and fertilizer application on agricultural lands. Higher concentrations of salts can make groundwater unsuitable for drinking or irrigation, corrode pipes and water infrastructure, and harm native vegetation. *(Environmental Background Report)*

Historic District and Landmarks. The City of Santa Maria adopted the Historic Overlay District to encourage the preservation of local landmarks and objects of historical merit through flexible development standards. The City's Municipal Code defines objects of historical merit as places, sites, buildings, structures, or works of art that have special historical, aesthetic or cultural value, according to the Recreation and Parks Commission. Historical landmarks are places, sites, buildings, structures, or works of art with historical, cultural, aesthetic, or special character or interest for the general public and are at least 50 years old and are approved by the City Council. The Recreation and Parks Commission may make a designation of historic merit by resolution of the Parks and Recreation Commission; however, permission from the owner is required prior to such designation. Historic Landmark designations are approved by the City Council, following the review and recommendation of an application for Historic Landmark designation by the Planning Commission. As of January 2019, four parcels on Broadway are within the Historic Overlay District and 36 landmarks and objects of historic merit are located between Liberty Street and El Camino Colegio. Buildings in these areas generally consist of California mission architecture. Santa Maria's historic resources illustrate the community's history and culture, and redevelopment on sites with historic resources and the aging of these structures pose a risk of damage or loss of these resources. *(Environmental Background Report, Santa Maria Municipal Code)*

Archaeological, Paleontological, and Tribal Cultural Resources. Archaeological resources refer to the material remains (artifacts, structures, refuse) produced purposely or accidentally by human beings. Archaeological remains identify the type of activities, types of adaptation to the environment, and changes in activities and organization that were experienced by people in the past. Furthermore, these remains often have special significance to ethnic groups, special interest groups and the general public. While Santa Maria has a long history of human inhabitance, identified sensitive archaeological, paleontological, and tribal cultural resources are not public knowledge. Other cultural resources designated by the City of Santa Maria include the Santa Maria Museum of Flight and Santa Maria Cemetery District. Archaeological, paleontological, and tribal cultural resources provide a vital link to the shared history of human societies, and tribal resources continue to hold significant spiritual and cultural meaning for Native American tribal

communities. Without the appropriate mitigation, development can lead to the damage or destruction these resources. *(Environmental Background Report)*

# V. Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

This section outlines a strategic framework for the preservation and management of Santa Maria's natural and working lands, urban forest, water resources, water quality, air quality, and historic and cultural resources. These goals, policies, and implementation actions address critical issues such as biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, responsible resource management, and community involvement.

Each goal, policy, and implementation action includes a source in parentheses. Sources include: the City's existing General Plan, State law, existing conditions reports, community input, guidance from City staff, industry or regional best practices, or related materials.

### **Goal COS-1: Natural Lands and Biodiversity.** A healthy and connected natural environment that sustains the local natural biodiversity. *(New goal, best practice)*

**Policy COS-1.1: Natural habitat and wildlife corridors.** Protect and, to the extent feasible, expand natural habitat and wildlife corridor areas, natural wetlands, and other natural lands throughout the city and sphere of influence. *(Adapted from Goal 3 and Policy 3)*

Action COS-1.1.1: Revise the Santa Maria Municipal Code to establish ecological buffer requirements for development adjacent to natural lands, including habitat and wildlife corridor areas and wetlands. *(Adapted from Goal 3 Implementation Program 3)*

Action COS-1.1.2: Prevent the loss of natural land area and/or the reduction of the quality of natural lands through the establishment of a *no net loss* land use management policy. *(New action, best practice)*

- Site new development outside of sensitive habitat and wildlife corridor areas
- Prohibit redevelopment that would encroach upon sensitive habitat and wildlife corridor areas

Action COS-1.1.3: If impacts to environmental resources are identified during review, require the applicant to adjust site design and/or incorporate additional mitigation measures to minimize the identified impacts. *(Adapted from Goal 3 Implementation Program 3)*

Action COS-1.1.4: Support state and regional conservation efforts for protecting natural landscapes and biological resources. *(New action, best practices and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-1.1.5: Encourage the establishment of conservation open space areas and conservation easements or acquisitions in sensitive habitat areas and areas identified as critical wildlife corridors through education, technical assistance, and pursuing grant funding (such as funding from the Habitat Conservation Fund). *(Adapted from Objective 7.1.c and 7.1.d)*

