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INTRODUCTION
During the fall and winter of 2011 and 2012, this alternative design of an area part of Los Osos Valley Road from Highway 101 to Madonna Road. The renovated area is to mimic the genuine small town charm the heart of downtown San Luis Obispo has implemented. On October 3, 2011, the urban design process began. Under supervision from senior project advisor and professor, Umut Toker, an Urban Design Plan has been developed in order to benefit the Los Osos Valley Road to become more usable and connected to the rest of the city. Included in this plan is an assessment of existing land uses, conceptual development as well as a conceptual design of the project area, understand the best land uses, circulation patterns, and popular amenities. In order to understand the City’s opinion of the project area, an interview was conducted with James David, Regional Planner of the City of San Luis Obispo on November 8, 2011. This interview included the interpretation of the needs and wants of the community as well as possible outreach opportunities. Over a period of 12 weeks during fall quarter, the conceptual diagram and development as well as outreach events were completed. There were two outreach events: an online survey and in-person survey. Finally, the last chapter discusses form based codes for the area. This specific document has been developed as a senior project for the class of CRP 461 and CRP 462. This urban design plan is one alternative of what Los Osos Valley Road could become. I would like to thank the City of San Luis Obispo, Umut Toker, and others who helped with input, support and development of this Urban Design Plan proposal.
SITE ANALYSIS
AND INVENTORY
2.1 Introduction to Site
San Luis Obispo is located between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The road runs perpendicular to the US Highway 101 on the Central Coast of California. Los Osos Valley Road is located within the city and county limits of San Luis Obispo. Just north of the road is Laguna Lake and the Madonna Plaza Shopping Center. It was founded in 1772 by the Spaniards during the mission era. Los Osos Valley Road boarders the side of Highway 101 and is visible from both northern and southern bound traffic. The project area is enclosed by the limits of US Highway 101 and Madonna Road. It currently holds commercial properties. On the south-western portion of the project area there are five vacant farm lots. On the north eastern portion of the project are car dealerships and commercial retail. Los Osos Valley Road is currently undergoing an improvement project at the US 101 interchange, however there are no other redevelopment or improvement plans to be implemented in the Los Osos Valley Road area.

2.2 History of Site
The area around Los Osos Valley Road was cattle ranches before development occurred. Most of the land on Los Osos Valley Road was or still is owned by the Madonna Family. A majority of the land has been developed.
2.3 Demographics

Today the City of San Luis Obispo has a population of 45,119. (2010 Census). The elevation is approximately 230 ft., the total land area is about 12.7 square miles. The city is about 84% white, 1.2% African American, 6% Native American, 5.2% Asian, and 14.87% Latino, according to the Census.

![Demographics Chart](image)

2.4 Existing Land Uses on the Site

There are a variety of land uses in the Los Osos Valley Road project area. At the northern section of the site are multi-family homes, public as well as commercial uses. Further south along Los Osos Valley Road are commercial uses which include numerous big box stores and car dealerships. Along the southern end of Los Osos Valley Road is Calle Joaquin Road. Three hotels, some commercial uses, multi-family apartments, and a service station are located on this road. Many steps are needed in order to help make Los Osos Valley Road more connected to not only the downtown core of San Luis Obispo but to the city as a whole. This part of the city is what passer-byers see as they come into the city from Highway 101 south. This is a crucial area for San Luis Obispo to project its charm and unique sense of character. Presently, the view from the
highway is of big box stores and agriculture land. In order to make this area more attractive, the city should conserve the agriculture land and enhance the connectivity through the area. This would help make Los Osos Valley Road project area a place that people want to go to and stay. The condition of Los Osos Valley Road is decent due to recent construction such as on Calle Joaquin and near Madonna Road, however much work is needed on Los Osos Valley Road to make it more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. The proposal area has a lot of potential and it is possible to accomplish a connected Los Osos Valley Road area to the rest of the City of San Luis Obispo.

