



3

COMMUNITY DESIGN

This chapter summarizes existing conditions and issues relevant to the existing character of Camarillo and its General Plan Planning Area (Planning Area), which includes land within the City limits and surrounding areas within the City's Sphere of Influence and Camarillo Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB).

It focuses on the physical attributes that help define Camarillo's sense of place, including topography and views; urban form; street network; and historic resources and landmarks. This chapter also provides an overview of the character of different neighborhoods in the community.

Community Character

Community character refers to the distinct identity of a place. It is the collective impression a neighborhood or town makes on residents and visitors based on a combination of physical, social, cultural, and environmental attributes. Community character is important as it influences quality of life, economic vitality, and a shared sense of pride among residents. Preserving valued landscapes and neighborhood qualities, while guiding new development to be compatible and complementary, ensures that growth strengthens rather than diminishes Camarillo's identity. A clear understanding of community character enables the City to make decisions that strike a balance between change and continuity, honoring Camarillo's past while shaping its future. Camarillo draws its identity from a history rich in agriculture, its location on Highway 101, the Southern Pacific Railroad line, and the beauty of its natural environment, including mountain backdrops, agricultural fields, and creeks. A key element of Camarillo's character is the harmonious balance between its vibrant urbanized areas and the openness and scenic beauty of the surrounding environment. Other defining features of Camarillo's character include its agricultural heritage, small-town atmosphere, and high-quality architectural and landscape design.

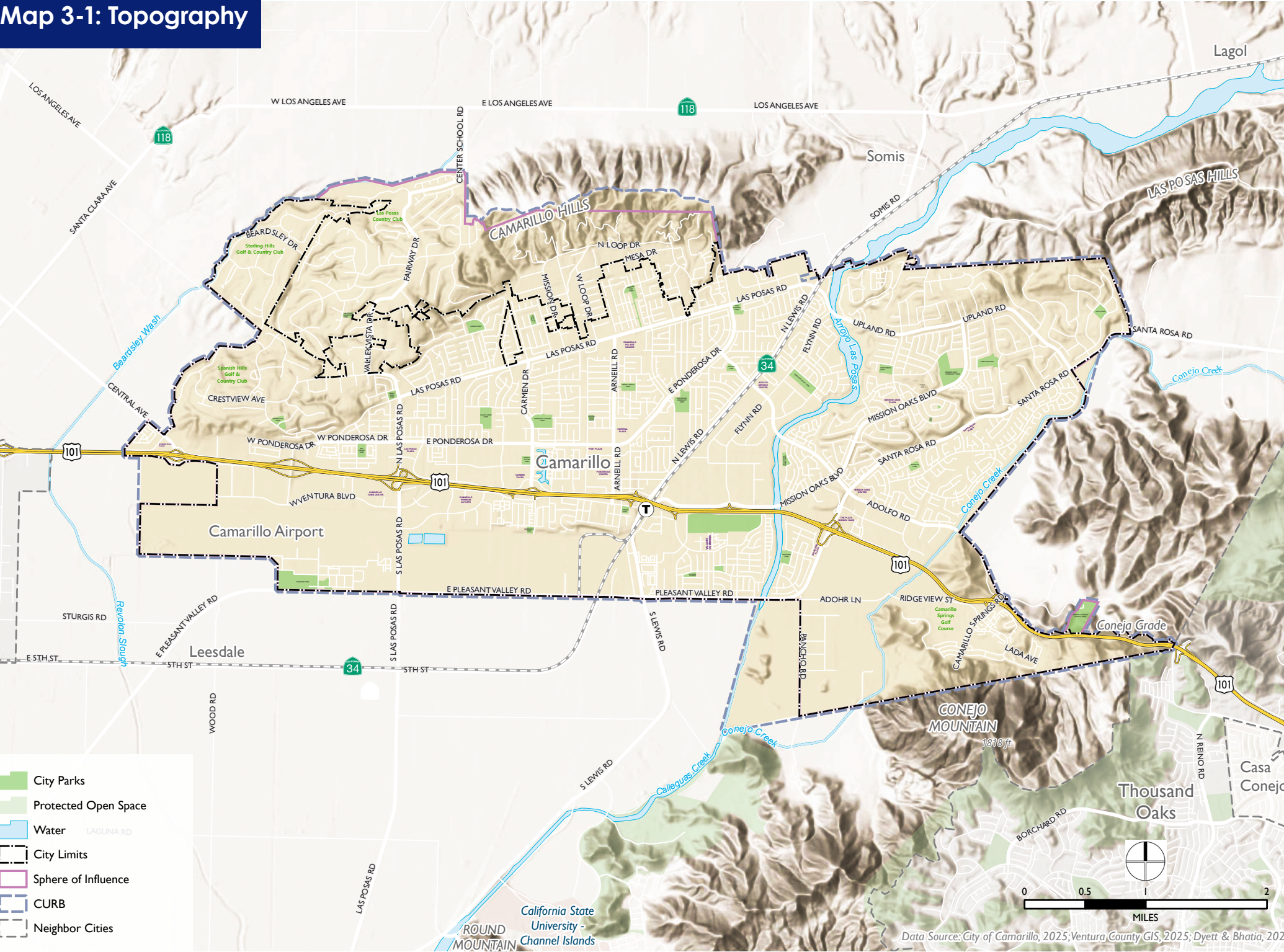
Camarillo's setting is further distinguished by open space protections established through Ventura County's Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources (SOAR), Camarillo Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB) initiatives and the CURB Element in the current general plan. As described in Chapter 2: Land Use and Development Trends and shown in **Map 2-1**, the SOAR initiative, passed in 1998, seeks to ensure protection and preservation of local undeveloped lands by requiring a majority vote of the people in order to rezone unincorporated open space, agricultural, or rural land for development. In addition, the CURB (shown in **Map 2-2**) promotes the formation of a cohesive community and helps prevent urban sprawl by establishing a line beyond which the City will not extend its services or infrastructure to new development. Within the city itself, careful planning and effective design standards and guidelines have helped create attractive neighborhoods and streetscapes as the city has grown.

