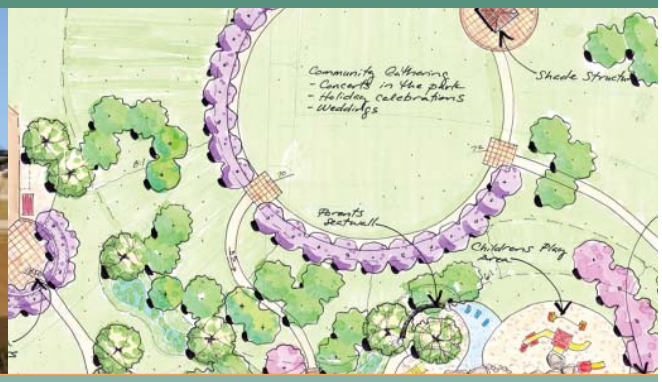
VOLUME I

Final Environmental Impact Report

TR 060922
General Plan Amendment Case No. 200900009
CUP No. 200900121
CUP No. 04-075
Oak Tree Permit No. 04-075
Highway Realignment Case No. 200900001

Skyline Ranch Project



County Project No. 04-075-(5)
State Clearinghouse No. 2004101090

County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
Impact Analysis Section
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012-3225

February 2010

VOLUME I

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Skyline Ranch Project

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County Project No. 04-075-(5)

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PCR

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF THE FINAL EIR

The County of Los Angeles, as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared this Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for the Skyline Ranch project, located in the Santa Clarita Valley west of Sierra Highway, north of Highway 14 (Antelope Valley Freeway) and the City of Santa Clarita in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The Draft EIR, comments received on the Draft EIR, and responses to these comments collectively comprise the Final EIR.

As described in Sections 15089, 15090 and 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Lead Agency must prepare and consider the information contained in a Final EIR before approving a project. The purpose of a Final EIR is to incorporate into the EIR: a) comments and recommendations on the Draft EIR; b) a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR; c) the Lead Agency responses to comments made by the public and agencies; and d) other information added by the Lead Agency.

B. ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL EIR

The Final EIR consists of the following four chapters:

Chapter 1.0 Introduction. This chapter describes the purpose of the Final EIR, summarizes the Final EIR public review process, and presents the contents of this document.

Chapter 2.0 Comments and Responses. This chapter presents all comments received by the County during the 49-day public review period of the Draft EIR (July 28, 2009 through September 14, 2009) and at the public hearings before the Regional Planning Commission on September 16, 2009 and December 16, 2009, as well as the responses to those comments. Some comments received after the close of the public review period are also responded to in this section.

Chapter 3.0 Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR. This chapter includes revisions to the Draft EIR that represent minor changes or additions in response to some of the comments received on the Draft EIR and additional edits to provide clarification. Changes to the Draft EIR are shown with ~~strikethrough~~ text for deletions and <u>underline</u>

text for additions. These changes do not add significant new information that would affect the analysis or conclusions presented in the Draft EIR.

Chapter 4.0 Mitigation Monitoring Program. The Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) is the document that is used by the enforcement and monitoring agencies responsible for the implementation of the proposed project's mitigation measures. Mitigation measures are listed by environmental topic.

D. OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS FOR THE DRAFT EIR

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15085, upon completion of the Draft EIR, a Notice of Completion and Availability (NOCA) as well as CD copies of the Draft EIR were submitted to the State Clearinghouse, Governor's Office of Planning and Research for distribution to State Agencies. The Draft EIR was initially circulated for a 45-day public review on July 28, 2009 through September 10, 2009. On July 30, 2009, the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning extended the close of the public review period to September 14, 2009 for a total of 49 days. As required under Section 15086 of the CEQA Guidelines, a NOCA requesting comments on the Draft EIR and CDs of the Draft EIR were sent to approximately 50 public agencies and other interested parties. In compliance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15087 the NOCA was published in The Signal Newspaper and posted with the County Clerk on July 28, 2009. Copies of the Draft EIR were also placed at the following County of Los Angeles libraries: Newhall Library, Canyon Country Jo Anne Darcy Library, Valencia Library, and Los Angeles County Public Library. The Draft EIR was also available for review on the internet at: http://www.planning.lacounty.gov/case/all The Notice of Public Review Time Extension was also distributed to agencies and interested parties and published in The Signal Newspaper.

Comments on the Draft EIR were also accepted up to and including the date of the public hearing before the Regional Planning Commission on September 16, 2009. At the time the Draft EIR was prepared, it was anticipated that the highway realignment to realign Whites Canyon Road to the proposed Skyline Ranch Road would be approved as part of the County's pending updated General Plan and updated Area Plan for the Santa Clarita Valley (or the One Valley One Vision [OVOV] plan) and therefore prior to the final public hearing before the Regional Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for the Skyline Ranch Draft EIR. Because the approval process for the updated County General Plan and OVOV has been delayed, County staff requested that the Skyline Ranch project initiate the General Plan Amendment to amend the Los Angeles Master Plan of Highways to realign Whites Canyon Road to the proposed Skyline Ranch Road alignment as a secondary highway from Plum Canyon Road to Sierra Highway and the public hearing before the Regional Planning Commission was continued until December 16, 2009. Because a new entitlement was requested for the continued public hearing, the County

provided new and revised notices of public hearing in compliance with County Code Sections 21.16.070 and 22.60.174, posted the project site in compliance with County Code Sections 21.16.075 and 22.60.175, and posted the revised notice on the County's website at: http://www.planning.lacounty.gov/case/all and published in The Signal on November 13, 2009 and La Opinion on November 14, 2009. Comments received at both of the public hearings and during the public review period are presented and responded to in Chapter 2.0, Comments and Responses.

2.0 COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(a) states that "The Lead Agency shall evaluate comments on environmental issues received from persons who reviewed the Draft EIR and shall prepare a written response. The Lead Agency shall respond to comments that were received during the noticed comment period." In accordance with these requirements, this chapter of the Final EIR provides responses to each of the written comments received during the formal public comment period on the Draft EIR and at the public hearings before the Regional Planning Commission held on September 16, 2009 and December 16, 2009 regarding the proposed Skyline Ranch project. Table 2-1, which starts on page 2-2, provides a list of the agencies, organizations, and individuals commenting on the Draft EIR and the corresponding environmental issues raised by the respective commenter's. Late comments received after the formal public comment period were also responded to. Issues identified in the matrix as "Other Comments" relate to non-CEQA issues or issues that do not address the content of the Draft EIR, such as comments expressing general support or opposition to the project.

Section 2.A, Responses to Individual Comments presents comments submitted during the public comment period for the Draft EIR from Federal, State, County and local agencies, as well as from private organizations and individuals as listed on Table 2-1. The individual letters are each assigned a letter and number based on the date of the comment letter and the affiliation, if any, of the commenter. Each comment that requires a response within the letters is also assigned a letter and number. For example, the first federal agency (Letter A) to provide comments was the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and therefore this is Letter Number A1. The first comment received from FEMA would be Comment A1-1, and the fourth comment in Letter Number A1 would be Comment A1-4. The responses to each comment are then correspondingly numbered, (i.e., Response A1-1 and Response A1-4). The comment letter is presented first followed by the responses to the comments included in the letter. Comments received after the close of the formal public review period on the Draft EIR are also responded to in this section. Responses to these comments are provided in the same manner as responses to individual comments. Comments that have resulted in changes to the Draft EIR are identified in Table 2-1.

Section 2.B, Public Hearing Testimony and Responses provides responses to both oral comments received during the public hearings before the Regional Planning Commission held on September 16, 2009 and December 16, 2009 at the Regional Planning Commission Hearing Room. As with the comment letters received on the Draft EIR, the verbal comments received at the public hearings are presented first followed by the responses to the comments.

Table 2-1

Summary of Comments on the Draft EIR

Letter No. and Date	SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS	Executive Summary	2.0 Project Description	3.0 Cumulative Analysis	4.A Geotechnical Resources	4.B Hydro/ Water Quality	4.C Biological Resources	4.D Cultural/ Paleo Resources	4.E Visual Qualities	4.F Traffic/Access	4.G Noise	4.H Air Quality	4.I Water Resources	4.J Wastewater Disposal	4.K Solid Waste Disposal	4.L Law Enforcement	4.M Fire Services/Hazards	4.N Education	4.O Libraries	4.P Parks	4.Q Land Use	4.R Population/Housing/Emp.	4.S Global Climate Change	5.0 Alternatives	6.0 Other CEQA Considerations	Other Comments	CHANGES TO DRAFT EIR
A. Federal Agencies																											
A1 8/7/09	U.S. Department of Homeland Security FEMA Region IX Gregor Blackburn, Branch Chief Floodplain Management and Insurance Branch 1111 Broadway, Suite 1200 Oakland, CA 94607-4052					X																					Yes Section 4.B.
A2 9/14/09	U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service Chris Dellith, Senior Biologist Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office 2493 Portola Road, Suite B Ventura, CA 93003		X				X																	X			

Table 2-1 (Continued)

Summary of Comments on the Draft EIR

Letter No. and Date	SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS	Executive Summary	2.0 Project Description	3.0 Cumulative Analysis	4.A Geotechnical Resources	4.B Hydro/ Water Quality	4.C Biological Resources	4.D Cultural/ Paleo Resources	4.E Visual Qualities	4.F Traffic/Access	4.G Noise	4.H Air Quality	4.I Water Resources	4.J Wastewater Disposal	4.K Solid Waste Disposal	4.L Law Enforcement	4.M Fire Services/Hazards	4.N Education	4.O Libraries	4.P Parks	4.Q Land Use	4.R Population/Housing/Emp.	4.S Global Climate Change	5.0 Alternatives	6.0 Other CEQA Considerations	Other Comments	CHANGES TO DRAFT EIR
B. State Agencies																											
B1 9/15/09	Governor's Office of Planning and Research Scott Morgan, Acting Director State Clearinghouse 1400 10th Street, P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044																										
C. County Agencies																											
C1 8/20/09	County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County Stephen R. Maguin, Chief Engineer 1955 Workman Mill Road Whittier, CA 90601-1400														X												Yes. Section 4.K.

Table 2-1 (Continued)

Summary of Comments on the Draft EIR

Letter No. and Date	SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS	Executive Summary	2.0 Project Description	3.0 Cumulative Analysis	4.A Geotechnical Resources	4.B Hydro/ Water Quality	4.C Biological Resources	4.D Cultural/ Paleo Resources	4.E Visual Qualities	4.F Traffic/Access	4.G Noise	4.H Air Quality	4.I Water Resources	4.J Wastewater Disposal	4.K Solid Waste Disposal	4.L Law Enforcement	4.M Fire Services/Hazards	4.N Education	4.O Libraries	4.P Parks	4.Q Land Use	4.R Population/Housing/Emp.	4.S Global Climate Change	5.0 Alternatives	6.0 Other CEQA Considerations	Other Comments	CHANGES TO DRAFT EIR
D. Regional and Local Agencies/Organizations																											
D1 9/14/09	Southern California Association of Governments Jacob Lieb, Manager Assessment, Housing & EIR 818 West Seventh Street, 12th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435																				X	X					
D2 9/14/09	City of Santa Clarita Sharon Sorensen, Senior Planner Community Development Department 23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300 Santa Clarita, CA 91355-2196		X							X																	Yes. Sections 2.0 and 4.F.
D3 9/16/09	South Coast Air Quality Management District Gordon E. Mize, Air Quality Specialist CEQA Section 21865 Copley Drive Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4178											X															

Table 2-1 (Continued)

Summary of Comments on the Draft EIR

Letter No. and Date	Summary of Written Comments	Executive Summary	2.0 Project Description	3.0 Cumulative Analysis	4.A Geotechnical Resources	4.B Hydro/ Water Quality	4.C Biological Resources	4.D Cultural/ Paleo Resources	4.E Visual Qualities	4.F Traffic/Access	4.G Noise	4.H Air Quality	4.I Water Resources	4.J Wastewater Disposal	4.K Solid Waste Disposal	4.L Law Enforcement	4.M Fire Services/Hazards	4.N Education	4.O Libraries	4.P Parks	4.Q Land Use	4.R Population/Housing/Emp.	4.S Global Climate Change	5.0 Alternatives	6.0 Other CEQA Considerations	Other Comments	Changes to Draft EIR
E. Private Organizations																											
E1 9/12/09	Sierra Club Katherine Squires, Conservation Chair Santa Clarita Sierra Club 3435 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 320 Los Angeles, CA 90010-1904		X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X				X	X				X	X	X			Yes. Section 4.D.
F. Individuals																											
F1 8/4/09	Nancy L. Corwin 28150 Haxton Drive Canyon Country, CA 91351			X					X	X		X			X	X							X				
F2 8/18/09	Lynn Kakumu 28026 Damar Court Canyon Country, CA 91351			X						X	X																
F3 9/13/09	Dianne Wohlleben 29619 Fitch Avenue Canyon Country, CA 91351		X																								

Table 2-1 (Continued)

Summary of Comments on the Draft EIR

Letter No. and Date	SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS	Executive Summary	2.0 Project Description	3.0 Cumulative Analysis	4.A Geotechnical Resources	4.B Hydro/ Water Quality	4.C Biological Resources	4.D Cultural/ Paleo Resources	4.E Visual Qualities	4.F Traffic/Access	4.G Noise	4.H Air Quality	4.I Water Resources	4.J Wastewater Disposal	4.K Solid Waste Disposal	4.L Law Enforcement	4.M Fire Services/Hazards	4.N Education	4.O Libraries	4.P Parks	4.Q Land Use	4.R Population/Housing/Emp.	4.S Global Climate Change	5.0 Alternatives	6.0 Other CEQA Considerations	Other Comments	CHANGES TO DRAFT EIR
F4 9/14/09	Kathryn Marsailes 17601 Sierra Hill Street Canyon Country, CA 91351				X	X	X			X		X															
G. Late Letters																											
G1 10/22/09	County of Los Angeles Fire Department Frank Vidales, Acting Chief Forestry Division Prevention Services Bureau 1320 North Eastern Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90063-3294																X										Yes. Section 4.M.
G2 11/5/09	California Department of Fish and Game Edmund Pert, Regional Manager South Coast Region 4949 Viewridge Avenue San Diego, CA 92123						X																	**X**			

Table 2-1 (Continued)

Summary of Comments on the Draft EIR

Letter No. and Date	SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS	Executive Summary	2.0 Project Description	3.0 Cumulative Analysis	4.A Geotechnical Resources	4.B Hydro/ Water Quality	4.C Biological Resources	4.D Cultural/ Paleo Resources	4.E Visual Qualities	4.F Traffic/Access	4.G Noise	4.H Air Quality	4.I Water Resources	4.J Wastewater Disposal	4.K Solid Waste Disposal	4.L Law Enforcement	4.M Fire Services/Hazards	4.N Education	4.O Libraries	4.P Parks	4.Q Land Use	4.R Population/Housing/Emp.	4.S Global Climate Change	5.0 Alternatives	6.0 Other CEQA Considerations	Other Comments	CHANGES TO DRAFT EIR
G3 11/10/09	County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Steve Burger Land Development Division 900 South Fremont Avenue Alhambra, CA 91803		X			X				X			X	X				X									
G4 Recvd 12/7/09	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Ronald P. Schafer, Chairperson Ramirez Canyon Park 5750 Ramirez Canyon Road Malibu, CA 90265		X				X																	X			
H. PUBLIC HEARING SEPTEMBER 16, 2009																											
H1	Public Hearing Transcript		X				X			X		X	X					X		X	X				X		Yes. Sections 2.0, 4.F., and 4.Q.
I. PUBLIC HEARING DECEMBER 16, 2009																											

Table 2-1 (Continued)

Summary of Comments on the Draft EIR

Letter No. and Date	SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS	Executive Summary	2.0 Project Description	3.0 Cumulative Analysis	4.A Geotechnical Resources	4.B Hydro/ Water Quality	4.C Biological Resources	4.D Cultural/ Paleo Resources	4.E Visual Qualities	4.F Traffic/Access	4.G Noise	4.H Air Quality	4.I Water Resources	4.J Wastewater Disposal	4.K Solid Waste Disposal	4.L Law Enforcement	4.M Fire Services/Hazards	4.N Education	4.O Libraries	4.P Parks	4.Q Land Use	4.R Population/Housing/Emp.	4.S Global Climate Change	5.0 Alternatives	6.0 Other CEQA Considerations	Other Comments	CHANGES TO DRAFT EIR
I1	Public Hearing Transcript		X				X			X			X				X										Yes. Section 4.I.

2. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES
A. RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

Letter A1

AUG 13 2009

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region IX
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200
Oakland, CA. 94607-4052

FEMA

August 7, 2009

Michele Bush, Project Manager
County of Los Angeles, Department of Regional Planning
Impact Analysis Section, Room 1348
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Ms. Bush:

This is in response to your request for comments on the Notice of Public Review Period Time Extension/Notice of Completion and Availability Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Skyline Ranch Project County Project No. 04-075, Tract Map 060922 Conditional Use Permit and Oak Tree Permit 04-075, State Clearinghouse Number 2004101090 for Los Angeles County, California.