2.5 Existing Circulation and Transportation Conditions of Site within Context
The City of San Luis Obispo has numerous circulation connections through the central coast. The main arterial road is the US Highway 101 that runs through the northern portion of the city to the south western portion. This highway is the main way of transporation in and out of the city. Another highway is the US Highway 1, which runs along the California Coast. It comes into the City of San Luis Obispo from Morro Bay and joins with Highway 101 until Pismo Beach. The accessibility into Los Osos Valley Road is very easy. The two ways to enter the project area are the US Highway 101 and Madonna Road. Both have two lanes and are well maintained. Los Osos Valley Road itself is very wide and has two lanes each way with a median in the middle. There is only a sidewalk and bike lane on the south to north portion of the street. The side streets, Calle Joaquin, Auto Park Way, and Froom Ranch Way off of Los Osos Valley Road are not in very good condition because they have pot holes and other issues. The main source of transportation along this road is automobile and bus.

2.6 Natural Environment
The City of San Luis Obispo is located within the county of San Luis Obispo. The city is located within a Mediterranean climate and has an average of 50 days of rain a year. Winters are generally middle and the average temperature is 80 degrees. The large morros located around the city include Bishop’s Peak and Cerro San Luis. The largest source of noise is from the US 101.

The Los Osos Valley Road is surrounded by numerous viewsheds and is nestled between mountain ranges and the ocean. The mountain ranges are unique to the San Luis Obispo area and have been able to be preserved over the years. The area that Los Osos Valley Road runs through is flat in the Los Osos Valley, however the terrain begins to become hilly just south west of the project area. The project area receives an average of 1 to 2 inches of rain per year and the temperature is about 60 to 70 degrees fahrenheit. The noise generators on the site include Los Osos Valley Road, Madonna Road, and HWY 101.

Figure 2.7: Average Temperature, Precipitation, Humidity and Wind Speed.
2.7 Relevant Documents

The San Luis Obispo General Plan elements and design guidelines will be utilized to make this urban design proposal.

The General Plan was most recently updated in 2008. Our mission is to identify and serve the needs of all people in a positive and courteous manner and to help ensure that San Luis Obispo remains a healthy, safe, attractive and enjoyable place to live, work or visit. We help plan the City’s form and character, support community values, preserve the environment, promote the wise use of resources and protect public health and safety. The chapters include land use, circulation, housing, noise, safety, conservation and open space, parks and recreation, water and wastewater.

The Land Use element was adopted on August 23, 1994. It is considered the “blueprint for the future of the City of San Luis Obispo...the element also describes the expected level of population growth resulting from construction of the kinds of housing units included in the plan, as well as the kinds of new commercial and industrial development that are responsive to the City’s economic needs” (City of San Luis Obispo Land Use Element).

Furthermore, the Land Use Element includes the Vehicle Sales Auto Park Way. Under 3.6.7 Vehicle Sales, the Auto Park Way is an “attractive auto sales and service center”. Figure 2.8 and 2.9 depicts the area in which is zoned for vehicle sales. The Site Analysis and Inventory Map further depicts all of the current zoning of the parcels in the project area.

Further in the Land Use Element is the 8.7 Los Osos Valley Gap section that describes the area for implementation and renovation as the following: This 16-acre site should be developed if land in common ownership to the east is permanently preserved as open space. The following are possible uses for the area designated Interim Open Space.

• Vehicle sales;
• Multifamily housing;
• An open space corridor, trail, or both, to connect Laguna Lake Park and Prefumo Creek with the Irish Hills.

The Housing Element discusses the various housing types and incentives located within the City limits of San Luis Obispo. The Los Osos Valley Road area is encouraged to increase residential units and homes.

The zoning in the project area of Los Osos Valley Road is discussed under the Zoning Regulations in the General Plan of San Luis Obispo.

Retail – Commercial (C-R) Zone

On page 103 of the Zoning Regulations, Chapter 17.40 describes the Retail-Commercial (C-R) Zone regulations. The purpose and application include the types of uses that can be used in this zone. This includes a wide range of retail sales, business, personal, and professional services, as well as recreation, entertainment, transient lodging, and some residential uses. The land uses allowed in this zone will generally serve the entire community and the region, as well as tourists and travelers. The C-R zone implements and is consistent with the General Retail land use category of the General Plan, and is intended to be applied primarily to areas with more public exposure on arterial streets than those reserved for manufacturing. The standards include maximum density as 36 units per net acre, maximum height, coverage, floor area ratio, depth, width, and frontage. It also discusses the parking requirements and building size.

