

TO: PASO ROBLES CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RONALD WHISENAND, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LAFCO REGARDING TEMPLETON SPHERE OF INFLUENCE STUDY

DATE: MARCH 21, 2006

Needs: For the City Council to review the Templeton Community Services District's request of LAFCO to amend their Sphere of Influence and consider a possible response to that request.

Facts:

1. LAFCO is in the process of updating the Spheres of Influence (SOI) for all jurisdictions in the County. A SOI represents an area adjacent to a jurisdiction where development might be reasonably expected to occur in the next 20 years.
2. The community of Templeton is requesting several expansions of their SOI. Their Study Area No. 4 as referenced in LAFCO's Sphere Update Public Review Draft, is the only change that has the potential to affect the City of Paso Robles. Study Area No. 4 (see Attachment 1) generally extends up Bethel Road to Highway 46 and then east to our City limits in the Theater Drive area.
3. The Study Area contains a total of 695 acres of land. 409 acres are currently zoned Agriculture. 142 acres are zoned for Residential Rural (RR) and 144 acres for Residential Suburban (RS). RR zoning currently allows parcels with a minimum size of 10 acres while RS zoning supports 1 acre lots with community water and 2 ½ acres without.
4. Templeton CSD currently serves nearly half of these RR and RS parcels with "community water" under Outside Service/User Agreements (see Attachment 2).
5. Primarily due to these previous service agreements, LAFCO staff is supportive of Templeton's request to expand their SOI to include the RR and RS properties west of the City. However, LAFCO staff is not supportive of including any properties currently zoned for agriculture. A copy of LAFCO's recommended SOI is shown in Attachment 3.

6. Good planning practice, and both the City's and County's General Plan policies strive to achieve/maintain a clear distinction between urban and rural development. This buffer provides needed "community separation" between us and Templeton to the south and San Miguel to the north.
7. Highway 46 West is a heavily traveled gateway into our City. The Rural Residential and Residential Suburban properties, given they are contiguous to Paso Robles urban uses, should be part of the distinctive Paso Robles urban boundary. Further, the agriculturally zoned properties shall be preserved for agricultural uses and as distinctive edge to the City of Paso Robles.
8. The comment period for the draft Sphere of Influence Update is over on March 27, 2006.

Analysis  
and  
Conclusion:

The City's General Plan Land Use Map extends beyond the City limits and includes many of the County parcels that lie in Templeton's SOI request (Attachment 4). The parcels are included in our planning area and have a land use designation of Residential Single-Family (RSF-2) which carries a maximum density of two dwelling units per acre. There are several other policies that address how County regulated parcels should develop when located at the fringe of the City. A complete listing of those policies is included as Attachment 5.

One common theme with many of the policies from the City's and County's General Plan is to maintain an open space buffer surrounding the City. Of particular note is our Land Use Element Policy LU-2E and Open Space Element Policy OS-1 A which both support retaining surrounding lands in very low-density rural residential, open space, and agricultural uses. These policies are the heart of our newly established Purple Belt Program wherein the City is surrounded by an economically viable agricultural greenbelt (aka "purple belt") that provides visually appealing community separators and City gateways. In addition the County's own General Plan supports maintaining a distinction between urban and rural development by providing for rural uses adjacent to the City which are "predominately agriculture, low-intensity recreation, residential and open space uses, which will preserve and enhance the pattern of identifiable communities."

As stated above, the minimum parcel size in the RR district is 10 acres. However, with water supplied by Templeton CSD, the RS zoned parcels that

are closest to our boundaries could be subdivided down to one acre. Given the 144 acres that exist with this RS designation, there could be a significant increase in residential parcels beyond the 37 that currently exist in this area.

LAFCO staff is opposed to Templeton’s request to include the 409 acres of agriculturally zoned land to the SOI. Policies in both the City and County General Plans clearly support LAFCO staff on this point. There seems to be little reason for the district to have the need to serve agriculturally productive lands.