Please review the current effective countywide Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the County of Los Angeles (Community Number 065043) and City of Santa Clarita (Community Number 060729), Maps revised September 26, 2008. Please note that the City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County, California is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The minimum, basic NFIP floodplain management building requirements are described in Vol. 44 Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR), Sections 59 through 65. **A1-1**

A summary of these NFIP floodplain management building requirements are as follows:

- All buildings constructed within a riverine floodplain, (i.e., Flood Zones A, AO, AH, AE, and A1 through A30 as delineated on the FIRM), must be elevated so that the lowest floor is at or above the Base Flood Elevation level in accordance with the effective Flood Insurance Rate Map. **A1-2**

- If the area of construction is located within a Regulatory Floodway as delineated on the FIRM, any ***development*** must not increase base flood elevation levels. **The term *development* means any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including but not limited to buildings, other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations, and storage of equipment or materials.** A hydrologic and hydraulic analysis must be performed *prior* to the start of development, and must demonstrate that the development would not cause any rise in base flood levels. No rise is permitted within regulatory floodways. **A1-3**

- All buildings constructed within a coastal high hazard area, (any of the "V" Flood Zones as delineated on the FIRM), must be elevated on pilings and columns, so that the lowest horizontal structural member, (excluding the pilings and columns), is elevated to or above the base flood elevation level. In addition, the posts and pilings foundation and the structure attached thereto, is anchored to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement due to the effects of wind and water loads acting simultaneously on all building components. **A1-4**

- Upon completion of any development that changes existing Special Flood Hazard Areas, the NFIP directs all participating communities to submit the appropriate hydrologic and hydraulic data to FEMA for a FIRM revision. In accordance with 44 CFR, Section 65.3, as soon as practicable, but not later than six months after such data becomes available, a community shall notify FEMA of the changes by submitting technical data for a flood map revision. To obtain copies of FEMA's Flood Map Revision Application Packages, please refer to the FEMA website at http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/forms.shtm. **A1-5**

Please Note:

Many NFIP participating communities have adopted floodplain management building requirements which are more restrictive than the minimum federal standards described in 44 CFR. Please contact the local community's floodplain manager for more information on local floodplain management building requirements. The City of Santa Clarita floodplain manager can be reached by calling Christina Monde, Floodplain Coordinator, at (661) 255-4959. The Los Angeles County floodplain manager can be reached by calling George De La O, Floodplain Manager/Senior Civil Engineer, at, (626) 458-7155. **A1-6**

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call Cynthia McKenzie of the Mitigation staff at (510) 627-7190.

Sincerely,

Gregor Blackburn, CFM, Branch Chief
Floodplain Management and Insurance Branch

cc:
Christina Monde, Floodplain Coordinator, City of Santa Clarita
George De La O, Floodplain Manager, Senior Civil Engineer, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
Garret Tam Sing/Salomon Miranda, State of California, Department of Water Resources, Southern District
Cynthia McKenzie, Senior Floodplanner, CFM, DHS/FEMA Region IX
Alessandro Amaglio, Environmental Officer, DHS/FEMA Region IX

LETTER NO. A1

Gregor Blackburn, CFM, Branch Chief
Floodplain Management and Insurance Branch
FEMA Region IX
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200
Oakland, CA 94607-4052

RESPONSE NO. A1-1

The Draft EIR addressed flood plains in Section 4.B, Hydrology and Water Quality with supporting data provided in Appendix C-1 and Appendix C-2 of the Draft EIR.

The Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panel No. 0607290365C, described on pages 4.B-11 and 4.B-12 in Section 4.B, Hydrology and Water Quality of the Draft EIR, was the current FIRM in effect at the time the Notice of Preparation was issued for the Draft EIR in 2004. As referenced by the commenter, the current effective FIRM is 06037C0840F, Los Angeles County Community (065043) and City of Santa Clarita Community (060729). A review of this FIRM indicates there are no notable changes in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zone Boundary shown on Figures 4.B-2 and 4.B-5 in the Draft EIR. However, revised figures with the updated FIRM information are provided in Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

In addition, there was a revision to the FEMA Flood Zone designation within Watershed D, at the project entrance of Sierra Highway and Skyline Ranch Road, where a proposed bridge would be located. At this location the Flood Zone designation was revised from Zone AO to Zone A. As defined on page 4.B-11 of the Draft EIR, Flood Zone A is an area subject to 100-year floods with an undetermined base flood elevation, whereas Zone AO is defined as an area subject to 100-year shallow flooding (usually sheet flow on sloping terrain) with an average depth of 1 to 3 feet with an undetermined base flood elevation. Flood Zone A would be considered a reduced hazard compared to Flood Zone AO, because Flood Zone A does not have restrictions to the average depth of flooding. Therefore, no change to the findings in the EIR regarding flood hazards is required. There is no change to the Flood Zone designation (Flood Zone A) at the southwest portion of Watershed A. However, corrections to reflect the current FIRM panel information have been incorporated into Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

The basic National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) floodplain management building requirements were considered in the preparation of the Flood Plain Analysis as further described in Responses A1-2 through A1-5 below.

RESPONSE NO. A1-2

The majority of the project site is designated as FEMA Flood Zone D, defined as areas in which flood hazards are undetermined, but possible. As stated in Response to Comment A1-1, the entrance to the proposed project at Skyline Ranch Road and Sierra Highway is within designated FEMA Flood Zone A. Therefore the entrance is proposed to be elevated by constructing a bridge over a series of culverts which would allow water from Sierra Highway to flow under Skyline Ranch Road. Also within Zone A, a 78-inch storm drain and concrete-lined trapezoid channel is proposed on the southwestern portion of the site and would extend 1,300 feet offsite to the southwest and connect with an existing Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LACDPW) flood control channel (Schaffer Channel). This storm drain improvement would significantly reduce and change the FEMA Flood Boundary. A Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) showing the revised FEMA Flood Zone A Boundary for a 100-year storm event will be submitted by the project engineer to LACDPW, which will then be submitted to FEMA by LACDPW for review and approval, subsequent to approval of Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 060922 and prior to issuance of a phased grading permit that is relevant to the encroachment and/or change to the FEMA Flood Boundary.

RESPONSE NO. A1-3

The project development area, including the entrance to the project site is not located within a Regulatory Floodway (i.e., Recorded County Floodway Boundary) as shown on Figures 4.B-2 and 4.B-5 in the Draft EIR. In order to determine potential change in base flood elevations a resulting from construction of the storm drain improvements at the project entrance (within Sierra Highway), a Flood Plain Analysis, included as Appendix C-2 of the Draft EIR, was prepared for the proposed project. As determined in this Analysis, construction of the storm drain improvements would not cause any rise in base flood levels. As stated in Mitigation Measure 4.B-1 and clarified in Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR, final drainage improvement plans for the project shall be designed to the satisfaction of LACDPW and the City of Santa Clarita Department of Public Works to ensure that there is no rise within the flood plain area during a 50-year storm event. A Conceptual Drainage Plan, including a hydrologic and hydraulic analysis, has been submitted to and approved by LACDPW and is provided as Appendix C-1 of the Draft EIR. As described in Response to Comment A1-2, a CLOMR showing revisions to the FEMA 100-year storm event will be submitted by the project engineer to LACDPW, which will then be submitted to FEMA for review and approval, after approval of the Tentative Tract Map and before issuance of the relevant phased grading permit by LACDPW**.** A Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) will be provided to FEMA after the phased construction that is relevant to the encroachment and/or change of the FEMA Flood Boundary is complete.

RESPONSE NO. A1-4

The proposed project is not located within a coastal high hazard area as shown on the current FIRM referenced in Response to Comment A1-1.

RESPONSE NO. A1-5

As described on pages 4.B-11 and 4.B-25 and shown on Figures 4.B-2 and Figure 4.B-5 of the Draft EIR, a change is proposed to the County Flood Plain Boundary based on recent recalculations and adjustments by the County of Los Angeles, Water Resources Division, Hydrology Development Section. As described under Response to Comment A1-2, a CLOMR will be provided to FEMA by the project engineer via LACDPW upon Tentative Tract Map approval and prior to issuance of a phased grading permit that is relevant to the encroachment and/or change of the FEMA Flood Boundary**.** A LOMR will be provided after the phased construction that is relevant to the encroachment and/or change of the FEMA Flood Boundary is complete.

RESPONSE NO. A1-6

The Drainage Concept/Hydrology/Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan and Flood Plain Analysis have been prepared in coordination with the County of Los Angeles and City of Santa Clarita and are included in Appendices C-1 and C-2 of the Draft EIR. After Tentative Tract Map approval, a formal package including final drainage improvement plans and CLOMR will be submitted to the County of Los Angeles, the City of Santa Clarita, and FEMA for final design approval prior to issuance of a phased grading permit that is relevant to the encroachment and/or change of the FEMA Flood Boundary.

Letter A2

From: Yolanda_Ledesma@fws.gov [mailto:Yolanda_Ledesma@fws.gov]
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2009 9:32 AM
To: Bush, Michele
Cc: Chris_Dellith@fws.gov; Colleen_Mehlberg@fws.gov
Subject: Notice of Completion and Availability of the DEIR, Skyline Ranch Project, County Permit No. 04-075, Santa Clarita Valley, LA County, CA, Sep 14, 2009
Importance: High

Subject letter will be mailed to Michele Bush today. **A2-1**

Yolanda M. Ledesma
OA/South Coast Division
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Office - Ventura
(805) 644-1766 ext 270

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

IN REPLY REFER TO:
2009-FA-0113

September 14, 2009

SEP 16 2009

Michele Bush
Department of Regional Planning
County of Los Angeles
Impact Analysis Section, Room 1348
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Subject Notice of Completion and Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Skyline Ranch Project, County Permit No. 04-075 in the Santa Clarita Valley, Los Angeles County, California

Dear Ms. Bush:

This letter provides the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) comments on the subject Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The notice of availability was received in our office on July 28, 2009. The proposed project is located in the Santa Clarita Valley west of Sierra Highway, north of Highway 14 and the city of Santa Clarita.

The proposed project would occupy approximately 2,173 acres and would develop approximately 622 acres of the southern portion of the site, including 1,313 lots consisting of: 1,260 residential lots, a 22-acre elementary school site, 10 lots for park areas, 13 debris basin lots, 4 water tank/booster pump station lots, and 25 open space lots. Three quarters of the site (northern 1,551 acres) is proposed to remain undeveloped, with approximately 1,355 acres dedicated or designated as open space through the establishment of the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA). Approximately 166 acres of undeveloped land in the northern portion of the site on the Cruzan Mesa would remain undeveloped and designated as a Non-Development/Continuing Use Area. Also, within the northern portion of the site, approximately 22 acres would be preserved as a Mitigation Exchange Area for 22 acres of preserve area within adjacent recorded Tract 46018. A2-2

The project site supports 12 vegetation communities including: coastal sage scrub, disturbed coastal sage scrub, coastal sage-chaparral scrub, chaparral, non-native grassland, disturbed, barren, holly-leaved cherry scrub, southern vernal pool, developed, sycamore riparian woodland and southern willow scrub. The dominant communities on the site are coastal sage scrub and mixed coastal sage–chaparral scrub. These communities are interspersed to varying degrees within the project site and provide habitat for various wildlife species.

According to Appendix D-1, the Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) of the DEIR, the federally listed species identified, or with the potential to occur on-site include: the federally endangered Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), slender-horned spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*), California orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*), San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*), unarmored threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*), arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), and southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*); the threatened spreading navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*), vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*), California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), and coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*); and the candidate San Fernando Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *fernandina*). This letter includes our comments regarding the federally listed species you identified, as well as endangered California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) and Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*) as they have the potential to occur within the project site. Concurrent with your determination, we do not believe the site could support the Santa Ana sucker, unarmored threespine stickleback, arroyo toad, or California red-legged frog because there is no suitable habitat onsite and thus these species will not be further discussed herein. **A2-3**

The Service's responsibilities include administering the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), including sections 7, 9, and 10. Section 9 of the Act prohibits the taking of any federally listed endangered or threatened species. Section 3(18) of the Act defines "take" to mean "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." Harm is further defined by the Service to include significant habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury to listed species by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering. Harass is defined by the Service as intentional or negligent actions that create the likelihood of injury to a listed species by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering. The Act provides for civil and criminal penalties for the unlawful taking of listed species. Exemptions to the prohibitions against take may be obtained through coordination with the Service in two ways. If a project is to be funded, authorized, or carried out by a Federal agency, and may affect a listed species, the Federal agency must consult with the Service pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Act. If a proposed project does not involve a Federal agency but may result in the take of a listed animal species, the project proponent should apply to the Service for an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act. **A2-4**

As it is not our primary responsibility to comment on documents prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), our comments on the DEIR do not constitute a full review of project impacts. We are providing our comments based upon a review of sections addressing biological resources, project activities that have potential to affect federally listed species, and our concerns for listed species within our jurisdiction related to our mandates under the Act. Based upon our review, we have the following concerns regarding the DEIR's characterization of impacts to federally listed species.

Surveys: The BRA includes a summary of the biological survey information in Table I. This table includes information about surveys conducted for general site reconnaissance, coastal California gnatcatcher, sensitive plants, trees, and vegetation mapping. Surveys were conducted between 2002 and 2008 with the help of 11 biologists. The scope of the information displayed in the table is extremely large and difficult to decipher. We recommend that the table be revised to better convey the information it is intended to provide. **A2-5**

Information regarding the location of all biological surveys conducted within Skyline Ranch should be disclosed in the DEIR. Even though the currently proposed development site is located in the southern portion of the Skyline Ranch site, Section 5.0 of the DEIR discusses development alternatives outside the currently proposed development site. For the discussion to address the effects of alternative development options on biological resources, the entire Skyline Ranch site should have been surveyed; however, we are unable to confirm this with the information provided. It is especially important to survey portions of the site outside of the development footprint if areas not proposed for development are to be conserved for mitigation purposes pursuant to CEQA. We reiterate that we are unable to determine from the DEIR or the BRA if the entire Skyline Ranch (2,173 acres) was surveyed for biological resources, or if surveys were only conducted within the proposed development footprint. **A2-6**

A vast majority of the sensitive plant surveys were conducted in the spring of 2003 when 15 surveys were completed, followed by five surveys in 2005. While we recognize sensitive plant surveys require a substantial commitment of resources, it should be noted that surveys conducted 6 years ago should be not relied upon to characterize the extent of current site occupation by sensitive plant species. Furthermore, the BRA sensitive plant survey report submitted by Dr. Anuja Parikh and Dr. Nathan Gale is titled “Monosabian Assemblage Site”. It unclear where the Monosabian Assemblage Site is located in regards to Skyline Ranch. The report states that survey site was bounded roughly by Sierra Highway to the southeast, Vasquez Canyon Road to the northeast, Bouquet Canyon Road to the northwest, and Plum Canyon Road to the southwest. The largest section of Plum Canyon Road lies primarily to the west of the project site but also bisects Skyline Ranch along Plum Canyon and the base of the Cruzan Mesa. The description of the sensitive plant surveys seems to indicate that surveys were only conducted above Plum Canyon Road, in the areas proposed for open space designations. Failure to survey the portion of the site that is proposed for development would inaccurately describe the impacts of the development on biological resources. **A2-7**

California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB): The BRA frequently references the CNDDB and its role in determining which species may occur onsite. While the CNDDB is a useful resource to better understand the distribution of rare species, it does not represent all occurrences of those species and cannot be relied upon for a definitive determination of presence of a species within a selected location. As such, species not listed in the CNDDB in the project vicinity still have a potential to occur on the project site. **A2-8**

Furthermore, the references made to the CNDDB were made from a search compiled in 2004, according to the BRA. This further limits the applicability of the CNDDB to the biological **A2-9**

assessment of the project site. For example, page 28 of the BRA states that breeding coastal California gnatcatchers have not been found north of the Santa Clara River since the 1920's. Relying on information produced from the CNDDB in 2004 would not reflect the breeding pair detected in nearby Bee Canyon in 2008 or the individual that was observed calling near San Francisquito Canyon in 2006 (CNDDB 2009, occurrences 867, 853, respectively). We recommend that the information in the DEIR that has been derived from the CNDDB in 2004 be updated to reflect current species records. **A2-9** Cont'd

Quino checkerspot butterfly: Exhibit 8 of the BRA (page 31) includes the quino checkerspot in the map titled "USFWS Federally Listed Species Occurrences". The occurrence for the butterfly extends over a majority of the Skyline Ranch site; however, this map is the only place that the butterfly is acknowledged in either the DEIR or the BRA. We recommend that the BRA acknowledge why it has been excluded from the document. **A2-10**

Coastal California gnatcatcher: Contrary to the portrayal of species presence in the BRA (page 28), there are numerous observations of coastal California gnatcatchers surrounding the project site in the Newhall, Agua Dulce and Mint Canyon quadrangles of the 7.5-minute U.S. Geological Survey topographic map as recent as 2008 (CNDDB 2009). In fact, an occurrence was observed by the Service in 1998 near the site in Plum Canyon, which crosses into the Skyline Ranch property (Rick Farris, Service, pers. obs. 1998). In addition, we have indications that the coastal California gnatcatcher may be expanding its range, as it has recently been observed in locations previously considered unoccupied, including an occurrence at the California State University, Channel Islands, in Camarillo, Ventura County. Suitable habitat occurs onsite including chaparral, coastal sage chaparral scrub, coastal sage scrub, and grassland vegetation. **A2-11**

According to Table I of the BRA, focused surveys for the coastal California gnatcatcher were conducted in 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Understanding the methodology of surveys conducted for the coastal California gnatcatcher is important because the DEIR states that surveys were conducted according to Service protocol. There are many requirements for a survey to be completed according to protocol, including, but not limited to: from March 15 through June 30, a minimum of six surveys must be conducted at least 1 week apart; surveys must be conducted between 6:00 am and 12:00 pm; no more than 80 acres can be surveyed per biologist per day; and the permittee must provide information in a report to the Service including the location of the surveys and complete description of survey methods including number of acres surveyed per biologist per hour and how many total acres surveyed per biologist per day. None of the aforementioned information was available in the table submitted in the BRA, and we cannot confirm the surveys were conducted to Service protocol because survey reports were not submitted to the Service containing all the elements required by the protocol. At a minimum, the table should include information about the locations of the surveys as it is not apparent that the entire project site was surveyed according to Service protocol. Finally, the table includes numbers following coastal California gnatcatcher surveys under the "survey type" column, but the table key does not explain the numerical system. **A2-12**

More importantly, we consider the surveys contained in the BRA to no longer be valid for determining the presence or absence of the coastal California gnatcatcher onsite because they are greater than 1 year old. We recommend that surveys be conducted according to Service protocol immediately prior to project related activities, including vegetation removal and construction, to ensure that no coastal California gnatcatchers are present. If coastal California gnatcatchers are detected during the surveys, the Service should be notified immediately to determine if the activities will require an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act or if a take exemption pursuant to section 7 of the Act would be required. **A2-13**

Finally, it is unclear from the documents whether coastal California gnatcatcher surveys were conducted over the entire Skyline Ranch. The effects of the project on the coastal California gnatcatcher may extend beyond the proposed development footprint due to indirect effects (e.g., cats, lighting, noise, fuel management), or if an alternative development site is chosen. We recommend that protocol level surveys be conducted over the entire Skyline Ranch site where suitable habitat exists to allow the DEIR to adequately address the direct and indirect effects of the project on the coastal California gnatcatcher. **A2-14**

Least Bell's vireo: According to the recovery plan for the species, the least Bell's vireo is an obligate riparian breeder, typically inhabiting structurally diverse woodlands along watercourses (Service 1998). They occur in a number of riparian habitat types, including cottonwood-willow woodlands/forests, oak woodlands, and mule fate scrub. Although least Bell's vireos are tied to riparian habitat for nesting, they have been observed extending their activities into adjacent upland habitats. Least Bell's vireos along the edges of riparian corridors maintain territories that incorporate both riparian and non riparian habitat, including coastal sage scrub.