Conservation / Open Space (C/OS) Zone

On page 96, of the Zoning Regulations,
Chapter 17.32 describes the Conservation / Open Space (C/OS) Zone regulations. The purpose and application include the types of uses that can be used in this zone. This includes open space because of topography, geology, flood hazard, and scenic prominence. It is intended to prevent urban development and is intended to be permanent. The C/OS zone includes maximum density, parcel size, street yard, lot area, width, and street frontage.

Service Commercial (C-S)
On page 114, of the Zoning Regulations, Chapter 17.46 describes the Service Commercial (C-S) Zone regulations. The purpose and application include the types of uses that can be used in this zone. This includes services, limited retail, and other commercial services that are less appropriate for commercial zones. This includes storage, transportation, wholesale, or light manufacturing. The property development standards include maximum density, street yards, height, coverage, off street loading requirements and parking requirements.

Tourist Commercial (C-T)
On page 113, of the Zoning Regulations, Chapter 17.44 describes the Tourist-Commercial (C-T) Zone regulations. The purpose and application include the types of uses that can be used in this zone. This includes services and accommodations for travelers. Under property development standards include maximum density per net acre, maximum coverage, height and floor area ratio. Furthermore, the standard lot dimensions, parking requirements and building size are established.

2.8 Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities
- Easy accessibility to the US 101
- First sight into San Luis Obispo from Southern California
- Depict San Luis Obispo flare

Constraints
- Farmland cannot be touched
- Many residents come to shop then leave in their cars
- Changing land uses to be more usable
3

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT
3.1 Conceptual Development: Community Outreach Events

After the existing conditions were evaluated, community outreach was conducted. Surveys were made in order to understand the public’s opinion of the Los Osos Valley Road corridor from Highway 101 to Madonna Road. Interviews of individuals of all ages and years residing in San Luis Obispo were used. In order to receive as many residence’s opinions, a paper form as well as an electronic form was developed. The questions that were asked referred to the individual’s age, gender, and years of residency in the City of San Luis Obispo. The other questions regarded the satisfaction of the current state of Los Osos Valley Road from Highway 101 to Madonna Road as well as the potential land uses that should be utilized. The questions for the paper and electronic forms were the same, however they were distributed differently and received different responses.

The paper version survey was a 4.25 x 5.5 inches paper double sided. It was distributed at numerous coffee shops in San Luis Obispo. The first was at Kreuzberg, CA coffee shop in downtown San Luis Obispo. At this coffee shop, 8 surveys were completed. Other coffee shops such as Blackhorse Uptown and Blackhorse Foothill had 21 and 18 surveys fulfilled respectively. At the Nautical Bean on Los Osos Valley Road, 16 surveys were filled out successfully. On Madonna Road, 13 surveys were completed at the Starbucks. In order to retrieve the students opinions of the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of Los Osos Valley Road from Highway 101 to Madonna Road, surveys were given out to students walking on campus at various locations on the Cal Poly campus. These locations included Dexter lawn, Kennedy Library and Mott Gym. 24 surveys were completed. A total of 100 surveys were completed. The electronic version utilized the website, Survey Monkey, which allows web-surveys to be made and distributed through social networks. Facebook was the social network that distributed the survey. 200 individuals were asked to take the survey online, however only 57 completed the survey.
3.2 Paper Survey Findings

The paper surveys were conducted on various days. The Kreuzberg, CA surveys were conducted in the late afternoon on November 9th, 2011. The Blackhorse Uptown and Foothill coffee shop surveys were done on November 12th, 2011. The Nautical Bean and Starbucks surveys were completed on November 13th, 2011. The surveys conducted on the campus of California Polytechnic State University were collected on November 14th, 2011. The following themes emerged from the paper survey findings.
- More commercial and shops along Los Osos Valley Road
- More Small town commercial
- Open Space / Agriculture
- Landmarks

On the paper survey, Questions 7 - 9 were open ended questions that concluded interesting findings. Figure 3.1 depicts the findings from questions 7, 8, and 9. There is a large majority of responses to question 8 responding with more commercial and shops. However, there is a consistency with the rest of the responses which means that adding various attractions such as commercial, nightlife, and less congestion would attribute to individuals utilizing Los Osos Valley Road more.

