

AGRICULTURAL MASTER PLAN
for the
City of San Luis Obispo's
CALLE JOAQUIN AGRICULTURAL RESERVE



prepared by
City of San Luis Obispo
Natural Resources Protection Program
January, 2011

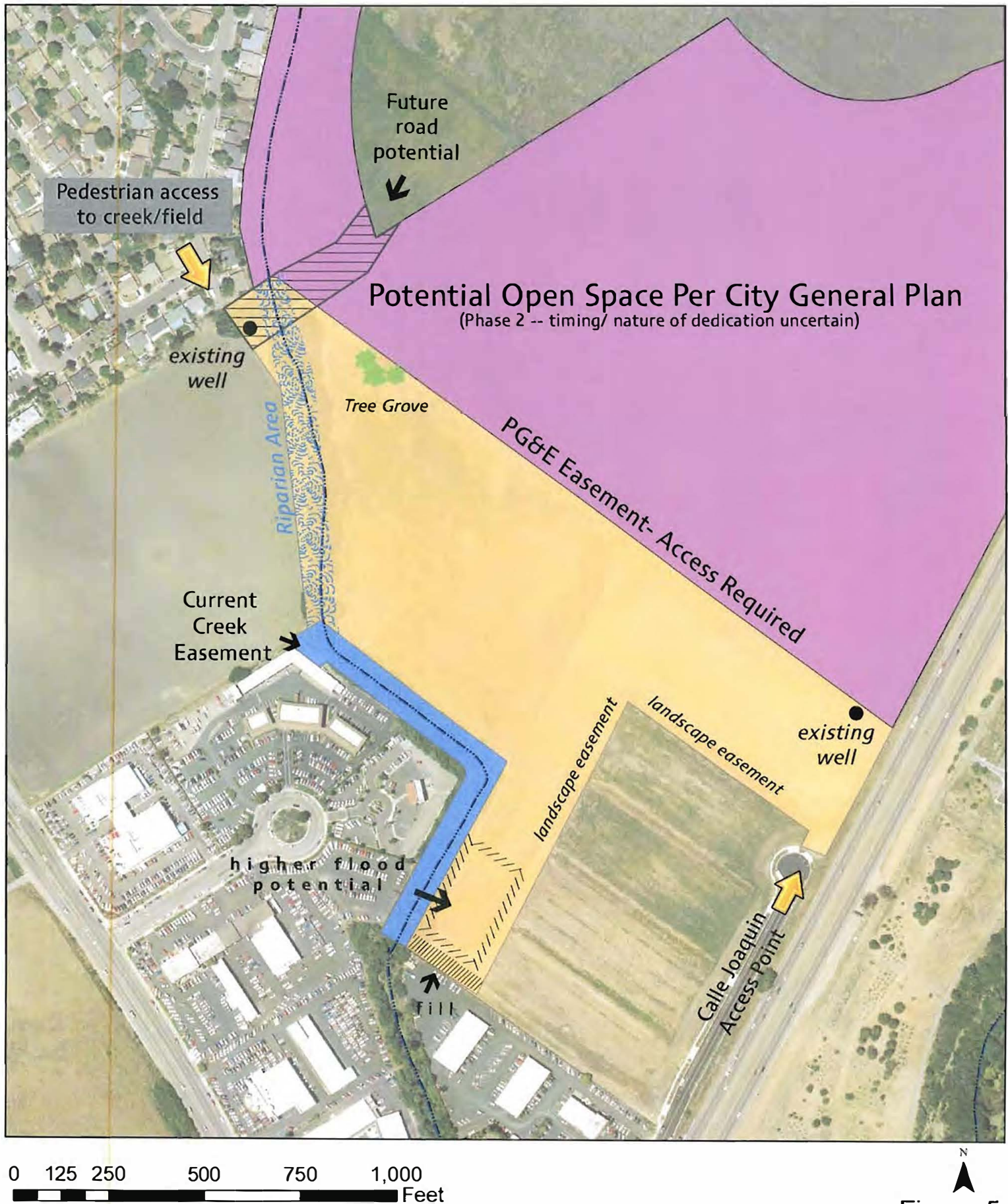
Calle Joaquin Agricultural Master Plan Phasing Areas