The BRA states on page 28 and in Table III-4 that no suitable habitat exists onsite for the least Bell's vireo; however, Exhibit 5 depicts a stand of southern coast live oak riparian forest within the proposed development footprint. This vegetation community could potentially support the least Bell's vireo, but it is not discussed in the document. Later in the BRA, Exhibit 10 describes the area as holly leaved cherry scrub and sycamore woodland. Exhibit 16 highlights this area and illustrates the sycamore, oak, juniper, and cottonwood trees that will be removed during the project. In other words, we are concerned that the BRA's description of the habitat is inconsistent, and we are unable to evaluate the conclusions regarding the proposed project's impact on least Bell's vireo habitat. According to information in the BRA, suitable habitat may exist on the proposed development site, and if so, impacts to the least Bell's vireo should be addressed in the DEIR. Furthermore, if the habitat is suitable, we recommend protocol-level surveys for the species throughout the suitable habitat occurring on Skyline Ranch. According to Exhibit 10, suitable habitat may also exist in the southern willow scrub vegetation communities located between Plum Canyon and the Cruzan Mesa. **A2-15**

Condor: A substantial remaining concern is that the DEIR did not address potential impacts of the proposed action on the federally endangered California condor. California condors are known to roost, forage, and feed within the vicinity, and impacts to the species should be more fully evaluated in the final EIR. To ensure the most recent information regarding California **A2-16**

condor use of the project area is considered and incorporated into the final EIR, we recommend coordinating with our office and with Jesse Grantham, the Service's California condor recovery program coordinator. Mr. Grantham can be reached at (805) 644-5185. **A2-16** Cont'd

Migratory Birds: The Service is concerned about potential impacts to migratory birds in the proposed project area during the construction of the Skyline Ranch development. We have conservation responsibilities and management authority for migratory birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703 *et. seq.*) (MBTA). Any land clearing or other surface disturbance associated with the proposed actions should be timed to avoid potential destruction of bird nests or young of birds that breed in the area, as such destruction may be in violation of the MBTA. Under the MBTA, nests with eggs or young of migratory birds may not be damaged, nor may migratory birds be killed. If this seasonal restriction is not possible, we recommend that a qualified biologist survey the area for nests or evidence of nesting (e.g., mated pairs, territorial defense, carrying of nesting material, transporting food, etc.) prior to the commencement of land clearing activities. If nests or other evidence of nesting are observed, a protective buffer should be established around the nests and avoided to prevent destruction or disturbance to active nests. **A2-17**

Proposed land uses:
Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA): The proposed 1,355 acre SRCA would provide on-site mitigation for the proposed 622-acre residential development's anticipated impacts on biological resources. Land within the SRCA would be protected through voluntary conservation easements, land dedications, or land set asides within the northern area of the Skyline Ranch property. The area includes the Plum Canyon vernal pool and four smaller pools on the southern portion of the Cruzan Mesa; however, the Cruzan Mesa and 9 acres of open space on the northernmost boundary of the site will be excluded from the SRCA. **A2-18**

According to the DEIR, direct and indirect degradation of habitat would be prevented in part though the steep topography that separates the SRCA from the proposed development area and through the prohibition or restriction of uses within the SRCA. The DEIR does not confirm how the land will be preserved, and what land use protections will be guaranteed within the SRCA. The summary of environmental impacts discussed in the EIR (Table ES-1) states that there will be no adverse impacts to land within the SRCA; however, without knowing what activities will prohibited or restricted within the SRCA it is difficult to determine how the project will impact the habitat within the SRCA. For example, the project proposes extend the County Trail System through the SRCA and Cruzan Mesa, which could adversely impact the biological resources of the SRCA. While off-road vehicles, domestic pets, and other harmful activities may be discouraged from using the site according to the DEIR, the trail system will increase access to the SRCA and could potentially lead to adverse impacts to sensitive species and habitats. In conclusion, we are unable to confirm that the proposed project will have no adverse impacts to the SRCA because the DEIR offers few details about the levels of land use protections, activities, and enforcement that will be ensured throughout the site. **A2-19**

Non-Development/Continuing Use Area: The Cruzan Mesa is a biologically diverse system that supports three federally listed species according to the DEIR: the vernal pool fairy shrimp, California orcutt grass, and spreading navarretia. The county of Los Angeles has proposed to designate the area as the Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pools Significant Ecological Area due to the regionally significant resources found onsite.

The Service is concerned about the impacts of excluding the Cruzan Mesa from the land use protections offered by the proposed Skyline Ranch Conservation Area. According to the DEIR, the Non-Development/Continuing Use Area would remain as open space through a recorded land use restriction; however, it is unclear how current or future activities conducted onsite may affect federally listed species. The DEIR does not make a clear distinction between the land use restrictions of SRCA and Non-Development/Continuing Use Area, or how the two will be managed by the applicant. Pages 129 and 130 of the DEIR both state that some activities, including film-making may be approved in both the SRCA and the Non-Development/Continuing Use area. The DEIR characterizes both land use designations as conservation areas, but does not explain why the two are separated. **A2-20**

According to the DEIR, the Cruzan Mesa is the only area on the Skyline Ranch site that supports federally listed species, and we recommend that the site be given the strictest land use protections possible to support the conservation of the biological resources found on the Skyline Ranch property. The federally listed species found on the Cruzan Mesa occur within vernal pool systems. According to the Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon, the major threats to vernal pool species include, but are not limited to: habitat loss and fragmentation, altered hydrology, invasive species, contaminants, inappropriate management and monitoring, overutilization, disease, and human waste, recreational use, and vandalism (Service 2005). The Cruzan Mesa and its vernal pool systems should be managed to protect vernal pool species from these threats through land use restrictions and/or active management. **A2-21**

Open Space: According to the DEIR, 9 acres of land on the northernmost portion of the Skyline Ranch property will remain as open space without conservation easements or restrictions. The site is surrounded by the Non-Development/Continuing Use Area and the SRCA. The DEIR does not explain the reasoning behind excluding the site from the SRCA or Non-Development/Continuing Use Area. The project description of the DEIR should address any plans for development or project activities within the open space area if it will not be protected as open space and the impacts of any future activities should be discussed. **A2-22**

Alternatives: The DEIR discusses three project alternatives that include residential development. Both the Reasonably Foreseeable On-Site Development and the Reduced Project A alternatives include residential development on the Cruzan Mesa. The Reduced Project B alternative would reduce the size of the currently proposed project in the southern portion of Skyline Ranch, and would not develop on the Cruzan Mesa. As previously discussed, the Cruzan Mesa is a biologically significant resource area and we agree with the DEIR's **A2-23**

determination that the Reduced Project B would be the environmentally superior alternative that meets the project objectives. We recommend the applicant pursue this development alternative. A2-23 Cont'd

Furthermore, if biological surveys were only conducted in the construction footprint of the originally proposed development, the DEIR would not be able to appropriately characterize the impacts of alternative developments outside of that area, nor the value of "conservation areas" in relation to the project impacts. Thus, the Reasonably Foreseeable On-Site Development and the Reduced Project A alternatives would not have accurately addressed the impacts to biological resources. The DEIR should more clearly state if the entire project site, including the Cruzan Mesa, was surveyed. A2-24

In summary, we find the DEIR to be lacking in the specificity of information regarding the presence of federally listed species and biological resources needed to accurately evaluate and characterize the impacts the project, as proposed, would have on these resources. We encourage that this information be gathered for evaluation by the applicant and the county of Los Angeles such that any impacts to federally listed species be avoided wherever possible or minimized to the maximum extent. We are willing and available to work with you to achieve this goal; however, any action that would result in the take of listed animal species would be subject to the prohibitions of section 9 of the Act, thus requiring some form of exemption, either through an incidental take permit or interagency consultation if a federal nexus exists. A2-25

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Skyline Ranch Residential Development DEIR. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Colleen Mehlberg of our staff at (805) 644-1766, extension 221.

Sincerely,

Chris Dellith
Senior Biologist

cc:
Betty Courtney, California Department Fish and Game

LITERATURE CITED

[CNDDB] California Department of Fish and Game, Natural Diversity Database. 2009. Element occurrence reports for *Polioptila californica*. Unpublished cumulative data current to September 2009.

Rick Farris 1998. Personal observation. Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office. Ventura, California.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1998. Draft recovery plan for the least Bell's vireo. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon. 139 pp.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2005. Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon. xxvi + 606 pp.

LETTER NO. A2

Chris Dellith, Senior Biologist
United States Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
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RESPONSE NO. A2-1

This comment provides the transmittal for the letter, which was received by the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning on September 16, 2009. Responses to the referenced letter are presented in Responses to Comments A2-2 through A2-24 below.

RESPONSE NO. A2-2

The comment is noted. This information is presented in Chapter 2.0, Project Description and Section 4.C, Biological Resources of the Draft EIR. However, it is noted that the proposed elementary school site is 11 acres, rather than 22 acres, as stated by the commenter.

RESPONSE NO. A2-3

The comment provides a context for the federally-listed species that are the subject of the letter and expresses concurrence with the findings of the Draft EIR that Santa Ana sucker, unarmored threespine stickleback, arroyo toad, and California red-legged frog do not have the potential to occur on site due to the absence of suitable habitat. Please see Responses to Comments A2-16 regarding the California condor and A2-10 regarding the Quino checkerspot butterfly.

RESPONSE NO. A2-4

The comment states the responsibilities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to administer the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended; defines key terms used in its regulatory capacities; and outlines the conditions under which its regulatory powers relative to this statute are recognized and are acknowledged. Information about the Federal Endangered Species Act, including the definition of "take" and conditions requiring a take permit is also presented on pages 4.C-4, 4.C-5 and 4.C-26 in Section 4.C, Biological Resources of the Draft EIR. Of note, however, the comment does expand on the definition of "take" to mean "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot,

wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct" which is acknowledged. The comment also states that "harm" is further defined by the Service to include significant habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury to listed species by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering" which is also acknowledged. Further, the comment states that the term "harass" is "defined by the Service as intentional or negligent actions that create the likelihood of injury to a listed species by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering" which is acknowledged. Specific concerns regarding the characterization of impacts to federally listed species are addressed in Reponses to Comments A2-5 through A2-24, below.

RESPONSE NO. A2-5

Table I of Appendix D-1, Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) of the Draft EIR provides a log of survey's performed, with data regarding survey type and weather conditions listed on the table in chronological order with a legend identifying the name of the surveyors and start-stop times. Although considerable information is contained in the table due to the number of surveys performed, and it requires study, it is complete and comprehensive and provides what is intended to be conveyed regarding the basic parameters of the surveys performed. Therefore, revisions to Table I in the BRA are not warranted.

RESPONSE NO. A2-6

As described on page 4.C-7 of the Draft EIR, "NRC conducted general biological surveys of the Skyline Ranch study area in June and July 2002, March through July 2003, April through June 2005, March through June 2006, and January through June 2007." As defined on page 4.C-2 of the Draft EIR, the study area is not limited to the proposed development footprint, rather it includes the 2,173-acre project site and 60.8 acres of off-site area that would be altered to accommodate project development. The total acreage and identification of biological resources presented in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, in the tables and figures listed above, represent results of the general surveys and focused surveys for the entire 2,173-acre site and offsite areas. The evaluation of the impacts of the development alternatives, presented in Chapter 5.0, Alternatives, of the Draft EIR, was based on the configuration of the alternative site development area and the underlying biological resources that would be affected, as mapped for the entire project site. Areas proposed for mitigation, to address impacts within the proposed development footprint and affected offsite areas, are identified on Table 4.C-5, Vegetation Community Preservation and Figure 4.C-7 Proposed Conservation and Mitigation Areas.

RESPONSE NO. A2-7

The surveys for the Monosabian Assemblage covered all portions of Skyline Ranch except for small parcels added to the project study area after the survey including off-site improvement areas. However, these smaller added parcels were surveyed for sensitive plants and other biological resources at the time they were added to the study area. Whereas the vernal pool areas located on Cruzan Mesa were a focus of the study, all areas within the study area were adequately surveyed and the comment indicating that the sensitive plant surveys did not include areas south of Plum Canyon is incorrect. Concerning the commenter questioning the reliability of using data derived from sensitive plant surveys conducted in 2003 and 2005, it should be noted that the reliability of plant surveys is highly dependent on rainfall totals during the season they were conducted. According to data collected at the Los Angeles Civic Center and presented in The Los Angeles On-Line Almanac, the 130-year average seasonal rainfall is 15.04 inches. During the 2002-2003 rainy season, 16.42 inches of rain fell at the Civic Center station, indicating slightly higher than normal precipitation. During the 2004-2005 rainy season, 37.96 inches of rain fell at the season, indicating a very wet year. In both cases, conditions for sensitive plant growth are considered to be good to excellent case scenarios that reflect best case conditions for conducting surveys. Therefore, the data presented in the Draft EIR are considered to be accurate and reliable.

RESPONSE NO. A2-8

The comment regarding possible limitations to the reliance solely on CNDDB information as a definitive means to determine the presence or absence on the project site is acknowledged. In order to clarify and as stated in Section 3.1, GIS Analysis of Sensitive Species Data, on page 3 of the technical BRA (included in Appendix D-1 of the Draft EIR) "NRC incorporated sensitive species data into a GIS evaluation of the Skyline Ranch site, including occurrence data from the CNDDB and the USFWS…" Moreover, in Section 5.2, Sensitive Resources Occurring or Potentially Occurring on the Site, on page 13 of the BRA "Sources used to determine the potential occurrence of sensitive resources in the vicinity of the site include USFWS (1997a), CDFG (1996a, 1996b, 1997, 1998a, 1998b), CNPS (Tibor, 2001), California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB, 2004), California Wildlife Habitat Relationships Database System (CDFG, 1991), Remsen (1978), CDFG and PRBO (2001), Jennings and Hayes (1994), and Williams (1986)." These sources include information on endangered and threatened and otherwise sensitive species of plants and animals throughout California which was also considered in determining the potential presence or absence of such species on site. Therefore, the CNDDB was only one of a number of sources consulted for this purpose, and was not used as a definitive means to determine presence or absence of a species.

RESPONSE NO. A2-9

The comment stating that the technical BRA and Draft EIR incorporated information from a records search of the CNDDB in 2004 is incorrect. As noted in the footnotes on page 4.C-28 of the Draft EIR, the latest search and data incorporated into the assessment was conducted using the 2007 edition of the CNDDB. Nevertheless, based on an updated search using the 2009 version, four sensitive species have record updates of note to the assessment since 2007. These are: the coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), which is discussed below in Response to Comment A2-11; the unarmored threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*), for which suitable habitat does not exist in the study area; spreading navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*), which was recorded at the vernal pool in Plum Canyon as well in the vernal pools on Cruzan Mesa and which were observed at both locations as stated in the Draft EIR; and California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), which were recorded at the Plum Canyon vernal pool and the vernal pools on Cruzan Mesa and were noted as observed at these locations in the Draft EIR. Therefore, with the exception of the coastal California gnatcatcher, the information documented in the Draft EIR reflects the current body of knowledge regarding sensitive species elements recorded in the most recent CNDDB.

Regarding the coastal California gnatcatcher, please refer to Response to Comment A2-11 below.

RESPONSE NO. A2-10

The occurrence for the Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*) shown on Exhibit 8 of the technical BRA is from a single sighting in 1920. The display of this occurrence was made in an attempt to capture all historical data without regard to current population distributions. According to the *Recovery Plan for the Quino Checkerspot Butterfly* (*Euphydryas editha quino*) published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, dated August 11, 2003, the species was historically distributed throughout the coastal slopes of southern California, including Los Angeles, Orange, western Riverside, San Diego, and southwestern San Bernardino counties. Figure 2, Quino Checkerspot Butterfly Historic U.S. Distribution, in that document indicates one sighting of the species in the general area of the project site that was recorded sometime between 1890 and 1986. For this reason it is mentioned in the Draft EIR. The Recovery Plan also states that although by the 1970's most of the coastal bluff and mesa habitats in southern California had been urbanized or otherwise disturbed, the species still occupied known habitat locations inland and at higher elevations in San Diego and western Riverside counties. However, by the mid-1980's, the species was thought to have disappeared from all remaining locations. Moreover, the Recovery Plan states that current information suggests that the Quino checkerspot butterfly has been extirpated from Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties. This is further supported by the *Quino Checkerspot*

Butterfly (Euphydryas editha quino) 5-Year Review: Summary and Evaluation, published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, dated August 13, 2009, which describes the current range for the species as being multiple areas in western Riverside County, south into Mexico.

RESPONSE NO. A2-11

The comment is correct in stating that recent sightings of the coastal California gnatcatcher are not reflected in the Draft EIR. Nonetheless, as stated in the Draft EIR, "coastal sage scrub areas and adjacent areas of mixed chaparral-coastal sage scrub were considered suitable gnatcatcher habitat." The sighting of the California gnatcatcher near the site in Plum Canyon by representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1998 is not disputed. However, no information on the veracity of the recent sighting at the California State University, Channel Islands campus in Camarillo was given in the comment. Nor was any supporting information given regarding the indications that the California gnatcatcher may be expanding its range (northward). Therefore, for purposes of this response, while the comment is noted, it does not invalidate the findings of California gnatcatcher surveys on the site itself which were conducted in 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007, and which all produced negative findings for the presence of the species on site. Furthermore, all such habitat areas over the entire site were surveyed. Based on the negative findings of surveys in 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2007, the site was concluded to be unoccupied by California gnatcatcher, and no analysis of potential direct or indirect effects on the species was warranted.

