

## Santa Maria Character Building



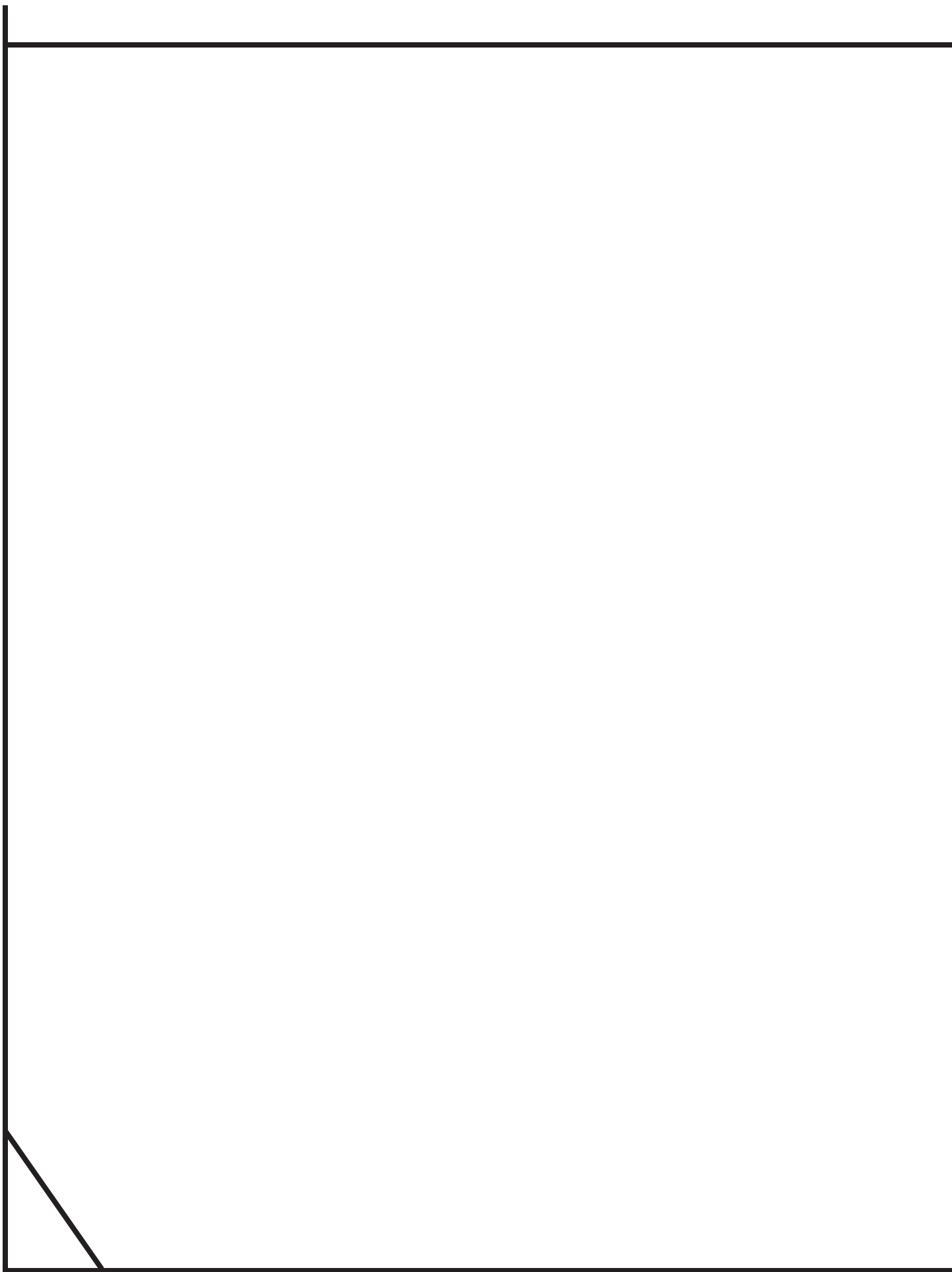
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## Appendix A: Sources