TOPOGRAPHY AND VIEWS

Camarillo's community character is heavily defined by its unique topography. Situated within Pleasant Valley in southern Ventura County, the city occupies a distinct transition zone where the wide, flat coastal Oxnard Plain meets rugged inland mountain ranges as seen in **Map 1-1** and **Map 3-1**. This unique geography dictates development patterns, frames viewsheds, and provides natural boundaries that give the city a legible sense of place. The Planning Area is surrounded by significant landforms at varying distances that create a natural sense of enclosure and visual framing. The base of the prominent Conejo Mountain, rising over 1,800 feet, directly borders the southeastern portion of the Planning Area, forming an immediate and dramatic backdrop. To the south, the broader Santa Monica Mountains range lies approximately five miles from the Planning Area, defining the regional southern horizon. To the immediate north, the Camarillo Hills (reaching heights around 884 ft) provide a visible ridgeline that frames the northern edge of the community, while the Las Posas Hills rise near the northeastern border. Further north, the larger ranges of South Mountain (located approximately 1.75 miles from the city) and the Santa Susana Mountains (approximately 2.9 miles away) provide a layered distant backdrop separating Camarillo from the Santa Clara River Valley. Westward, the terrain opens expansively toward the agricultural fields of the Oxnard Plain and the distant Pacific Ocean.

Within the Planning Area, topography is characterized by a sharp contrast between the valley floor and surrounding uplands. The central and western portions of the city's developed core—including Old Town, most post-war residential grids, and the area surrounding the Airport—dominate the relatively flat terrain of the plain. However, this flat terrain transitions abruptly into steep slopes along the peripheral edges. The Camarillo Hills rise prominently immediately north of the flats, presenting significant grade changes in residential areas like Camarillo Heights and the upper sections of Las Posas Estates. Similarly, toward the southeast, the terrain transitions steeply up to the base of Conejo Mountain, defining the tucked-away setting of the Camarillo Springs neighborhood and providing an elevated perch for St. John's Seminary. The eastern boundary is defined by the most dramatic topographic feature in the region: the Conejo Grade along Highway 101. This steep hill forms a sharp drop between the higher

Map 3-1: Topography



- City Parks
- Protected Open Space
- Water
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- CURB
- Neighbor Cities



Data Source: City of Camarillo, 2025; Ventura County GIS, 2025; Dyett & Bhatia, 2025

Conejo Valley to the east and the lower coastal plain where Camarillo sits. The grade involves an elevation gain of approximately 800–900 feet (from valley floor to summit) over just a few miles. Driving down the grade offers wide, expansive views of the city and surrounding farmland below, acting as a major gateway that signals arrival into Camarillo.

Major natural drainage corridors also shape the city's topography. The Arroyo Las Posas cuts through the eastern part of the city, winding north to south and shaping drainage patterns and natural corridors. In addition, the Conejo Creek runs separately along the eastern boundary of the city and merges with the Arroyo Las Posas at the southernmost point of the Planning Area. Together, these two major waterways are the primary tributaries that form the Calleguas Creek, which drains the entire watershed. Combined with the open space protections of surrounding farmland, these topographic features create distinct viewsheds. From the flatlands, views are dominated by the framing mountains and hills. Conversely, from higher elevations in the hillside residential areas, expansive views extend across the agricultural buffers of the plain toward the ocean, reinforcing the city's identity as a community closely tied to its natural setting.



Scenic Corridors

Corridors along roadways, trails, and waterways provide views of a community that shape how it is perceived. Corridors that provide exceptional scenery or carry important cultural and historic significance are often designated as scenic corridors to protect the views they offer, recognizing their aesthetic value and the contributions they make to community character, tourism, and economic development. A scenic corridor consists of land that is visible from, adjacent to, and outside the highway right-of-way, and is comprised primarily of scenic and natural features. Much of what forms the visual image of Camarillo comes from what is seen from motor vehicles. The city's primary corridors provide a variety of views including commercial centers, residential neighborhoods, industrial developments, open space, agriculture, and mountain ridgelines. A framework of regulations at the State and local level is in place to protect scenic corridors in and around Camarillo, as described below.

State Scenic Highway Program

The California Scenic Highway Program, managed by Caltrans, officially designates certain state routes as scenic highways to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the adjacent corridors. The program identifies portions of the State highway system that require special conservation treatment. A highway receives official designation only after the local government adopts a Corridor Protection Program (CPP), which includes visual quality protection measures such as regulating land use, controlling outdoor advertising (prohibiting billboards), and regulating grading.

While there are no officially designated highway segments in Camarillo, the segment of US 101 from Route 27 (Topanga Cyn Blvd) to Route 46 (Near Paso Robles) is identified as eligible for designation as a State Scenic Highway, including the portion of the freeway that runs through the city. A highway identified as eligible for State Scenic Highway designation has been determined by Caltrans to possess scenic qualities that could qualify for official designation if protected by local action. While eligibility does not confer formal designation, it signals the presence of scenic resources that should be preserved to maintain designation potential.



- **Lewis Road.** The Lewis Road corridor is one of the most important visual corridors in the city as it is the primary north/south route through town. It is also known as State Route 34 and is owned and maintained by Caltrans. Visible features include views of the Camarillo Hills to the north, Conejo Mountain to the south, and agricultural land along the Calleguas Creek floodplain.
- **Las Posas Road/Upland Drive.** The corridor runs north-south as another major spine, offering views into both commercial zones and hillside neighborhoods. Visible features along the corridor include expansive agricultural fields, and views of the Santa Monica Mountains foothills and Conejo Mountain. At higher elevations on Upland Drive, views of the Camarillo Hills, Calleguas Creek corridor, and the Oxnard Plain are also seen.
- **Pleasant Valley Road/Santa Rosa Road.** This corridor extends east-west and is lined by open agricultural land, low-density development, and scenic views of distant hills. Visible features along the corridor include expansive farmland, views toward the Santa Monica Mountains to the south, Conejo Mountain to the southeast, and glimpses of the Camarillo Hills to the north.

For projects located along an eligible scenic corridor, Caltrans applies visual and aesthetic review standards as part of the CEQA (and where applicable, NEPA) environmental review process. This includes a Scenic Resource Evaluation and Visual Impact Assessment to identify scenic resources within the project viewshed and assess whether proposed improvements could adversely affect visual quality or scenic character. Where potential impacts are identified, design refinements or mitigation measures—such as context-sensitive design, landscaping, grading treatments, or visual screening—may be incorporated to avoid degrading scenic qualities and to preserve the corridor's eligibility for future designation.

Local Scenic Corridors

The General Plan Community Design Element identifies four scenic corridors, as seen in Map 3.2 recognized for their contributions towards Camarillo's high quality of life and are intended to highlight, promote and preserve the community's scenic and environmental characteristics and help reflect the community's character:

- **US 101.** US 101 acts as a major entry corridor with sweeping views of agricultural lands, foothills, and the Conejo Grade ascent. Visible features along the corridor include panoramic views of the Oxnard Plain's farmland, Conejo Mountain's rocky profile, Camarillo Hills, and glimpses of the Calleguas Creek corridor.

