



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No. 630.01

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: May 17, 2011

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Environmental Services, Finance Department

SUBJECT: Amendment Of Countywide Siting Element

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Adding the Proposed Los Flores Ranch Integrated Waste Management Facility to the Countywide Siting Element, a Regional Solid Waste Planning Document, as Prescribed by the California Public Resources Code.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Santa Maria is in the process of siting a new integrated waste management facility at Los Flores Ranch. This landfill and diversion facility would replace the Santa Maria Regional Landfill following its closure, estimated to occur in 2015.

The Countywide Siting Element is a regional solid waste planning document required by the Integrated Waste Management Act. Pursuant to the Act, a disposal facility must be described in the Siting Element before the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) can approve an operating permit for the site. For this reason, the City of Santa Maria has requested that the Countywide Siting Element be amended to include the Los Flores Ranch Integrated Waste Management Facility (IWMF). Before the City of Santa Maria can obtain an operating permit for the disposal facility, a majority of jurisdictions within the County must approve the amendment to the Siting Element.

DISCUSSION:

The existing Santa Maria Regional Landfill will reach capacity and will cease accepting waste in 2015. State law requires that each waste shed maintain at least 15 years of solid waste disposal capacity at all times. In 2001, elected officials from the County and each of the cities located within the County formed a Multi-Jurisdictional Solid Waste Task Group (MJSWTG). The purpose of the Task Group is to cooperatively plan for the solid waste management needs of the region. In 2003, the MJSWTG issued a recommendation that a

new landfill should be sited in Northern Santa Barbara County prior to the closure of the existing Santa Maria Regional Landfill.

In response to this recommendation, the City of Santa Maria began to search for a suitable replacement site in northern Santa Barbara County. In 2005, a Landfill Siting Study was commissioned to evaluate three sites, and Los Flores Ranch was selected as the preferred site. The City of Santa Maria presented details of Los Flores Ranch to the MJSWTG in December of 2005. The City of Santa Maria Council approved the purchase of the site on January 17, 2006.

Los Flores Integrated Waste Management Facility

Los Flores Ranch is located approximately eight miles southeast of the Santa Maria City center in an unincorporated portion of the Solomon Hills (Attachment). The property totals 1,774 acres. The proposed facility would include a landfill, a recycling drop-off area and a composting operation. The Los Flores IWMF would serve the disposal needs of jurisdictions located in the Santa Maria waste shed, including the Cities of Orcutt, Santa Maria and the surrounding unincorporated county area.

The proposed landfill would be a canyon fill and would be developed in phases over its estimated 90-year lifespan. The City of Santa Maria anticipates that the facility will be operational in 2015. While the total project area would encompass 617 acres, the refuse footprint would only total 286 acres of which only 80 acres would be active at any one time.

Solid waste collection vehicles would deliver material loads directly to the facility via an existing interchange on Hwy 101, and would approach the scale house from a proposed entrance road. All other non-collection vehicles, such as self-haul traffic, would use a transfer facility to be located at the existing Santa Maria Regional Landfill. These individual loads would be consolidated in transfer vehicles and delivered to Los Flores IWMF in order to reduce traffic trips along local roads. Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste services would continue to be provided at the existing Santa Maria Landfill.

Since the waste disposal activities take place in a relatively small portion of the site, the existing Los Flores Park would continue to be open to the public during construction and operation of the IWMF. The Park features a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Environmental Setting

A Geotechnical Investigation Report has been completed on the proposed landfill. The Report finds that deep ground water and impermeable stable underlying soil formations are well suited to the IWMF. Monitoring wells have also been installed to monitor water quality.

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the development and operation of the IWMF was completed in March of 2010 and was certified in April of 2011. The EIR evaluated the potential impacts of the project on aesthetics, air quality, biological resources and cultural resources, environmental justice, geology, hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use, noise, public services and utilities and traffic and circulation.

Amendment of the Countywide Siting Element

The Countywide Siting Element is a regional solid waste planning document required by the Integrated Waste Management Act. Pursuant to the Act, a disposal facility must be described in the Siting Element before the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) can approve an operating permit for the site. For this reason, the City of Santa Maria has requested that the Countywide Siting Element be amended to include the Los Flores Ranch IWMF.

An amendment to the Countywide Siting Element involves several steps. First, the proposed changes must be reviewed by the Santa Barbara County Solid Waste Local Task Force (LTF). The LTF is required by State Law to meet periodically to complete various tasks prescribed by the Integrated Waste Management Act. The LTF, which is comprised of staff from the County of Santa Barbara and all of the cities located within the County, reviewed the proposed changes to the Siting Element at two separate meetings held in the City of Solvang on September 9 and September 23, 2010, respectively. Next, the proposed amendment must be approved by the elected bodies of the County of Santa Barbara and a majority of the cities, by population, located within the County.

It should be noted that an affirmative vote by Council to amend the Siting Element does not approve the construction or operation of the proposed IWMF. Rather, it would allow the City of Santa Maria to apply for a solid waste facilities permit from CalRecycle. The City of Santa Maria would also be required to obtain permits from several other regulatory agencies including the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District and the Regional Water Quality Control Board before construction on the facility could begin.

Trash generated within the City of Santa Barbara is currently disposed at Tajiguas Landfill. The Los Flores IWMF would primarily serve the North County waste shed. For this reason, staff believes that construction of the Facility would have no impact on the City in the near-term. In the long-term, staff believes that the existence of a second disposal facility and additional recycling capacity could serve as a back-up following the closure of Tajiguas Landfill. It is anticipated that the Tajiguas Landfill will reach its permitted disposal capacity in 2023 at the current rate of disposal.