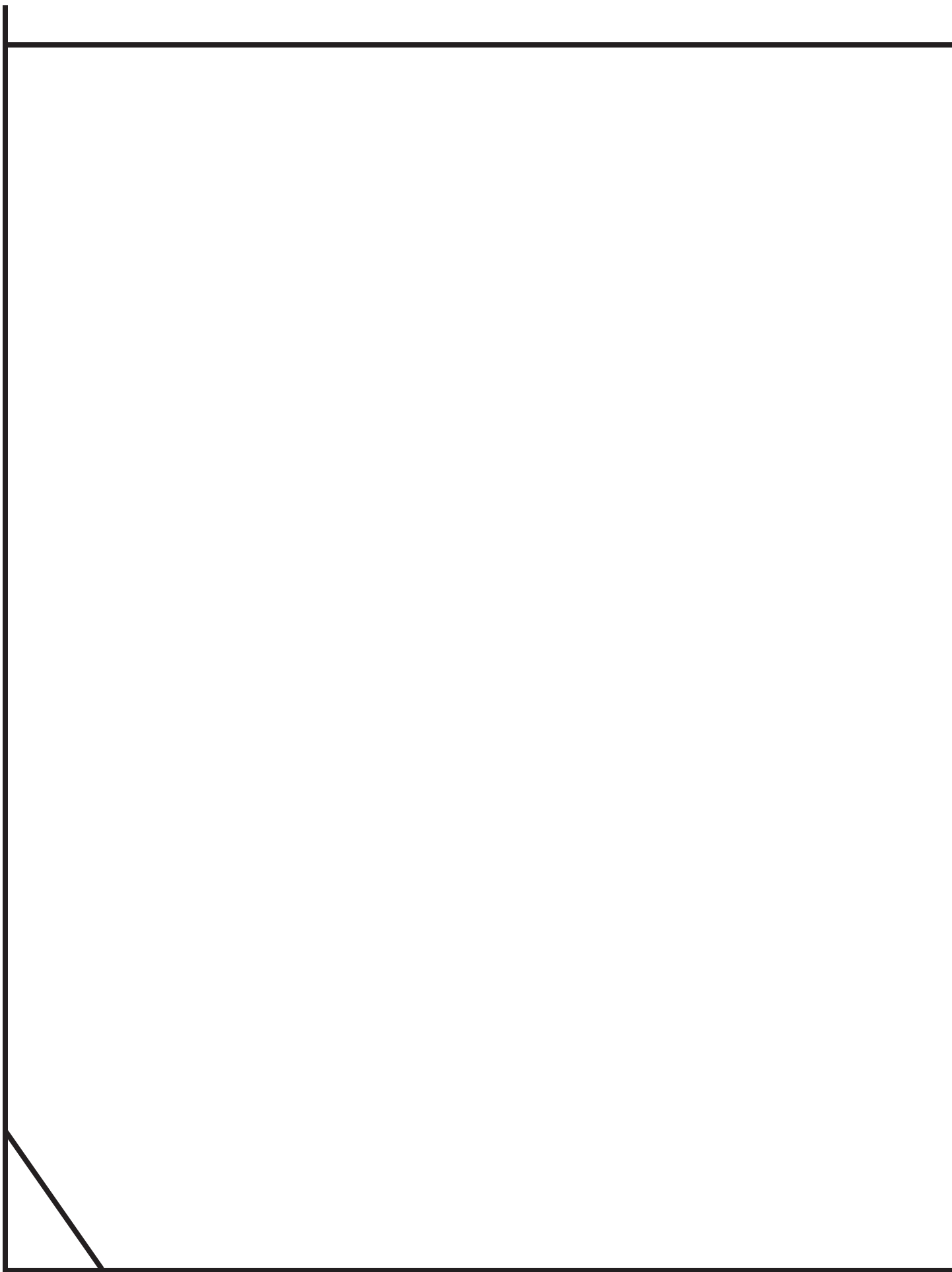


## Intent

The intent of this document is to examine and promote the existing documents and policies Santa Maria has in place that encourage the preservation of historic structures and character features in its downtown area. The area surrounding the Broadway and Main intersection will be specifically examined, in order to create a newly revitalized sense of character for the City. Currently, the City of Santa Maria has two main documents in commission that work to preserve historic structures and create a sense of place in the community, these being the City's Downtown Specific Plan and their Historic Overlay District zoning designation. Both of these work to promote history, and have the ability to create a real sense of local color and regional character and should be utilized to their full potential.