LAFCO staff is supportive of Templeton’s request to include the 142 acres of Rural Residential zoned land in the SOI. The increased development potential on these properties that could occur with Templeton water would clearly be inconsistent with our goal of creating and maintaining a buffer of agricultural and open space uses surrounding the City.

LAFCO staff is supportive of Templeton’s request to include the 144 acres of Residential Suburban zoned land in the SOI (these lands are the ones that lie closest to the City’s southwestern boundary). LAFCO staff has indicated that this is partially due to the fact that they currently are being served by Templeton water despite being currently outside of the District boundaries. However, City staff is concerned with how the character of the area will change when the 37 lots potentially grows to 144. Houses, driveways, grading, and roadway systems will all have the potential to negatively impact this visually important gateway into the City. Again both the City and County General Plan calls on the need to maintain an urban separator between Paso Robles and Templeton.

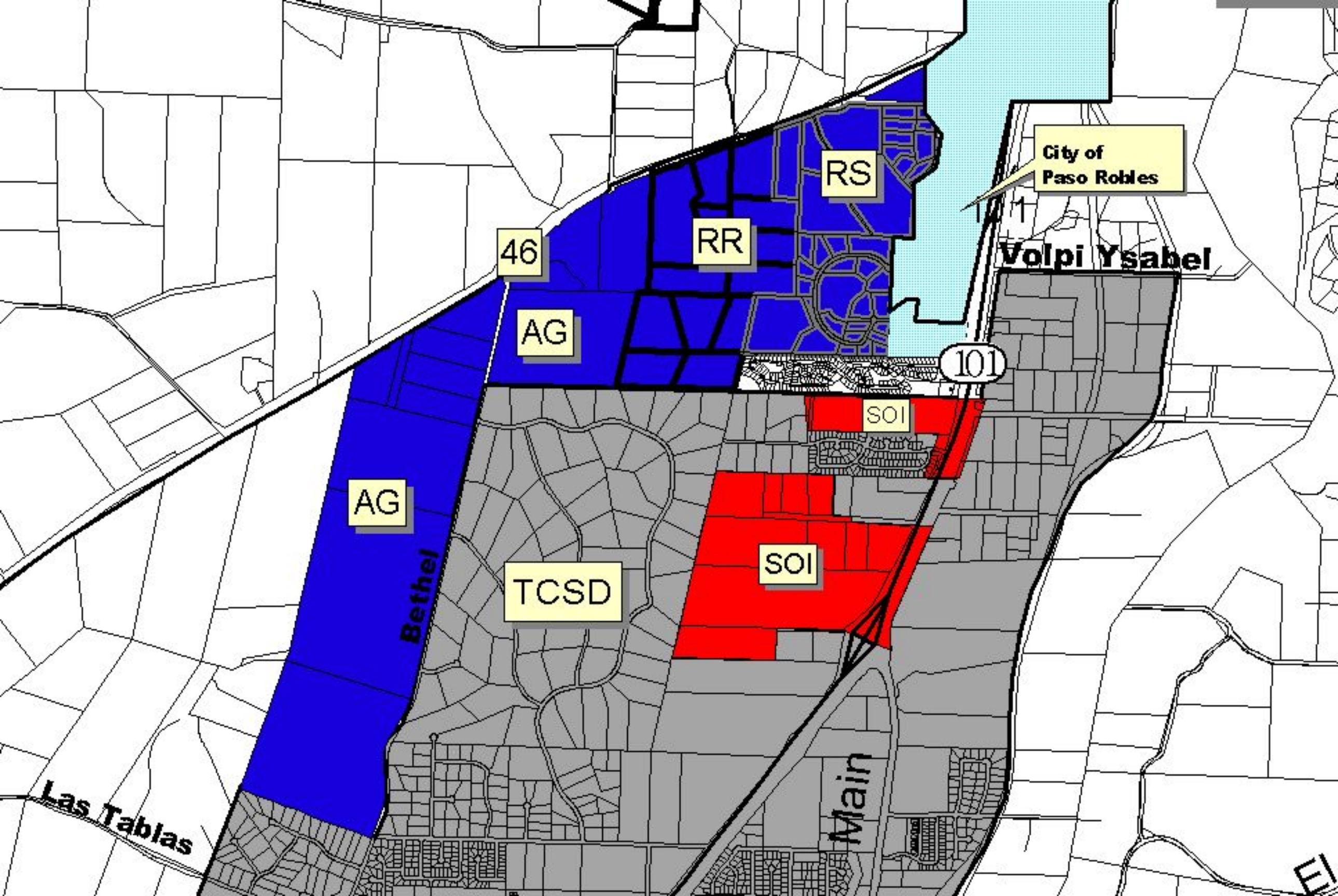
Policy  
Reference: See Attachment 5

Fiscal  
Impact: No immediate, direct fiscal impact

- Options:
- a. Authorize the Mayor to sign a letter (Attachment 6) on behalf of the City supporting LAFCO staff’s recommendation to exclude agriculturally zoned lands from the Templeton SOI and opposing inclusion of the Residential Rural and Residential Suburban in the SOI due to inconsistency with City and County General Plan policies and the inability to maintain an adequate separator between communities.
  - b. Amend, modify or reject the foregoing option.

Attachments:

1. Templeton's proposed Area 4 SOI boundaries
2. Map showing parcels within Area 4 currently served with water from Templeton CSD
3. LAFCO staff's recommended SOI boundary
4. Land Use Element Figure LU-6R showing land use designation of Subarea G
5. Statement of Key General Plan Policies
6. Draft letter to LAFCO opposing Templeton's SOI expansion



