

2008 General Plan Annual Report

SP-2009-004



City of Santa Maria

Prepared by the
Community Development Department

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

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A. Purpose of the Annual Report

Section 65400 of the California Government Code requires the City to file an annual report addressing the status of the General Plan and progress made toward goals and objectives. The annual report provides a means to monitor the success of implementing the Housing Element and to review the General Plan and determine if changes need to be made in the plan or its implementation programs.

B. Purpose of the General Plan

The General Plan is a public document and is available for all to read and use as needed. The General Plan serves two primary functions. First, the General Plan provides information. Second, it states the community's goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures (i.e., ways to achieve the goals and objectives). Copies are available for review at the Santa Maria Public Library and at the City Clerk's Office. Each member of the City Council and the Planning Commission has a copy of the General Plan as well as each City department.

As an information document, the General Plan describes existing conditions, makes projections, and establishes a vision for the community's future. The General Plan provides the public with valuable information about the City and the direction that it seeks to move. In a community where rapid growth accentuates change, there is a need to look ahead and determine the effect of change on the physical, social, and economic structure of the community.

As a policy document, the General Plan establishes guidelines for decision-makers. Using these guidelines, the City Council and Planning Commission take incremental steps toward achieving the larger goals of the City. The City focuses implementation programs contained in the General Plan through day-to-day operations of the City.

C. Status of the Adopted Elements of the City's General Plan

State law requires that the General Plan include seven elements. These elements must cover the following topics: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Safety, Noise, Conservation, and Open Space. State law also allows the City to adopt any additional general plan elements that the City deems necessary. The City of Santa Maria combines the Conservation and Open Space elements into a Resource Management Element (RME), which also includes sections on Recreation and Parks, Public Facilities and Services, Private and Community Services, and Growth Management.

Circulation Element

(Adopted on January 4, 1994) Map amendments were adopted on October 20, 1998, November 17, 1998, and January 5, 1999. In conjunction with the adoption of specific plans, two Circulation Plan (2010) amendments occurred in 2008.

Economic Development Element

(Adopted on February 17, 2004) A text amendment occurred on February 21, 2006. No amendments to the Economic Development Element occurred in 2008.

Housing Element

(Adopted on December 21, 2006) The State Department of Housing and Community Development certified that this Housing Element complies with State housing element law in February 2007. No amendments to the Housing Element occurred in 2008. Chapter II discusses the Housing Element in greater detail.

Land Use Element

(Adopted on August 20, 1991—exhibits amended in December 1993) Text amendments occurred in May 1994, August 1994, October 1997, and January 2001. In 2008, the Highway Commercial zoning district was identified as a compatible zone in the Freeway Services land use designation.

Noise Element

(Adopted on December 16, 1997) In 2008, the Noise Element was amended to establish acceptable outdoor noise level in outdoor living spaces (e.g., yards, balconies, patios ...) in urban settings. The standards were amended for apartment and residential Mixed Use developments.

Resources Management Element (RME)

(Adopted on May 7, 1996) The RME includes the state mandated Conservation and Open Space Elements. Other elements include Recreation and Parks, and Public Facilities and Services. A text amendment occurred in January 2001 and no amendments to the Resources Management Element occurred in 2008.

Safety Element

(Adopted on November 21, 1995) No amendments to the Safety Element occurred in 2008.

CHAPTER II – HOUSING ELEMENT

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State law requires the annual report to include ". . . the progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs . . ." for monitoring the success of implementing the Housing Element. The following Table identifies the current Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) targets used in the adopted General Plan.

In 2008, 272 new housing units were added as the result of new construction or conversion and six units were demolished. With 105 senior apartments, 24 affordable apartments, and 1 mixed-use unit constructed, 130 special needs/affordable units were added to the City housing inventory. 133 single-family housing units were added as the number of detached housing units produced fell to 68 houses and 65 attached housing units received final inspection clearances. Nine infill units were built on lots with other units. Additionally, three single-family detached houses, 115 single-family lots with manufactured homes on fixed foundations, and 96-condominium units were added by means of annexation. A net 474 units were added to the 27,387 units in the City on January 1, 2008.

