



# Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*



**Richard J. Bruckner**  
Director

## **NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING**

**DATE:** March 28, 2014

**TO:** State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Organizations and Interested Parties

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report in Compliance with Title 14, section 15082(a) of the California Code of Regulations.

The County of Los Angeles (County) is the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed project identified below. The County has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide Responsible Agencies and other interested parties with information describing the project and to identify its potential environmental effects pursuant to State requirements.

**AGENCIES:** The County requests your agency's views on the scope and content of the environmental information relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project, in accordance with Title 14, section 15082(b) of the California Code of Regulations. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by the County when considering any permits that your agency must issue, or other approval for the project.

**ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERESTED PARTIES:** The County requests your comments and concerns regarding the environmental issues associated with construction and operation of the proposed project.

**PROJECT, PERMITS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** The Homestead South project, which is the third tract map implementing the approved Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, proposes residential, commercial, and non-residential development within the tract map site and other associated improvements to provide adequate circulation, service, and utility systems to the tract map site.

Project Title: Homestead South

Project No. TR060678-(5)

Project approvals needed to implement the Project include the following:

**Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 060678** to authorize subdivision of the Project Site into 699 single-family lots, 29 condominium lots for 2,918 multi-family units, one commercial lot, and additional lots for, among other uses, Spineflower Preserve, parks, school sites, private recreation, and open space on 1,745.7 acres. VTTM 060678 would subdivide the Project Site into a total of 1,008 lots;

**General Plan Amendment No. 201400001** to amend the County's Plan of Highways to reclassify the designation of Long Canyon Road;

**Conditional Use Permit No. 200500150** to authorize: (a) development within the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan's River Corridor Special Management Area/Significant Ecological Area 23 boundary (River Corridor SMA/SEA 23), (b) on-site grading in excess of 100,000 cubic yards and development of Project-related infrastructure (including water tanks and utilities, both on-site and off-site), and (c) development of 250 second dwelling units;

**Oak Tree Permit No. 200500057** to authorize the removal of 380 oak trees and the encroachment upon 82 oak trees within the Project Site; and

**Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Substantial Conformance Review No. 201400004** to authorize: (a) hillside grading, (b) changing the land use designation of a Specific Plan-designated Commercial parcel to Residential; and (c) modifying residential lot widths. These modifications are pursuant to Section 5.2 of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, by which the Planning Director determines whether proposed development or uses substantially comply with the standards, regulations, and guidelines of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan.

**Environmental Review No. 200500150:** Environmental Impact Report

**OTHER REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS:** Over the years, numerous public agencies have considered and approved other federal, state, and regional permits and authorizations needed to implement the County-approved Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, which includes the proposed Project site. The other permits, approvals, and authorizations were issued as part of the related Newhall Ranch Resource Management and Development Plan (RMDP) and Spineflower Conservation Plan (SCP) project approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Also, the Newhall Ranch RMDP/SCP project was the subject of a separate Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) approved by both the Corps and CDFW.

The following permits and approvals, among others, already have been issued in connection with the development of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan site:

- (a) Clean Water Act section 404 permit (No. SPL-2003-01264-AOA) issued by the Corps;
- (b) Biological Opinion (No. 2003-01264-AOA:8-8-09-F-44) issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- (c) NPDES Permit No. CA-0064556, Order No. R4-2007-0046, issued by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region;
- (d) Master Streambed Alteration Agreement (Notification No. 1600-2004-0016-R5) issued by CDFW;
- (e) Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2008-012-05 (San Fernando Valley spineflower) issued by CDFW;
- (f) Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2008-013-05 (multi-species) issued by CDFW;
- (g) traffic mitigation agreements for related projects (Landmark Village/Mission Village) issued by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans);
- (h) Clean Water Act section 401 Water Quality Certification and Waste Discharge Requirements for the Newhall Ranch RMDP/SCP project (Order No. R4-2012-0139) issued by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region;
- (i) approval of formation of a new County Sanitation District to maintain and operate the approved Newhall Ranch Water Reclamation Plant (WRP), issued by the Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission; and
- (j) approvals of the Interconnection Agreement, which encompasses the plan for coordination of Newhall Ranch Specific Plan wastewater management facilities, issued by the Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District.

In addition, below is a list of other permits and approvals, which are known to be needed, or may be needed, to implement various Project components in the future.