RESPONSE NO. A2-12

As summarized on page 4 and Table I of the Biological Resources Assessment (included as Appendix D-1 of the Draft EIR), all surveys for the coastal California gnatcatcher followed the protocols/guidelines published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Accordingly, six surveys were performed at least one week apart, between 6:00 A.M. and 12:00 P.M., within all portions of the study area containing suitable habitat. A maximum of 80 acres per person per survey day were surveyed. To ensure coverage of adjacent areas, vocalizations were broadcast outside the boundaries where suitable coastal California gnatcatcher habitat existed. All surveys were conducted under weather conditions considered to be conducive to gnatcatcher detection by the surveyors. Surveys were performed during the breeding seasons in 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Specifically, the dates and times are indicated on Table I. Under the column heading “Survey/Type” the number following C indicates that this is a series of the six required surveys (e.g. C(2) is the second of a series of the six required gnatcatcher surveys that was conducted).

RESPONSE NO. A2-13

For the purpose of the Draft EIR, the surveys for California gnatcatcher are considered to be valid today for three primary reasons: 1) multiple surveys were conducted on site in 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007 with negative findings for the presence of the species; 2) no supporting evidence was presented to support any indications that the species may be expanding its current range to include the project site in the future (see Response to Comment A2-11); and, 3) a wildfire burned all suitable habitat within the development area in 2007 and had not recovered to the point where it was considered suitable to support California gnatcatchers in 2008 and 2009; therefore the previous surveys represent conservative assumptions regarding suitable habitat.

RESPONSE NO. A2-14

Clarification about where on site the California gnatcatcher surveys were conducted is provided on page 4, second paragraph, last sentence of Appendix D-1, Biological Resources Assessment, of the Draft EIR. As stated, "coastal sage scrub areas and adjacent areas of mixed chaparral-coastal sage scrub were considered suitable gnatcatcher habitat." Furthermore, all such habitat areas over the entire site were surveyed. Based on the negative findings of surveys in 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2007, and the loss of habitat due to the 2007 wildfire, the site was concluded to be unoccupied by California gnatcatcher, and no analysis of potential direct or indirect effects on the species was warranted.

RESPONSE NO. A2-15

Exhibit 5 in the BRA reflects mapping obtained from the CNDDB. Typically, such mapping of vegetation is not based on site specific investigations and should be viewed as "broad brush" or "coarse". A more accurate characterization of the vegetation type on site is provided in Exhibit 10, Vegetation Communities, in the BRA because it was based on site inspections conducted for the specific purpose of mapping this information. As shown on Exhibit 10, the area pointed out by the commenter was determined to be sycamore riparian woodland and not southern coast live oak woodland. Moreover, the description of the sycamore riparian woodland provided on page 9 of the BRA states that this vegetation is "a patchy sycamore woodland community" where "a few small Fremont cottonwood trees occur scattered among sycamores." Based on experience gained through conducting literally thousands of hours of least Bell's vireo surveys on the part of Natural Resource Consultants' biologists, these biologists are extremely confident that this vegetation is unsuitable for occupancy by the species in the manner described by the commenter. Based on the determination that no suitable habitat for the least Bell's vireo exists at this location (see page 28 of the BRA), no analysis of potential direct and indirect impacts was warranted.

The same determination by the same biologists was made for the area mapped as southern willow scrub. As described on page 9 of the BRA, "willows are poorly represented on the site because of the low annual rainfall, highly porous sandy soils, and consequent lack of water in the drainages for most of the year, however, there is a small patch of southern willow scrub located on the north slope of Cruzan Mesa on steep terrain." It should also be noted that this area is not within the proposed development area.

RESPONSE NO. A2-16

For the purpose of the analysis provided in the Draft EIR, the California condor is not considered to be a species of concern for the proposed project based on the most current data available regarding its occurrence on site, in the vicinity of the site, and/or in the region. The comment states that California condors are known to roost, forage, and feed within the vicinity. However, although the site is acknowledged to be located within the historical range of the species, out of thousands of California condor global positioning system (GPS) locations recorded between April 2002 and June 19, 2008 and reported in the Draft Tehachapi Uplands Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan prepared by Dudek in 2008, there are only three locations in the vicinity of the site and no locations on the site itself. According to these data the nearest recorded perch and roost location is approximately 11 miles to the northwest of the project site, and only three recorded aerial locations (i.e., overflights) are within approximately five miles of the project site. These include two locations approximately one mile to the west and southeast, respectfully, and one location approximately two miles to the east. In comparison, there are literally thousands of locations where over-flights have been recorded and hundreds of perch and roost locations have been recorded well to the south of State Route 14 in the Santa Susana Mountains, in and between Hopper Mountain and the Mount Pinos area, and north in the Tehachapi Mountains. Given the mobility of this species, which can include foraging over 30 to 45 miles from their nesting areas, it is not surprising that they may have been rarely observed over-flying in the vicinity of the project. It should also be noted that there is no California condor critical habitat on or near the site and the nearest critical habitat is located approximately 15 miles away. Based on these recent data, the site does not support condors and no known locations of condors have been recorded on the site and it would be highly speculative and misleading for the Draft EIR to suggest otherwise.

In support of this conclusion are the findings of Bloom Biological, Inc.'s (July 13, 2007; 2007a) Late Winter and Spring Avian Survey with Focus on the California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) on Portions of Newhall Land and Farming Company Property, Los Angeles County, California, which concluded “it [Newhall's Landmark Village project] will not induce significant direct impacts to the California condor resurging population, specific individuals, their individual and combined behavior, or their critical habitat.” The Newhall Landmark Village project study area included approximately 25 miles of the Santa Clara River and its major tributaries in and around Valencia, Los Angeles County. It is important to note that this conclusion of no significant impacts

for the Newhall Landmark Village project applies to a site that is within two to three miles of areas with high concentrations of condor perch, roost, and overhead sightings compared to the Skyline Ranch site which is located more than 18 miles from such areas.

RESPONSE NO. A2-17

The commenter's concern regarding migratory birds was addressed by Mitigation Measure 4.C-3, in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, of the Draft EIR, wherein provisions for avoidance of vegetation clearance during the nesting season of birds is provided for and, if impracticable, pre-construction surveys are required. As stated in this mitigation measure, these provisions are specifically directed at avoiding impacts to nesting birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

RESPONSE NO. A2-18

The procedures for implementation and maintenance of the SRCA, including performance standards, are described in Mitigation Measure 4.C-1, on page 4.C-72, in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, of the Draft EIR, as well as Table ES-1 of the Executive Summary. Mitigation Measure 4.C-1 requires the preservation of the SRCA through either a Declaration of Restrictions, Conservation Easement, or dedication or transfer of the land to a qualified conservation organization approved by the County and also provides for the establishment and funding of a long-term maintenance and management program in order to preserve biological resources within the SRCA. The program requires the use of signs, and where appropriate, other management practices to discourage off-road vehicles, domestic pets, and other activities harmful to natural lands. Any continued use of lands within the SRCA, could only occur with approval by the SRCA habitat manager upon a demonstration that the uses would not be incompatible with the resource conservation objectives of the SRCA. Furthermore, Mitigation Measure 4.C-2 requires preservation of the vernal pool and artificial pool habitats within the SRCA subject to RWQCB jurisdiction. While more specific details regarding restrictions would be established through the SRCA, Mitigation Measure 4.C-1 provides a series of performance standards that must be met to ensure significant impacts are avoided. Furthermore, all mitigation measures would be implemented through a Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) as required by CEQA. The MMP is included as Chapter 4.0 of this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. A2-19

The extension of the Mint Canyon Trail from Vasquez Canyon Road to the Plum Canyon Fire Road would be implemented along an existing dirt path and therefore, would not adversely affect sensitive resources. No grading would occur along the trail easement, with the exception of

grading at the proposed Mint Canyon Trail trailhead entrance at Vasquez Canyon Road to provide a switch back trail, as shown on the revised Vesting Tentative Tract No. 060922 (see new Figure 2-4, Mint Canyon Trail Entrance, in Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR.) Grading for this portion of the trail would occur within an area of approximately 7,405 square feet that is primarily dirt with little to no vegetation. The switchback trail is located within an area designated as Open Space without conservation easements or restrictions, due to the lack of notable biological resources. Grading for the trial could include erosion control measures as needed, such as sandbagging, to minimize soil erosion and stormwater runoff to the existing drainage inlet north of Vasquez Canyon Road.

Regarding the concern the trail system will increase access to the SRCA with potential impacts to sensitive species and habits, Draft EIR Mitigation Measure 4.C-1 includes performance standards that specify in part that: "An on-going maintenance and management program shall be adequately funded and implemented to ensure the long-term integrity of biological resources within the 1,355-acre SRCA." And that: "Direct and indirect degradation of habitat shall be prevented … through the prohibition or restriction of uses within the SRCA,"

RESPONSE NO. A2-20

As described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description of the Draft EIR, the Non-Development Continuing Use Area encompasses the portion of the site that was previously approved for the development of 200 residential lots. This area is currently being leased by a film production company and had been previously used for cattle grazing. There is also a landing strip (which was in use until the 1980s) located within this area. Therefore, the Non-Development Continuing Use Area has been disturbed by previous activities to a greater extent than the SRCA. As shown on Figure 4.C-1, Vegetation Communities of the Draft EIR, the vast majority of the 166-acre Non-Development/Continuing Use Area supports non-native grasslands, disturbed areas, and disturbed coastal sage scrub. As such, this area does not provide in-kind conservation mitigation for impacts to any vegetation community that would be impacted by the proposed project; and therefore was not included in the SCRA which was established to off-set project impacts. Unlike the SRCA, no changes to this area or currently allowed uses within this area, including film-making activities, are proposed. Nonetheless, a Declaration of Restrictions (or similar, recorded land use restriction) would be placed over the 166-acre area to prevent buildings from being established within this area. Furthermore, no changes are proposed to fencing or other existing procedures that protect the vernal pools within the Non-Development Continuing Use Area.

RESPONSE NO. A2-21

Please refer to Response to Comments A2-18 through A2-20 regarding potential impacts to the vernal pools. As indicated, the proposed project offers protections to the vernal pools that are not currently in place. The project places the vernal pools into lands previously approved for development into perpetual open space. No grading activities within or adjacent to the vernal pools would occur as part of the proposed project. As indicated in Response to Comment A2-19, the vernal pools are fenced and fencing of these areas would not be affected by the proposed project.

RESPONSE NO. A2-22

As stated by the commenter and shown on Figure 2-3 of the Draft EIR, there are nine acres of open space at the northernmost edge of the project site without conservation restrictions or easements. The nine acres are located outside of the proposed SEA area, on land that does not include sensitive habitat or species. The land is not required for project mitigation and not credited as providing mitigation for impacts on biological resources in the Draft EIR. Therefore, not placing restrictions on the open space area as part of project development would not cause a biological resources impact to occur. As stated in Response to Comment A2-19, the Mint Canyon Trail would extend into this area. No other plans for development are proposed within this area.

RESPONSE NO. A2-23

The comments regarding the project alternatives and EIR identification of and Agency support for Reduced Project Alternative B as an environmentally superior alternative are noted for the consideration of the decision-makers. However, it should be clarified that the Draft EIR did not simply indicate that Reduced Project Alternative B meets the project objectives. Rather, it states more specifically in Section 5.A, Alternatives, on page 5-59, that: "…Reduced Project Alternative B would not fulfill certain objectives to the same degree as the proposed project. For example, due to the reduction in the amount of residential development, the Alternative would not increase the supply of housing to serve existing and future needs in the Santa Clarita Valley to the same degree as the proposed project. This Alternative would also not fulfill park and recreation objectives to the same extent as the proposed project, since no trail easement would be provided to support the extension of the County Trail System. Additionally, Reduced Project Alternative B would not fulfill the mobility objective of providing for the major highway improvement involving the Whites Canyon Extension to Sierra Highway, as proposed by the project and conditionally approved and shown on the County's Draft Highway Plan. Without this highway improvement as part of the project, the County's ability to complete such a connection could be compromised, as it would not be substantially funded by the project and its implementation, if it were to occur, could be significantly delayed."

RESPONSE NO. A2-24

As stated in Response to Comment A2-6, biological surveys were conducted over the entire site and impacts to biological resources were adequately addressed under the Reasonably Foreseeable On-Site Development and Reduced Project Alternatives in light of the biological resources within the areas associated with these alternatives. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d), each alternative presented in Chapter 5.0 of the Draft EIR, was evaluated in sufficient detail to determine whether impacts on biological resources would be less, similar, or greater than the proposed project.

RESPONSE NO. A2-25

Please see Responses to Comments A2-5 through A2-24 regarding the issues raised by the commenter.

Letter B1

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PLANNING AND RESEARCH

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

CYNTHIA BRYANT
DIRECTOR

September 15, 2009

RECEIVED
SEP 21 2009

Michele Bush
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: Skyline Ranch Project, Project No. 04-075, Tract Map No. 060922
SCH#: 2004101090

Dear Michele Bush:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Draft EIR to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on September 14, 2009, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. B1-1

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Acting Director, State Clearinghouse

1400 10th Street P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, California 95812-3044
(916) 445-0613 FAX (916) 323-3018 www.opr.ca.gov

Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base

SCH# 2004101090
Project Title Skyline Ranch Project, Project No. 04-075, Tract Map No. 060922
Lead Agency Los Angeles County

Type EIR Draft EIR

Description NOTE: Review Per Lead

The proposed Skyline Ranch project site occupies ~2,173 acres. The project is a request to develop on ~622 acres of the site, which includes 1,313 lots consisting of 1,260 residential lots, an ~11 acre elementary school site, 10 lots for park areas, 13 debris basin lots, 4 water tank/booster pump station lots and 25 open space lots. Nearly 3 quarters of the site (northern 1,551 acres) is proposed to remain undeveloped, with ~1,355 acres dedicated or designated as a Non-Development/Continuing Use Area. Also within the northern portion of the site ~22 acres would be preserved as a Mitigation Exchange Area for 22 acres of preserve area within adjacent recorded Tract 46018. The project includes a Conditional Use Permit application due to Density-Controlled Development and Hillside Management Areas; and an Oak Tree Permit for the removal of one oak tree.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Michele Bush
Agency Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
Phone (213) 974-6461 **Fax**
email
Address 320 W. Temple Street
City Los Angeles **State** CA **Zip** 90012

Project Location

County Los Angeles
City Santa Clarita
Region
Lat / Long 34° 16.9' 26" N / 118° 17.4' 27" W
Cross Streets Sierra Highway, Whites Canyon Rd
Parcel No. 2839-0-17 to 19, 2802-02-1, 3 to 8, 10 to 12, 15, 2812-3-45, 4, 27, 2, 2802-03-1, 5, 2812-4-11
Township 4N **Range** 15W **Section** 3,9,10 **Base** SBB&M

Proximity to:

Highways 14
Airports None
Railways Metrolink
Waterways Santa Clara River, Mint Canyon
Schools Sangus HS,Arroyo Seco Jr High,Leona Cox ES,Mint Canyon ES
Land Use Vacant (occasional filming use) / A-2-1, A-1-1, A-1-10,000 / Non-urban

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Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Cumulative Effects; Drainage/Absorption; Flood Plain/Flooding; Geologic/Seismic; Growth Inducing; Landuse; Noise; Population/Housing Balance; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Schools/Universities; Sewer Capacity; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Solid Waste; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Water Supply; Wildlife

---

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Department of Conservation; Department of Fish and Game, Region 5; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; Office of Emergency Services; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 7; Department of Housing and Community Development; Department of Health Services; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 4; Department of Toxic Substances Control; Native American Heritage Commission; Public Utilities Commission

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base

Date Received 07/28/2009 ***Start of Review*** 07/28/2009 ***End of Review*** 09/14/2009

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

LETTER NO. B1

Scott Morgan, Acting Director
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit
1400 10th Street
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

RESPONSE NO. B1-1

The comment is noted. It is also acknowledged that no State agencies that received copies of the Draft EIR from the State Clearinghouse submitted comments to the State Clearinghouse or Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning by September 14, 2009. Refer to Letter G2 for a late comment, dated November 5, 2009 that was provided by the California Department of Fish and Game.

Letter C1

WATER RECLAMATION
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS
OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601-1400
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4998, Whittier, CA 90607-4998
Telephone: (562) 699-7411, FAX: (562) 699-5422
www.lacsd.org

STEPHEN R. MAGUIN
Chief Engineer and General Manager

August 20, 2009

File No. 31R-3100.10

Ms. Michele Bush
County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
Impact Analysis Section, Room 1348
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

AUG 24 2009

Dear Ms. Bush:

Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)
for the Skyline Ranch Project Santa Clarita Valley, CA

The County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Districts) received the subject CEQA document on July 31, 2009. Regarding solid waste management for the above-mentioned project in unincorporated County of Los Angeles, the Districts offer the following comments:

1. The Districts are a partnership of 24 independent special districts providing wastewater and solid waste management services for about 5.3 million people in Los Angeles County. The Districts' service area covers approximately 820 square miles and encompasses 78 cities and unincorporated territory within the county. On the solid waste management side, the Districts operate three active sanitary landfills, four landfill energy recovery facilities, two recycle centers, three materials recovery/transfer facilities, and participate in the operation of two refuse-to-energy facilities. **C1-1**

   There are seven major public and private landfills operating in Los Angeles County. The Puente Hills Landfill (PHLF), located at 13130 Crossroads Parkway South in the City of Industry is the closest landfill operated by the Districts that could be used by the proposed project. The conditional use permit (CUP) for the PHLF authorizes the disposal of a maximum of 13,200 tons per day. Disposal operations will continue under the CUP until November 1, 2013. The site will then stop accepting waste for disposal.