TABLE A provides the Regional Housing Need Allocation target units, by household income, which were allocated to the City through the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) plan.

TABLE A

Santa Maria Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA – 2001-08)*

Santa Maria RHNA	<u>Total</u>	<u><50%</u>	<u>51-80</u>	<u>81-120</u>	<u>+120%</u>
	4,837	1,161	822	1,209	1,645
	100%	24%	17%	25%	34%

*The end year was extended to June 30, 2009

The 2009 Housing Element update must include the RHNA target numbers adopted for the City for the next Housing Element update cycle before August 30, 2009.

The first goal of the Housing Element addresses new construction activities occurring in 2008, which increased the supply of housing and the affordability of the units counted toward achieving the target production identified in the Housing Element. The **FIRST GOAL – Producing new housing units**, mostly comes from new construction, but may involve adaptive reuse of non-residential structures for housing opportunities.

Action steps to provide adequate sites:

1. The City continues to gather, organize and distribute the information needed by applicant/developers, staff, Planning Commission and City Council in an expeditious fashion.

Action steps to annex sufficient land for residential needs:

1. The City annexed 42.1 acres of land suitable for new residential development in 2008. Potentially, 369 dwelling units could be developed to increase the availability of housing in the City.
2. The City works cooperatively with County and State government entities as well as non-profit and agriculture community to help housing for all special needs populations.

Action steps to encourage mixed-use development:

1. Mixed-Use projects that encourage provision of affordable housing are given priority, especially those within the Downtown Specific Plan (adopted 2008), accommodating special needs populations, and housing the local workforce by employers.

Action steps to encourage infill and refill:

1. The City's General Plan establishes goals for preserving agricultural land at the perimeter of the City and this boundary as established by City Council Resolution 94-9. The City started the process to adopt Uniform Rules for the administration of agricultural preserves and directing growth away from the areas under agricultural preserves.
2. The City of Santa Maria and the County of Santa Barbara jointly allocated HOME funds to the McClelland-Inger (Recovery Point) project, proposed by Good Samaritan Shelter.
3. City staff continues working with the Housing Trust Fund of Santa Barbara County to facilitate the development of a workforce housing project in Santa Maria. Monthly meetings for the Northern Santa Barbara County sub-committee are held in the City to support the technical needs of the Housing Trust Fund.

The second goal of the Housing Element addresses conservation activities, occurring in 2008, directed toward maintaining or extending the useful life the existing housing stock identified in the Housing Element. The **SECOND GOAL – Rehabilitating existing housing units** seeks to extend the useful life of older residential structures, rehabilitation keeps housing units in service to meet the residential needs of the community. The City's target numbers are based on expectations that 112 demolitions and conversions occurring during the RHNA cycle would need to be replaced without such maintenance.

Action steps to improve sub-standard housing conditions:

1. The City continues to maintain an active code compliance program of complaint-based inspections in target neighborhoods to stop destabilizing elements in the area and work with other programs to encourage housing rehabilitation and neighborhood security. The City abated a long-term, abandoned house in trust for the absentee owner. There were 212 building permit applications resulting from these special investigations.
2. Four mobile homes were removed and replaced with new units. One housing unit avoided unnecessary demolition by being relocated to a commercial site and converted into a residential/office mixed-use building. Six units were demolished in 2008; four of those were replaced soon after the sites were remediated.
3. The City continues to provide CDBG funds to Habitat for Humanity for the operation of a residential rehabilitation loan program for low-income homeowners.

Action steps to assist special needs populations:

1. The City continues its work with local non-profit agencies acting as Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) to undertake various housing related activities including transitional and supportive housing facilities (Good Samaritan Shelter), and new construction of affordable permanent rental units. The City has HOME/CDBG provided funding to proceed with these projects.
2. The City helped amicably negotiate a three-year deal between the Santa Maria Airport and the mobile home tenants to relocate about 90 mobile homes off the Airport Business Park property.
3. One conversion of an apartment project that was constructed with the intent to be converted into condominiums in 2008 and appropriate conditions were placed on any project at the time of the tentative map approval.