During the 1970s redevelopment phase in the City's downtown, many character rich buildings were lost to new construction, including a period theatre, bank, church and Masonic Temple, which would have each added greatly to Santa Maria's historic character. In order to avoid these types of losses from occurring again, the valuable structures that are still existent today must be preserved and modeled after in new construction, thus creating a specific sense of character in the City's downtown core.

This document employs two tools to promote historic protection, these being the designation of existing character building structures, in addition to opportunity sites in the Broadway/Main area. By identifying existing opportunity structures within the Downtown Specific Plan's boundaries, this document aims to show that there are architecturally valuable buildings existent within the boundary that need protecting in order to prevent their loss. The opportunity sites identified are currently vacant, dilapidated, or empty lots that could potentially be utilized to create structures that compliment the architectural and historic styles of other buildings within the district, thus creating a sense of place by aesthetic and visual means.



## Previous Documents

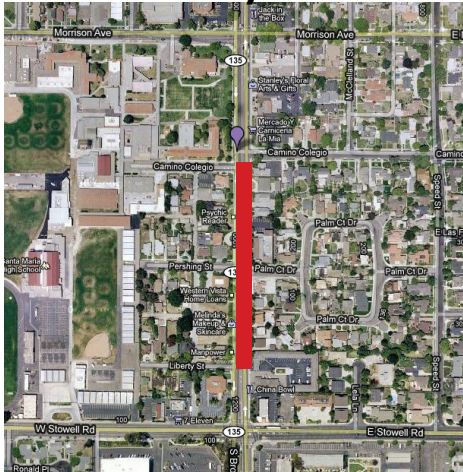
Santa Maria's Downtown Specific Plan, adopted in 2008, and its Historic Overlay District (H District), work to preserve existing historic structures, as well as to integrate newer structures cohesively around them in order to build character. The intent of both documents is to work toward stronger historic preservation practices, as well as to create consistent and interconnected design. This is a very positive step for Santa Maria, which has lost a lot of historic structures to redevelopment in the past.

### Historic Overlay District

The Historic Overlay District zoning's intent is to preserve architecturally and historically significant structures by offering incentives to developers and property owners, including relaxed development standards such as lesser parking requirements, and altered setback requirements. By providing maximum design flexibility, the City encourages design features consistent with historic buildings architecture and oversees the arrangement of uses in a project. However, the code does not define what architectural aspects or what specific buildings are considered historically significant. The zoning code does not identify what design aspects the City is trying to preserve, seemingly leaving these designations to the discretion of developers. Additionally, the incentives provided to developers and building owners should be outlined more fully to truly show how preserving and maintaining these structures will ultimately benefit them monetarily and help Santa Maria's character in the long run. More clarity should be offered to those looking to create a Historic Overlay District in order to direct them in the importance of character building in Santa Maria's downtown and how one can achieve this. If rewritten, the code should include what aspects or architectural significance the City is looking to preserve, in addition to specific structures that the City views as important historically.

There is currently one Historic Overlay District in Santa Maria, located on Broadway between Liberty Street and Camino Colegio. This district preserves Mission and Spanish style homes, which have mostly been converted to offices. This district boasts architectural details of this style, including barrel tile roofs, stucco and plaster finishes, and arched windows and entries. This district is outside the boundaries of the downtown specific plan, but does a lot to protect the historically significant homes on South Broadway, and coincides with the intent of the Downtown Specific Plan.