The Community Design Element (CDE) establishes policies and guidelines to ensure development is consistent with the City's character, addressing environmental, architectural, and aesthetic considerations. These policies and guidelines apply to new development projects and public infrastructure improvements along all designated local scenic corridors within the city and are implemented through discretionary review and project design evaluation. The CDE emphasizes protecting scenic views and reinforcing corridor identity while ensuring development responds sensitively to its visual context. CDE policies focus on protecting views of agricultural lands, hillsides, ridgelines, and other prominent landscape features visible from public roadways. Public infrastructure projects are guided to use context-sensitive design, including natural-appearing grading, walls, landscaping, and appropriately designed roadway elements. Private development along scenic corridors is encouraged to use appropriate building height, massing, setbacks, landscaping, and signage to minimize visual impacts and maintain corridor character. The CDE also promotes minimizing visual intrusion from utilities and infrastructure, including undergrounding utilities where feasible.

Heritage Zone

The CDE also identifies a Heritage Zone, which establishes a specific design theme for areas adjacent to US 101 and key interchanges and sets that shape initial impressions of the city. The Heritage Zone, shown on **Map 3-2**, includes parcels within 500 feet of the freeway and 1,000 feet of freeway interchanges (measured from the outer boundary of the Caltrans right-of-way). Policy GSC-1.1.3 establishes that buildings within the Heritage Zone should conform with design guidelines articulated in the element, which outline desired architectural styles (Mission, Monterey, Early California, Spanish, Mediterranean, or modern interpretations of these styles) and building materials (stucco, wood, glass, tile, textured blocks and other similar materials). No related standards have been adopted into the Zoning Code.

CITY STRUCTURE AND URBAN FORM

Community character is shaped by both a city's underlying structure and its physical form. *City structure* describes the broader organizational framework that influences land use patterns, demographic distribution, and economic activity, while *urban form* refers to the physical layout and design of development, including density, building scale, and transportation networks. Together, these elements explain not only how a city developed, but why it functions and appears as it does today.

Overall City Structure

The city's topography and agricultural greenbelts have helped preserve distinct boundaries between urban and rural land, maintaining views of surrounding hills and open spaces as seen in **Map 3-1**. These natural features have also shaped a city layout that does not follow a typical grid, instead reflecting planned development on former agricultural lands, the relatively flat valley floor, and other form-giving features within and around City limits. Mountains, hills, and creek corridors—including the Camarillo Hills, Conejo Mountain, Arroyo Las Posas, Conejo Creek, and Calleguas Creek—have guided the placement of neighborhoods, commercial centers, and industrial uses, shaping growth patterns while also providing open-space buffers. Major roadways such as Highway 101 and Ventura Boulevard have further directed development along accessible corridors.

Today, Camarillo's contemporary city structure reflects a predominantly suburban pattern structured around Highway 101 and a network of major arterials, including Ventura Boulevard, Lewis Road, Las Posas Road, and Santa Rosa Road. As shown on **Map 3-3**, development is organized along these corridors, with commercial, retail, and office uses concentrated near freeway interchanges and major intersections, and residential neighborhoods extending outward from these corridors. Public and institutional schools, and city facilities, are distributed in residential neighborhoods across the city. Industrial uses are concentrated in distinct districts with ready access to the regional transportation network. Vacant sites are primarily seen near the northeast border of the City, as well as within the Sphere of Influence (SOI) in the northern portion of the city adjacent to rural residential areas. Within this structure, Camarillo's commercial centers function as activity nodes or focal points located at prominent crossroads and connecting adjacent neighborhoods. The Camarillo Airport and the city's industrial districts function as employment nodes, while the Camarillo Premium Outlets is a regional attractor.

Urban Form

Camarillo is a predominantly low-rise, horizontally oriented community with an urban form that reflects postwar suburban growth and transportation infrastructure development. The city's overall shape is elongated east-west, generally paralleling Highway 101, with development dispersed outward along historic corridors rather than concentrated into a single high-density center. This results in a decentralized urban form characterized by multiple activity nodes connected by arterial roadways.



Development density in Camarillo generally ranges from 4 to 16 units per acre in most of the city, with single-family residential neighborhoods forming the dominant land use across much of the city, and higher density multi-family residential often acting as a buffer between commercial areas and single-family neighborhoods as shown in **Map 3-3**. Overall density gradually decreases toward the edges of the city, where development transitions into lower-density residential areas interspersed with open space, agricultural land, and recreational uses. Towards the city's outer edges, large open-space and recreational features further shape the urban form. Golf courses located along the northern and eastern portions of the city – in neighborhoods including Camarillo Springs, Sterling Hills, and Spanish Hills – function as low-intensity land uses that buffer surrounding residential neighborhoods and contribute to a more dispersed development pattern. In these areas, residential development is often integrated around open space amenities, reinforcing a suburban landscape with strong spatial separation between neighborhoods.

Building heights across the city generally range between 10 and 20 feet, contributing to Camarillo's suburban scale and visual continuity. As seen in **Map 3-5**, the majority of structures fall within the one- to two-story range, particularly in residential areas. Building heights across most of the city range from one to three stories, with taller structures limited to select industrial districts and commercial nodes such as the Camarillo Premium Outlets area and along U.S. 101. Older structures in central areas generally exhibit lower heights and finer-grained massing, while newer commercial and mixed use developments tend to include larger footprints and slightly taller forms.

As seen in **Map 3-4**, buildings built before 1950 are generally concentrated in the northern and central parts of the Planning Area. The oldest buildings in Camarillo are found in Old Town, near the Metrolink/Amtrack Station, west of Arneill Road, and north of Las Posas Road, including within the SOI. Buildings built between 1950 and 1970, during the establishment of the city of Camarillo, are found in central Camarillo, north of Highway 101, and west of North Lewis Road. In the 1970s and 1980s, the City grew to the east and to the north, with considerable development in the SOI in the northwestern part of the Planning Area. Since 2000, development has primarily occurred east of Lewis Road and north of Las Posas Road. Additionally, several

major projects are currently planned or under construction, including infill developments in more central areas as well as large-scale residential communities on the city's western periphery, such as the Springville and Camino Ruiz areas, as described in Chapter 2.

Street patterns and block configurations vary by era and location. Older central neighborhoods in the flatter portion of Camarillo – particularly near Old Town and along Ventura Boulevard – exhibit more regular grid or modified-grid patterns that support walkability and connectivity. In contrast, later suburban neighborhoods developed primarily after the 1960s feature curvilinear streets, loop roads, and cul-de-sacs, reflecting the hilly topography of these areas and accommodating automobile-oriented circulation.