   Recognizing that in-county disposal capacity is finite, in the long term there will be a need for out-of-county disposal capacity. To that end, the Sanitation Districts have pursued additional capacity through the use of a waste-by-rail system. The Districts are currently in the process of designing and constructing the rail facilities necessary to begin Waste-by-Rail operation by 2011/2012. The City of Industry Planning Commission approved the CUP for the Puente Hills Intermodal Facility (PHIMF) in June 2008. The PHIMF will be used for loading and unloading rail-ready shipping containers for the Waste-by-Rail system. The containers will then be transported to the Mesquite Regional Landfill in Imperial County for disposal. **C1-2**

Other solid waste management facilities operated by the Districts that are available to the proposed project and offer recycling options are the Commerce Refuse-to-Energy Facility (CREF), the Downey Area Recycling and Transfer Facility (DART), the South Gate Transfer Station, and the Puente Hills Materials Recovery Facility (PHMRF). CREF is located at 5926 Sheila Street in the city of Commerce. CREF is a transformation facility that is permitted to accept up to 1,000 tons per day, not to exceed 2,800 tons per week. DART is located at 9770 Washburn Road in the city of Downey. DART is a materials recovery/transfer facility that is permitted to accept up to 5,000 tons per day. The South Gate Transfer Station is located at 9530 Garfield Avenue in the city of South Gate that is permitted to accept up to 1,000 tons per day of refuse. The PHMRF is located at 2808 Workman Mill Road in the city of Whittier. The PHMRF is permitted to accept 4,400 tons per day, not to exceed 24,000 tons per week of municipal solid waste. **C1-2 (cont)**

2. In regards to Table 4K-1 of the DEIR, please make the following corrections: **C1-3**

   a. Footnote *g*: Replace "Watershed" with "Wasteshed"

      Replace "Ordinance #4782" with "Ordinance #4780"

   b. Footnote *f*: Replace "Watershed" with "Wasteshed."

If you have additional questions concerning this response, please contact me at (562) 908-4288, extension 2764.

Very truly yours,

Stephen R. Maguin

Ziad A. El Jack
Senior Engineer
Planning Section

ZE:mh

LETTER NO. C1

Stephen Maguin, Chief Engineer
County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
1955 Workman Mill Road
Whittier, CA 90601-1400

RESPONSE NO. C1-1

This comment provides specific information on the County Sanitation Districts' facilities and service area. The commenter indicates that the closest landfill (owned and operated by the Districts) that could be used by the project is the Puente Hills Landfill. While this is the closest Districts' landfill, it is not the closest landfill to the project site. As discussed in Section 4.K, Solid Waste Disposal, of the Draft EIR, the closest landfills to the project site are Sunshine Canyon Landfill, Chiquita Canyon Landfill, and the Antelope Valley Landfill, where solid waste generated by the project would likely be disposed. Furthermore, although the Puente Hills Landfill could accept solid waste generated at the project site during the initial phases of occupancy, buildout of the project is anticipated to be 2017, after closure of the landfill. This information regarding the Puente Hills Landfill is presented in Table 4.K-1 of the Draft EIR. As shown therein, the permit expiration date for the Puente Hills landfill is October 31, 2013 according to the 2007 Los Angeles Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (May 2009), or, as stated by the Districts "disposal operations will continue until November 1, 2013." No additional response is required.

RESPONSE NO. C1-2

This comment provides additional information on waste-by-rail, refuse-to-energy, and other recycling options available to the project and is not a comment on the Draft EIR. Therefore, no additional response is required.

RESPONSE NO. C1-3

The typographical errors are noted. In response, Footnotes g and h of Table 4.K-1 have been revised. Please see Chapter 3.0, Corrections and additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

Letter D1

From: Bernard Lee [mailto:leeb@scag.ca.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2009 1:24 PM
To: Bush, Michele
Subject: SCAG Comments on the DEIR for the Skyline Ranch Project

Dear Ms. Bush,

Attached are comments from the Southern California Association of Governments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Skyline Ranch Project [I20090488]. **D1-1**

Please contact me if you have any questions or encounter difficulty opening the attachment.

Thank you,
Bernard

Bernard Lee
Southern California Association of Governments
Office: 213.236.1895
Email: leeb scag.ca.gov

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS

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Energy & Environment
Keith Hanks, Azusa

Transportation
Mike Ten, South Pasadena

September 14, 2009

Ms. Michele Bush
County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
Impact Analysis Section, Room 1348
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
mbush@planning.lacounty.gov

RE: SCAG Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Skyline Ranch Project [I20090488]

Dear Ms. Bush,

Thank you for submitting the **Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Skyline Ranch Project, County Project No. 04-075 [I20090488]** to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) for review and comment. SCAG is the authorized regional agency for Inter-Governmental Review of Programs proposed for federal financial assistance and direct development activities, pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 12372 (replacing A-95 Review). Additionally, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21083(d) SCAG reviews Environmental Impacts Reports of projects of regional significance for consistency with regional plans per the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Sections 15125(d) and 15206(a)(1). SCAG is also the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency and as such is responsible for both preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) under California Government Code Section 65080 and 65082. As the clearinghouse for regionally significant projects per Executive Order 12372, SCAG reviews the consistency of local plans, projects, and programs with regional plans. This activity is based on SCAG's responsibilities as a regional planning organization pursuant to state and federal laws and regulations. Guidance provided by these reviews is intended to assist local agencies and project sponsors to take actions that contribute to the attainment of regional goals and policies. **D1-2**

SCAG staff has reviewed this project and determined that the proposed project is regionally significant per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Sections 15125 and/or 15206. The proposed project, located on 2,173 acres (of which 622 acres would be developed), would consist of 1,260 residential lots.

We have evaluated this project based on the policies of SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Compass Growth Vision (CGV) that may be applicable to your project. The RTP and CGV can be found on the SCAG web site at: http://scag.ca.gov/igr. The attached detailed comments are meant to provide guidance for considering the proposed project within the context of our regional goals and policies. We also encourage the use of the SCAG List of Mitigation Measures extracted from the RTP to aid with demonstrating consistency with regional plans and policies. Please provide a copy of the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for our review. If you have any questions regarding the attached comments, please contact Bernard Lee at (213) 236-1800. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jacob Lieb, Manager
Assessment, Housing & EIR

DOCS# 153232

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE SKYLINE RANCH PROJECT [SCAG NO. I20090488]

PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project is located in the Santa Clarita Valley west of Sierra Highway, north of Highway 14 (Antelope Valley Freeway) and the City of Santa Clarita. The project site includes various undeveloped parcels west of Sierra Highway (Mint Canyon) between the Santa Clara River and Vasquez Canyon.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Skyline Ranch project site occupies approximately 2,173 acres. The project is a request to develop on approximately 622 acres of the site, which includes 1,313 lots consisting of 1,260 residential lots, an approximately 11-acre elementary school site, 10 lots for park areas, 13 debris basin lots, four (4) water tank/booster pump station lots and 25 open space lots. Nearly three quarters of the site (the northern 1,551 acres) is proposed to remain undeveloped, with approximately 1,355 acres dedicated or designated as open space through establishment of the proposed Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA). Approximately 166 acres of undeveloped land in the northern portion of the site on the Cruzan Mesa would remain undeveloped and designated as a Non-Development/Continuing Use Area. Also within the northern portion of the site approximately 22 acres would be preserved as a Mitigation Exchange Area for 22 acres of preserve area within adjacent recorded Tract 46018. The project includes a Conditional Use Permit application due to Density-Controlled Development and Hillside Management Areas; and an Oak Tree Permit for the removal of one oak tree.

The project site is undeveloped except for the northern portion, known as Cruzan Mesa, which is currently being leased by a film production company as an outdoor movie location. Portions of Cruzan Mesa have been previously used for cattle grazing and are the site of sizable vernal pools. Remnants of an old landing strip are still present on Cruzan Mesa; based on available historical information, this landing strip had been in operation from at least the late 1950s until the late 1980s. Also within the project boundary are seven parcels (or 60 acres) under private ownership, which are not a part of the proposed project. These include five vacant parcels and two parcels with one single-family unit each. These parcels are outside of the proposed development area and access to these parcels would not be affected by the proposed project. D1-3

Large portions of the project site, located to the north, lie adjacent to undeveloped lands. The southern portion of the project site, the portion designated for development, lies adjacent to or in the vicinity of existing urban development. Residential development in the City of Santa Clarita lies adjacent to the southernmost edge of the west side of the project site, with residential development continuing southward into the larger city area. A smaller residential tract is located to the southeast of the project site along Sierra Highway.

In particular, within the immediate vicinity of the location of the proposed connection of the new access road that would extend from Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway just north of Adon Avenue are several multi-family residential developments, motels, and daycare/preschool facilities. Sierra Highway extends southeast and northwest from its closest point to the project site with limited strip commercial uses interspersed with residential development and industrial uses further to the north. Soledad Canyon Road is located approximately one mile south of the project site and provides the nearest major commercial activities to the project site.

The following approvals are required for the project.

- Vesting Tentative Tract Map approval (for the development of 1260 residential lots) pursuant to Subdivision Code Subsections 21.38.010 through 21.38.080;

- Conditional Use Permit for Density-Controlled Development pursuant to Zoning Code Subsection 22.56.205 and Hillside Management Areas pursuant to Zoning Code Subsection 22.56.215;
- Oak Tree Permit (for removal of one oak tree) pursuant to Zoning Code Subsections 22.56.2050 through 22.56.2260;
- Approval to construct a 70-foot non-standard right-of-way within a local interior street;
- Other approvals, subsequent to discretionary approval, including those from the following agencies:
  - County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Sewer Line Connection Permit);
  - Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (Building Permit, Grading
- Permit, Improvement Plan Permit, General Municipal Separate Storm Sewer
- System Permit, Flood Control Easement);
  - Los Angeles County Fire Department (Approval of Alternative cul-de-sac/turnaround on Beneda Lane).

D1-3 Cont'd

CONSISTENCY WITH REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Regional Growth Forecasts

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) should reflect the most current SCAG forecasts, which are the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Population, Household and Employment forecasts (adopted May 2008). The forecasts for your region, subregion, and county are as follows:

Adopted SCAG Regionwide Forecasts[1]

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Population	19,418,344	20,465,830	21,468,948	22,395,121	23,255,377	24,057,286
Households	6,086,986	6,474,074	6,840,328	7,156,645	7,449,484	7,710,722
Employment	8,349,453	8,811,406	9,183,029	9,546,773	9,913,376	10,287,125

Adopted NLAC Subregion Forecasts (Unincorporated)[1]

D1-4

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Population	194,704	244,463	294,120	342,578	389,595	434,773
Households	58,090	74,714	92,232	105,907	119,114	129,981
Employment	46,820	56,539	62,745	70,041	77,831	85,289

Adopted NLAC Subregion Forecasts (Total)[1]

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Population	719,989	839,942	960,006	1,076,970	1,190,463	1,299,449
Households	215,650	253,750	293,899	325,241	355,511	380,417
Employment	193,386	218,637	234,761	253,717	273,957	293,334

Adopted County of Los Angeles Forecasts (Unincorporated)[1]

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Population	1,188,321	1,282,624	1,378,396	1,471,608	1,561,983	1,648,694
Households	325,615	357,468	391,383	417,848	443,414	464,468
Employment	320,171	336,371	346,717	358,881	371,868	384,300

Adopted County of Los Angeles Forecasts (Total)[1]

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Population	10,615,732	10,971,598	11,329,832	11,678,549	12,015,885	12,338,619
Households	3,357,798	3,509,580	3,666,631	3,788,732	3,906,851	4,003,501
Employment	4,552,398	4,675,875	4,754,731	4,847,436	4,946,420	5,041,172

1. The 2008 RTP growth forecast at the regional, subregional, and county levels was adopted by the Regional Council in May 2008.

D1-4
Cont'd

SCAG Staff Comments:

Chapter 4.R (Population, Housing and Employment) utilizes the 2008 RTP forecasts. In order to derive values for years 2007 and 2017, the preparers of the EIR have interpolated.

The **2008 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)** also has goals and policies that are pertinent to this proposed project. This RTP links the goal of sustaining mobility with the goals of fostering economic development, enhancing the environment, reducing energy consumption, promoting transportation-friendly development patterns, and encouraging fair and equitable access to residents affected by socio-economic, geographic and commercial limitations. The RTP continues to support all applicable federal and state laws in implementing the proposed project. Among the relevant goals and policies of the RTP are the following:

Regional Transportation Plan Goals:

RTP G1 *Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region.*
RTP G2 *Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region.*
RTP G3 *Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system.*
RTP G4 *Maximize the productivity of our transportation system.*
RTP G5 *Protect the environment, improve air quality and promote energy efficiency.*
RTP G6 *Encourage land use and growth patterns that complement our transportation investments.*
RTP G7 *Maximize the security of our transportation system through improved system monitoring, rapid recovery planning, and coordination with other security agencies.*

D1-5

SCAG Staff Comments:

SCAG staff finds the project meets consistency with RTP G4 and partial consistency with RTP G1, G5, and G6. RTP G2, G3, and G7 are not applicable to this project.

The proposed project meets partial consistency with RTP G1. Mobility pertains to the speed at which one may travel and the delay, or difference between the actual travel time and travel time that would be experienced if a person traveled at the legal speed limit. Table 4.F-16 (ICU and LOS Summary with Mitigation) indicates that all analyzed intersections meet Level of Service (LOS) requirements (LOS E per page 4.F-10), after accounting for improvements. Accessibility measures how well the transportation system provides people access to opportunities, such as jobs, education, shopping, recreation, and medical care. The proposed project site is located approximately two miles north of Highway 14, slightly challenging access to the rest of the region. Local access is provided via Sierra Highway.

With regard to RTP G4, the proposed project meets consistency. Productivity is a system efficiency measure that reflects the degree to which the transportation system performs during peak demand conditions. As mentioned previously, analyzed intersections near the proposed project site would perform at acceptable Levels of Service.

The proposed project meets partial consistency with RTP G5. Per page 4.H-40, the proposed project's operation would exceed SCAQMD thresholds for five out of six criteria pollutants, after mitigation measures have been applied. Table 4.H-7 (Estimated Operational Emissions Without Mitigation) indicates that Mobile Sources contribute to emissions in a significant manner. However, pages 4.S-7 to 4.S-9 discuss the low impact development standards and green building programs that the project intends to implement. **D1-5** Cont'd

The proposed project meets partial consistency with RTP G6. The project site is located two miles from Highway 14, which provides regional access and is located near Sierra Highway, which provides local access. Pages 2-14 to 2-19 describe roadway improvements that will be required in order to provide sufficient access to the site. Three Santa Clarita Transit bus lines, operating on 30 minute headways, stop within a quarter mile of the project site.

GROWTH VISIONING

The fundamental goal of the **Compass Growth Visioning** effort is to make the SCAG region a better place to live, work and play for all residents regardless of race, ethnicity or income class. Thus, decisions regarding growth, transportation, land use, and economic development should be made to promote and sustain for future generations the region's mobility, livability and prosperity. The following "Regional Growth Principles" are proposed to provide a framework for local and regional decision making that improves the quality of life for all SCAG residents. Each principle is followed by a specific set of strategies intended to achieve this goal.

Principle 1: Improve mobility for all residents.

GV P1.1 *Encourage transportation investments and land use decisions that are mutually supportive.*
GV P1.2 *Locate new housing near existing jobs and new jobs near existing housing.*
GV P1.3 *Encourage transit-oriented development.*
GV P1.4 *Promote a variety of travel choices*

D1-6

SCAG Staff Comments:

Where applicable, the proposed project meets partial consistency with Growth Visioning Principle 1. GV P1.3 is not applicable since the project is not a transit-oriented development.

The proposed project meets partial consistency with GV P1.1. The project site has moderately reasonable regional and local access (via Highway 14 and Sierra Highway, respectively), but will require additional roadway extensions to effectively serve the project. Three bus lines currently run within a quarter mile of the site, but only operate on 30 minute headways.

SCAG staff cannot determine consistency with GV P1.2. The North Los Angeles County subregion lags the SCAG region overall, as it relates to jobs/housing balance.

The proposed project meets consistency with GV P1.4. In addition to autos, other modes (public transit, walking, and biking) have been accounted for in the project's objectives on page 2-5.

Principle 2: Foster livability in all communities.

GV P2.1 *Promote infill development and redevelopment to revitalize existing communities.*
GV P2.2 *Promote developments, which provide a mix of uses.*
GV P2.3 *Promote "people scaled," walkable communities.*
GV P2.4 *Support the preservation of stable, single-family neighborhoods.*

SCAG Staff Comments:

Where applicable, the proposed project meets partial consistency with Growth Visioning Principle 2. GV P2.4 is not applicable since there is not a single-family neighborhood on the project site.

SCAG staff cannot determine consistency with GV P2.1, as the existing site is largely undeveloped. **D1-7**

With regard to GV P2.2, SCAG staff cannot determine consistency, as the proposed project is almost exclusively residential.

The proposed project meets partial consistency with GV P2.3. One of the project objectives, listed on page 2-5, is to "Create a pedestrian friendly environment which encourages pedestrian access between neighborhoods, parks, and a public elementary school." However, the Mobility Objectives related to walkability seem to focus around pedestrian safety in the context of autos, as opposed to creating pedestrian-oriented environments.

Principle 3: Enable prosperity for all people.

GV P3.1 *Provide, in each community, a variety of housing types to meet the housing needs of all income levels.*
GV P3.2 *Support educational opportunities that promote balanced growth.*
GV P3.3 *Ensure environmental justice regardless of race, ethnicity or income class.*
GV P3.4 *Support local and state fiscal policies that encourage balanced growth*
GV P3.5 *Encourage civic engagement.* **D1-8**

SCAG Staff Comments:

Where applicable, SCAG staff is unable to assess the proposed project's consistency with Growth Visioning Principle 3, based on the content in the DEIR. GV P3.2 and 3.5 are not applicable.

Principle 4: Promote sustainability for future generations.