City of Paso Robles

RS

RR

46

AG

Volpi Ysabel

101

SOI

AG

Bethel

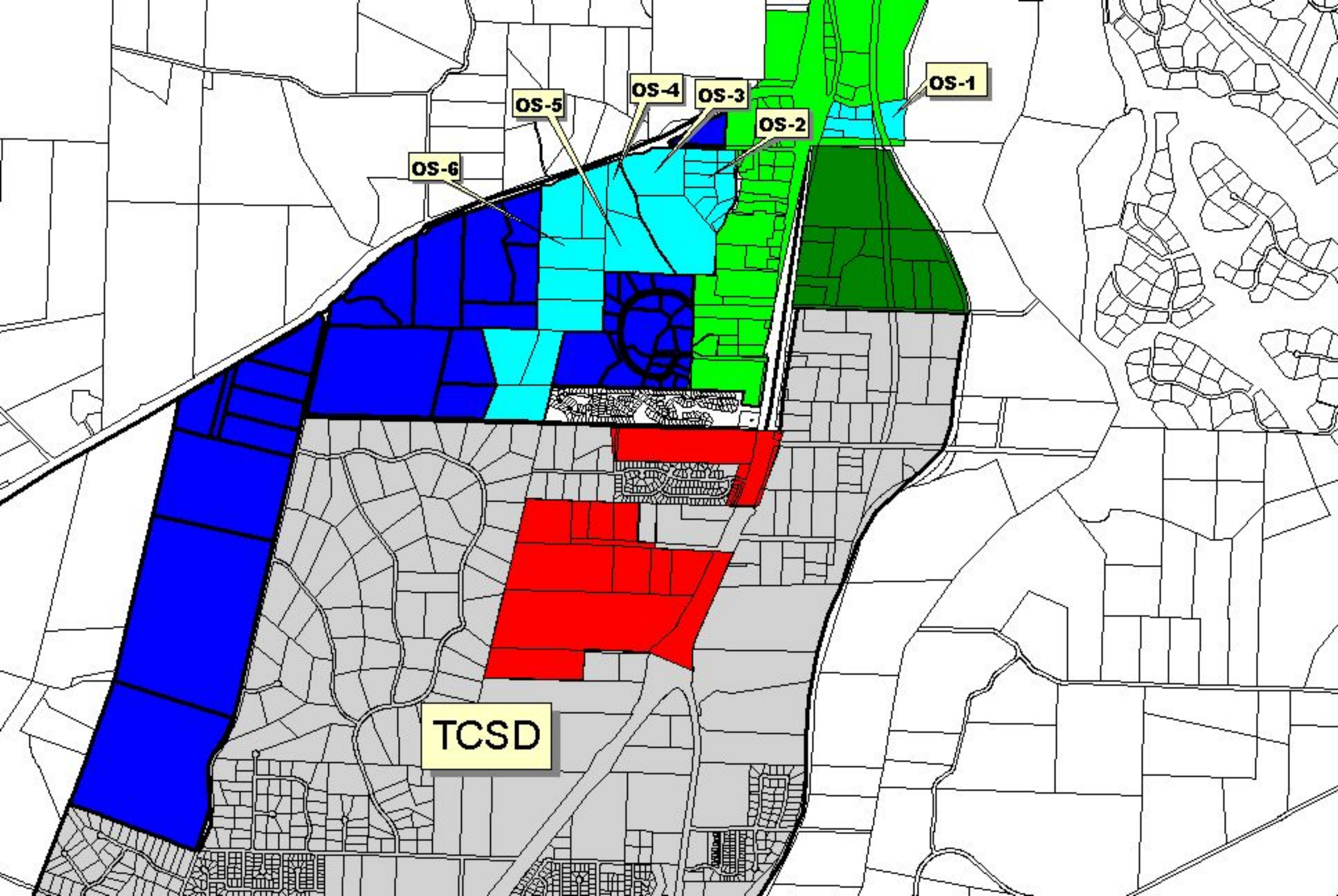
TCSD

SOI

Main

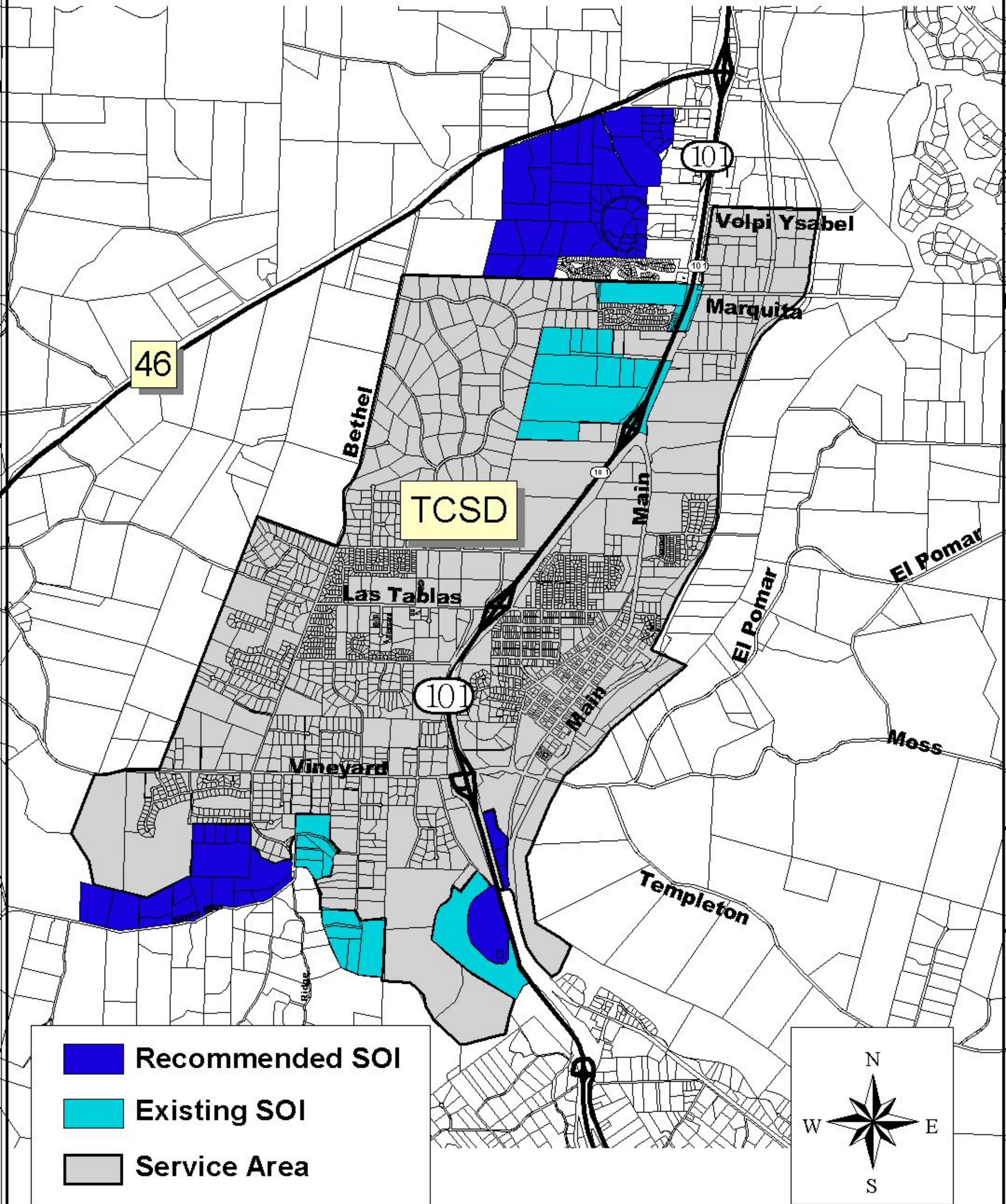
Las Tablas



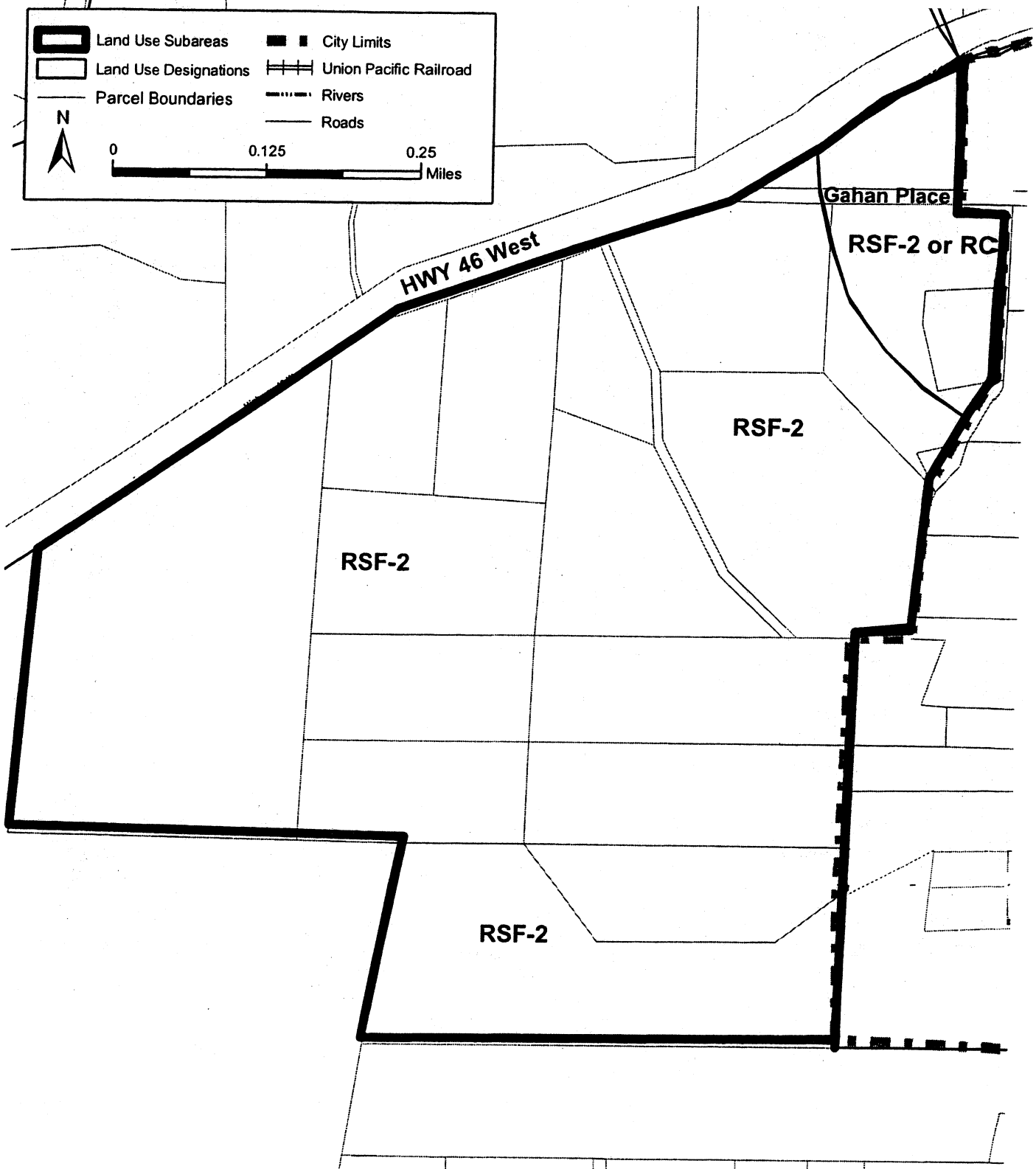




# Recommended Sphere of Influence Templeton Community Services District







Source: City of El Paso de Robles, 2003.

General Plan Land Use Subarea G

Figure LU-6R  
City of El Paso de Robles



## Summary of Key General Plan Policies

### A. City of El Paso de Robles

#### 1. Land Use Element Policy LU-2B – Visual Identity:

Action Item 2. Adopt design standards to clearly articulate how important public view, gateways and landmarks are to be maintained/enhanced.

#### 2. Land Use Element Policy LU-2E – Purple Belt:

Create a distinct “Purple Belt” surrounding the City by taking actions to retain the rural, open space, and agricultural areas.