3.3 Electronic Survey Findings

The Survey Monkey survey was made on October 18, 2011. It consists of the same 10 questions as the paper survey. The online survey was sent out on the social network, Facebook, on November 13th, 2011. It was sent out to 200 Facebook users. The survey closed on November 20th. A total of 57 surveys were completed. The following themes emerged from the online survey findings.
- More commercial and shops along Los Osos Valley Road
- More Restaurants
- Open Space / Trails
- More Character

Figure 3.1: What Would Attract You to Go to Los Osos Valley Road and Spend Time There? November 28, 2011. Stephanie Shaffer.

Figure 3.2: Design Concept: Small Town Commercial.
3.4 Conceptual Diagram Needs

The conceptual diagram is established by combining all the wants and needs of individuals of the community as depicted from the surveys collected. The responses of the surveys indicated that the area of Los Osos Valley Road from Highway 101 to Madonna Road should have a small town feel like the downtown of San Luis Obispo exemplifies. This would help connect both parts of town and establish the Los Osos Valley Road section from Highway 101 to Madonna Road as part of San Luis Obispo. Furthermore, responses indicated that more commercial should be placed in that area. These commercial retailers would include more shopping and restaurants. Individuals indicated they would stay at Los Osos Valley Road if there was something to keep them there such as a park. Below in Figure 3.3 is an example of a park that can be a possible destination point for residents and visitors alike. One important issue that many respondents rose was of open space. Many respondents do not want the rest of Los Osos Valley Road to be developed, and be left as open space. These respondents did however suggest adding hiking trails to this open space so people can still enjoy it.

3.5 Interview with James David, Regional Planner, City of San Luis Obispo, California

On November 8, 2011, an interview was conducted with James David, Planner in the Long Range Planning Department of San Luis Obispo. This meeting was to discuss the City’s perspective of Los Osos Valley Road between Highway 101 and Madonna Road. During the interview with James David, numerous topics were discussed. These include land uses, the Autopark way, transportation to and from Los Osos Valley Road, and gateways for the City and Cal Trans.
David began the interview discussing the northern area of Calle Joaquin. It was recently rezoned for service commercial. A tire store will be placed next to the AAA store to further the General Plan’s want for vehicular services and sales. It is stated in 3.6.7 Vehicle Sales under Land Use, Section A. Auto Park Way that the area must be, “easily accessible and attractive auto sales and service center...The city will reserve about 50 acres total for vehicle sales in the area, including the areas. (City of San Luis Obispo, General Plan, Figure 1). However, David discussed the possibility of other vehicle oriented programs that could be utilized. Alternative park and ride or “Park and Ride” lot options were examples given by David. According to the Land Use Element in the City of San Luis Obispo General Plan, the vehicle sales area for the city include numerous parcels. These include 053-151-039, 053-151-030, 053-151-028, 053-151-029, 053-151-037, 053-151-035, 053-151-038, 053-151-023, 053-151-021, 053-151-024, 053-152-001, 053-152-002, 053-152-003, 053-152-004 (Figure 2).

Los Osos Valley Road’s purpose is for regional attractions and regional serving. Big Box stores such as Costco, Home Depot, and Target are regional serving. Visitors from nearby cities such as Pismo and Los Osos frequently visit Los Osos Valley road as a one-stop-shop for all necessary items such as groceries or clothing. The City and County both generate a lot of sales tax from these big box stores.