GV P4.1 *Preserve rural, agricultural, recreational, and environmentally sensitive areas*
GV P4.2 *Focus development in urban centers and existing cities.*
GV P4.3 *Develop strategies to accommodate growth that uses resources efficiently, eliminate pollution and significantly reduce waste.*
GV P4.4 *Utilize "green" development techniques*

SCAG Staff Comments:

D1-9

The project meets partial consistency with Growth Visioning Principle 4.

As mentioned previously, the proposed project would be built on land that is largely undeveloped. Therefore SCAG staff cannot determine consistency with GV P4.1.

With regard to GV P4.2, the proposed project meets partial consistency. While it is not in an existing city, the southern portion of the project site lies adjacent to urbanized areas, including

portions that are within the City of Santa Clarita.

The proposed project meets consistency with GV P4.3 and P4.4. Pages 4.S-7 to 4.S-9 discuss the Los Angeles County low impact development standards, drought-tolerant landscaping standards, and green building development standards. In addition, pages 4.S-25 to 4.S-27 discuss additional green building standards that would be implemented by the project applicant. **D1-9** Cont'd

CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed project partially meets consistency with SCAG Regional Transportation Plan Goals and Growth Visioning Principles. **D1-10**

All feasible measures needed to mitigate any potentially negative regional impacts associated with the proposed project should be implemented and monitored, as required by CEQA. Refer to the SCAG List of Mitigation Measures for additional guidance, which may be found here:
http://www.scag.ca.gov/igr/documents/SCAG_IGRMMRP_2008.pdf

When a project is of statewide, regional, or areawide significance, transportation information generated by a required monitoring or reporting program shall be submitted to SCAG as such information becomes reasonably available, in accordance with CEQA, Public Resource Code Section 21018.7, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15097 (g). **D1-11**

LETTER NO. D1

Bernard Lee
Southern California Association of Governments
818 West Seventh Street, 12th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435

RESPONSE NO. D1-1

This comment provides the transmittal for the letter. Responses to the referenced letter are presented in Responses to Comments D1-2 through D1-11 below.

RESPONSE NO. D1-2

This comment provides background on the role of SCAG as "the authorized regional agency for Inter-Governmental Review of … direct development activities;" and notes that the proposed project is a regionally significant project per CEQA guidelines. Submittal of this letter by SCAG provides evidence of SCAG review of the project EIR pursuant SCAG's role and obligations. This comment does not address the contents or adequacy of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. D1-3

The comment recites information regarding the characteristics of the proposed project that is included within the Draft EIR. This comment does not address the adequacy of the Draft EIR and therefore no further response is required.

RESPONSE NO. D1-4

The comment is noted. As indicated by the commenter, analysis presented in Section 4.R, Population, Housing and Employment of the Draft EIR, was based on population, housing and economic forecasts that are presented in the 2008 RTP and is therefore consistent with SCAG policies.

RESPONSE NO. D1-5

The comment is noted. The Draft EIR addresses the project's relationship to RTP goals and Growth Visioning Principles in Table 4.Q-1 on page 4.Q-18. That discussion notes certain

transportation and environmental features that are not identified by the commenter. While SCAG staff states that site access will be provided, the extension of Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway would also enhance the regional roadway network through a long planned regional roadway improvement contemplated in the Draft Los Angeles County Highway Plan. Furthermore, this roadway would also facilitate the extension of the Santa Clarita Transit (SCT) bus service to the project site, with more frequent service provided in response to ridership demand and as determined by the SCT. The applicant would provide fair share funds to Bouquet Canyon and Eastside B&T Districts, mitigating project traffic impacts and providing overall transportation improvements within the Santa Clarita Valley. In addition, the project design is favorable to the RTP goals by clustering development adjacent to existing development, and preserving more remote, environmentally sensitive parts of the project site.

The commenter acknowledges the project's environmentally protective features that are described on pages 4.S-7 to 4.S-9, in Section 4.S, Global Climate Change, of the Draft EIR such as those stated in the County's Drought-Tolerant Landscaping Ordinance, Green Building Ordinance, and Low Impact Development Standards Ordinance. Additional information regarding the implementation of environmentally protective features is provided on pages 4.S-25 through 4.S-29 of the Draft EIR. That discussion includes some provisions that are consistent with the intent of the Low Impact Development Standards Ordinance (even though the project is exempt from the ordinance) and also identifies LIVINGSMART program features that would be offered as a homebuyer option. The LIVINGSMART program identifies numerous building/materials/practices to reduce energy consumption, and support sustainable building practices, health enhancement and water conservation. These additional features would provide greater environmental protection than the features described on pages 4.S-7 to 4.S-9 of the Draft EIR and would suggest greater support for the RTP policies than identified by the commenter.

RESPONSE NO. D1-6

The comment is noted. The commenter refers to the project's need for additional roadway extensions but omits noting that such required roadways are being implemented as part of the project. As noted in Response to Comment D1-5 above, the project will construct the extension of Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway (as Skyline Ranch Road), enhancing the regional roadway network and facilitating the extension of the Santa Clarita Transit (SCT) bus service to the project site, with more frequent service provided in response to ridership demand and as determined by the SCT. Furthermore, the applicant would provide fair share funds to Bouquet Canyon and Eastside B&T Districts, mitigating project traffic impacts and providing overall transportation improvements within the Santa Clarita Valley. These contributions to mobility in the project area would suggest greater support for the Growth Visioning, Principle 1, than identified by the commenter. Also, the discussion of Principle 1 in Section 4.Q, Land Use, Table 4.Q-1, of the Draft EIR notes that the proposed lower density project is located outside of the Growth Visioning "2%" area that is

designated for higher density development; and therefore the proposed project would not adversely affect policies pertaining to SCAG efforts to increase density along transportation corridors and in high density activity centers.

RESPONSE NO. D1-7

The comment is noted. The commenter's statement regarding the amount of support for pedestrian-oriented activities, and that the project objectives seem to focus on pedestrian safety rather than creation of a pedestrian oriented environment, fails to note that the project includes a system of landscaped pathways, paseos, a pedestrian bridge, and bike lanes that encourage and support walking and bicycling to the school and parks located on the project site, and to offsite areas as well (as described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description of the Draft EIR). The school and parks are being provided within the project site to increase the range of uses and enhance livability. Furthermore, the project provides housing that would occur adjacent to existing housing and a proposed mixed-use development to the west. The proposed housing type associated with the project would be similar in mass, height, and density to the existing adjacent, residential development, thus supporting the stability of the existing single family neighborhoods. These contributions to mobility in the project area would suggest greater support for Growth Visioning, Principle 2, than identified in the comment. See also Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions, of this Final EIR, which incorporate the pedestrian bridge as a component of the project and no longer optional.

RESPONSE NO. D1-8

The comment is noted. As also noted in the discussion of Principle 3 in Section 4.Q, Land Use, Table 4.Q-1 of the Draft EIR, the project would provide a school site (over and above the customary school mitigation fees required under Senate Bill 50) and additional tax revenues that may be used by the County to enhance the community.

RESPONSE NO. D1-9

The comment is noted. Principle 4.1, for which SCAG did not reach a conclusion is served by the project design, which clusters development within the southern portion of the site to preserve or otherwise avoid development within the environmentally sensitive areas in the northern portion of the site and preserve portions of the site that are within the County's proposed Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pools SEA. In more specific terms, the project would set aside 1,551 acres of the site as open space and would establish the 1,335 acre Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA) to support the protection of biological resources in the area in perpetuity. See also Response to Comment D1-5 regarding environmentally protective features that address Principles 4.3 and 4.4.

RESPONSE NO. D1-10

The comment regarding project consistency with the SCAG RTP Goals and Growth Visioning Principles is a conclusion based on the previous comments. Responses to Comments D1-5 through D1-9 present additional project features and mitigation that support the relevant Goals and Principles identified by SCAG staff and are discussed in Sections 4.Q, Land Use and 4.S, Global Climate Change of the Draft EIR. These applicable project contributions would suggest greater support for the Goals and Principles than stated in the comment.

RESPONSE NO. D1-11

The comment is noted. The EIR analyzed the project's potential impacts and recommended mitigation measures to reduce identified impacts pursuant to the CEQA guidelines. These mitigation measures are specifically tailored to address the project's impacts, given it unique characteristics and environmental setting. Furthermore, a Mitigation Monitoring Program for implementation of the mitigation measures presented in the Draft EIR has been prepared pursuant to California Public Resources Code and Section 15097 of the CEQA guidelines and is included in Chapter 4.0 of this EIR.

Letter D2

City of
SANTA CLARITA

23920 Valencia Boulevard • Suite 300 • Santa Clarita, California 91355-2196
Phone: (661) 259-2489 • FAX: (661) 259-8125
www.santa-clarita.com

September 14, 2009

Ms. Michelle Bush
Principal Regional Planning Assistant
Impact Analysis Section
Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Bush:

Subject: DEIR Comments for VTTM 060922, Skyline Ranch – Pedestrian Crossing for School/Park

The City has reviewed the above-referenced EIR and as determined that the document adequately addresses project impacts, mitigation measures and project alternatives. However, there is one portion of the DEIR which we believe warrants further analysis and mitigation. D2-1

The pedestrian safety discussion on page 4.F-44 of the DEIR notes that pedestrian safety at the intersection of Skyline Ranch Road and Main Street South, in the vicinity of the school site, would be provided by, "fully improved streets with full width sidewalks," and that children crossing Skyline Ranch Road at the school site would be able to use "the traffic signal adjacent to the school." It should be noted that there is no signalized intersection depicted on the tentative tract map for this location, nor are there any mitigation measures proposed in the DEIR which would require installation of a traffic signal at this intersection. Page 4.F-45 of the DEIR goes on to state that "the plan includes all feasible measures to ensure a high level of pedestrian safety" and then stops short of specifying any actual pedestrian safety mitigation measures which must be implemented in order to mitigate potential pedestrian safety impacts.

The City has a concern with pedestrian safety for both school children and other future residents who would be accessing the school site, the park site and the bike paths and trails at this intersection. The applicant's proposal illustrated in Figure 2-8 of the DEIR (pages 2-16), addresses this concern through the use of a strategically located pedestrian bridge and a series of off-street paseos and a stairway which provides off-street linkages to the school site, the park site, the central bike paths and the community on the east side of Skyline Ranch Road. We believe this overall concept would effectively address the project's overall pedestrian safety impact; however, the DEIR contains no mitigation measures requiring these pedestrian improvements and the project application has recently been amended to describe construction of the pedestrian bridge as "optional" to be paid for and constructed at the discretion of the school district. The school district would likely be unable to expend school funds for an improvement which would benefit the entire Skyline development. We therefore believe inclusion of a mitigation measure requiring the subdivider to construct the pedestrian bridge and paseo improvements as illustrated in EIR Exhibit 2-8 prior to the occupancy of the first unit on the northeast side of Skyline Ranch Road is necessary in order to mitigation potential pedestrian safety impacts. D2-2

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIR. Should you have any questions, or would like to discuss our comments; you may contact Associate Planner David Koontz, AICP, at 661-255-4330 or by email at dkoontz@santa-clarita.com.

Sincerely,

Sharon Sorensen

Sharon Sorensen
Senior Planner

SS:DK:kb
S:\CD\CURRENT\IRP\IRP FILES\VTTM 60922 (Skyline Ranch)\rttm60922 Bush 9-13-09.doc

Attachment

cc: Paul Novak, 5th District Planning Deputy
Susan Tae, Supervising Regional Planner
James Bizelle, Pardee Homes
Lisa Webber, Planning Manager
Sharon Sorensen, Senior Planner
David Koontz, Associate Planner
Andrew Yi, City Traffic Engineer

LETTER NO. D2

Sharon Sorenson
Senior Planner
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300
Santa Clarita, California 91355-2196

RESPONSE NO. D2-1

The comment is noted.

RESPONSE NO. D2-2

In response to the concerns expressed by the commenter, the pedestrian bridge, stairway, and paseo improvements shown on Figure 2-8 of the Draft EIR will be incorporated as a component of the project and are no longer designated as optional. Construction of these improvements would occur prior to the occupancy of the first unit on the northeast side of Skyline Ranch Road and would become a condition of project approval. As this feature is now incorporated into the project and as the analysis provided on page 4.F-45, in Section 4.F, Traffic/Access of the Draft EIR, concluded that pedestrian safety impacts would be less than significant pending the development of a detailed site plan by the Sulphur Springs Union School District, no mitigation measures are proposed. Please refer to Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

Letter D3

From: Gordon Mize [mailto:gmize@aqmd.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2009 1:14 PM
To: Bush, Michele
Cc: James Koizumi
Subject: Draft EIR for the Proposed Skyline Ranch Project

Ms. Michele Bush, Impact Analysis Section
County of Los Angeles, Department of Regional Planning

Re: Draft EIR for the Proposed Skyline Ranch Project

I realize that the public comment period closed on September 14, 2009 but I would still like to review the health risk assessment and localized significance threshold analyses for this Draft EIS EIR document. In order to do this, I would like to request that the following electronic files be sent to my colleague, Mr. James Koizumi, Air Quality Specialist, for review. Please send all of the electronic files, such as spreadsheets or databases used to estimate health risk in the HRA (Appendix D, ISCST3 Dispersion Modeling Files, etc.). These electronic files are needed in order to verify that the impacts of the HRA. In addition, please send the electronic files for any localized significance thresholds analysis performed. These modeling files should be in their native electronic state. Please forward these files to Mr. Koizumi, Air Quality Specialist, at jkoizumi aqmd.gov . Comments for this document were due on Monday, September 14th. **D3-1**

If you have any questions regarding this request please contact Mr. Koizumi at (909) 396-3324 or myself.

Thank you.

Gordon Mize

Gordon E. Mize
Air Quality Specialist
South Coast Air Quality Management District
CEQA Section
(909) 396-3302 phone
(909) 396-3324 fax

LETTER NO. D3

Gordon E. Mize
Air Quality Specialist
South Coast Air Quality Management District
CEQA Section
21865 Copley Drive
Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4178

RESPONSE NO. D3-1

Although this request was received after the close of the public comment period on the Draft EIR, the requested electronic files were provided by the County to SCAQMD for their review. No additional comments were received from SCAQMD.

Letter E1

From: Katherine Squires [mailto:kat_268@att.net]
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2009 4:46 PM
To: Bush, Michele
Subject: Skyline Ranch DEIR Comments

Hello,

The attached files include the Sierra Club's DEIR comment letter for the proposed Skyline Ranch project along with several additional attachments. **E1-1**

Thank you,

Katherine Squires
Conservation Chair
Santa Clarita Sierra Club

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TITLE
Skyline Ranch Project No, 04-075

COMMENTS

As both residents of the Santa Clarita Valley and members of the Sierra Club, we are extremely concerned about the ramifications of the "Skyline Ranch Project." The proposed build-out of 1260 residential lots within the city of Santa Clarita is shocking when one considers the economic, environmental, and societal pressures of the times. The proposed Skyline Ranch project will substantially degrade the quality of the environment in northern Los Angeles County. **E1-2**

A recent trend of development corporations consists of attempts (and many have been successful) to redefine southern California by creating new developments in the midst of our most beautiful remaining open spaces. The proposed Skyline Ranch development area is one of these open spaces. It is situated in the heart of the city of Santa Clarita Valley. **E1-3**

- <u>Infrastructure</u>

Since year 2007, California has not needed thousands of new homes especially in newer towns such as Santa Clarita. If anything, people should be moving into homes in more urban areas where there are more jobs, public transportation, etc. Foreclosures, bankruptcies, and losses of adequately paying jobs have resulted in a surplus of unoccupied homes; including new homes. Many new homes and small businesses in the Santa Clarita Valley remain uncompleted and/or empty because of the recession, a sick economy, state and federal deficits, and a long-term lack of demand for more new homes. California has the worse debt and economy of any state in the country. Citizens have lost much income and savings over the last year and the project may soon be asking them to spend and buy in an isolated, remote area. **E1-4**

Due to the troubling economic times, many schools in the Santa Clarita Valley have seen a huge drop in enrollment and thus have lost state A.D.A. monies in addition to the extremely detrimental budget cuts coming from both the state and federal government. This has meant that local school districts have had to halt the building of new schools, increase class-sizes, and have either pink-slipped and or let-go of qualified teachers. How would a new development of over a thousand new homes make any of these problems better? **E1-5**

- Biology

Skyline Ranch is a wildlife linkage corridor and the animals that exist on or utilize the property will be losing their habitat and foraging grounds. Native habitat will be destroyed and many of the few pockets of open space will be just that, "islands" within the development. How will this be of any use to the animal species that frequent this wildlife corridor? This makes no sense. Animals that transition through the area (looking for food and water, etc.) will have nowhere to go. If allowed to be built, this project would sever the natural transition zones in the area prohibiting animals from crossing through necessary wildlife corridors. It would also destroy portions of an irreplaceable eco-region. **E1-6**

There are numerous significant impacts to coyotes, owls, toads etc…(many rare species who in many cases are already declining in numbers). However, the impacts always seem to be mitigated to non-significant levels by such things as: monitoring of property by a qualified biologist, relocation of animals, and/or limitations on human and pet access. We ask who the biologist would be? How often would the biologist be checking the property? Is he/she going to walk in front of the bulldozers to see if toads are about to be squished? Where would these animals be relocated to? How would relocating an animal(s) effect the biology of the relocation area and its native species? How can the limiting of human and pet access be enforced? **E1-7**

In other words, what the DEIR promises in mitigations for endangered or rare species is basically not possible.

One such example of an animal species in peril is that of the Black-tailed jackrabbit:

> Years ago, one of our Sierra Club members, Don Mullally, was one of a group of people allowed on the land of the proposed project by Newhall Land and Farm to examine natural features and conditions. He was surprised to discover jackrabbits on land proposed for the housing project.
>
> Apparently the hares existed on the part of the project located near the river due to much relatively level and gently sloping open land supporting brush, grasses, and herbs. Steep slopes of the Santa Susana Mountains with woodlands located a short distance south of the project are not inhabited by jackrabbits. In fact, jackrabbits have never been observed by myself or associates on the steep slopes and their canyons in the middle and upper parts of the Santa Susana Mountain **E1-8**

Range of Los Angeles County. Similarly, equivalent parts of the Santa Monica Mountains, San Gabriel Mountains, and Verdugo Mountains are also devoid of jackrabbits. Tongues of large valleys such as the San Fernando Valley extend into foothill canyons were formerly habitat for jackrabbits. However, for the most part those have been developed, and jackrabbits are now absent from them.