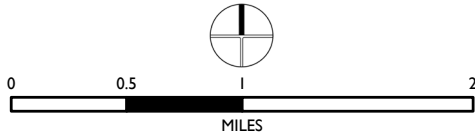
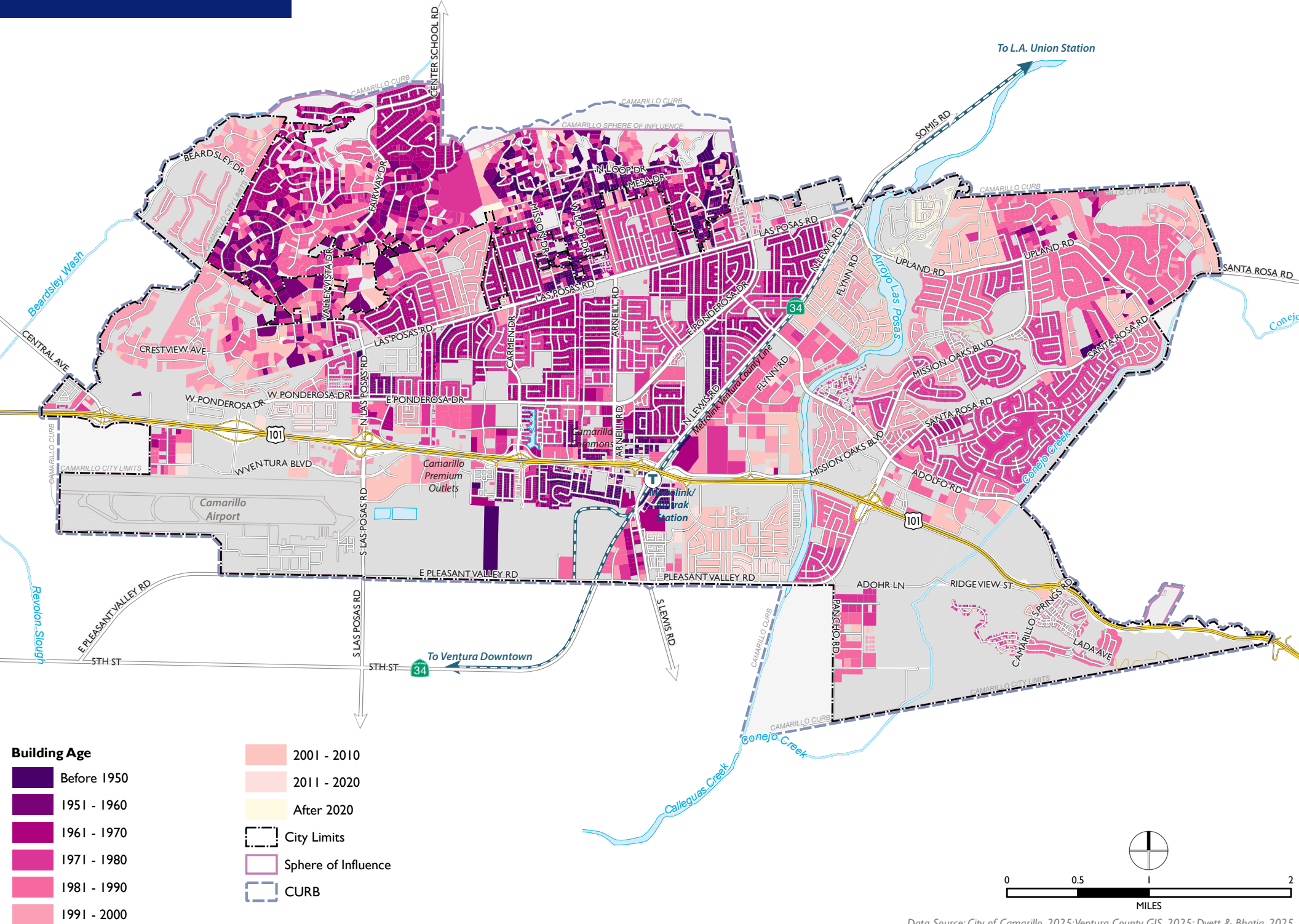
STREET NETWORK AND MAJOR CORRIDORS

Street Network

Camarillo's street network is structured around a hierarchy of arterial corridors that organize development and circulation across the city, as illustrated on **Map 3-3**. Rather than following a uniform grid or strict cardinal orientation, the street system reflects planned development on former agricultural lands, the city's relatively flat valley floor, and localized topographic constraints along foothills and hillside areas. While much of the city is served by an orthogonal street system, variations occur where roads follow natural landforms, agricultural property boundaries, and the Highway 101 freeway corridor. Major corridors provide continuity across the city, while collector and local streets branch inward to serve residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, employment areas, and civic uses.

U.S. Highway 101 bisects Camarillo and serves as the city's primary regional transportation spine. Freeway interchanges at Las Posas Road, Lewis Road, Springville Drive, and Santa Rosa Road distribute regional traffic into the arterial network and have influenced the location of commercial, industrial, and higher-intensity land uses near these access points. A network of primary arterial corridors forms the backbone of citywide circulation, linking neighborhoods with commercial districts, employment centers, and regional destinations. Corridors such as Lewis Road (State Route 34), Las Posas Road, Pleasant

Map 3-4: Building Age



Data Source: City of Camarillo, 2025; Ventura County GIS, 2025; Dyett & Bhatia, 2025



Valley Road, and Santa Rosa Road provide direct regional connections, linking Camarillo westward to Oxnard, east toward Santa Rosa Valley and northeast toward Somis and unincorporated areas of Ventura County. Additional arterials—including Carmen Drive, Upland Road, Springville Drive, and Adolfo Road—function primarily as major internal city connectors linking larger residential zones and activity centers. Most major arterials in Camarillo are designed as multi-lane roadways featuring landscaped medians, dedicated turn lanes, and bicycle facilities, expanding in select locations near freeway interchanges and commercial centers to accommodate higher traffic volumes.