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Figure 4

Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve Phase 1 -- Existing Features



Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve Phase 2 -- Existing Features



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet



Figure 6

species included monarch butterflies (possibly overwintering in the eucalyptus groves), California red-legged frog (suitable habitat), southern steelhead (known to occur at times in Prefumo Creek), and southwestern pond turtle (suitable habitat). Two-striped garter snake and pallid bat were considered to have good habitat here and to be possible inhabitants. The remaining seven species were considered to be unlikely to occur here due to poor or unsuitable habitat.

Lists of both sensitive plant and sensitive animal species in the area as identified in the Prefumo Creek Commons studies are included as Appendix A.

3. *Goals and Policies*

The General Plan of the City of San Luis Obispo includes discussion about the Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve. As noted earlier, the 1994 update of the General Plan states that it was the City of San Luis Obispo's intention to preserve significant parts of "this signature working agricultural landscape" at the city's southern gateway.

The General Plan further states that "Publicly owned agricultural lands should be leased back to farmers, or used as demonstration projects that will benefit local farmers"

The more recently updated and adopted Conservation and Open Space Element to the General Plan (adopted in 2006) includes more detail as to the approach and expected outcomes of land management decisions for City-owned lands, including the Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve. Specifically, the Element describes the decision-making process that should be followed to develop appropriate land management practices for City-owned lands, noting especially that input from both the general public and from knowledgeable experts should be solicited.

These statements provided the overall framework for the permanent conservation and proper management of the Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve and ultimately the entire Master Plan area, as well as a methodology for arriving at those decisions.

3.1 *"Stakeholder" Process*

At the direction of the City Council, a stakeholder process was used to solicit citizen input for the Master Plan beginning in October 2009, and continuing through March 2010. Because of the unusual nature of the Agricultural Master Plan in comparison to other City-owned open space lands, a special format was implemented to obtain input relevant to the specific issues and constraints facing future agricultural uses of this City-owned land. The public was invited to a series of meetings held at City Hall, and, after City staff described the properties involved and certain parameters established by the City Council were explained, ideas for the establishment and operation of the Agricultural Reserve were put forward by citizens attending the sessions. A total of four sessions were held, and out of this process there developed a consensus among the stakeholders as to the appropriate direction of the Master Plan. The present document is the result of the stakeholder process.

4. Agricultural Master Plan

The overall goal of the Agricultural Master Plan is to retain as much as reasonably possible of the Master Plan Area in production agriculture, consistent with General Plan policy. This may include but is not limited to: a private, community-supported agricultural operation; individual garden plots; “incubator” plots leased to individuals for small-scale operations; and commercial scale agricultural operations. Lands not suited for agriculture or ultimately needed for other purposes will be addressed independently, and they may be used temporarily for agricultural operations if appropriate. Examples of such lands include the riparian corridor of Prefumo Creek and planned expansion thereof; a possible wetland swale in the southern corner of the site; the route of the Bob Jones Trail; and management and maintenance of the eucalyptus groves and the drainage channel extending southwesterly from Dalidio Drive.

The Plan allows for agricultural operations to include one or more buildings to provide for “light processing” (i.e., washing) of produce, storage, and a site for educational programs for the public. This will require a small parking facility and extension of urban services to those buildings, which are currently available at the end of Calle Joaquin. (Use of untreated well water for drinking water or “light processing” uses is not considered appropriate, since the site will ultimately conduct public educational sessions, etc.)

Establishment and growth of the Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve will be predicated upon certain events over which the City does not have full control. Therefore, the Agricultural Master Plan calls for a phased approach to the operations; these are discussed in more detail below.