Jackrabbits were formerly common in all the large valleys of southern California. Don Mullally knows this because he observed the animals. Unfortunately, the California Department of Fish and Game, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the systems of state and county parks stood by doing nothing while the jackrabbits went extinct in the Santa Clarita Valley, San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles Basin, and the San Gabriel Valley. A few may continue to survive in the low hills and canyons on the northern side of the Simi Valley and in undeveloped locations in valleys east of San Gabriel Valley. The once hare-infested area of Cucamonga also seems to now be devoid of jackrabbits. **E1-8** Cont'd

Presently the question is – What will be the fate of the jackrabbits on and near the Skyline Ranch project? How far will the people of the Los Angeles greater area need to travel to see a common jackrabbit? Incidentally, the collapse of the noted populations of jackrabbits led to the disappearance of Golden eagles in the Los Angeles Basin and greater area.

As mentioned above, the proposed project would result in the loss of suitable foraging habitat for a variety of species (including mammals such as mountain lions/mule deer, birds such as condors/raptors, reptiles, amphibians, etc.), and the direct loss of special status plant species. It is easy to see that the impacts on animal and plant species will be drastic. **E1-9**

However, the DEIR is very inconsistent when describing potential mitigation measures and other solutions to the problem. When mitigation measures are mentioned they are weak or vague. Case in point, the DEIR states repeatedly that the effects of development will be significant and ultimately unavoidable.

Also, for some reason the County allowed a destructive filming operation on the sensitive Cruzon Mesa, currently proposed for Significant Ecological Area (SEA) designation. This area contained habitat that supported the endangered fairy shrimp, inhabitants of rare California vernal pools such as that found in the Cruzan Mesa. A recent and destructive wildfire was also allowed to burn through this area. CEQA requires that investigation of biological resources must be reviewed on a baseline prior to destruction of native habitat. We believe that this DEIR is inadequate because it does not use the proper baseline biological surveys in the DEIR **E1-10**

Stating that the impacts to wildlife are unavoidable is not acceptable and the mitigation measures suggested are not enough.

- Traffic

People inhabiting the homes potentially created by the Skyline Ranch Development Plan will, for the most part, probably have employment at well paying jobs in distant cities. Each day many thousands of workers and their automobiles will be leaving or returning to the town from these cities. This proposed development will bring thousands of additional car trips a day onto our freeways and surface streets and increase air pollution which is already some of the worst in the nation. Despite the claims of local developers to the contrary, most people who buy homes in the proposed development will simply not be able to work and live in the same community. Jobs in the service sector of local small towns will not yield sufficiently high salaries and wages to meet monthly house payments and other necessary costs. All highways leading to big cities offering high wages will become more crowded with automobiles than they are at present. Traffic congestion was much worse before the poor economy and recession. Traffic on surface streets and along Interstate 5, Highway 14, and along Sierra Highway could become literally unbearable. New homes are not the answer to the needs and wishes of the people living in Santa Clarita Valley and neighboring areas. Traffic congestion is a major concern of the residents of the surrounding areas. **E1-11**

- Air Quality

Another serious concern with the DEIR is the substantial effect the proposed development would have on the worsening air quality that we have in our area. It is obvious that the cumulative air pollutant emissions in the area would contribute to the degradation of local and regional air quality. The Santa Clarita Valley already has some of the worst air quality in the nation. Katherine Squires, a local teacher, sees the effects of poor air quality on the children in her Canyon Country classroom. Each year she sees more and more students who suffer from asthma. The SCV already exceeds Federal air pollution standards for particulate matter generated from dust and diesel pollution. **E1-12**

In addition, there would be long term effects resulting from the additional traffic on our local roads and freeways. Climatologists agree that greenhouse gases are causing global warming and even the Supreme Court, in its decision several months ago, said that EPA must address Carbon Dioxide as a pollutant. These two facts alone suggest that further discussion of global warming should appear in this DEIR. **E1-13** The project should not be approved without making public transportation available to its future residents. **E1-14**

- Geology and Paleontology **E1-15**

The proposed development is situated in an area prone to extreme tectonic activity (at the same rate of uplift as that which created the Himalaya Mountains). The area is in a regional setting of demonstrable high seismic risk. Consider the aftermath of a major earthquake on the people that could potentially reside in the proposed 1260 units. **E1-15** Cont'd

It is challenging for the reader to be more specific about the geology and paleontology of the area because the property has historically been off-limits to researchers and scientists. Such individuals have been denied access. Therefore, it is necessary to consult the few papers that discuss the area on and adjacent to the property (from many years ago). Past research demonstrates the fact that the site has important and rare megafauna including vertebrate remains of: camels, horses, antelopes, rhinos, and various carnivores. More research needs to be done before evaluating the "significance" of this project's ramifications.

This rich diversity of megafauna from the Late Miocene/Early Pleistocene (5-6 Million years old) can yield valuable information about paleoclimate, biostratigraphy, and chronostratigraphy. Unfortunately, it is hard to be specific about the Soledad Basin area's non-marine resources because paleontologic knowledge of this stratigraphic unit in the proposed project area has been severely hampered by the land owner's long-standing policy that forbids any research that might jeopardize their development plans. This lockout of research has also hampered detailed stratigraphic analysis of the nonmarine Mint and Saugus Formations in the critical area of the proposed development. **E1-16**

As their scientific tools improve with time, stratigraphic sections like the one proposed will be invaluable. This is the developers opportunity to leave a legacy that demonstrates they are a progressive corporation, much like the Tejon Ranch owners of the newly approved Tejon Ranch projects.

The paleontologic part of the DEIR is riddled with redundant and generalized non-informative statements. Details are sorely lacking, and these details are definitely needed before the merits of the DEIR can be determined by the readers of this document. It is extremely self-serving to mention the rich diversity of fossils in the various stratigraphic units and then to provide no details because independent researchers have been denied access to the area for decades.

The proposed project is excessively massive, and the impact on the geological and paleontological resources are permanent and unforgiving. Every effort must be made to preserve as much pristine area as possible.

Where will the fossils that are found during grading be stored? The developer should pay for the storage space and storage cabinets needed to house the fossils found on the site. Storage cabinets could be placed at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. But of course, the question remains, has the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County been contacted about receiving the material? Do they, in fact, have the space? **E1-17**

Additionally, there needs to be a guarantee that the paleo-monitors have a degree in geology and have had a course in paleontology/paleontology lab whereby they have learned to recognize invertebrate fossils. Hiring untrained paleo-monitors who have never had a course in the identification of invertebrate fossils would be unacceptable. **E1-18**

- Green Building Standards

The Sierra Club requests that green building standards be included as conditions of any approval that might be considered. **E1-19**

- Fire Hazard

This project is in an extremely high fire hazard zone. It was recently burned over by a destructive arson fire pushed by Santa Ana winds that burned 38,000 acres. Had this fire occurred after this project was built, many homes would have been lost.

The Sierra Club opposes further sprawl projects in the urban interface that are indefensible from wildfires. Such projects will cost enormous amounts of taxpayer dollars to fight future wildfires. Project approvals in high fire hazard zones should require, at the least, additional mitigation funding for fire fighting so that this burden is not placed on tax payers at a later date. **E1-20**

Further, there is inadequate fire service for this project and inadequate ingress and egress to provide swift emergency service and evacuation for residents. **E1-21**

- Water Resources

The area in which this project is located does not have sufficient ground water to support additional housing.[1] Therefore water to serve this project must come from the State Water Project (SWP) or the western reaches of the Santa Clara River. **E1-22**

The Water Supply Assessment (WSA) for the project does not include the recent Federal Court decisions and Biological Opinions that have reduced pumping from the Sacramento Delta[2], and thus reduced water availability to the SWP. A new Water Supply Assessment that includes the impact of reduced pumping required by these decisions must be included in the review of this project to determine whether the water supply is adequate to support the project. **E1-23**

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[1] See well graphs available through Santa Clarita Water Co.

[2] *Natural Resources Defense Council v Kempthorne*, 506 F.Supp.2d 322 (E.D. Cal. 2007) (*Wanger* Decision - Delta smelt); and *Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, et al. v. Gutierrez, et al.*, No. 06-CV-00245-OWW-GSA (E.D. Cal. 2008) (*Wanger* Decision - Chinook salmon/steelhead.

Should cutbacks of state water supply continue, the only source of sufficient ground water is in the western end of the Santa Clarita Valley[3]. The Santa Clara River is not adjudicated, so this water is available to the project, however extensive piping and pumps must be installed to make it available to locations in the eastern portion of the Santa Clarita Valley. **E1-24**

Water in the western reaches of the Santa Clara River is currently also being considered for use by Newhall Ranch. Both projects cannot be supported by this water supply. A cumulative analysis must be conducted as required by CEQA and the SB610 to ensure an adequate water supply. **E1-25**

Ammonium Perchlorate Pollution

In 1997 ammonium perchlorate contamination was discovered in the Saugus and alluvial aquifers of the Santa Clarita Valley. Since that time, six municipal drinking water wells have been closed down[4], some of them permanently. Since the Saugus Aquifer is the drinking water supply long depended on in Santa Clarita as the emergency drought back up as well as a major source of daily supply, its contamination has been a blow to the reliability of local water supplies.

Ammonium perchlorate pollution affects the function of the thyroid gland causing hypothyroidism. Reduced thyroid function in pregnant women may cause retardation in the fetus.

In 2000 the Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA) and other local purveyors filed litigation against the Whittiker Bermite project to force them to clean up the water supply or pay for the clean up. Several years later a settlement agreement was reached that provided for funding to clean up two of the Saugus wells polluted by this contamination and one of the Alluvial wells. **E1-26**

In 2004, the Sierra Club and Friends of the Santa Clara River won an appellate court decision requiring disclosure of the ammonium perchlorate pollution and requiring a time line for the clean up in CLWA's Urban Water Management Plan[5].

Since then the Sierra Club has remained concerned that the facilities to provide this clean up continue to be delayed while thousands of additional housing units are approved. These facilities are still not operating as of the date of this letter.

In addition to these delays, it was previously represented that the two wells designated to provide "capture" and clean up of the ammonium perchlorate (Saugus Well 1 and 2) would be returned to their previous production levels. However, CLWA found that production was significantly reduced by 50%in those two wells by the clean up process.[6] **E1-27**

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[3] Groundwater Basin Yield, 2008, Ludhdroff and Scalmanini and GSI Solutions, Inc., 2009, hereby included by reference in this administrative record.

[4] Stadium Well, Valencia Well Q2, Valencia Well 157, Saugus 1 and 2, NCWD 11

[5] *Friends of the Santa Clara River v. Castaic Lake Water Agency et al*., 2004, CalAp5

[6] See attached chart of Saugus Well Production Chart

Due to these significant delays and reductions in water supply, the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club passed a resolution[7] calling for the halt to housing approvals until the ammonium perchlorate treatment facilities are functioning to provide the community with its E1-28

Conclusion for Water Section

The Santa Clarita Water Co. is wholly owned by Castaic Lake Water Agency. It is in the interests of CLWA to promote projects that will buy additional state water project water from CLWA, the state water wholesaler for the Santa Clarita Valley. This fact creates a conflict of interest. We believe an independent source should provide the water supply information for this company's projects in order to ensure their accuracy. All agencies should carefully review the water supply information for errors or omissions.

The Sierra Club believes a monopoly control that does not separate the retailer from the wholesaler of water supply may create serious problems for our community. The potential unwanted outcome may lead to poor planning, direction of water resources to only certain projects or water hoarding that impedes communities in their efforts to fairly distribute this precious resource. Such serious ethical issues should be held in mind as this project is reviewed and addressed by the decision-makers. E1-29

Attachments:

1.Saugus Well Production Chart from information provided by Castaic Lake Water Agency

2.Sierra Club Resolution 7-23-06

CONCLUSION

E1-30

The Sierra Club is concerned that if the proposed Skyline Ranch development plan succeeds with county government, the entire region in the heart of the Santa Clarita Valley will become nearly continuous urban and suburban development. E1-31 The water situation could become unbelievably serious. E1-32 Furthermore, many of the values of southern California will be forever lost (scenic open spaces, habitat for wildlife, and a rich variety of fossil resources etc.). The Skyline Ranch development plan could set in place a dangerous precedent. The National Sierra Club has a policy against urban sprawl projects such as this one due to their unsustainability and wasteful use of resources. E1-33 It is requested that mitigation (including green building standards, a corridor for wildlife movement and public transportation for commuters that will live in the project) be provided that would reduce the disclosed impacts.

[7] Resolution approved 7-23-06, attached

At this time the Sierra Club favors the development alternative. We want to ensure reduced density and to be guaranteed that our environmental concerns (lack of water and infrastructure, traffic, air quality, and wildlife corridors, etc.) are sufficiently addressed. **E1-34**

Sincerely,

Katherine Squires

Conservation Chair, Santa Clarita Group

Saugus Formation Wells Actions

Well	Lost Capacity (gpm)	Action Taken	Restored Capacity (gpm)
V-157	1,500	Replaced with Well V-206	1,500
NC-11	1,200	Taken out of service	0
Saugus 1	2,600	Rehabilitate well; install treatment	1,200
Saugus 2	2,600	Rehabilitate well; install treatment	1,200
Total	7,900		3,900

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Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Angeles Chapter

The Angeles Chapter opposes additional land use approvals in Santa Clarita that rely on water from the contaminated Saugus aquifer until clean up facilities to remove the ammonium perchlorate, NDMA and other pollutants from this ground water source are functioning.

E1-36

Approved unanimously
7-23-06

LETTER NO. E1

Katherine Squires
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Santa Clarita Sierra Club
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RESPONSE NO. E1-1

This comment provides the transmittal for the letter. Responses to the referenced letter are presented in Responses to Comments E1-1 through E1-36, below.

RESPONSE NO. E1-2

The comment is noted for the consideration of the decision-makers. The Draft EIR for the project has been prepared pursuant the CEQA guidelines and addresses the project impacts on the physical environment. It evaluates project impacts on 19 environmental topics determined in the Initial Study and based on recent public concern about greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change to be potentially significant. Chapter 4.0, Environmental Impact Analysis of the Draft EIR, evaluated project impacts, identified mitigation measures to reduce project impacts, and identified significant unavoidable impacts that would remain after the implementation of mitigation measures. The Draft EIR, using conservative assumptions, identified the following potentially significant, unavoidable impacts on the environment: visual impacts associated with construction activities and changes in views from the existing residential neighborhood to the west; cumulative traffic impacts on Highway 14 from Sand Canyon Road to south of the Sierra Highway interchange; noise due to construction and off-site mobile sources; air quality due to construction and project operations; cumulative solid waste; law enforcement; and cumulative global climate change. The project is not located within the City of Santa Clarita as stated by the commenter, but is located within unincorporated Los Angeles County, adjacent to the City of Santa Clarita. Regarding the commenter's alarm at the size of the project in light of economic, environmental and societal pressures, it should be noted as stated on page 6-4 in Chapter 6.0, Other CEQA Considerations of the Draft EIR, that the increase in housing and population associated with the project is within growth forecasts for the area and represents a relatively small component of expected growth. As also stated in Chapter 6 of the Draft EIR, the proposed project would not exacerbate economic pressures. Rather, it would result in economic growth through job creation and annually-recurring revenue in the form of taxes and other fees (e.g., sales tax, property tax, utility fees, etc.).

RESPONSE NO. E1-3

The comment does not address the contents or adequacy of the Draft EIR; however the comment is noted for consideration by the decision-makers. The Draft EIR analyzed project impacts on open space in several sections including Sections 4.C, Biological Resources and 4.Q, Land Use. As described within those sections, nearly 1,551 acres in the northern portion of the site would remain undeveloped, including the establishment of a 1,355-acre Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA) and 166-acre Non-Development/Continuing Use Area. As described on page 2-33 and 2-34, in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, of the Draft EIR, the SRCA would have an ongoing maintenance and management program for the long-term persistence of the property's biological resources and the Non-Development/Continuing Use Area would remain undeveloped with restrictions placed on the use of the land to prevent buildings from being established in this area. Therefore, development of a previously approved 200 unit subdivision, located in the northern portion of the site and within the SRCA and Non-Development/Continuing Use Area, would not occur. The result of these project features would be to provide development contiguous to existing development in the southern portion of the site, in contrast to the previously approved, noncontiguous development location out amid the larger open space area. The proposed project would leave a large contiguous area of open space leading up to the Angeles National Forest. The establishment of the SRCA and Non-Development Continuous Use Area would protect the Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pool area, currently proposed by the County as a Significant Ecological Area. Overall, the proposed project would not redefine land use patterns but rather is consistent with the Countywide General Plan, Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan, and zoning regulations and concentrates residential uses next to existing residential development.

RESPONSE NO. E1-4

The comment does not address the contents or adequacy of the Draft EIR; however the comment is noted for consideration by the decision-makers. The Draft EIR discussed development trends and housing needs, inclusive of population, housing and employment projections, in Section 4.R, Population, Housing and Employment of the Draft EIR. As described therein, SCAG is mandated by State Housing Law to prepare a Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The current RHNA quantifies the need for housing within each jurisdiction in the region for the January 1, 2006 to June 30, 2014 period. The RHNA takes into account overall growth demand as well as development distribution in the region, in light of SCAG policies to improve mobility and foster livability and sustainability. According to the RHNA, there is a need for 73,352 new dwelling units in the North Los Angeles County Subregion between January 1, 2006 and June 30, 2014.