Action Item 3. Take steps to ensure that the County retains surrounding lands in very low-density rural residential, open space, and agricultural uses. Oppose the creation of new parcels within the County.

#### 3. Circulation Element Policy C-5A – Visual Gateways and Landmarks

Identify important visual resources: gateways, corridors, major arterials, natural/open space areas, as shown on Table C-1 and Figure C-3. *Table C-1 identifies Highway 46 West between Arbor Road and Highway 101 as both a “Gateway to the City” and a “Visual Corridor*

*In Gateway areas, the city shall:*

- Limit range of land uses to preclude those commercial and industrial uses with outside processes and storage.
- Development shall be designed to make a positive visual impression (in terms of design/architecture and landscaping) and incorporate/preserve natural features.

*In Visual Corridors the City shall:*

- Development shall be designed to make a positive visual impression and incorporate/preserve natural features.

#### 4. Open Space Element Policy OS-1A – Purple Belt:

Develop and open space plan/program for establishing an open space/purple belt (agricultural preserve area) surrounding the City.

Action Item 7. Coordinate the City’s Open Space/Purple Belt plan/program with neighboring communities, the County of San Luis Obispo, and non-profit agencies.

Action Item 8. Investigate and implement as appropriate and feasible with San Luis Obispo County, establishment of permanent agricultural and open space areas that buffer communities from continuous urbanization and promote efficient growth patterns.

Action Item 9. Take steps to ensure that the County retains surrounding lands in very low-density rural residential, open space (including natural resource), and agricultural uses. Oppose the creation of new parcels within the County.

B. San Luis Obispo County

**Templeton Area Plan Land Use Descriptions**

1. **Residential Rural.** Several hundred acres of land in the northwest Templeton urban area are designated for Residential Rural use. This rolling land adjacent to the community provides rural estate home sites close to community services. Adjacent to Highway 101, the area could continue to provide the appearance of a rural separation between Templeton and Paso Robles by clustering or using similar techniques that locate development out of view of the highway. Agricultural uses should also be encouraged to continue within the area to maintain this rural separation.

