



# Pathfinder

“A year from now you may wish you had started today.” Karen Lamb

## Teamwork Matters

*A message from  
the City Manager*



JASON STILWELL

**In this, my first column as your new City Manager, I begin by recognizing and reflecting on our collective work to improve Santa Maria during 2017. I will conclude by briefly reintroducing myself, and share a look forward at upcoming opportunities. Looking back over the past year, some of the City’s noteworthy achievements were:**

Assisting the developers of Enos Ranch with new roads and utilities, to open with the expanded Costco, Lowe’s, and other stores – and eventually apartments, a school, a park, and automobile dealerships (to generate more sales tax);

Establishing a by-district elections process for future City Councilmembers, after significant public input along with expert opinion from a consultant;

Launching the Downtown Multi-modal Streetscape Plan and hosting initial public outreach to obtain input for preferences for downtown framework;

Adopting a grass-roots strategic plan to end youth violence – after six months of public forums through the Mayor’s Task Force on Youth Safety.

There were many more accomplishments such as: more radio project progress; smoothly relocating our public safety dispatch center; launching the successful Wine Trolley; the Jim May Park biofilter project; a \$2 million grant toward addressing the impacts of homelessness; transit receiving 10 replacement vehicles and adding many amenities for riders; upgrading Grogan and Buena Vista (and soon Armstrong) parks; online reservations for programs and facilities; numerous Public Library

programs; and, succession planning programs. You are probably familiar with these and the many more accomplishments as it was due to our collective efforts that the City made these achievements. Thank you for being part of another productive year.

Now to my introduction. I joined the City on June 15, 2015 and have more than 25 years of City and County management experience. I value honesty, long-range thinking, and getting the work done well. Given the fiscal issues, my approach is to try to maintain current levels of service while avoiding unnecessary layoffs. Clear communication (internal and external) is important, as is embracing technology.

Opportunities ahead include our Technology Summit in February, at which we will show off our state-of-the-art communications in hopes of attracting interest from other agencies and businesses who want to become partners (revenue generation).

Also, we are seeking to renew the City’s general purpose one-quarter cent transactions and use tax, known as Measure U2012. We have hired a professional polling survey firm to gauge voter support for a variety of City programs and services. The goal is to determine “the sweet spot” of support and then craft the language for the ballot measure in November 2018.

In addition to the above, goals for the coming year are to balance the budget, retain and recruit the best talent possible, all while becoming ever-more efficient. We are no different from other cities in facing serious financial challenges. We will move forward with the downtown revitalization, keep the peace, grow more business and wonderful programs and services for our residents. I look forward to serving the community and working with all of you.

*Jason*