Another topic David discussed during the interview was open space conservation and agriculture. In respect to the Target project, the company had to maintain some of the lot as agriculture and conservation of open space. This is one of many mitigation measures that companies must deal with when moving to the City of San Luis Obispo. Apart of conservation and open space, the General Plan designates Los Osos Valley Road from Highway 101 to Madonna road as having scenic value. Another open space parcel is next to Home Depot. This area needs to be preserved as open space / conservation. David suggested that the area may be utilized for agriculture purpose in the future.

As part of transportation efficiency on Los Osos Valley Road, Cal Trans has established plans for revamping the Highway 101 overpass by the year 2015. The overpass needs to be in accordance to the parkway arterial standards according to the State. David discussed how the arterial standard Cal Trans conforms to will help ease incoming traffic from S. Madonna Road onto Los Osos Valley Road.

David concluded the interview by addressing the issue of gateways in the City. There is a project proposed at the entrance to the City on Highway 1 on Santa Rosa Street. It went through the Architectural Review Commission last year, and according to David, will be approved shortly. Reviewing this sign proposal will be helpful to research in preparing a gateway for the southern entrance into the City.
4 LAND USE, CIRCULATION, AND AMENITIES
4.1 Introduction

After community outreach was conducted as well as the design concepts in the conceptual development chapter, the land use, circulation and amenities were evaluated. Design concept proposals for Los Osos Valley Road were developed from the input of the community outreach surveys as well as the meeting with James David, Long Term Planner for the City of San Luis Obispo during the fall of 2011.

4.1.1 Introduction to Land Use section

The land use section of this chapter describes the rationale and findings for the certain land uses selected for each parcel within the urban plan project area.

4.1.2 Introduction to Circulation section

The circulation section discusses the various modes of transportation and their systems through Los Osos Valley Road and how each mode of transportation interacts with one another.

4.1.3 Introduction to Amenities section

Certain community amenities were discovered during the community input surveys, therefore the proposals have included some of those amenities.
4.2 Land Use

The land uses proposed have been suggested in order to bring in more visitors to the area as well as make the Los Osos Valley Road area more productive. Beginning with the intersection of Los Osos Valley Road and Madonna Road will be updated streetscaping. Some of the existing land uses will be maintained, however a majority has been altered for the betterment of the community. Each land use will be described in each of the following sections. These sections include mixed uses, service commercial, and open space.

4.2.1 Mixed Uses

Mixed uses are proposed on parcel 067-242-01. On this parcel, it is proposed to place three buildings facing the exterior of the parcel. This allows for parking and open space in the interior of the parcel reducing visual pollution. The front building on this parcel is recommended to have commercial uses on the first story and office on the second story. The rear buildings are recommended to have residential over commercial uses. This would invite individuals to live on Los Osos Valley Road, enjoy the views of the area, and have the safety of being above the ground floor. A park is suggested at the rear of the parcel to connect the open space at the rear of the parcel. The buildings on this parcel would have a zero setback from Los Osos Valley Road to connect the pedestrian space with the building.

At the southern portion of the project area (053-171-034, 053-171-032, 053-171-033, 053-171-032, 053-171-039, 053-171-029, 053-171-037, 053-171-013) it is zoned for tourism and services. This portion of the Urban Design Plan project site is the gateway into San Luis Obispo from the southern portion of Highway 101. In order to attract visitors and make an entrance into San Luis Obispo, it is recommended that these parcels should be zoned as mixed use. These are various hotels already present on these parcels. These will be exempt from mixed use zoning. It is imperative that these buildings complement the rest of San Luis Obispo as these buildings represent the community. These buildings will have commercial uses on the first floor and residential and office space on the second floor. There will be an equal mixture of residential and office space on the second floor. It is important to utilize live-work land uses.

4.2.2 Service Commercial

Further down on Los Osos Valley Road near Calle Joaquin are the service commercial zoned parcels. Currently, the service commercial zoned parcels have car dealerships or are vacant. Although these zones require the parcels to only have car specific services, alternative uses can be utilized. For instance some of the parcels...
4.2.3 Open Space / Recreation

The Open space and park and recreation parcels (053-152-008, 053-152-007, 053-152-009, 053-152-006) should be left as open space. The open space, park and recreation parcels (067-241-030 and 067-241-031, 067-241-032) is currently a ranch. It is proposed to take advantage of these parcels as both an outdoor getaway as well as low income housing. On parcel 067-241-030, a low income project could be utilized to help the City of San Luis Obispo increase its number of low income housing within the city limits. A large green plaza with a landmark such as a water fountain as a node could be utilized not only by the low income housing residents, but also for the community in order to enjoy the natural environment. A hiking trail already exists at the rear of these properties. It is suggested to connect a trail or path from Los Osos Valley Road to these trails.