### **Historic Overlay Distict Area**



### **Downtown Specific Plan**

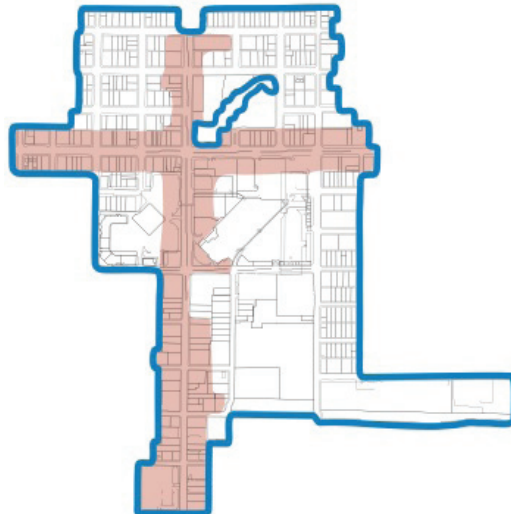
Santa Maria's Downtown Specific Plan's intent is to provide a clear vision for the community's downtown in terms of land use policy, developments standards, and development design guidelines. The Plan has delineated five districts in Santa Maria's downtown, the Bungalow District, Town Center District, Gateway District, Garden District and Railroad Loft District. The Plan presents specific guidelines for each district, as well as overarching guidelines for the whole of the City's downtown. The overarching guidelines offer two procedures for historic preservation and character building under its Building Mass and Articulation section. These are:

- Existing historic or older structures with architectural details or ornamentation shall be retained, restored, or replicated whenever possible
- Structures constructed adjacent to historic structures shall incorporate similar materials, details, accents, and architectural styles whenever possible

The Downtown Specific Plan is valuable, as it aims to create character by using existing structures as a basis for new development. Additionally, the document recognizes that in order to be cohesive, adjacent structures should incorporate the architectural styles of these historic buildings.

The Gateway District, which encompasses the Main and Broadway intersection of downtown, envisions the historic character of a traditional downtown for Santa Maria. This is the district of focus because it outlines specific actions in terms of historic preservations and character building. It is also the district that encompasses the main downtown corridor of the Main and Broadway intersection. The document specifies which architectural aspects of Renaissance Revival, Mission Style, and Early 1900's Commercial the City would like to see constructed on facades in the Gateway District. The document provides photos as architectural examples of the ideal style Santa Maria's Gateway District is striving for, but unfortunately none of the buildings pictured as examples are in Santa Maria. While aiming to construct historically consistent structures, the City should take into account the significant and repeated architectural details of existent downtown buildings, using these accessible buildings as examples. Several buildings within the delineated Gateway District can act as specific examples for developers to follow and reinterpret the architectural styles the City is aiming for.

#### **Gateway District Area**



The other four districts outlined in the Santa Maria Downtown Specific Plan offer their own unique character opportunities. The Town Center District aims to become the entertainment hub of Santa Maria, envisioning a mixed-use environment including plazas, retail shops, restaurant options, and outdoor entertainment and dining. The Town Center District allows for a mix of architectural styles, including Early American Commercial, Spanish, Mission Revival, Renaissance Revival, Italian Renaissance, interpretations of these styles, and contemporary styles. The Garden District has been designated as a civic area, to include City administrative purposes and public recreational uses. This Garden District also does not require a specific architectural style. The Bungalow District encompasses the City's older single-family historic bungalows, outlining their conversion to office and restaurant space. To stay consistent with the Bungalow style, the District call for designs including Craftsman/Bungalow, Victorian, Italian Renaissance, and modern interpretations. The final district, the Railroad Loft District, incorporates a mix of urban residential, compatible light assembly, and long-term live/work, work/live opportunities and the reuse of existing industrial structures. Because of the Railroad Loft District's proximity to industrial uses, it will have a more contemporary industrial style, including Art Moderne and Art Deco architecture. Each of these unique districts offers a district character building opportunity, distinguishing themselves from one another quite clearly.