To deny the proposed amendment to the Countywide Siting Element, Council would have to find that the proposed project would result in one or more significant adverse impacts within the boundaries of the City of Santa Barbara.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

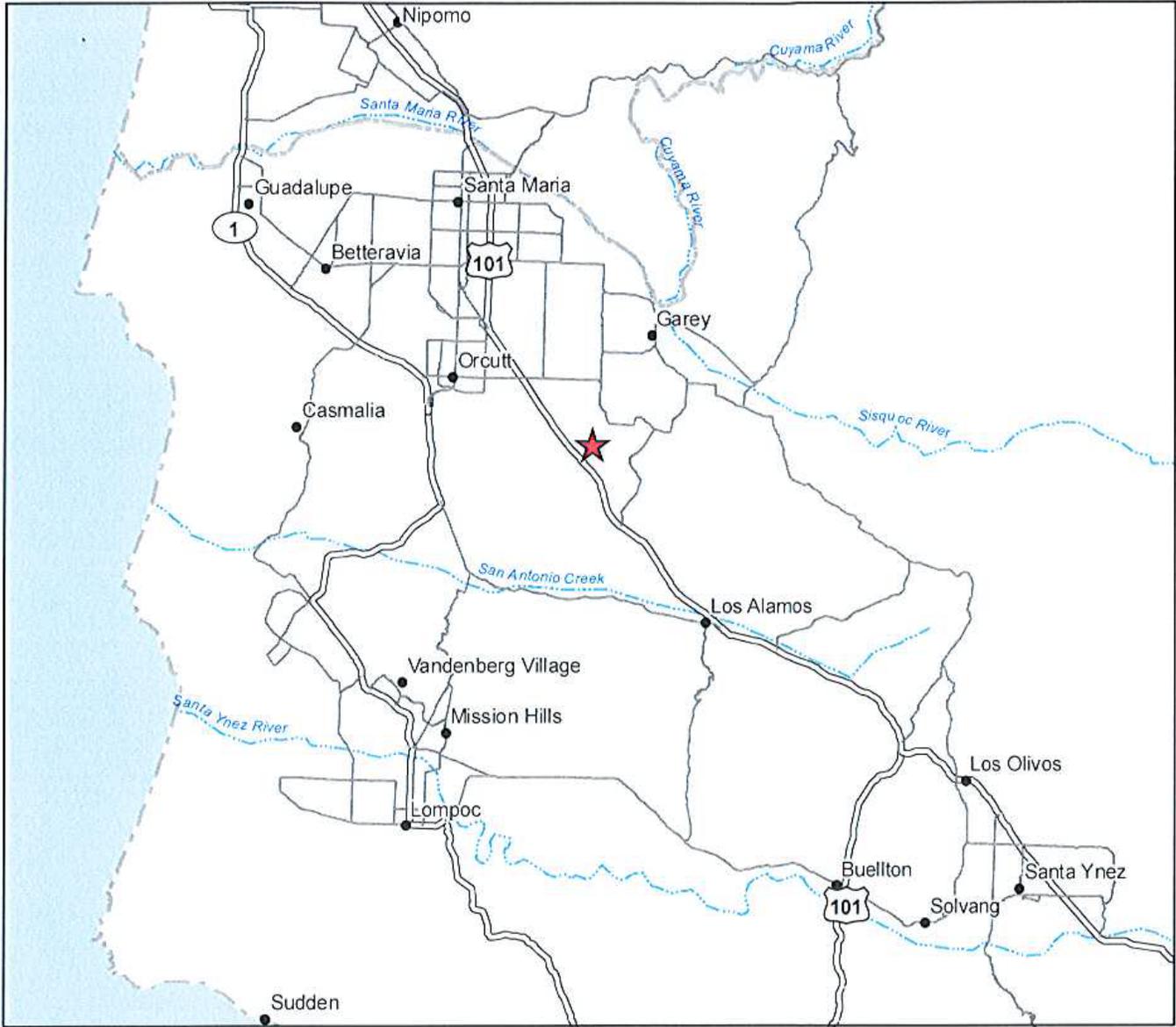
The Los Flores IWMF may provide additional disposal and recyclables processing capacity for the entire County, but is not anticipated to have a material impact on the City in the near-term.

ATTACHMENT: Regional Location Map

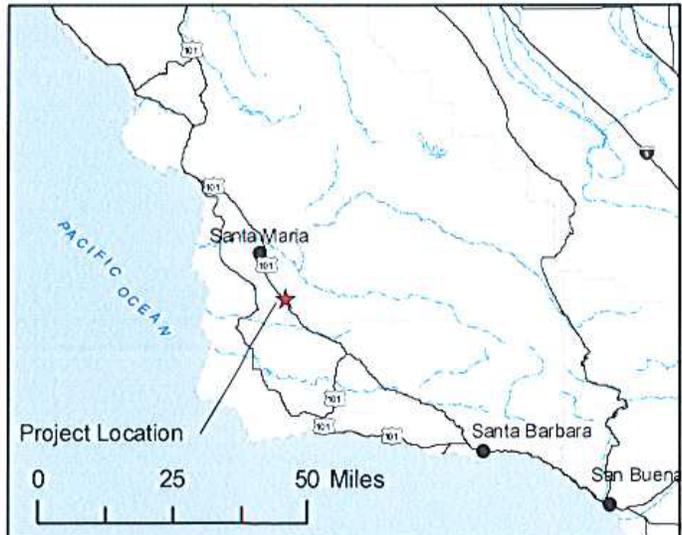
PREPARED BY: Matt Fore, Environmental Services Manager

SUBMITTED BY: Robert Samario, Finance Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



★ Project Location



Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census Tiger 2000 data and ESRI, 2004.