It is important to note that the City of San Luis Obispo does not anticipate being the primary operator of the Agricultural Reserve. That operation will be in the hands of a nonprofit entity which, pursuant to an agreement with the City of San Luis Obispo, will be responsible for the overall capital improvements, operation, and maintenance of the agricultural operations of the site. The City of San Luis Obispo will retain responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Prefumo Creek area, the Bob Jones Trail, and other small areas not directly involved with the agricultural operations.

In the event that the nonprofit entity should fail for any reason, the City of San Luis Obispo will retain the right to take over operation of the property, assign the agreement with the nonprofit entity to another entity of the City’s own choosing, or to temporarily or permanently close the facility. Details of this condition and its implementation would be spelled out in a formal agreement between the City of San Luis Obispo as owner of the land in question and the nonprofit entity which would be operating it.

4.1 Phasing Areas and Land Use Designations

Phasing for the implementation of the Agricultural Master Plan is split in two main parts, Phase 1 and Phase 2, and these phases are further split into sub-phases.

Phase 1 consists of lands currently owned or controlled by the City of San Luis Obispo, including the 3 acre portion with a cloud on title. This area totals about 25 acres.

Phase 1A constitutes the initial farming area. This area of approximately 20 acres will be leased to a nonprofit entity whose primary purpose will be to return the site to production agriculture, and to oversee and manage agricultural production and agricultural education programs and activities there. This would be done pursuant to a capital improvement, management and maintenance plan agreed to between the City of San Luis Obispo and the nonprofit entity. The entity is expected to wish to pursue the development of an educational and “light processing” facility that would permit the washing of produce for sale to local institutions such as schools or prisons. This facility is envisioned as a group of one or more structures following an agricultural motif that ultimately would house areas for processing and storage of produce, a classroom or classrooms and small amphitheatre, a teaching kitchen, various demonstration gardens, and minor support facilities (office, restrooms, etc.). The facility is not expected to generate significant traffic volumes, as no on-site sales are anticipated. With up to ten seasonal employees, occasional visits from schools groups, and no on-site sales, traffic volume is anticipated at 100 vehicle trips per day, or 12 vehicle trips per business hour with little vehicle traffic at other times.

Funding for the facility is expected to come through grants and other fundraising, with no significant expenditures planned by the City. Timing of these improvements is uncertain but it is expected to take up to ten years to fully fund and develop the site improvements.

The nonprofit entity may wish in the future to engage in on-site sales either seasonally or year-round; however, the decision to do so shall constitute a request for amendment of this Plan and shall be subject to full analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) especially as to its potential traffic impacts, and may be subject to other City fees and charges, including but not limited to business license fees.