From the arterial system, collector streets extend into neighborhoods, providing connections between arterials and local residential areas, schools, parks, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Streets such as Arneill Road, Daily Drive, and Mission Oaks Boulevard function as key internal connectors across multiple neighborhoods. Local residential streets form the finest-grained level of the network and typically provide direct access to homes; examples include Ponderosa Drive and Temple Avenue. A large number of local residential streets in established subdivisions terminate in culs-de-sac, reinforcing a quiet suburban character. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are integrated into much of the street system. Class II bike lanes are common along arterials such as Las Posas Road, Mission Oaks Boulevard, and Pleasant Valley Road, while Class III bike routes provide shared lanes along neighborhood streets. The Calleguas Creek bike path (Class I) and other separated multi-use trails supplement on-street facilities, creating additional non-motorized connections through the city. Additionally, shared roadways are also found along Lewis Road and

Crestview Avenue. Most streets within developed areas include sidewalks on at least one side, contributing to walkability in residential and commercial districts. These facilities enhance non-motorized connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, employment areas, commercial destinations, and adjacent communities.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

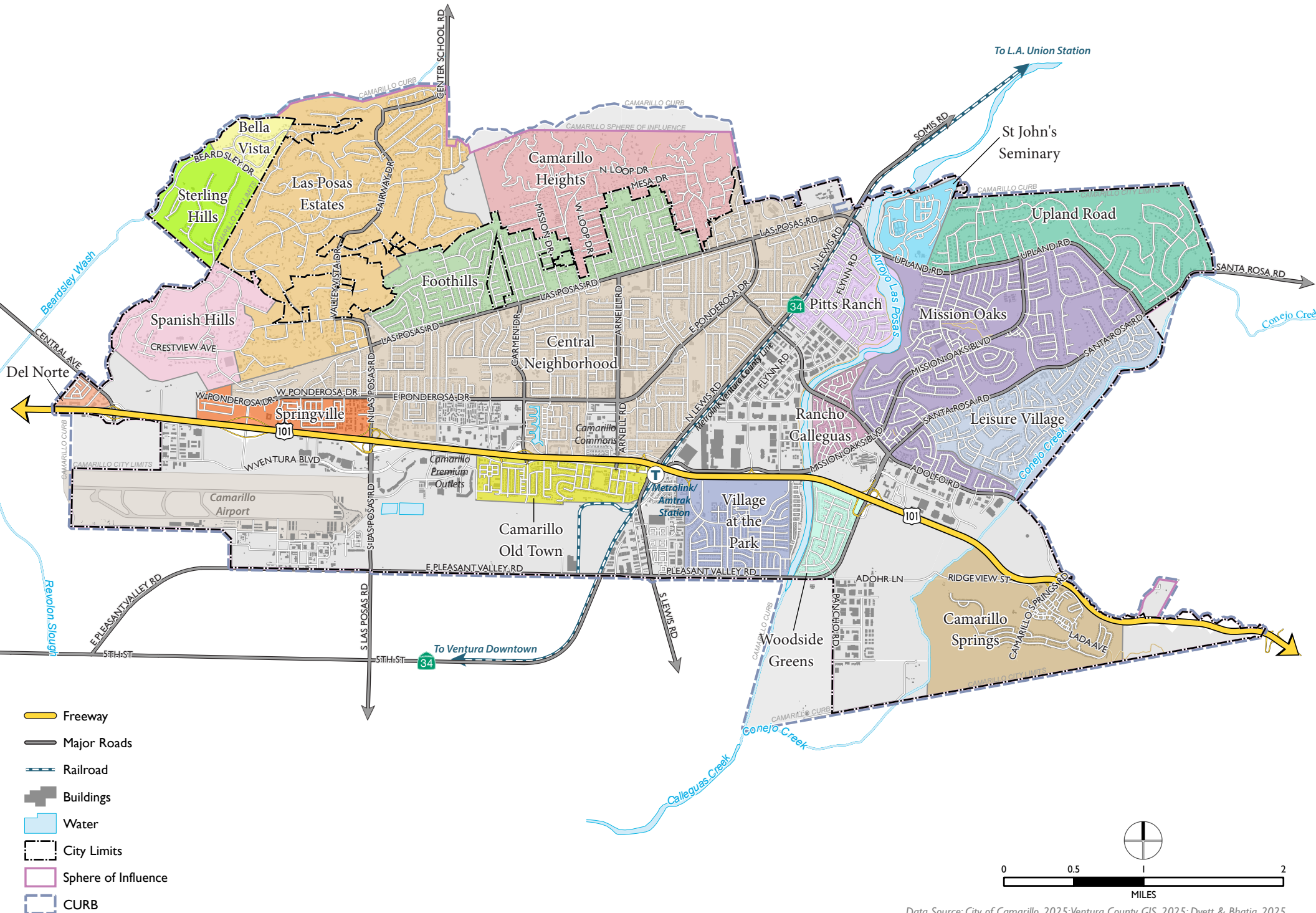
Neighborhood character is an essential component of community character as it reflects how residents experience the built environment at the most everyday scale. Features such as street and block patterns, architectural styles, landscaping, and walkability shape how cohesive, identifiable, and livable different parts of the city feel.

Camarillo Neighborhoods

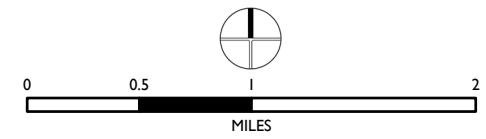
Residential areas in Camarillo have largely been the result of planned development. Most neighborhoods were established through recorded subdivision maps and masterplanned residential projects. Neighborhoods such as Mission Oaks (developed through multiple residential tract subdivisions beginning in the 1980s), the Springville neighborhood (guided by the Springville Specific Plan), Village at the Park (a large masterplanned community developed on former agricultural land), and Camarillo Heights (an established hillside neighborhood developed through subdivided residential tracts with estate-style lots) exemplify the city's pattern of developer-built subdivisions that follow the City's land use framework.

Camarillo's neighborhoods are typically comprised of 150 to 500 residential units, emphasizing a relationship with public spaces and balance vehicular circulation with pedestrian mobility. There are 17 established residential neighborhoods in Camarillo, as seen in **Map 3-6**. These neighborhoods are distinct in identity, characterized by design elements such as their street patterns, architecture typologies, landscaping, public realm elements, and other attributes that each contribute in their own way to Camarillo's sense of place. The 17 neighborhoods shown on **Map 3-6** represent broad geographic areas used to describe residential areas across the city. Within these areas, there are numerous individual subdivisions, planned developments, and gated communities that are commonly known by their own names. These smaller developments contribute to neighborhood identity.

Map 3-6: Camarillo Neighborhoods



- Freeway
- Major Roads
- Railroad
- Buildings
- Water
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- CURB



Data Source: City of Camarillo, 2025; Ventura County GIS, 2025; Dyett & Bhatia, 2025

Neighborhood streets such as those in the Las Posas Estates and on Upland Drive exhibit an organic, semi-rural street pattern, while the Foothills and Village at the Park neighborhoods are loosely based on a grid pattern. Development within residential neighborhoods such as Village at the Park, Springville, and Camarillo Commons are guided by the standards and guidelines provided in their respective Specific Plans.