**Policy COS-1.2: City greenbelt.** Coordinate with Santa Barbara County to develop a continuous system of greenbelts and natural corridors. *(Adapted from Objective 3.1.d)*

Action COS-1.2.1: Define the purpose and desired outcomes for a system of greenbelts, and collaborate with Santa Barbara County to develop designation criteria and standards for the design, implementation, and use of greenbelt areas. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-1.2.2: Assess existing land use patterns to designate areas that will comprise the City's greenbelt. Design the greenbelt to ensure connectivity to existing and planned parks, trails, and open spaces to facilitate wildlife movement. *(Adapted from Objective 3.1.d)*

Action COS-1.2.3: Designate portions of the Santa Maria River as greenbelt areas whereby riparian habitats may be preserved. *(Goal 3 Implementation Program 2)*

Action COS-1.2.4: Explore the feasibility of allowing the transfer of development rights and permitting higher intensity uses in existing urban areas to conserve natural lands. *(New action, best practice)*

**Policy COS-1.3: Natural biodiversity.** Increase natural biodiversity through the reintroduction of indigenous species, removal of non-native, invasive species, and proper sustainable maintenance of vegetated areas. *(New policy, best practice)*

Action COS-1.3.1: Identify areas feasible for implementing sustainable maintenance practices on City owned open spaces and landscaped areas and incorporate these practices into regular maintenance activities for the identified areas. *(New action, best practice)*

- Reduce mowing in targeted areas (i.e. within agricultural and habitat buffers and in City open spaces) to promote natural plant growth and habitat for pollinators
- Reduce the use of pesticides on City owned lands through the adoption of minimum risk pesticide use and spot treatment
- Incorporate the use of integrated pest management strategies on City owned landscaped areas and parks
- Use organic compost in landscaped and turfed areas, to enhance soil quality and improve water retention

Action COS-1.3.2: Eliminate non-native and invasive species in natural habitat areas, open spaces, and City managed landscaped areas through regular maintenance and vegetation management activities. *(New action, best practice)*

**Policy COS-1.4: Urban rewilding.** Implement urban rewilding projects to reintroduce natural processes, restore natural ecosystems, and promote biodiversity. *(New policy, best practice)*

Action COS-1.4.1: Identify areas where urban rewilding projects could be implemented, including vacant land, alleyways, underutilized parking lots, and underutilized areas within existing parks (landscaped areas, areas along trails and walkways). *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-1.4.2: Develop and implement small scale pilot projects on City owned land, such as pocket forests or incorporating native plants in community gardens, to demonstrate how urban rewilding can be successfully achieved and the benefits of these efforts. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-1.4.3: Connect with private landowners where urban rewilding projects could be implemented, such as landfill sites or sites with inactive oil and gas wells. Provide educational information on potential rewilding projects and seek partnerships for implementing rewilding of these sites. *(New action, best practice)*

**Policy COS-1.5: Endangered, threatened, and special status species.** Minimize potential impacts of development on federal or state endangered and threatened species and non-listed special status species through the development and permit review process. Condition development projects to avoid impacts to these species, to the greatest extent feasible. *(Adapted from Objective 3.1.a and Goal 3 Implementation Program 3)*

**Policy COS-1.6: Multifunctional open spaces.** Design multifunctional open spaces that provide public recreational opportunities and protect the community from hazards. *(New policy, best practice)*

Action COS-1.6.1: Consult with utility companies and public agencies to establish walking trails and native landscaping in easement areas. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-1.6.2: Increase natural greenspaces and green infrastructure throughout the city to reduce the risk of extreme heat impacts and incorporate climate resilient, native vegetation. *(New action, best practice)*

### Goal COS-2: Working Lands. Sustainable and productive working lands that support healthy local ecosystems. *(New goal, best practice)*

**Policy COS-2.1: Agricultural preservation.** Collaborate with Santa Barbara County and local land owners to preserve existing agricultural uses on lands not proposed for future development, including croplands and rangelands. *(New policy, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-2.1.1: Balance state and regional efforts for preserving existing agricultural uses, including the Santa Barbara County Right to Farm Ordinance, clustering of urban land uses/development, and transfer of development rights, with other factors such as providing adequate housing, jobs-housing balance, economic sustainability and other City interests. *(New action, best practice and Santa Maria Municipal Code)*