#### Future Agency Actions<sup>a</sup>

Agency	Action Required
South Coast Air Quality Management District	Various permits for air emissions required under the Air Quality Management Plan
California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)	Possible approval of Valencia Water Company service area extension to provide water to the Project Site (if Valencia remains a regulated utility, such approval shall be obtained from the CPUC; however, if Valencia is no longer a regulated utility at the time such approval is required, then approval may be from LAFCO); Approval of a new Southern California Edison Company substation, if necessary
California Department of Transportation	Traffic Mitigation Agreement with the Project applicant
City of Santa Clarita	Encroachment permits to construct off-site roadway improvements, if necessary

Agency	Action Required
Newhall School District	Elementary School approval, if constructed by the Applicant
William S. Hart Union High School District	Junior High and High School approval, if constructed by the Applicant
Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County	Will Serve letter
Valencia Water Company	Water supply assessment and verification
<p><sup>a</sup> <i>This list is not intended to provide the complete and final listing of all future actions required to implement the Project but, rather, identifies those actions that are known at this time to be required, or may be required, in the future.</i></p>	

**PROJECT APPLICANT:** The Newhall Land and Farming Company, 25124 Springfield Court, Suite 300, Valencia, CA 91355

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Project Site is located south of State Route 126 (SR-126) and approximately 2 miles west of the Interstate 5 (I-5). The Project Site is near the intersection of SR-126 and Chiquito Canyon Road, southwest of the confluence of the Santa Clara River and Castaic Creek. The location of the Project Site is depicted on a map included within Attachment A. The APNs for the Project Site are as follows: 2826-002-022, 2826-002-023, 2826-002-024, 2826-122-005, 2826-122-008, 2826-122-009, 2826-122-010, and 2826-123-002.

Most of the Project Site is currently vacant land characterized by a rolling topography; and agricultural uses, which would cease as these areas are developed under the proposed Project implementation; active and inactive oil wells and natural gas facilities; and water wells. A portion of the Project Site is located within a designated floodplain related to the Santa Clara River and its tributaries. Existing buildings located on the Project Site are limited to sheds, barns, and other agriculture-related structures which will be removed upon Project implementation.

The uses surrounding the Homestead South tract map site consist primarily of approved or planned development within the approved Specific Plan area or its vicinity. The eastern site boundary of the Homestead South tract map site abuts the approved Mission Village development (VTTM 061105), which is a village within the approved Newhall Ranch Specific Plan; to the south is the planned Legacy Village development (VTTM 061996), located just outside of the approved Specific Plan area; to the west is the planned Potrero Valley development (VTTM 061911), a village within the approved Specific Plan; and to the north is the approved Landmark Village development (VTTM 053108), a village within the approved Specific Plan. Further to the east of the Homestead South tract map site are the planned Entrada North and Entrada South developments; Six Flags Magic Mountain Amusement Park; an existing water reclamation plant (Valencia WRP); a California Highway Patrol station; and business

parks, offices, hotels, restaurants, and service stations located adjacent to I-5. The City of Santa Clarita is located further east of the Project Site, just beyond I-5.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Homestead South would implement the third tentative tract map<sup>1</sup> of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors on May 27, 2003. The Specific Plan site is located in the Santa Clarita Valley (an unincorporated portion of the County), west of the Interstate 5 freeway (I-5) and south of the I-5/SR-126 interchange. The Specific Plan site is approved for the development of 20,885 residential units,<sup>2</sup> 5.54 million square feet of mixed-use and commercial land uses, facilities, and infrastructure and associated amenities. As part of the Specific Plan, Homestead South would provide single- and multi-family residences, retail/commercial uses, school sites, public parks, private recreation facilities, open space and plant preserve areas, and other facilities and infrastructure necessary to facilitate Project development. Moreover, the Homestead South project includes over 1,000 acres of open space, which represents over 50 percent of the tract map site acreage, and would implement sustainable planning principles.

Specifically, the proposed Project would consist of residential and commercial/retail land uses within the Homestead South tract map site (Vesting Tentative Tract Map (VTTM) 060678). The design goal is to situate Homestead South's residential land uses to capture the site's varied elevations and resulting topography, avoid sensitive resources, and to design distinctive open space areas served by an integrated trails/paseos system.

Homestead South's commercial component consists of complimentary commercial/retail uses within the southeast portion of the tract map site. This design allows Homestead South village residents to also utilize close-by commercial centers planned in Potrero Valley and Mission Village, both of which are easily accessible by roadways and the community trails/paseos system.

Homestead South also features elementary, junior high, and high school sites, public parks, private recreation areas, open space, including preservation of Sawtooth Ridge, and a spineflower preserve within the Mesas West portion of the tract map site. As explained further below, Homestead South will also feature roads, trails/paseos, and other facilities, infrastructure, and amenities to facilitate development of the tract map site.

The Homestead South tract map (VTTM 060678) proposes development of 3,617 residences (699 single-family and 2,918 multi-family); 66,400 square feet of retail commercial uses; a 9.4-acre elementary school site; a 19.3-acre junior high school site; a 54.6-acre high school site; 12.1 acres of public parks; 11.0 acres of private recreation

---

<sup>1</sup> The two preceding tentative tract maps are as follows: (1) Landmark Village (VTTM 053108); and (2) Mission Village (VTTM 061105).