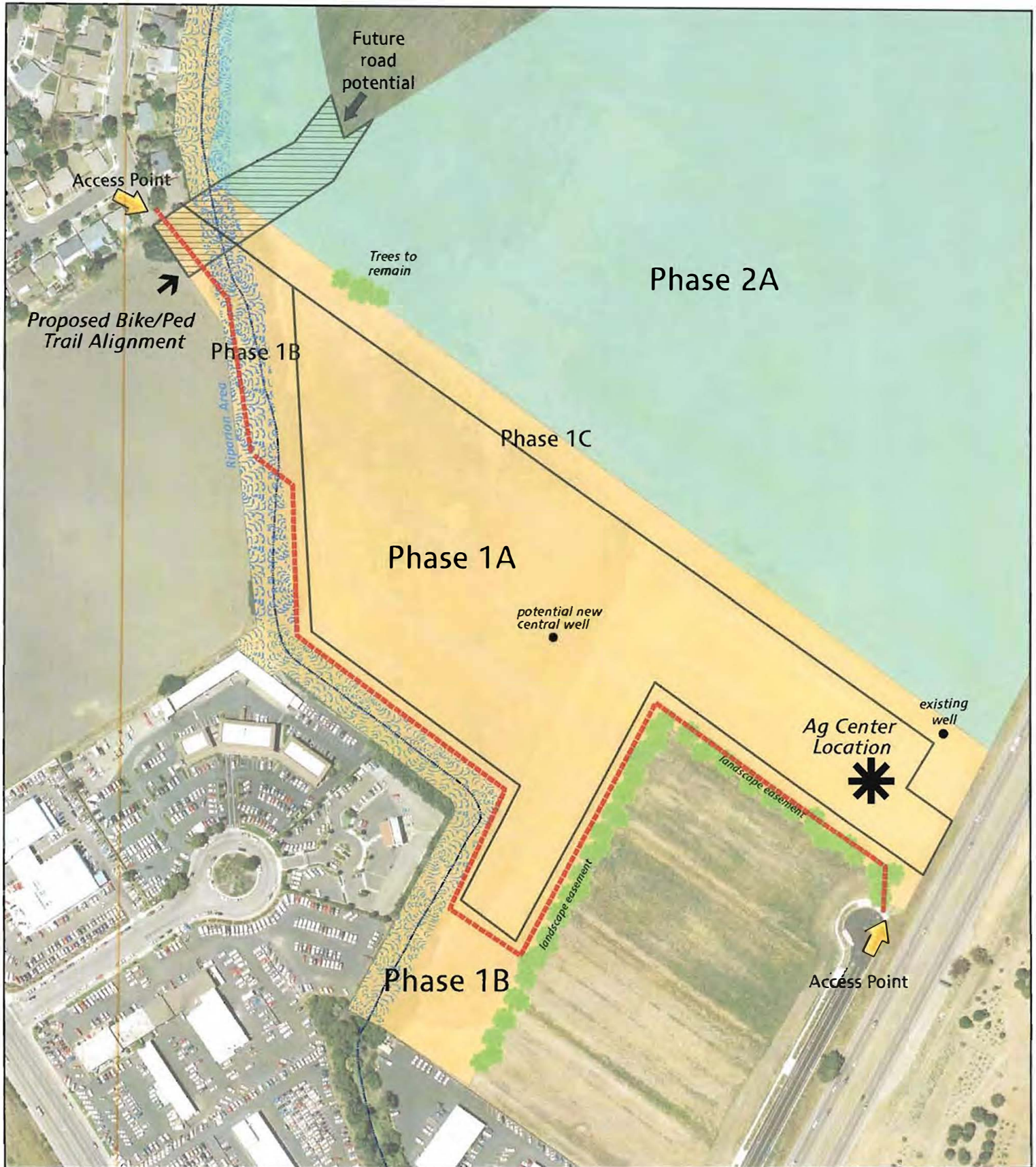
Phase 1B includes improvements and activities in areas that are City controlled or maintained. These may include but are not limited to:

- Initial extension of the Bob Jones Bike Trail from Calle Joaquin to Oceanaire Drive via a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Prefumo Creek, with ultimate connection to either Madonna Road or Dalidio Drive (possibly both);
- Possible community garden or native plant nursery;
- Possible wetland meadow at the southern corner of the property; and
- Riparian enhancement plantings along Prefumo Creek and the fill area at the south end of the property, along with control of the date palms and other non-native vegetation.

Phase 1C includes the three acres where City ownership is the subject of a title dispute. If this matter is not successfully resolved by the time this plan is ready for implementation, Phase 1C will consist of simple additions to the adjacent crop areas, and, where the disputed area intersects Prefumo Creek, additional enhancements to the creek corridor, once the matter is finally resolved. In the meantime, either continued cover cropping, fallowing, or other benign activities will take place there with no capital improvements placed thereon, so as not to prejudice the ultimate outcome of the dispute.

Proposed activities for the Phase 1 area are shown in Figure 7. Proposed activities for Phase 2 are not shown because of the uncertainty of timing and final details of Phase 2.

Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve Phase 1 -- Plan



0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

N
Figure 7

Phase 2 includes lands not owned or controlled by the City of San Luis Obispo and in which such ownership or control is a longer-term or uncertain proposition. This is basically those portions of the Dalidio property whose long term future is uncertain at this time, but for which the City of San Luis Obispo has indicated long-term conservation in open space and agriculture in conjunction with development of other portions of the property upon future annexation.