Action COS-2.1.2: To the extent feasible, support the establishment of easements on land within the City's Sphere of Influence designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland by initiating discussions with property owners on eligible sites and providing education and technical assistance to interested owners. *(New action, best practice Annexation Scenario Impact Analysis)*

**Policy COS-2.2: Sustainable agriculture.** Encourage the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices to preserve productivity while protecting natural environments. *(New policy, best practice)*

Action COS-2.2.1: Work with local agricultural operators to encourage the continued use and adoption of best management practices that enhance soil quality, conserve water, and reduce soil erosion, including: *(New action, best practice)*

- Integrated pest management and reduction of chemical pesticide use
- Rotational grazing and crop rotation to enhance soil health and biodiversity
- Agroforestry
- Composting

**Policy COS-2.3: Sustainable resource extraction.** Ensure sustainable extraction and processing of mineral resources that preserves the health of local natural ecosystems. *(Adapted from Policy 6.1)*

Action COS-2.3.1: Review applications for mining operations for consistency with the Santa Maria General Plan, and compliance with the State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 and the City of Santa Maria Surface Mining Ordinance (Chapter 47 of Title 12 of the Municipal Code). *(Adapted from Goal 6 Implementation Program 2)*

Action COS-2.3.2: Require operators and new mineral extraction uses to develop plans for post-extraction land rehabilitation to restore the natural environment after mineral operations cease. Such post-extraction rehabilitation plans must, at a minimum, meet the requirements set forth by state law. *(Adapted from Objective 6.1.a(2))*

Action COS-2.3.3: Require operators to conduct annual training to educate employees on safe practices and how to effectively monitor and report potential environmental concerns. *(New action, best practice)*

## Goal COS-3: Urban Forestry. A healthy and expansive urban forest that is cohesive with the city's natural ecosystem. *(Adapted from Goal 3)*

**Policy COS-3.1: Urban forestry regulations.** Implement the Urban Forest Management Plan with the goal of expanding the urban canopy to 20 percent of the City by improving tree maintenance and planting standards in the City's Municipal Code. *(Adapted from Objective 3.1.b)*

**Policy COS-3.2: Urban Forest Management Plan Compliance.** Ensure implementation of urban forestry projects to comply with the adopted Urban Forest Management Plan. *(New policy and best practice)*

**Policy COS-3.3: Urban forestry funding.** Pursue funding opportunities dedicated to expanding and maintaining the City's urban forest. *(New policy, Urban Forest Management Plan, Environmental Background Report, and best practice)*

Action COS-3.3.1: Pursue grant funding to support expansion, maintenance, and education related to the City's urban forest, such as funds provided through the California Urban and Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act. Dedicate a share of received funds to support programs for disadvantaged communities. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-3.3.2: Evaluate and dedicate local revenue mechanisms for urban forestry management, such as funding from the following sources: *(New action, best practice)*

- Recycled urban lumber sales
- Fines for illegal removal of trees
- In lieu fees for tree replacement
- Municipal fuel taxes

**Policy COS-3.4: City canopy cover.** Facilitate new tree plantings per the City's Urban Forest Management Plan, with specific focus on disadvantaged communities. *(New policy, best practice and Urban Forest Management Plan)*

Action COS-3.4.1: Partner with local agencies and non-profit organizations to implement a tree planting program on City owned lands. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-3.4.2: Develop street tree master plans to outline how the City will expand the urban forest in areas with an overlap of disadvantaged communities and inadequate canopy cover. *(New action, best practice)*

### Goal COS-4: Water Resources. Sustainable watershed management that protects the city's water quality and natural ecosystems. *(Adapted from Policy 1 and Objective 1.1.b)*

**Policy COS-4.1: Santa Maria River protection.** Protect and enhance the beneficial uses of the Santa Maria River to support essential community and environmental needs, including municipal and domestic water supply, agricultural supply, and groundwater recharge. *(Adapted from Objective 6.1.a(1) and Goal 6 Implementation Program 1)*

Action COS-4.1.1: Implement best management practices (BMPs) to reduce pollutants from urban and agricultural runoff, safeguarding the water quality of the Santa Maria River for all beneficial uses. *(New program, best practice)*

Action COS-4.1.2: Develop regional recharge programs and projects that use the Santa Maria River for replenishing local groundwater sources, focusing on areas of high groundwater demand. *(Adapted from Objective 1.1.b and 1.1.c)*