<sup>2</sup> The 20,885 total residential dwelling units does not include 423 second units that would be developed on the single-family lots and authorized by a conditional use permit.

areas; and 993.6 acres of open space, which includes the 67.4-acre Grapevine Mesa spineflower preserve. Facilities and infrastructure proposed as part of the Project include a network of roads, trails, drainage improvements, flood protection (including buried bank stabilization within and adjacent to the Santa Clara River), potable and recycled water systems (including water tanks), and sanitary sewer and dry utility systems. As explained below, Homestead South includes several proposed improvements which are located outside the Homestead South tract map site and are required to provide adequate circulation, service, and utilities to the Homestead South tract map site (External Map Improvements).

The Project Site includes the Homestead South tract map site and External Map Improvements comprising a total of 2,534.5 acres. Of this total, 1,745.7 acres are located within the boundary of the Homestead South tract map site and entirely within the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan area. The remaining 788.8 acres are situated outside the tract map site and partially outside the Specific Plan area, and would accommodate construction of the External Map Improvements. Additional information regarding Homestead South is provided in Attachment "A," Expanded Project Description.

**POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT:** Based on a preliminary review of the proposed Project consistent with section 15060 of the CEQA Guidelines, the County has determined that an EIR should be prepared for this proposed Project. In addition, consistent with section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the County has identified the following probable environmental effects of the project, which will be addressed in the EIR for this project:

- Aesthetics;
- Agriculture/Forest;
- Air Quality;
- Biological Resources;
- Cultural Resources;
- Geology and Soils;
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials;
- Hydrology and Water Quality;
- Land Use and Planning;
- Mineral Resources;
- Noise;
- Public Services;
- Transportation/Traffic; and
- Utilities and Service Systems.

These potential environmental effects are described in greater detail in the Initial Study prepared for the Project. The environmental impacts associated with development of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan were analyzed at a program level in the EIR for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and Water Reclamation Plant (WRP; SCH No. 95011015). The environmental impacts associated with the Newhall Ranch WRP were analyzed at

a final project-level in the certified Specific Plan EIR. The EIR for the proposed Project will tier from the certified Specific Plan EIR and, thereby, focus on an evaluation of those potential impacts not previously addressed in the Specific Plan EIR; for activities “within the scope” of the Specific Plan EIR, there is no need for new environmental documentation. (CEQA Guidelines, §15168(c)(2).) Alternatives will be developed to reduce environmental impacts that may be identified during the EIR process. To provide a complete record of the County’s environmental decision-making, environmental issues that do not rise to the level of significant impacts will be addressed in the EIR in a separate section entitled “Impacts Found to Be Less than Significant.”

The County has determined that there is not a likelihood of potentially significant effects related to the following environmental topics:

- Energy; and
- Population/Housing.

The County proposes that the EIR indicate the reasons why these effects were determined not to be significant and are therefore not addressed in detail in the EIR.

**NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING:** The County will conduct a public scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting oral and written comments from interested parties as to the appropriate scope and content of the EIR. All interested parties are invited to attend the scoping meeting to assist in identifying issues to be addressed in the EIR. The scoping meetings will include a brief presentation of the project to be addressed in the EIR and will provide attendees with an opportunity to provide input to the scope of the EIR. The Scoping Meeting will be held on April 17, 2014, from 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. or when testimony is completed, whichever comes first. The scoping meeting will be held at the following location:

Rancho Pico Junior High School  
26250 W. Valencia Boulevard  
Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381

Translation in other languages can be made available at the meeting upon request. Please submit translation requests at least seven (7) business days in advance of each scheduled meeting to: [kszalay@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:kszalay@planning.lacounty.gov).

**PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD:** The County has determined to make this NOP available for public review and comment pursuant to Title 14, section 15082(b) of the California Code of Regulations. The comment period for the NOP begins on March 28, 2014, and ends on April 28, 2014.

Any comments provided should identify specific topics of environmental concern and your reason for suggesting the study of these topics in the EIR.

**DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:** The NOP and Initial Study are available for public review during regular business hours at the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning address listed above and the following locations:

- Valencia Library, 23743 W. Valencia Boulevard, Santa Clarita
- Castaic Library, 27971 Sloan Canyon Road, Castaic
- Stevenson Ranch Express Library, 26233 W. Faulkner Drive, Stevenson Ranch
- Newhall Library, 22704 W. 9th Street, Santa Clarita
- Canyon Country Jo Anne Darcy Library, 18601 Soledad Canyon Road, Santa Clarita

The public is also encouraged to visit the Department of Regional Planning's website to review the initial study at: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/case/view/tr060678/>.

Thank you for your participation in the environmental review of this project.

Please direct all written comments to the following address:

Mr. Kim Szalay  
Special Projects Section  
Department of Regional Planning  
County of Los Angeles  
320 W. Temple Street, Room 1362  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Tel: (213) 974-4876  
Fax: (213) 626-0434  
Email: [specialprojects@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:specialprojects@planning.lacounty.gov)