2. **Residential Suburban.** Suburban areas are characterized by tracts with one-acre lots or by clusters of residences within large open space lots. Clustering of allowed development or other techniques that achieve the same purpose as clustering are encouraged when needed to preserve rural visual character, steep hillsides, oak woodlands and creek riparian habitats within the area...

**Distribution of Land Uses**

7. Encourage an urban environment that is an orderly arrangement of buildings, structures and open space appropriate to the size and scale of development for each community.

8. Maintain a distinction between urban and rural development by providing for rural uses outside of urban and village areas which are predominately agriculture, low-intensity recreation, residential and open space uses, which will preserve and enhance the pattern of identifiable communities.

9. Identify important agricultural, natural and other rural areas between cities and communities and work with landowners to maintain their rural character.

10. Encourage the protection of agricultural land for the production of food, fiber, and other agricultural commodities.

**Phasing of Urban Development**

11. Design and maintain a land use pattern and population capacity that is consistent with the capacities of existing public services and facilities, and their programmed expansion where funding has been identified.



**12.** Encourage the phasing of urban development in a compact manner, first using vacant or underutilized "infill" parcels and lands next to existing development.

### **Residential Land Uses**

**13.** Locate urban residential densities within urban or village reserve lines near employment areas, while protecting residential areas from incompatible and undesirable uses.

### **Administration**

**22.** Work closely with cities to provide continuity between city and county land use planning and to achieve common land use goals through reciprocal agreements.

# ATTACHMENT 6

March 22, 2006

San Luis Obispo LAFCO  
Attn: David Church, Senior LAFCO Analyst  
1042 Pacific Street – Suite A  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

SUBJECT: Public Review Draft Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Service Review for the Templeton Community Services District

Dear Commissioners:

The City of El Paso de Robles would like to thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Sphere of Influence Update for the Templeton Community Services District. We are certain that Templeton, San Luis Obispo County, and LAFCO all share our desire that growth is consistent with City and County General Plan policies, well planned, and sensitive to adjacent communities. To that end, we offer you the following comments.

We recognize the right of Templeton CSD to manage and maintain quality service to their community. Of the four Study Areas being considered for expansion of their Sphere of Influence (SOI), three are clearly logical extensions of the District's boundaries and have no impact on Paso Robles. The City therefore does not oppose consideration of Areas 1, 2, and 3 of Templeton CSD's request. Area 4 however, adjoins the City limits of Paso Robles and would cause the southern tip of the City to be surrounded on three sides by the Templeton CSD. Our comments will therefore focus on Study Area 4 and whether expanding the SOI is a wise decision for LAFCO to make.

We feel that the guiding principles that LAFCO should use to evaluate the request and its impacts on adjoining communities are the General Plans for the County of San Luis Obispo and City of Paso Robles. I have attached a detailed summary of the various General Plan policies that we feel should guide your decision. As you can see, there are numerous policies that call for maintaining "open space and agricultural uses" on parcels that surround the City. These policies are central to the City's Purple Belt program which envisions and solicits cooperation from outside agencies to maintain a rural agricultural buffer around the City. LAFCO's own policies also discourage agricultural land from being included in a district's sphere and call for maintaining rural character in areas surrounding municipalities (Policy 3, 7 and 8, page 1-6).



The City's General Plan also identifies Highway 46 West between Highway 101 and Arbor Road as an important visual gateway to the City where inappropriate development patterns could have a detrimental effect on our community. The level of development of Study Area 4 that could occur with Templeton CSD water could have significant physical and visual impacts that are outside of the City's regulatory control.

When the City of Paso Robles updated its General Plan in 2003, the City made a conscious decision to not propose expansion of our boundaries south of Highway 46 and westward from Theater Drive. The goal was to allow Paso Robles and Templeton to retain a degree of distinct geographic and land use identity. The requested SOI clearly would not respect our right, nor the City's and County's General Plans, to maintain a distinctive urban edge surrounded by agricultural or open space uses.

Based on the above cited policies and concerns, the City strongly opposes any action that would compromise community identity along the Highway 46 corridor. We urge you to deny the Area 4 SOI application.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Mecham  
Mayor

Attachments