Phase 2A will be the expansion of farming activities onto the Dalidio property if and when the Dalidio property develops in the City of San Luis Obispo. This area may include uses such as Farmer's Market stands, "incubator" leaseholds, and expanded and/or relocated farming operations from the Phase 1 area. This would be done pursuant to a capital improvement, management and maintenance plan agreed to between the City of San Luis Obispo and the nonprofit entity.

Phase 2B will include extension of the Bob Jones Bike Trail to Madonna Drive and/or Dalidio Drive when agreements are in place and funding is available to do so. In addition, this area will have limited new landscaping and moderate to extensive safety pruning and other arboricultural activities in the eucalyptus grove.

Each of these phasing areas can move forward independently of the others. It is anticipated that it may take several years before any significant actions take place in Phases 2A or 2B. In addition, it is anticipated that it may take one to two years before Phase 1A activities can begin to take place due to infrastructure and funding constraints.

Any extension of Froom Ranch Way across Prefumo Creek in conjunction with development of the Dalidio property will be evaluated under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) at the time a formal proposal for such an extension is made. It is not a proposal of the Agricultural Master Plan, merely an acknowledgement that the concept exists.

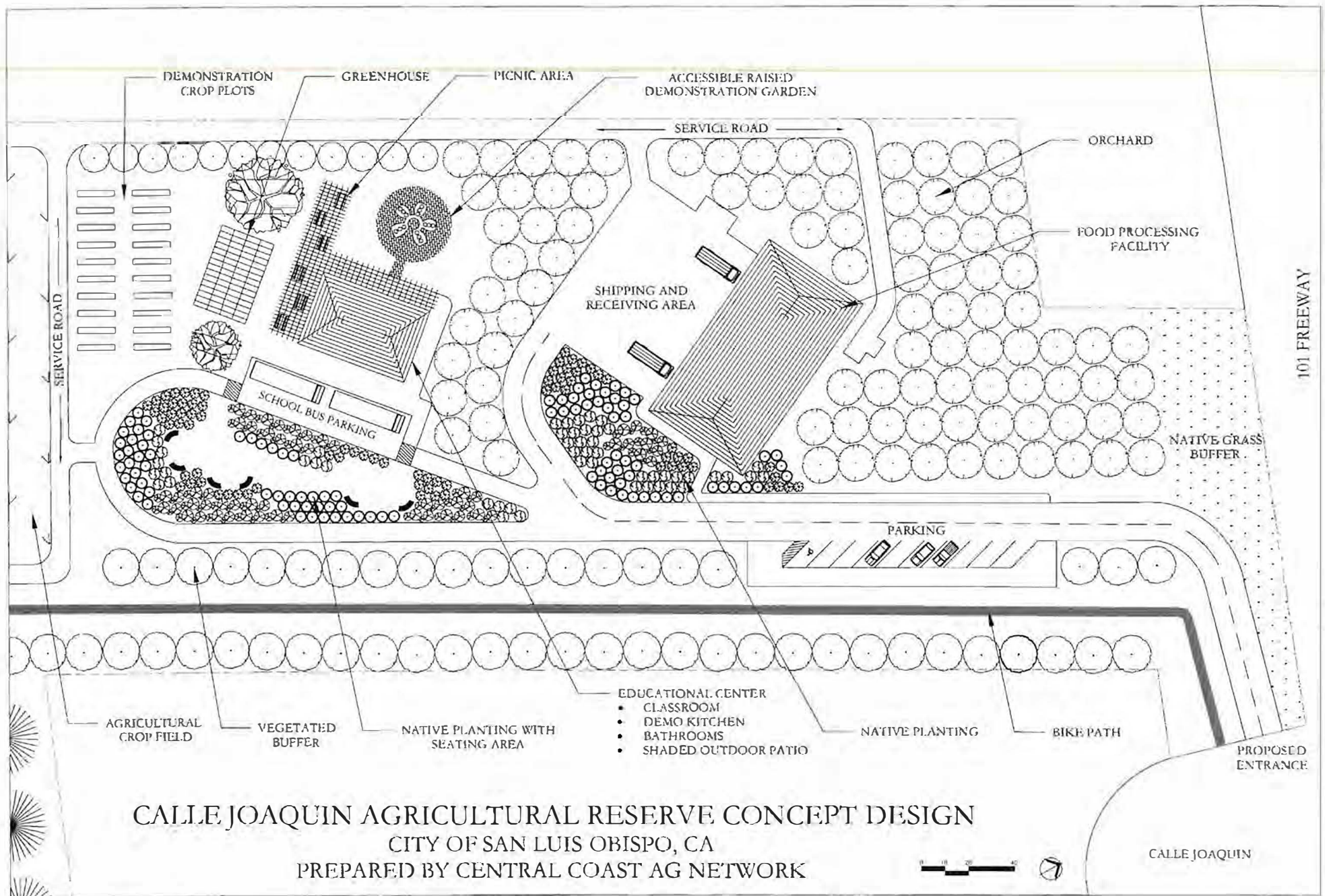
4.2 Consistency with Current Zoning

The existing Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve is zoned Conservation and Open Space (C-OS) under the City of San Luis Obispo's zoning ordinance. This zone allows for a maximum pavement and building area of three percent (3%) of a site area or parcel of ten acres or larger. For the existing Reserve of approximately 25 acres, this requirement would translate to an allowable building and pavement area of 0.75 acre or approximately 32,670 square feet. The buildings will be subject to review by City staff, the public, and appropriate commissions prior to final approval of the design features of the site. Although the buildings will be situated within an area subject to flooding (i.e., the 100-year flood plain), City regulations require that the floor of the buildings be at least one foot above the identified or calculated flood level. This is expected to ameliorate the potential for flood damage to the structures.