Action COS-4.1.3: Partner with regional water agencies, agricultural organizations, and environmental groups to coordinate efforts in water quality improvement, sustainable extraction practices, and the management of recharge basins along the Santa Maria River. *(Adapted from Goal 1 Implementation Program 6)*

**Policy COS-4.2: Surface water and groundwater quality.** Improve local surface water and groundwater quality through strategic land use and zoning practices. *(New policy, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-4.2.1: Implement land use and zoning practices that encourage the reduction of impervious surfaces and maximize open space areas, including open space areas for stormwater filtration and groundwater recharge. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-4.2.2: Establish maximum impervious surface coverage standards based on land use type, proximity to flood zones, and degree to which the site integrates sustainable design practices. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-4.2.3: Require the use of best management practices to manage and filter stormwater runoff for all new development and redevelopment. *(New action, best practice)*

**Policy COS-4.3: Groundwater contamination.** Minimize groundwater contamination from current and previous oil and gas operations. *(New policy, best practice, Environmental Background Report, and Health + Environmental Justice Existing Conditions Report)*

Action COS-4.3.1: Update the City's Petroleum Ordinance to maintain consistency with state and regional regulations pertaining to petroleum extraction, processing, storage, and transport. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-4.3.2: Update the City's Petroleum Ordinance to adopt standards to regulate post-production restoration, including timing, removal of equipment, plugging of boreholes and wells, and restoration of the site. Require the use of native vegetation in site restoration. *(New action, best practice and Health + Environmental Justice Existing Conditions Report)*

Action COS-4.3.3: Continue to enforce the City's Petroleum Ordinance to ensure the proper operation of active oil wells and the proper plugging and site restoration of inactive oil wells to minimize groundwater contamination. *(New action, Health + Environmental Justice Existing Conditions Report)*

**Policy COS-4.4: Sustainable groundwater management.** Ensure the long-term sustainability of groundwater resources through conservation management practices and supporting opportunities for expanding groundwater recharge. *(New Policy, adapted from Objective 1.1.a(1) and 1.1.a(2))*

Action COS-4.4.1: Assess and enhance stormwater retention systems that integrate groundwater recharge and contribute to natural resource conservation. *(New action, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-4.4.2: Continue and expand local water conservation programs. Increase awareness of the City's water-wise landscaping program, including incentives for turf replacement with native and drought-tolerant plants. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-4.4.3: Conduct a feasibility study for establishing recycled water systems for the irrigation of publicly owned parks, schools, sports fields, and landscaping. Collaborate with the local school districts to explore opportunities for utilizing recycled water on school properties. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-4.4.4: Reduce local per capita water consumption through community education programs. *(New action, best practice)*

- Update the City's Water Conservation webpage to provide additional and up to date information on the City's water conservation initiatives and the role the community serves in reducing water consumption.
- Publicize home projects residents can implement to reduce water consumption, such as installing low-flow water fixtures, smart irrigation systems, rainwater harvesting systems, and permeable paving. Host community workshops to demonstrate how to implement these projects. Publish this information on the City's website with links to affordable fixtures, irrigation systems, and rain barrels.

## Goal COS-5: Drinking Water Quality. High quality potable water supply. *(New goal, best practice)*

**Policy COS-5.1: Water quality standards.** Ensure the potable water supply meets all federal and state water quality standards. *(Adapted from Safety Policy 7.1)*

Action COS-5.1.1: Monitor and treat, if necessary, public drinking water for potential harmful contaminants. *(Adapted from Safety Objective 7.1.a)*

**Policy COS-5.2: Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District policies.** Ensure consistency between the City and the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD) air quality plans and regulations. Continue to enforce the standards and regulations set by the SBCAPCD. *(New policy, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-5.2.1: Continue to refer projects requiring an APCD permit to the SBCAPCD and require ACPD permit approval. *(New action, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-5.2.2: Evaluate potential impacts of proposed development on air quality during the development and environmental review process, using Air Pollution Control District (APCD) threshold standards as guidelines. *(Adapted from Goal 2 Implementation Program 1)*

Action COS-5.2.3: Ensure new development complies with the Santa Barbara County Congestion Management Program (CMP), Air Quality Attainment Plan (AQAP), Ozone Plan, and other relevant regulations during the development and environmental review process. *(Adapted from Goal 2 Implementation Program 2)*