Older vs. Newer Neighborhoods

The first residential units built in Camarillo were primarily small, one-story houses. As shown in **Map 3-4**, the oldest built residential areas in the city, pre-1950s, are primarily seen in Camarillo Old Town and portions of Camarillo Heights. The next 30 years saw residential development in the Las Posas Estates, Central Neighborhood, Leisure Village and parts of the Foothills neighborhoods. Newer development (post 2000) is majorly seen in neighborhoods closer to Lewis Road, which include St John's Seminary, Pitts Ranch, and Village at the Park.

Older neighborhoods tend to have modified grid street patterns, uniform lot sizes, and single- or two-story homes, reflecting the City's low-density residential framework in place at that time. More recent areas—Village at the Park, Springville, and Camarillo Commons—layer in Specific Plan standards: finer-grained block structures, integrated parks and trails, and a broader housing mix (townhomes, apartments, and flex-lot single-family) supported by RPD (Residential Planned Development) zoning that spans low to high densities. Village at the Park also introduced mixed use buildings (ground-floor commercial with apartments above), signaling a shift toward walkable, amenity-rich neighborhood centers.



Village at the Park

Hills vs. Flats

Hillside neighborhoods such as Spanish Hills and Las Posas Estates sit on sloping terrain managed by the City's hillside development policies (generally applied where natural slopes are ≥ 20 percent), which emphasize clustering, grading limits, and ridgeline protection. These areas present curvilinear, semi-rural street patterns, estate-scale or variable lot sizes, and more varied architectural massing responding to topography. By contrast, flatland neighborhoods—Mission Oaks, Foothills, and Springville—follow legible modified grids and cul-de-sacs with consistent setbacks and lot dimensions, and they more readily accommodate medium- and higher-density RPD districts and neighborhood commercial/mixed-use nodes.



Spanish Hills

Residential Typologies

Architectural typologies are common among many of the neighborhoods, as well as other design elements and features. Many of Camarillo's neighborhood sidewalks meander along the street edge and are shaded by mature trees. Fencing materials, including concrete masonry and wood, are found along the edges of most residential subdivisions. Landscaping in the city's residential neighborhoods is colorful, textured, and well maintained, which helps to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Overall, there are three major residential typologies in Camarillo including:

- **Single-Family Residential.** Camarillo's residential neighborhoods are primarily made up of single-family homes with elementary schools and parks. These neighborhoods are generally built on a modified grid pattern with tree lined streets served by large arterial roads. The homes are a variety of styles that include mostly one- and two-story structures on $\pm 5,000$ -square foot to $\pm 7,000$ -square foot lots.

- **Hillside Residential.** Residential neighborhoods such as Spanish Hills and Las Posas Estates are considered to be hillside residential. These homes are typically constructed on larger lots and are not uniform in lot size. A variety of architectural styles are found within the hillside residential areas. Walkability tends to be lower in hillside areas due to curvilinear patterns, grade changes, and larger lot spacing, compared to the more connected street networks and shorter blocks found in flatland neighborhoods.
- **Multi-Family Residential.** Multi-family residential development is generally concentrated in central Camarillo, where it often acts as a buffer between commercial areas and single-family neighborhoods. Leisure Village and Camarillo Springs are exceptions that are located towards the eastern and south-eastern boundaries of the Planning Area. These originated as distinct, large-scale masterplanned lifestyle communities—specifically age-restricted senior living and golf course oriented development, respectively—requiring large tracts of land available only on the city’s edge at the time of construction. Across Camarillo, multifamily developments typically include apartments, townhomes, and condominiums and commonly provide shared on-site amenities such as pools, common green spaces, walking paths, tennis courts, and recreation rooms. Many multifamily residential areas are also located within walking distance of parks, schools, public transportation, and commercial centers.

Notable departures from these typologies include Old Town and certain newer specific plan areas. Old Town



has a pre-War development pattern that features a finer grained urban fabric with smaller parcels, higher as-built floor area ratios (FARs), mixed use buildings, and a series of intersecting roadways that provide walking connections to shops and services from adjacent neighborhoods. The community design strategy used in the Village at the Park Specific Plan area (adopted 2001) and Springville Specific Plan area (adopted 2008) deliberately integrates a variety of housing types with community amenities.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic resources include buildings, sites, features, or objects that tell the story of a community’s shared heritage. Preserving and enhancing historic and cultural resources helps to tie generations together and contribute to a distinctive sense of place and hometown pride.

Camarillo’s most prominent historic resource is Camarillo Ranch, which was originally built in 1892 as the primary residence of the Adolfo Camarillo family. Designed in the Queen Anne-style by Franklin Ward and Herman Anlauf, the three-story mansion had intricate woodwork, a wraparound porch, a large veranda, and sprawling lawns sitting at the base of the Conejo Mountains. The property was fully restored in 2001 and now features a fully furnished museum and event space that hosts community gatherings, private events, and educational opportunities for visitors and students. The iconic property was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003 at the local level of significance under Criterion B for its association with Adolfo Camarillo and under Criterion C for its architecture. In 2005, it was also listed as a California Point of Historical Interest. In addition, the Camarillo Ranch Mule Barn built in 1905 is included as a contributing structure within the historic property.

Camarillo also has two churches that have been determined eligible for listing in National (NR) or California (CR) Registers. These include the Pleasant Valley Baptist Church and Saint Mary Magdalen Church. Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, now known as the Evangelical Free Church, is located on Ventura Boulevard. The church building was constructed in 1891 and expanded in the 1930’s as the community grew after selling a two acre plot of land formerly used as a cemetery to Don Adolfo Camarillo and his brother Juan. The latter, Saint Mary Magdalen Church, is also located on Ventura Boulevard, was established in



Evangelical Free Church

1913 by Juan and Adolfo Camarillo, and reflects California's Mission heritage with a white stucco exterior, red tile roofing, outdoor patio surrounded by lush gardens and a series of arches, and colorful stained-glass windows. It was also designated as a Ventura County Historical Landmark in March 1972. Other Ventura County designated historical landmarks in the Planning Area include the Camarillo Ranch House mentioned above, as well as the Rose-McGrath Ranch House (just outside the City limit), and the Eucalyptus Trees along U.S. Route 101.