The development concept for the building area is shown in Figure 8.

4.3 Resource Enhancement

Those portions of the Calle Joaquin Agricultural Reserve not suited for agricultural activities or needed for other uses are identified in Phases 1B and 2B above. Those activities that fall into the category of resource enhancement include: enlargement and diversification of the riparian



corridor of Prefumo Creek and the drainage channel; control of the date palms; new plantings adjacent to the to-be-developed properties fronting on Calle Joaquin and on the fill area at the southern edge of the property; management activities within the eucalyptus grove; development of a small wetland at the southern end of the property; and plantings along the Bob Jones Trail extension when it is constructed. The purpose of these is to improve habitat quality along Prefumo Creek and nearby; screen the future development on Calle Joaquin to a reasonable degree; make beneficial use of the currently weed-dominated fill area and the potential wetland area; and encourage native plant species alongside the Bob Jones Trail. Activities within the eucalyptus grove will be aimed at long-term retention of the grove for its visual qualities and value for large birds, while addressing problems and potential hazards associated with aging of the trees.

4.4 Wildfire Preparedness

Most of the Master Plan Area will consist of cropland, which is generally not susceptible to wildfires. The areas most susceptible to wildfire are the riparian areas and especially the eucalyptus groves. Wildfire preparedness will consist of annual weed abatement on the edges of the riparian areas and at least annual as-necessary treatments in and around the eucalyptus groves once they have entered into public ownership or control. Treatment may include but will not be limited to: removal or mulching of forest litter where accumulations are excessive; removal of down wood; thinning or removal of hazardous or dead trees; and maintenance of a fire road or other way with vehicle capacity around the edge of the grove to provide rapid access to the grove in the event of a fire.

5. Implementation Strategy

The City will implement this Master Plan in the following manner, upon adoption of the Master Plan by the City Council:

Years 1-2.