## **Criteria**

### **Character Building Structures**

A structure identified as character building will display features necessary to create a sense of place and identity for the City of Santa Maria's downtown. This criteria is based on the Downtown Specific Plan's Gateway District, in addition to other architectural and identifying features of buildings that exist within the downtown corridor. Suitable buildings do not have to be of a particular architectural style, but simply be of value to Santa Maria's culture and identity. A character building structure will be of renaissance revival, early 20th century commercial, mission/Spanish styles architecture, or contain valuable elements of these styles. Identifying features may include well preserved multi-paned windows, corbels and molding details, recessed windows, arched openings, barrel tile roofs, iron balconies, texture changes, and balustrades. All of these features are exhibited in the City's downtown, and should be preserved and replicated whenever possible.

### **Opportunity Structures**

A structure identified as an opportunity has the basic features of a character building structure, but is somewhat rundown or dilapidated. These structures can serve as character builders if some work is put into their appearance and overall aesthetic appeal.

### **Opportunity Sites**

A site deemed as an opportunity is located within the downtown district and is vacant. Currently there are four vacant lots within the area, which could each be used to develop a new structure that would create character and a sense of place in downtown Santa Maria.



## Character Building Structures



### 126 West Main Street

Built in 1906, the now Haslam Building, is typical of turn-of-the-century architecture. It is seen as a character builder because it exhibits projected cornices and horizontal floor divisions.



### 519 South Broadway

This converted home exhibits elements of the Spanish style, including a barrel tile roof, and a stucco finish, making it a character builder.



### 800 South Broadway

This building, known as The Landmark, was built in 1907, is a well preserved representation of turn-of-the-century styles, including its use of terracotta, roof line differences, and awnings.





### **116-122 West Main Street**

This commercial building exhibits the same character building stylings as the Haslam Building, with projected cornices, and texture changes.



### **309-313 West Main Street**

This commercial building is newer, but has replicated spanish style commercial architecture, ensuring compatibility and character building capability.

## Opportunity Structures



### **129 North Broadway**

This building, known as the Town Center, operates as a motel. It is an opportunity because it has such details as iron balconies, a barrel tile roof, and molded cornices. To become a character builder, the facade needs improvement, including new paint and basic repairs.



### **221 West Main Street**

This motel is an opportunity structures because it is in fairly good condition and is in a spanish style with architectural detailings. To be considered a character builder, the building should have a facade overhaul, in addition to other exterior improvements.



### **300 West Main Street**

This motel is seen as an opportunity because it also has the spanish style details that could be built upon, although it is in somewhat dilapidated. It needs facade and sidewalk improvements in order to be considered a Santa Maria character builder.



## Opportunity Sites



### **317 West Main Street**

This site is surrounded by commercial uses, so it would best be suited as a retail space.



### **412 West Main Street**

This site is next to two dilapidated houses. This space could potentially be used for multi-family housing to serve the downtown community.



### **418 East Main Street**

Surrounded by various uses and quite large, this site could be converted to a variety of things. It could also accommodate multiple stories, making it a good candidate for a mixed-use development.