- *The Rose-McGrath Ranch House*, built in the 1890's in Oxnard, was designated as a Ventura County Historical Landmark in June 2002. It is an early agricultural residence associated with both the Rose and McGrath families, who were influential in shaping Ventura County's farming history. The structure was relocated to Camarillo in 2001, where it was restored and incorporated into the remaining historic ranch property.
- *The eucalyptus trees along U.S. Route 101* were planted in 1892 by Adolfo Camarillo as a functional windbreak for surrounding agricultural fields. The grove remains a visible historic landscape feature and is closely associated with the early development of the Camarillo Ranch. Its preservation during later highway expansions contributes to the community's established semi-rural character and provides a longstanding visual identifier for the area. These trees were designated as a Ventura County Historical Landmark in October 1978.

In addition, the following buildings also provide an identifiable asset to the community design of Camarillo and the architectural foundation for the Spanish style of the Heritage Zone:

- **St. John's Seminary.** Juan Camarillo, Jr. donated 100 acres from his Rancho Calleguas on March 3, 1927, with the specific desire to have the land used for a seminary named for St. John the Evangelist. On January 14, 1938, John J. Cantwell announced the planned construction of the seminary.
- **Griffin residence on Daily Drive.** The Griffin residence was built in 1931 by Wendell Phillips Daily. The property was sold to the Griffin Family in 1951 and operated as a mortuary until 2022. The house was also evaluated as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources in 2022.
- **Charles Daily House (Boy Scout Headquarters).** The Charles Daily House is a craftsman-style house built in 1911 and is accompanied by a barn. The structures are the former residence of county pioneer Charles J. Daily and now serves as the Ventura County headquarters for The Boy Scouts of America.

Over the years, studies have identified at least 18 recorded archaeological resources and at least 134 potentially historic built resources in Camarillo. Based on evaluations by architectural historians, the majority of the latter were found not eligible for or removed from listing or designation, including a number of naval air weapons station points that have been demolished and replaced by housing developments. Officially designated historic resources and landmarks in Camarillo are shown on [Map 3-7](#).

PUBLIC ART

Public art plays an important role in shaping community character by creating distinctive visual landmarks, reinforcing local identity, and enhancing the quality of



St. John's Seminary

public spaces. In many cities, public art programs or public art ordinances provide a formal framework for integrating art into development. Camarillo currently relies on a more informal, project-specific approach; however, the City may wish to establish a more formal public art program. Options for this can be explored through the General Plan Update.

Camarillo has been gradually integrating public art into its community through various projects, often in collaboration with local artists and organizations, or partnerships with community groups. While the city does not yet have a formal, codified public art program, it currently relies on policies in the Community Design Element that encourage the incorporation of public art in larger development projects, generally those exceeding 25,000 square feet. These policies are typically implemented through conditions of approval and provide general guidance on the type of art desired.

Recent initiatives indicate a growing commitment to incorporating art into public spaces. Public art in Camarillo is typically approved and implemented on a project-by-project basis. An effort to establish a formal public art program approximately 8 to 10 years ago was not pursued further due to concerns about costs. In addition, the City Council's Strategic Plan for FY 2025/26 explicitly includes the objective: "Explore various options for financially supporting the arts program and ways to commission public art to celebrate the identity and history of Camarillo," signaling a broader commitment to developing and sustaining public art in the city. The Old Town Strategic Plan update, currently in draft form, also recommends establishing a public art program for the area. A City-sponsored program could potentially subsidize or support art on private properties in Old Town. As part of the General Plan Update process, the City can further explore interest in expanding public art policies and potential incentives for incorporating art into new development.

In many cases, these artworks are commissioned and developed through collaborative processes in which artists work with City staff, local historians, community stakeholders, and in some cases youth participants, to ensure the work reflects local heritage and values. Some projects are directly commissioned by the City of Camarillo, while others originate from partnerships with private entities or nonprofit organizations.



Recent public art projects in the city include the following:

- **Dizdar Park Art Commission.** As part of the recent renovation of Dizdar Park in Camarillo's Old Town, a dedicated space was set aside for a public art element. The project is a key component of the park's aesthetic and civic enhancement. This artwork will be directly commissioned by the City of Camarillo, with the City Council approving the artist selection and contract; the city has engaged Studio Channel Islands to manage the public art selection process and encourage community involvement.
- **Interpretive Metal Plaques (Central Plaza):** Artist Mollie Doctrow was commissioned to create 10 metal plaques for the Central Plaza. These plaques highlight the city's history, native wildflowers, and scenic vistas. The project involved consulting with historians and local heritage organizations, emphasizing the City Council's goal to celebrate Camarillo's identity. The plaques were created from woodcuts cast in metal. Doctrow's design process included community discussions and research into local ecological and historical themes, which directly informed the imagery used on each plaque. This commission was initiated and funded by the City of Camarillo as part of its effort to integrate interpretive historical elements into public spaces.
- **"Colorful Camarillo" Mural.** Unveiled in December 2024 at the Camarillo Premium Outlets, this vibrant mural is a collaborative effort between Visit Camarillo and the outlets. It prominently features the legendary

Camarillo White Horse (symbolizing Adolfo Camarillo's legacy), the historic Camarillo Ranch House, and the Bougainvillea Fiesta (the city's official flower), capturing the city's unique character and heritage. This mural was funded and commissioned by private partners (Visit Camarillo and Camarillo Premium Outlets) with local artists selected to implement the design, demonstrating a public-private partnership approach to public art in the city.

- **“Camarillo Breeze” Sculpture.** A stainless-steel sculpture known informally for its mermaid-like forms was installed at the corner of Arneill Road and Ponderosa Drive as part of Central Plaza and city art enhancements. Known as Camarillo Breeze, the abstract piece was conceptually approved in coordination with the plaza remodel and fabricated by Black Magic Metal Art of Oxnard based on a design by artist Joe Adams, reflecting local interest in dynamic, contemporary public sculpture. While located in a public setting, this artwork was driven by the plaza's private redevelopment process rather than a direct city commission.
- **Old Town Bronze Statues.** A series of bronze statues in Old Town Camarillo depict historically significant figures such as Don Adolfo Camarillo, Joel McCrea, and Walter Brennan. These works were commissioned by the City in the late 1990s and early 2000s to reinforce local heritage and place identity along Ventura Boulevard and at key public spaces. Created by sculptor Guillermo Castaño in consultation with community leaders, they provide both visual anchors and interpretive connections to Camarillo's historical narrative. Additional sculptural elements in Old Town include bougainvillea sculptures placed atop pilasters along Ventura Boulevard and eagle sculptures located in front of the former courthouse.
- **Calixa Apartments Obelisk.** A sculptural obelisk installed as part of the Calixa Apartments development serves as a public art feature integrated into the project's site design. The obelisk functions as a focal point within the development's open space and pedestrian areas, contributing a vertical sculptural element that enhances the visual character of the project and its surrounding streetscape.
- **CPS Produce Crates Installation.** An art installation referencing Camarillo's agricultural heritage incorporates sculptural produce crate elements as a visual feature within the development. The installation reflects the city's historic role as an agricultural center within Ventura County, where produce stands and

farming activities historically occurred along the edges of the community and surrounding valley lands. By referencing produce crates—an iconic element of agricultural production and distribution—the artwork serves as an interpretive element that connects contemporary development with the region's farming history.