**Policy COS-5.3: Agricultural air pollutant emissions.** Reduce air pollutant emissions associated with agricultural uses. *(New policy, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-5.3.1: Work with agricultural operators to encourage the adoption of farming practices that minimize dust, consistent with the Santa Barbara County's dust control measures, including limiting plowing, disking, mowing, and tilling when soil is dry and winds are high and using surface coverings or cover crops to reduce wind erosion and stabilize soil.*(New action, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-5.3.2: Coordinate with SBCAPCD to report illegal burnings and enforce SBCAPCD regulations pertaining to agricultural burnings. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-5.3.3: Collaborate with SBCAPCD to monitor pesticide residues in the air and enforce pesticide use and storage regulations. *(New action, best practice, meeting with City staff, and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-5.3.4: Update the Municipal Code to establish a minimum buffer requirement between agricultural uses , including agricultural supply businesses, and development based on type of use. Sensitive land uses, including residential uses, schools, day cares, senior homes, and hospitals shall require the largest buffer distance from agricultural and related uses. *(New action, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-5.3.5: Require the use of green walls or vegetation barriers in combination with minimum buffers to provide a physical barrier between agricultural and sensitive uses. *(New action, best practice)*

**Policy COS-5.4: Fugitive dust emissions.** Mitigate air pollutants and fugitive dust emissions resulting from construction and demolition activities by requiring use of best management practices. *(Adapted from Goal 2 Implementation Program 13)*

Action COS-5.4.1: Utilize SBCAPCD's short-term construction emissions guidelines to determine levels of significance for construction related emissions. *(New action, best practice)*

### Goal COS-6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions. A carbon neutral city. *(Adapted from Goal 2)*

**Policy COS-6.1: GHG reduction strategy.** Develop and implement a citywide GHG reductions and monitoring strategy. *(New policy, best practice)*

Action COS-6.1.1: Establish City GHG emissions reductions targets that are consistent with state mandated targets of reducing emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-6.1.2: Develop a sustainability plan or similar document that outlines how the City will achieve its GHG reductions targets. Integrate City-led GHG reduction strategies with regional efforts. *(New action, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

**Policy COS-6.2: Vehicle emissions reduction.** Reduce vehicle generated air pollution and GHG emissions by expanding active transportation opportunities. *(New policy, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-6.2.1: Implement bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements identified in the City's Active Transportation Plan, prioritizing projects that support active transportation access in disadvantaged communities. *(New action, Santa Maria Active Transportation Plan)*

Action COS-6.2.2: Update the Santa Maria Municipal Code to establish active transportation infrastructure standards for new development, such as minimum requirements for bicycle storage/lockers and requiring integration with existing nearby bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure. *(New action, best practices)*

Action COS-6.2.3: Periodically evaluate the efficiency transit services, identify transit needs, and implement strategies to meet those needs. *(New action,* best practice *Santa Maria Active Transportation Plan)*

**Policy COS-6.3: City vehicle fleet electrification.** Transition the City's vehicle fleet to electric/zero emission vehicles. *(New policy, best practice)*

Action COS-6.3.1: Amend the City's Capital Improvement Plan to incorporate the replacement of high-mileage fleet vehicles with clean fuel vehicles. *(Adapted from Objective 2.1.e)*

Action COS-6.3.2: Pursue state and federal grants for transitioning City vehicles to clean fuel sources. *(New action, best practice)*

**Policy COS-6.4: Energy conservation programs.** Promote energy conservation through public awareness programs. *(Adapted from Objective 6.1.b(5))*

Action COS-6.4.1: Coordinate with 3C-REN to increase awareness of local incentives for improving energy efficiency for homeowners. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-6.4.2: Identify and pursue funding to create a program offering home energy audits to help property owners identify updates to increase energy efficiency. *(New action, best practice)*

## Goal COS-7: Historic and Cultural Resources. A preserved and celebrated cultural heritage. *(Adapted from Goal 4)*

**Policy COS-7.1: Historic, cultural, and tribal resources.** Protect the City's historic, cultural, and tribal resources through the City's Historic Overlay Ordinance, Historic Landmark Ordinance, and proper tribal consultation practices. *(New policy, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-7.1.1: Review and explore opportunities for strengthening the Historic Overlay Ordinance to protect and document culturally significant sites, including tribal and historic resources. *(New action, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-7.1.2: Enforce federal, state, and local regulations related to the preservation of historic and cultural resources. *(New action, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-7.1.3: Identify impacts of new development on historic, cultural, and tribal resources during the development and environmental review process and incorporate site specific mitigation measures accordingly to minimize the identified impacts. *(Adapted from Objective 4.1.a)*