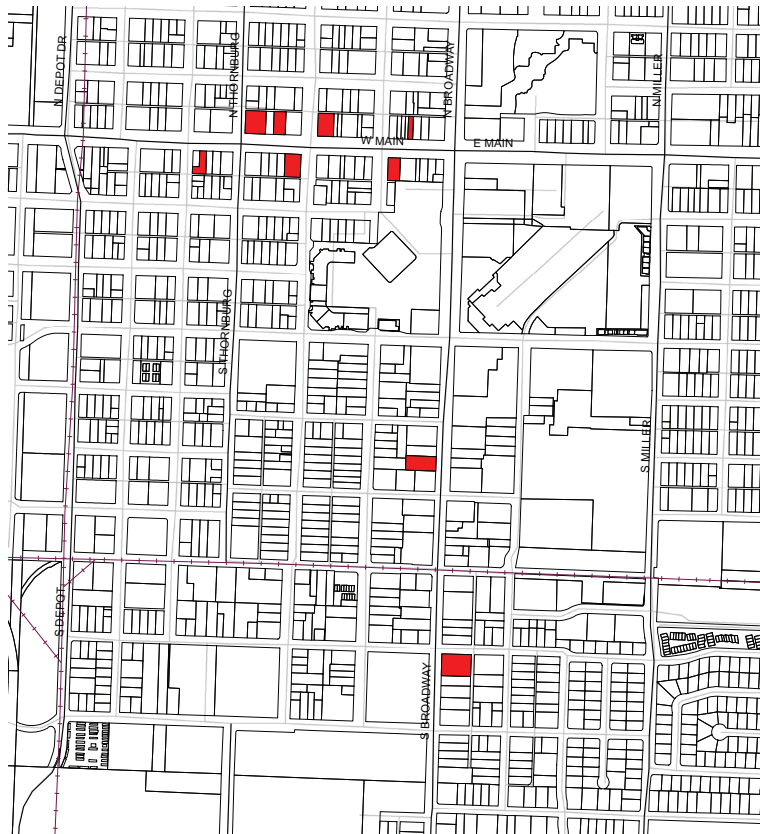
### **620 South Broadway**

Also quite large, this site could potentially be used as a mixed-use space, working with the surrounding commercial structures to attract the public.

\*\*Opportunity Site addresses approximate

# Character Builders Map

## Character Builders Map Santa Maria, CA



Legend	
	Highway101
	City_Boundary_Line
	Character Building Sites

0.002905 Miles

\*\*Map does not include Opportunity Sites, as addresses are approximate.

## Implementation

The ultimate goal for Santa Maria's downtown is to have an interconnected flow of historic structures that create a sense of identity for the citizens of the City. By employing a two-pronged approach to this goal and following through with an education and incentive program, the City will succeed in protecting and promoting its historic structures.

### Education

By utilizing the map of character building structures, Staff can provide existing examples for developers to model and adjust their developments to ensure compatibility. Developers should be encouraged to go to downtown Santa Maria with this map in hand to view the sites of the existing character builders in order to better relate their developments to these historic and character rich structures. Additionally, this will help in the creation of a network-like atmosphere so developers are aware of where the buildings that the City is trying to model development after are located and how they can relate their projects spatially to existing sites. Ideally, this dialogue between Staff and developers will occur prior to a downtown project's architectural development. By approaching developers with these tools prior to a project going to architectural review, Staff has a greater chance of encouraging a developer to utilize this information and to implement its ideas into their projects.

### Incentives

The Santa Maria Downtown Specific Plan Implementation chapter offers many recommended development incentives in the form of fee reductions, financial assistance, and entitlement incentives. These will work to garner the attention of developers and make developing in Santa Maria more attractive. The most basic incentives are also the ones that will work to initially gain the consideration of developers, and help to expand their interest in the Downtown Specific Plan and its dedication to character building. The most attractive fee incentives are the waiving of plan check fees and the altering of existing development impact fees.

These will both attract developers because their basic fees in working with the City's Planning Department will be reduced in addition to benefitting Santa Maria because such developments will be rooted downtown and under certain guidelines. Other important entitlement incentives include expedited plan checks of one week and the possibility of streamlined environmental documentation that would allow developers to skip the environmental impact stages of development.

### Incentive Table (from Downtown Specific Plan)

Table VII-2. Summary of Recommended Development Incentives			
FEE/TAX REDUCTIONS			
Item	Description	Recommended Actions	Funding Source
Plan Check Fees	Although the City's Plan Check fees are already modest for most projects, waiving them would send an important message to the development community of the City's commitment to attracting desired development to the Downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waive Plan Check fees for all Plan area projects submitted for review during the first three (3) years of implementation</li> <li>Revisit this issue after the first three years and consider extending the benefits</li> </ul>	City General Fund (this would not be an "out of pocket" cost, but a de facto cost of forgone revenue).
Business License Tax	As with Plan Check fees, the City's existing Business License taxes are modest (\$40-\$75/year). Nevertheless, waiving them for a specified period of time (for both existing and new businesses) would send an important message to the business community as to the City's level of commitment to the Downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon adoption of the Specific Plan, give all existing businesses in the Plan area a one-year Business License tax "holiday"</li> <li>Offer the same incentive to all new businesses that open in the Plan area during the first three (3) years of implementation</li> <li>Revisit this issue after the first three years and consider extending the benefits</li> </ul>	City General Fund (this would not be an "out of pocket" cost, but a de facto cost of forgone revenue).
Development Impact Fees	As a means of improving the Downtown's economic attractiveness (compared to other parts of the City which might otherwise be more attractive to the development community), the City could revise its "Growth Mitigation Fee" schedule to provide lower fees in the Plan area. In order to be consistent with AB 1600 requirements, these fee differentials would need to be defensible on the basis that Downtown development creates less demand for new infrastructure given the availability of existing infrastructure capacity in the Downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the upcoming study to review and update the City's schedule of impact fees, evaluate the feasibility of adopting different fees for different geographic sub-areas of the City (e.g., the Downtown). Whereas it conceptually makes sense that impacts are lower (and therefore fees should be lower) in the Downtown, this premise would need to be tested as part of the formal study process (as required by AB 1600). (The City has discussed this in the past.)</li> </ul>	If structured properly (i.e., fees reflect actual impacts in different parts of the City), this program would have no net cost to the City.