- **Vista Campanario Mural.** A mural located at the Vista Campanario residential community adds color and visual interest to the site and contributes to neighborhood identity. The mural contributes to placemaking within the residential complex by activating building walls and creating a distinctive visual feature within the development's shared spaces.





Key Findings and Implications

- Natural Setting and Visual Identity.** Camarillo's surrounding topography and preserved open-space edges are among its most defining characteristics. The contrast between the flat valley floor and the encircling hills and mountain ranges—including Conejo Mountain, the Camarillo Hills, and distant regional ranges—creates a strong sense of enclosure and visual orientation. These landforms frame prominent viewsheds throughout the city and establish clear urban boundaries that reinforce Camarillo's identity as a community closely tied to its natural environment. Longstanding growth controls such as SOAR and CURB have been instrumental in maintaining this relationship by limiting outward expansion and preserving agricultural and open-space buffers at the city's edges.
- Scenic Corridors and Gateways.** Major transportation corridors strongly influence how Camarillo is experienced and perceived. Highway 101 functions as the city's primary re-gional gateway, while designated local scenic corridors—including Lewis Road, Las Posas Road/Upland Drive, and Pleasant Valley Road/Santa Rosa Road—provide expansive views of agricultural lands, hillsides, and mountain backdrops. The State Scenic Highway Program establishes requirements for development along US 101 and Community Design Element policies and guidelines apply to development along these corridors, but related standards have not been codified in the Camarillo zoning ordinance. The City may wish to adopt objective zoning standards for development along scenic corridors, particularly in view of new State housing law. The General Plan Update process can be an opportunity to gather community input that can inform objective design and development standards for these visually important areas.
- Public Views and Visual Vantage Points.** Scenic views of agricultural lands, hillsides, ridgelines, and mountain backdrops are experienced from a variety of public vantage points throughout Camarillo, including roadways, parks, trails, and other open spaces. These views contribute significantly to the community's visual identity and reinforce the relationship between the built environment and the surrounding natural landscape. The current Community Design Element (CDE) primarily focuses on protecting views along designated scenic corridors and from public roadways. As the city evolves, the General Plan Update process provides an opportunity to consider whether additional policies are needed to recognize and protect important views from other public vantage points across the community.
- City Structure.** Camarillo's contemporary city structure reflects a suburban development pattern structured around Highway 101 and a network of major arterials. Development is organized along these corridors, with commercial, retail, and office uses concentrated near freeway interchanges and major intersections, and residential neighborhoods extending outward from these corridors. Within this structure, Camarillo's commercial centers function as activity nodes, or focal points located at prominent crossroads and connecting adjacent neighborhoods. Today the activity nodes are predominantly commercial in character, but

broadening and intensifying the mix of uses within them can help strengthen their role as vibrant focal points, offering a wider array of uses and amenities for the community and supporting economic vitality.

- **Urban Form.** Camarillo is a predominantly low-rise, horizontally oriented community. Density and development intensity gradually decreases toward the edges of the city, where development transitions into lower-density residential areas interspersed with open space, agricultural land, and recreational uses. Development is generally dispersed along arterial corridors rather than concentrated into a single high-density center, resulting in a decentralized urban form characterized by multiple activity nodes.
- **Old Town Urban Form.** Old Town is a notable exception to the prevailing pattern of urban form in Camarillo. Its pre-War development pattern features a finer grained urban fabric with smaller parcels, higher as-built floor area ratios (FARs), mixed use buildings and a series of intersecting roadways that provide easy walking connections to shops and services from adjacent neighborhoods. Its walkable urban form and distinctive architecture combine to create a unique experience and a placemaking opportunity for Camarillo.
- **Neighborhood Diversity and Identity.** Residential neighborhoods in Camarillo are primarily the result of planned subdivisions and Specific Plan areas, producing clearly defined neighborhood identities with relatively consistent internal character. Variations in street patterns, housing types, and architectural form reflect differences in era, planning approach, and topography. Older neighborhoods generally feature modified grid patterns and smaller-scale development, while newer master-planned communities incorporate a broader mix of housing types, integrated parks, and neighborhood-serving amenities. Hillside neighborhoods exhibit curvilinear street patterns and estate-scale lots shaped by terrain, while flatland neighborhoods support more regular layouts and higher connectivity. Together, these patterns create a diverse yet cohesive residential fabric citywide.
- **Street Network and Mobility Character.** Camarillo's street network reflects its suburban development history and natural setting, with major arterials providing regional connectivity and collector and local streets serving residential areas. While arterials effectively link activity nodes and adjacent jurisdictions, many

corridors remain auto-oriented, characterized by long block lengths, wide roadways, and limited pedestrian crossings. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are present throughout much of the city, but connectivity, comfort, and completeness vary by corridor and neighborhood. Because many major streets also function as scenic corridors and gateways, their design and operation play a critical role in shaping overall community character.

- **Historic Resources and Cultural Identity.** Although limited in number, historic resources make an important contribution to Camarillo's sense of place. Landmark properties such as Camarillo Ranch, St. Mary Magdalen Church, and St. John's Seminary provide tangible connections to the city's agricultural, cultural, and architectural heritage. Historic landscape features, including the eucalyptus groves along Highway 101, further reinforce Camarillo's semi-rural identity and long-standing visual character. The preservation and sensitive integration of these resources will be an important part of Camarillo's placemaking strategy as the city continues to evolve.
- **Public Art and Placemaking.** Public art is an emerging component of Camarillo's community character. While the city does not currently have a formal public art program, recent installations demonstrate a growing interest in using art to celebrate local history, enhance public spaces, and strengthen place identity. Existing artworks—particularly in Old Town and key commercial areas—function as visual landmarks and contribute to civic pride. As part of the General Plan Update, the City may wish to explore options for establishing a more formal public art program, as well as gauging interest in broader public art policies and potential incentives for incorporating art into new development. Continued exploration of public art opportunities presents a means to further reinforce Camarillo's identity and enhance the quality of its public realm.