- Conclude an agreement with a qualified non-profit organization which will have responsibility for day-to-day management for the majority of the property.
- Assist said organization with efforts to locate and install the required well, and with other small-scale improvements to the site, including sub-leasing if appropriate.
- Support efforts by the organization to raise funds for the buildings deemed necessary to the proper functioning of the site; and provide assistance in obtaining necessary permits from the City and other agencies where necessary.
- Implement enhancements to Prefumo Creek and its riparian corridor, the fill area and proposed wetland area, as funding and resources permit.
- Continue efforts to settle the title dispute affecting the three acre portion of the property.
- Seek grants and other funding sources to provide for the construction of the Bob Jones Trail's initial course between Calle Joaquin and Oceanaire Drive
- Seek agreement with the Dalidio family to permit extension of the Bob Jones Trail to Madonna Avenue and/or to Dalidio Drive.

Years 3-4.

- Continue the above actions to completion.

Years 5-6.

- Continue the above actions to completion.

6. Fiscal Statement

The fiscal impact of adoption of the Calle Joaquin Agricultural Master Plan is anticipated to be minor to moderate. This is because the City Council has directed that the primary implementation of the Master Plan, especially as it involves the currently City-owned lands, is to be undertaken by a local, recognized non-profit organization that will pursue fundraising and other efforts at implementation. The City Council may elect at a later date to include City funds for individual projects such as the Bob Jones Trail extension, or for continued enhancement of the Prefumo Creek riparian corridor, as well as for agricultural or educational activities; however, such expenditures will be made on their own merits and in the context of overall City budgeting decisions.

Major cost considerations include:

1. Building design and construction;
2. Extension of urban services (water and sewer) to the site;
3. Establishing a small parking area;
4. Installation of a new well and irrigation system;
5. Initial establishment of the Bob Jones Trail section; and
6. Future extension of the trail.

No funding is currently available for the first three items above, and it is anticipated that two to three years may be needed to successfully accomplish the necessary fundraising to begin any significant construction.

Funding for the fourth and fifth item above is available as mitigation requirements for certain impacts of the Prefumo Commons development project, and those funds are expected to be able to be made quickly available when the two projects are desired.

No funding is currently available for the sixth item above, and the necessary land tenure has not been secured; therefore this expenditure is not foreseen as being available in the immediate future.

It is believed that many of these projects will prove to be attractive for grant funding, and such grants are anticipated to be the primary source of funds for them.

Maintenance costs are expected to be minor and can be absorbed by modest growth of the Ranger Service and Natural Resources program funds consistent with the continued growth and service of those programs to our citizens.

6.1 Contingency Plan: In the Event of Breach or Failure of the Non-Profit Operation

In the event of a breach of agreement or failure for any reason of the operation of the site by the non-profit entity, the City shall retain the right to enter the property and take immediate control of the property and the operation thereof. However, in such event it would be the intention of the City to permit reorganization of the nonprofit entity to take over the operation again, or to transfer operation to another qualified entity.

The basic procedure in event of failure or evident failure by the nonprofit entity to perform will be:

1. The City will inform the entity of the claim of breach of agreement or of failure to perform, detailing the factors leading to this conclusion; and allow a reasonable time period for the entity to respond and correct the matters at issue.
2. If, after such time period, the City in its sole judgment remains convinced that such breach still exists or that failure of the operation has occurred or is imminent, then it shall direct the entity to either (a) turn over interim operation of the site to the City, or (b) close down the operation, secure the buildings, and turn over the “mothballed” site to the City. In such circumstance any tenants growing crops on the site will be permitted to continue until such time as they can harvest their crop.
3. The City will then determine the most appropriate course of action to meet the intent of the Agricultural Master Plan in seeking reorganization of the nonprofit entity or entering into a similar agreement with a new entity.

7. Monitoring

Monitoring will consist of regular observation of the agricultural area and improvement thereon, and regular meetings with representatives of the nonprofit entity operating the site. Monitoring of the City-managed portions of the property will include at least annual inspections of the riparian area, the Bob Jones Trail area once established, and at least annual survey of the eucalyptus grove once it is in public ownership or control. The riparian area will also be monitored at least annually for issues related to stormwater management. Monitoring for weed abatement and within the eucalyptus groves will be done in the late spring prior to the fire season, and monitoring of Prefumo Creek and the drainage channel will be done in the summer to determine necessary activities prior to the rainy season.