### Advertisement

These attractive incentives need to be advertised in such a way that potential developers will be aware of their existence and excited about the opportunity they present prior to their project's architectural review. Firstly, these incentives should be advertised on the Community Development Department's website under both the Planning Division and Building Divisions in the area where developers frequent. Additional online advertisements should be placed on the Chamber of Commerce website under the economic development and chamber of commerce links. The Economic Development Commission puts out two interactive newsletters on their website called the "Economic Development NEWSFLASH!" and "Santa Maria Means Business" where the incentives should also be advertised. Finally, a pamphlet should be developed that attractively and strikingly publicizes these incentives. These pamphlets should be sent to developers in Santa Maria and made readily available in the Community Development Department's office. Furthermore, information should be provided to existing owners of buildings within the district.



If an owner were considering redevelopment or improvements, this information would be of considerable value to them. Also, some form of an informational pamphlet can be sent out in residents' utility bills to gain more community awareness and understanding.

Additional incentives provided would help gain more support for the Downtown Specific Plan and also help to gain the attention of developers looking to improve and develop in the area. Other potential incentives include property tax breaks for the first three years after development, public utility rate breaks for new businesses, and free advertisement opportunities for developers. The more incentives the City provides, the more likely the Downtown Specific Plan will succeed.



## Conclusion

Character building and appreciation is an important aspect of any community's downtown, especially when attempting to accentuate historic features. By utilizing Santa Maria's existing documents to create a historic downtown feel and sense of place, the City is equipped to take on this important task. The most essential aspect in this undertaking is making developers and community members aware of the existing character in downtown and providing incentives for those who wish to help highlight this character through new development. By providing specific examples of character builders existent in the City, it is hoped that developers will be inspired by what is currently in the area. Santa Maria is a vibrant City whose downtown has suffered over time, and it is essential that it is restored to its once character rich environment.

In the future, under the guidance of the Downtown Specific Plan, Santa Maria could potentially have a character rich downtown that creates a sense of place for the community. At the center of this will be the intersection of Broadway and Main, the heart of Santa Maria's downtown. Stretching outward three to four blocks in each direction there will be an intermixing of truly old buildings with replications of various architectural styles, including Renaissance Revival, Mission Style, and Early 1900's Commercial. These will work together to create a sense of place and charm; visitors will know they have entered the City's downtown. The other districts besides the downtown Gateway District will participate by creating their own individual sense of place distinctive from the Gateway District, thus creating more individuality and opportunity for the its unique historic character to shine.

The challenges to this vision is gaining support from the community, including developers and existing building owners. Funding these projects will be a major issue, in addition to the apathy people feel towards historic preservation. It is important to garner interest in this specific type of new development and redevelopment, in order to ensure they are successful. Key advertisement strategies must be employed in order to ensure there is community and developmental backing to this vision.

## **Appendix A**

### **Sources**

City of Santa Maria Downtown Specific Plan: Chapters 4 and 7.

City of Richmond Draft General Plan: Historical Resources Element.

City of Tecumseh Comprehensive Plan: Downtown Tecumseh Plan.