Action steps to expand economic opportunities:

1. The City continues funding the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce to provide economic development services.

The **THIRD GOAL – Conserving affordable housing** of the Housing Element addresses preservation of existing affordable housing units—often called “units at risk”—threatened to be converted into market-rate rental housing. The Union Plaza Senior Apartment project is the only project at risk of conversion.

Action steps to maximize governmental assistance to conserve affordable housing units currently receiving subsidies – No change in the at risk status occurred in 2008.

FOURTH GOAL – Governmental Assistance. Where appropriate and legally possible, the City followed several strategies to further address the removal of governmental constraints (65583(c)(3) on the construction of housing for all income levels especially that for low and moderate income households.

Action steps to reduce land controls:

1. Residential Zoning Text Amendments

The City Council adopted one housing related zoning code amendments in 2008.

Chapters 12-7, 12-8, and 12-49—respectively: R-2, R-3, and Mixed Use—were amended to relax noise standards to make urban outdoor noise levels easier to attain.

Action steps to reduce building codes – No actions were taken in 2008.

Action steps to reduce site improvement costs – No actions were taken in 2008.

Action steps to reduce fees and exactions:

1. Developer Fees (Growth Mitigation Fees)

The City first adopted a Growth Impact Mitigation Fee ordinance in 1993. The City Council introduced and adopted an update of the ordinance in May 2007. The new fee structure applies growth mitigation fees to residential space on a square foot basis. In mid August 2007, all residential additions over 150 square feet were required to pay growth impact mitigation fees. The next fee update would occur in 2009.

Action steps to reduce processing and permit procedures:

1. Specific Plans

Two new specific plans replaced the Mahoney Ranch Specific Plan, which was repealed. Entrada Este Specific Plan Area A-2 became a new specific plan in 2008. The Downtown Specific Plan was adopted.

CHAPTER III
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

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The City of Santa Maria implementation programs identified in the General Plan include tools already in place and used on a day-to-day basis in the City as well as other tools that may be needed to further the City's goals and objectives. The following list was

1. Budget/Capital Improvement Program
2. Specific Plans and Master Plans
3. Municipal Code (Zoning, Subdivision, ...)
4. Sphere of Influence
5. Growth Impact Mitigation (AB1600) Fees
6. CDBG/HOME Funds and Grants
7. Development Agreements/Maintenance Annuity Funding
8. Improvement Districts
9. Land Use and Zoning Map Amendments
10. Land Banking and Exaction Program
11. Uniform Rules
12. Annual Report and Special Studies
13. Infrastructure Studies and Programs
14. Environmental Mitigation Measures (EIR, MND)

In summary, there were 15 Planned Development (PD) Permits, one PD Permit Amended, 14 Conditional Use Permits, two Project Review Permits, two Tentative Maps, two appeals of Zoning Administrator determinations, and one General Plan Consistency Determination addressed by the Planning Commission in 2008.

Specific Plans

Two new specific plans replaced the Mahoney Ranch Specific Plan, which was repealed. Entrada Este Specific Plan Area A-2 became a new specific plan in 2008. The Downtown Specific Plan was adopted.

- *Downtown Specific Plan (2008)*
- *Mahoney Ranch South Specific Plan (2008)*
- *Mahoney Ranch North Specific Plan (2008)*
- *Mahoney Ranch Specific Plan* (Repealed in 2008)
- *Entrada Este Specific Plan* (1994; amended: 1997, 2000, 2002, 2005, and 2008)
- *Enos Ranchos Specific Plan* (2008)

Zoning Text Amendments

The City Council adopted two zoning code amendments in 2008 that:

- Chapters 12-7, 12-8, and 12-49—respectively: R-2, R-3, and Mixed Use sections—were amended to relax noise standards to allow increased urban outdoor noise levels

- Chapter 12-32, Signs, was amended
- Chapter 12-26, Intrusions into Yards, was amended
- Chapter 12-13, C-2, was amended to address height and setback standards
- Downtown Specific Plan consistency zoning text amendments
- Chapter 12-13A, Highway Commercial (HC) District, ordinance 2008-029 was introduced (2nd reading occurred in January 2009)