Action COS-7.1.4: Avoid the relocation, rehabilitation, or alteration of historic resources to the greatest extent feasible, consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatments of Historic Properties. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-7.1.5: Support the adaptive reuse of designated and non-designated historical resources by enforcing the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration and providing technical assistance and sharing of best practices. *(New action, best practice)*

**Policy COS-7.2: Tribal resource protection.** Protect tribal resources by partnering with representatives of Native American tribes during in planning and development activities. *(New policy, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-7.2.1: Partner with local tribes and cultural organizations to identify and conserve cultural resources and points of interest. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-7.2.2: Continue to comply with state, regional, and local regulations pertaining to notification and engagement of Native American tribes, including AB 52 and SB 18. *(New action, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-7.2.3: Require any excavation activities at Native American sites be monitored by a local tribal representative. *(New action, best practice)*

**Policy COS-7.3: Cultural resource access.** Explore opportunities to incorporate cultural resources into parks and open spaces, enriching community access to Santa Maria's history. *(New policy, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

Action COS-7.3.1: Develop wayfinding and educational signage for significant historical and cultural resources. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-7.3.2: Pursue grant funding to facilitate the preservation and restoration of historic sites significant to the City's cultural identity. *(Adapted from Goal 4 Implementation Program 6)*

**Policy COS-7.4: Archaeological resource protection.** Protect archaeological resources by requiring development to incorporate adequate mitigation to ensure the integrity of these resources. *(Adapted from Policy 4)*

Action COS-7.4.1: Continue to analyze project-specific impacts to archaeological resources through the development review and CEQA processes with the goal of avoiding and reducing impacts on archaeological resources.

Action COS-7.4.2: Consult with representatives of Native American tribes to ensure the appropriate treatment of archaeological resources, including cultural artifacts and human remains. *(New action, best practice and Environmental Background Report)*

## Goal COS-8: Community Engagement. A knowledgeable and engaged community that actively supports local conservation initiatives. *(New goal, best practice)*

**Policy COS-8.1: Community conservation planning.** Increase public involvement in conservation planning and decision-making processes to foster local stewardship of local natural resources. *(New policy, best practice)*

Action COS-8.1.1: Integrate opportunities for public involvement, such as community forums, during the initial planning stages of the City's conservation initiatives to enable the community to help shape the vision for conservation projects. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-8.1.2: Establish community advisory committees to provide counsel during conservation planning for natural, historic, urban forestry, and parks and recreation resources. These committees should also ensure there are ample opportunities for public engagement throughout the planning process and provide opportunities for the community to co-design and participate in City-led conservation programs and collaborate in the creation of a shared community vision. *(New action, best practice)*

**Policy COS-8.2: Community environmental stewardship.** Offer a variety of community education opportunities to increase public understanding of the relationship between people and the natural environment. *(New policy, best practice)*

Action COS-8.2.1: Offer self-guided nature walks in local open spaces to educate the community on local natural resources and increase access to open space areas. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-8.2.2: Host community workshops on a variety of sustainability topics, such as composting, water conservation, sustainable gardening. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-8.2.3: Facilitate the creation of local gardens specifically for native plants that support native birds, bees, and insects. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-8.2.4: Create a webpage on the City's website dedicated to sharing monitoring information on local air quality, water quality, and other natural resources. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-8.2.5: Develop a public dashboard for sharing data on the city's tree inventory, canopy cover, and environmental and economic benefits of the urban forest. *(New action, best practice)*

Action COS-8.2.6: Create a monitoring and reporting dashboard to publicly track conservation efforts and measurable metrics to evaluate local environmental health, such as improvements to biodiversity ratios and species population counts, air quality in different locations within the city, changes to surface water and groundwater quality, past and present temperature records for monitoring extreme heat, groundwater table levels for monitoring groundwater supply and recharge, and acreage of restored and protected natural areas. Collaborate with local schools, colleges, and non-profit organizations to maintain the dashboard. *(New policy, best practice)*

Action COS-8.2.7: Facilitate the creation of a community-led team of volunteers to assist with implementing, maintaining, and monitoring conservation projects, such as planting and maintenance of native plants, trash clean up events, and assisting with water quality monitoring. *(New policy, best practice)*