Figure 4.3 Calle Joaquin Cross-Section

Figure 4.4 Froom Ranch Cross-Section

4.2.4 Circulation

The over arching issue to address for Los Osos Valley Road is the circulation. It was a major concern noted during the community outreach surveys. The major issue is the fact that there are many intersections into Los Osos Valley Road. The main congestion is at the most southern end of the project area where Los Osos Valley Road intersects with Highway 101. Currently, there are two stop lights before going
over the over-pass of Highway 101, which provides for a lot of stopped cars and back-up. In order to alleviate this congestion, it is suggested that a round-a-bout be placed at the intersection of Los Osos Valley Road and San Joaquin. A stop light will remain at the Highway 101 off-ramp and Los Osos Valley road. It is uneffective to have two stop lights at these two intersections. Placing a round-a-bout at Calle Joaquin would be a great traffic calming tool that would allow traffic to still move through the area efficiently. The stop light that is currently at Los Osos Valley Road and Froom Ranch Way as well as the intersection at Madonna road should stay. The 2015 Cal Trans Overpass Update will also help ease traffic coming to and from Los Osos Valley Road. The current circulation of Los Osos Valley Road is from the northern portion of Los Ososo Valley Road to the southern end of the road. To increase bicycle access in the area, it is proposed to have sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of Los Osos Valley Road as well as Calle Joaquin and Froom Ranch Way. Streets will be interactive separating all modes of transportation as shown in the cross sections provided. The goal for Los Osos Valley Road and connecting streets is to make known of the pedestrian, automobile, and bicyclists. Traffic calming methods such as raised sidewalks and flashing bicycle lanes will be encouraged throughout the Urban Design Project area. In order to decrease the amount of time and space the pedestrian must walk from one side of the street to another, bulb-outs will be placed at all major intersections on Los Osos Valley Road. The utility and pedestrian zones of the street will be interactive and include landscaping and street furniture to make them more inviting and enjoyable for pedestrians.

4.4 Amenities

Amenities for the Los Osos Valley Road should be encouraged in order to attract visitors and residents to the area.

Family Entertainment:
This center will be a children’s getaway. It will be a place of food and games and allow children to run around and play.

Figure 4.5 Family Entertainment

Nightlife:
Nightlife will attract students and young adults to work and enjoy this area. This would give a place for concerts and other entertainment.

Figure 4.6 Concerts
LAND USE, CIRCULATION, AND AMENITIES

Business Incubator:
The business incubator will invite more businesses to start in San Luis Obispo. Start-up spaces will be promoted. More business activity on Los Osos Valley Road will help create more attraction to the area.

Figure 4.7 Start-up Companies can be apart of the business incubator.

Community Plaza:
The plaza will be a central meeting space of the project area. It is recommended that the park be full of play structures, recreation sports, benches, and barbeques to invite events and family celebrations.

Figure 4.8 Community Plaza
FORM BASED CODES:
INTRODUCTION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the form based-codes that would be utilized in order to have a consistent design throughout the project area. A rationale is included along with various illustrations and an illustrative site plan. These codes will guide future development in the direction as proposed in this plan. The codes discuss regulations that include the building envelope, siting and massing. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the building form that includes the heights and roof articulation for all buildings within the project site. Afterward, the codes include pedestrian access to buildings as well as vehicular access. After the codes are some amenities that are proposed throughout the project area.
Figure 5.1: Birds eye view of the project site.

Figure 5.2: Perspective from the South of the project site.

Figure 5.3: Perspective from the North of the project site.
REFERENCES

James David, City of San Luis Obispo Long Range Planner, Interview, November 8, 2011.