General Plan and Zoning Map Amendments

City Council acted on three General Plan text amendments (GPA) in 2008:

- Circulation Element – Amended 2010 Circulation Plan for Enos Ranchos and Mahoney Ranch South
- Noise Element – made higher outdoor noise levels acceptable in Medium Density Residential (MDR), High Density Residential (HDR) designations, and residential mixed use developments
- Land Use Element – added the Highway Commercial zoning district as a compatible zone in the Freeway Services land use designation.

Amendments to the Land Use Policy Map are presented in TABLE B, below.

TABLE B
Land Use Amendments in 2008

General Plan Land Use Designations	Net Acres “to”	Net Acres “from”	Net Acres changed
Conservation Open Space	106.4	6.0	100.4
Recreational Open Space	8.5	47.0	(38.5)
Community Facilities	20.0	20.2	(0.2)
Lower Density Residential	0.0	122.0	(122.0)
Low Density Residential	63.2	93.0	(29.8)
Low-Medium Density Residential	81.7	39.0	42.7
Medium Density Residential	70.4	76.0	(5.6)
High Density Residential	19.0	13.4	5.6
Neighborhood Commercial	5.2	7.0	(1.8)
Community Commercial	75.9	28.7	47.2
Heavy Commercial Manufacturing	0.0	6.2	(6.2)
Right of way	8.2	0.0	8.2
TOTAL:	458.5	458.5	0.0

Land Division Applications

In 2008, one Certificate of Compliance, four Lot Line Adjustments, five Lot Mergers, and two Parcel Map applications were filed. Two Final Tract Map subdivisions were recorded to create six commercial lots and 11 residential units.

Building and Safety Division

The Building and Safety Division is responsible for administration and enforcement of those state and local codes, ordinances and regulations dealing with the construction, alteration, maintenance and use of privately owned structures, appurtenances and land. These regulations include the building, housing, dangerous building, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, swimming pool, and sign codes, as well as the California State Mobile Home Park regulations and City zoning ordinances.

The Building and Safety Division also provides staff support to the Board of Appeals, which hears appeals of Uniform Building Code interpretations. The Board of Appeals did not meet in 2008.

The Building and Safety Division provides a plan check service, issues building permits, conducts building inspections and provides advice to the public, contractors, and architects on building matters. In 2007, building inspectors made 8,398 construction and safety related inspections, and this division issued 1,334 permits. The Monthly Building Permit Reports from 2003-2008 continue to be maintained for public inspection the City Internet pages. Each monthly Permit Activity Report is also posted on the Building Division pages in 2008. Go to the Building Permit Information Page for the Current Year to Date monthly reports.

Planning Division

Planning activities include administration of the City's General Plan, development and subdivision review, preparation of zoning ordinances, processing annexations, bikeway implementation, providing demographic and census information, preparation of specific plans, conducting environmental review, and informing the public of the City's land use policies and development ordinances. The Planning Division reviews federal, state, and county legislation, projects of concern to the City, and responds to surveys from the State.

The Planning Division provides staff support to the Planning Commission; routine tasks include the scheduling of meetings, preparation of agendas, posting hearing notices, and preparation of minutes. The City posts Planning Commission meeting agendas and minutes on the City Internet pages. The Planning Commission held 18 public meetings and 19 study sessions in 2008.

Planning staff provides land use analysis, environmental review as required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and staff reports for the Planning Commission and City Council.

During 2008, the Planning Division received 66 environmental clearance applications, two new land division applications, five merger applications, five lot line adjustment applications, one Certificate of Compliance, 12 Planned Development Permits, 58 Use

Permits (22 for temporary outdoor sales), four general plan text amendments, and eight zoning text amendments. In 2008, one Parcel Map and two subdivision tract maps were recorded. The Community Development Department received 1,208 building permit applications, 99 sign permit applications, and issued 1,320 building permits issued in 2008. 289 business license reviews were received during the year.