By law, the County must use the RHNA for preparing a General Plan Housing Element, planning for future growth, and establishing policies, procedures and incentives in its land use

planning and redevelopment activities that will result in the maintenance and expansion of the housing supply to adequately house households currently living and expected to live in the County. While housing projections may vary from year to year depending on short-term cycles in market conditions, such variation tends to average out over longer durations such as those addressed in the RHNA. Furthermore, short-term variations in growth tend to be addressed by market forces which adjust to changing conditions regarding housing supply and demand. It should be noted that the development is not isolated and remote as suggested by the commenter, but is located immediately adjacent to residential uses within the City of Santa Clarita.

RESPONSE NO. E1-5

The comment regarding development and the provision of schools is noted for the consideration of the decision-makers. Project effects on schools are addressed in Section 4.N, Education of the Draft EIR. As indicated in that analysis, the project would be required to pay developer fees under the provisions of Senate Bill 50 (SB 50) which is considered full and complete mitigation that would reduce project impacts to a less than significant level. In addition to the payment of fees, the proposed project includes the voluntary provision of an elementary school site to the Sulphur Springs School District for the development of a new school. Provision of the school site is fully supported and considered appropriate by the Sulphur Springs School District.

RESPONSE NO. E1-6

The Draft EIR addressed biological resources in Section 4.C, Biological Resources with supporting data provided in Appendix D of the Draft EIR. Specifically, the Draft EIR evaluated the project area to determine the extent of any wildlife linkage corridors in the project vicinity on page 4.C-23 and addressed the project's potential impacts on wildlife corridors on page 4.C-63. As indicated in the Draft EIR, the projects site (1) does not serve as a component of a significant regional wildlife movement corridor per se, (2) does not serve as a linkage between two or more larger habitat areas, and (3) is near but outside of any missing linkages in the San Gabriel Mountains/Castaic area according to the publication *Missing Linkages: Restoring Connectivity to the California Landscape*, a collaborative project undertaking by the University of Wisconsin, The Nature Conservancy, California Wilderness Coalition, Talon Associates, and South Coast Wildlands (November 2, 2000). The project site is linked to the Angeles National Forest through Vasquez Canyon to the north. Proposed development would be located within the southern portion of the project site. Nearly three quarters of the project site, or approximately 1,551 acres would remain undeveloped and therefore, would provide a large contiguous open space area (rather than isolated pockets as suggested by the commenter) that would continue to foster wildlife movement between areas of the Angeles National Forest to the north and west (i.e. Lake Hughes, San Fancisquito Canyon, Bouquet Canyon) and areas to the east and south (i.e., Placerita Canyon State

Park, Tujunga Wash). Furthermore, establishment of the SRCA by the project would support establishment of the proposed Cruzan Mesa Significant Ecological Area.

RESPONSE NO. E1-7

This comment does not directly address the project's proposed mitigation measures, which are presented on pages 4.C-71 through 4.C-77 of the Draft EIR and would be implemented through the provisions of a Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) as described in Chapter 4.0 of this Final EIR. Mitigation Measure 4.C-1 addresses the establishment of a 1,355-acre Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA); sets performance standards for the area and lays out management and funding responsibilities. Mitigation Measure 4.C-2 provides for implementation of a Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) that preserves the 1,355 acre conservation area, requires the preservation of 1.53 acres of southern vernal pool and artificial pool habitats that are subject to RWQCB jurisdiction, and requires the establishment of 7.27 acres of sycamore/cottonwood riparian woodland within Plum Canyon. The measure sets out specific criteria and standards for the implementation of the HMMP. Mitigation Measure 4.C-3 addresses potential impacts to nesting birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. It requires that a biologist, qualified according to federal and State resource agency standards (because they typically include these same requirements as conditions of their permits) be present during vegetation clearing to search for and flag active nests and protect impacts to nesting birds. This is a feasible activity, one requiring the biologist to be present ahead of the grading activities, and one implemented regularly per the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Mitigation Measure 4.C-4 requires tree planting with specific performance requirements. Mitigation Measure 4.C-5 requires the use of native plant species adjacent to the open space areas. With regard to control of humans and pets adjacent to the open space areas, the potential impacts have been addressed on pages 4.C-70 through 4.C-72 of the Draft EIR. As indicated therein, the existing topography acts as a barrier that limits potential intrusion into the open space areas, and the project would include fencing and signage to further control access. Furthermore, Mitigation Measure 4.C-1 includes performance standards that specify in part that: "An on-going maintenance and management program shall be adequately funded and implemented to ensure the long-term integrity of biological resources within the 1,355-acre SRCA" and "Direct and indirect degradation of habitat shall be prevented … through the prohibition or restriction of uses within the SRCA." Such specific issues as who would be the monitoring biologist and how often the project would be monitored, would be determined by the organization that ultimately assumes responsibility for management of the SRCA pursuant to Mitigation Measure 4.C-1.

RESPONSE NO. E1-8

All sensitive species potentially occurring on the project site are listed in Table 4.C-3 in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, of the Draft EIR. Specific to the comment, these species include

the San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus bennittii*). As noted on page 4.C-62 of the Draft EIR, impacts to this species, as well as many other wildlife species, would be less than significant because project-related impacts would not result in substantial declines in regional population numbers. However, this comment is noted for the consideration of the decision-makers.

RESPONSE NO. E1-9

The Draft EIR does not describe the impacts on biological resources as "significant and ultimately unavoidable," as suggested by the commenter. Rather, the Draft EIR identified potentially significant impacts on sensitive plant species, riparian habitat, nesting birds, and oak trees prior to mitigation and concluded that all of the impacts would be mitigated to less than significant levels after mitigation. (Please refer to Response to Comment E1-2 regarding the project's significant and unavoidable impacts on topics other than Biological Resources.) Response to Comment E1-7 provides an overview of the recommended mitigation measures to address impacts to biological resources. As indicated therein, those measures include considerable detail regarding performance standards and implementation and they would be monitored through a MMP as described in Chapter 4.0 of this document.

RESPONSE NO. E1-10

As stated in the Draft EIR, the filming activities are an existing use and not a component of the proposed project. Filming activities which have historically occurred within the 166-acre Non-Development Continuing Use Area may continue.

If filming were to occur in the future within the 1,355-acre SRCA, which includes the Plum Canyon vernal pool and four artificial pools on the southern portion of Cruzan Mesa, such activities would be subject to Mitigation Measure 4.C-1, which requires approval of the activity by the SRCA habitat manager upon demonstration that the use would not be incompatible with the resource conservation objectives of the SRCA. The recent Quinn Fire, which occurred within a portion of the SRCA, is discussed on page 4.C-10 of the Draft EIR, and its area reflected in Figure 4.C-1. As described there, "… fire is an important part of the natural ecology of each of these vegetation communities and they are expected to fully recover to their pre-burn state within a couple of years. As such, the fire did not substantially diminish the resource value of these communities in the burn area." The analysis of the Biological Resources treats the burned area according to the pre-burn, and expected post-burn conditions. This approach to the analysis provides a conservative analysis and is consistent with the CEQA Guidelines. The suggestion that the EIR indicates that impacts to wildlife are unavoidable is in error. As stated on page 4.C-85 of the Draft EIR, impacts on biological resources after mitigation would be less than significant. Please also refer to Response to Comment E1-9 regarding the level of project impact and the proposed mitigation measures.

RESPONSE NO. E1-11

The comment is noted for the consideration of the decision-makers. As described in Response to Comment E1-4 above, a considerable number of new homes are expected to occur in the SCAG North Los Angeles County Subregion in a manner that is consistent with SCAG projections and planning for future service needs and transportation improvements. The Draft EIR addressed air quality and traffic in Sections 4.H, Air Quality and 4.F, Traffic/Access with supporting data provided in Appendices H and F of the Draft EIR. As concluded on page 4.H-10 of the Draft EIR, the project would have significant unavoidable impacts on air quality due to long term project operations.

With regard to traffic, Section 4.F, Traffic/Access of the Draft EIR described the existing conditions (identifying existing roadway deficiencies where they occur), identified project and cumulative impacts on the roadway system and recommended mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts. Significant impacts due to the project would occur during the P.M peak hour at Sierra Highway at Soledad Canyon Road (considered a cumulative impact as well) and Plum Canyon Road at Skyline Ranch/Heller Circle (South). The intersection of Golden Valley at Plum Canyon Road would have a significant cumulative impact during the A.M. peak hour. The analysis also identified significant cumulative traffic impacts on Highway 14 from Sand Canyon Road to south of the Sierra Highway interchange during the A.M. peak hour (southbound) and P.M. peak hour (northbound).

Proposed mitigation measures presented on pages 4.F-45 through 4.F-47, in Section 4.F, Traffic/Access of the Draft EIR, require the applicant to provide physical improvements at the intersection of Plum Canyon Road at Skyline Ranch Road/Heller Circle (South), and to pay fair share fees to the Bouquet Canyon and Eastside Bridge and Thoroughfare (B&T) Districts for the funding of intersection improvements at Golden Valley Road at Plum Canyon Road and Sierra Highway at Soledad Canyon Road. Roadway improvements made with the fees would reduce project impacts to less than significant levels. Two sets of roadway improvements have been proposed for Highway 14 (i.e., the Short Range Plan and Long Range Plan outlined in the North County Combined Highway Corridors Study, a report recently published by the Metro). If Caltrans establishes an impact fee mitigation program to implement the Highway 14 improvements prior to project implementation, the applicant would be required to pay a fair share contribution to that program. Implementation of such a program would substantially improve operating conditions and avoid cumulative impacts. However, since funding for the Highway 14 improvements are not in place, page 4.F-49 of the Draft EIR concludes that the project would contribute to a cumulative significant unavoidable impact.

RESPONSE NO. E1-12

The Draft EIR discussed air quality is Section 4.H, Air Quality with supporting data provided in Appendix H of the Draft EIR. As stated on page 4.H-40 of the Draft EIR, the project's operational emissions and the project's contribution to region-wide emissions would result in a significant and unavoidable air quality impact. Potential health impacts of certain air pollutants are described on pages 4.H-12 and 4.H-13 (which includes asthma and other respiratory ailments) and the location of receptors more sensitive to air pollutants (such as schools) are shown on Figure 4.H-1 of the Draft EIR. As stated on page 4.H-7 of the Draft EIR, the project is located in the South Coast Air Basin. Table 4.H-2 of the Draft EIR shows that the Basin, of which the Santa Clarita Valley is a part, is not in attainment for particulate matter. However, as illustrated in Table 4.H-3 of the Draft EIR, the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter were not exceeded at the monitoring station closest to the project site. Table 4.H-3 also demonstrates the trend towards the reduction of PM_{10} concentrations over time.

RESPONSE NO. E1-13

The Draft EIR addressed greenhouse gases (GHG) and global warming in Section 4.S, Global Climate Change with supporting data provided in Appendix K of the Draft EIR. The Supreme Court Decision, Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency, which requires that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulate greenhouse gases under the federal Clean Air Act was discussed on page 4.S-3 of the Draft EIR. At the State level, the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) released a Technical Advisor on addressing climate change through CEQA review through the following: quantifying GHG emissions during project construction and operation; determining the significance of a project's impact to climate change; and where the project's impact is significant, identifying alternatives and mitigation measures (see page 4.S-5 of the Draft EIR). Consistent with the OPR Technical Advisory, greenhouse gas emissions, including CO_2, CH_4, and N_2O were calculated for construction and operation of the proposed project. Since publication of the Draft EIR, proposed amendments to the CEQA Guidelines have been prepared by OPR and adopted by the Natural Resources Agency and are under review by the Office of Administrative Law as described in Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR. However, given that extensive analysis of global warming was provided in the Draft EIR, the general suggestion that further discussion of the issue be provided is hard to interpret, therefore, no additional analyses are considered necessary.

RESPONSE NO. E1-14

The project would make public transportation available to future residents. As stated on page 4.F-38, in Section 4.F, Traffic/Access, of the Draft EIR, Santa Clarita Transit would be able to utilize Skyline Ranch Road as part of future bus routes to serve the project site.

RESPONSE NO. E1-15

The Draft EIR addressed tectonic activity and seismic risk in Section 4.A, Geotechnical Resources with supporting data provided in Appendix B of the Draft EIR. As indicated on page 4.A-11 of the Draft EIR, it is acknowledged that future residents of the proposed project would be exposed to strong ground shaking with potential for serious damage, typical to all of southern California. However, the analysis also indicates that such impacts would be less than significant due to compliance with the Uniform Building Code and County of Los Angeles standards and procedures which would reduce the potential for structural damage during a major earthquake.

RESPONSE NO. E1-16

The Draft EIR discussed paleontological resources in Section 4.D, Cultural and Paleontological Resources with supporting information included in Appendix E of the Draft EIR. As concluded on page 4.D-19, the overall paleontological sensitivity of the project's Area of Potential Effect (APE) is considered high, based on a records search conducted by the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History. Therefore mitigation measures are recommended which include a paleontological survey and treatment program, paleontological monitoring, and paleontological data recovery. Implementation of the mitigation measures presents an opportunity to discover resources that might not be discovered otherwise. The suggested lack of access to private property by researchers and scientists and the provision of a detailed stratigraphic analysis would not change the conclusion or mitigation measures presented in Section 4.D of the Draft EIR regarding paleontological resources. Furthermore, project implementation places nearly three quarters of the project site (the northern 1,551 acres) in undeveloped open space, thereby preserving access to a substantial amount of open space land.

RESPONSE NO. E1-17

As stated in Mitigation Measure 4.D-2(a) of the Draft EIR, the specific procedures for museum storage of any fossils found during grading would be identified in a paleontological resources monitoring and mitigation program prior to the implementation of grading or construction activities. It is anticipated that any fossils collected would be donated to a public, non-profit

institution, such as the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County or to another non-profit institution with a research interest in the materials. Accompanying notes, maps, and photographs would also be filed at the repository. Based on past and recent experience submitting fossil specimens to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, there is no evidence suggesting that there would be insufficient storage space at the museum to curate paleontological resources encountered during construction activities. While the magnitude of any fossils that might be encountered is speculative at this time, Mitigation Measure 4.D-2(a) of the Draft EIR includes provisions for museum storage, and this mitigation measure would be monitored to ensure proper implementation through a MMP as described in Chapter 4.0 of this document. Any curation costs would be incurred by the applicant. See also Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. E1-18

Mitigation Measure 4.D-2(a), specifies that monitoring would be carried out by a qualified paleontologist. A qualified paleontologist is defined as a paleontologist meeting the criteria established by the Society for Vertebrate Paleontology including institutional affiliations/credentials, ability to recognize and recover vertebrate fossils in the field, local geological and biostratigraphic expertise, proficiency in identifying vertebrate fossils, and publications in scientific journals. A paleontological monitor has been trained by a qualified paleontologist to identify invertebrate fossils. A paleontological monitor would monitor earth-moving construction activities in those areas determined sensitive in the monitoring and mitigation program. In order to provide further clarification regarding the qualifications required for a paleontologist and paleontological monitor, revisions have been incorporated into Mitigation Measures 4.D-2(a), 4.D-2(b), and 4.D-2(c), as shown in Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. E1-19

The Draft EIR addressed green building standards in Section 4.S, Global Climate Change with supporting data provided in Appendix K of the Draft EIR. The proposed project would include green building standards that are part of the County's Green Building Program under the Drought-Tolerant Landscaping Ordinance and Green Building Ordinance. These standards include water-efficient landscaping and irrigation, energy conservation, indoor water conservation, and recycling construction waste. The proposed project would also be certified under the California Green Builder (CGB) program. As described on pages 4.S-24 through 4.S-29 of the Draft EIR, the proposed project also would incorporate project objectives, project features, and mitigation measures that would promote alternative transportation, reduce water and energy use, offer homebuyers the option to participate in the LIVINGSMART program, and implement a green educational program.

RESPONSE NO. E1-20

The Draft EIR addressed fire hazards in Section 4.M, Fire Services and Hazards. As discussed in this section, the project site is located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) and therefore additional Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD) requirements are applicable to the project, including the preparation of a Fuel Modification Plan, a landscape plan, and an irrigation plan to reduce the threat of wildfire. Mitigation Measure 4.M-2 would ensure that a Fuel Modification Plan be reviewed and approved by the LACoFD and the Department of Regional Planning and would ensure that fuel modification and brush clearance zones are maintained around structures. The project would also comply with other applicable requirements including the County Fire Code, Building Code, and California Fire Code, and Conditions of approval from the LACoFD including design features and fire suppression equipment such as an automatic fire suppression system, fire alarm system, and evacuation life safety system. Project plans would be reviewed by LACoFD prior to the issuance of building permits to ensure that the project would be compliant with applicable fire codes, and regulations, and conditions.

Mitigation funding for the LACoFD is provided through the Los Angeles County Fire Department Developer Fee Program. Fees paid to the Developer Fee Program would be used toward land acquisitions, development of new facilities, and new equipment. The Developer Fees are adjusted annually to ensure that adequate levels of fire protection service are maintained. It is expected that these fees would be sufficient to off-set project demand on LACoFD services. The applicant would be required to pay fees prior to the issuance of building permits as specified under Mitigation Measure 4.M-1(a). Furthermore, development of the project would generate annually recurring revenue in the form of property taxes, a portion of which could be used by the County to address LACoFD operations and staffing.

RESPONSE NO. E1-21

The adequacy of fire service and ingress and egress to the project site is analyzed on pages 4.M-8 and 4.M-9, in Section 4.M Fire Services and Hazards (Subsection 3.c(1)), of the Draft EIR. Emergency access would be provided primarily through the off-site extension of Plum Canyon Road/Whites Canyon Road to the west and through the project site as Skyline Ranch Road, which would connect to Sierra Highway to the south. All project roadways would meet the requirements of the LACoFD to ensure adequate emergency access to the project site. These requirements are incorporated as Mitigation Measures 4.M-1(b) through 4.M-1(i) in the Draft EIR and may be subject to further refinement by the LACoFD upon review of final plans. Based on the location of existing and proposed fire stations, first-due response times and distance of the nearest fire station would be more than adequate. As indicated on page 4.F-48, in Section 4.F, Traffic, with implementation of traffic mitigation measures, no significant traffic and access impacts would occur

at local intersections. Therefore, as concluded in Section 4.M of the Draft EIR, project impacts on fire services would be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures.

RESPONSE NO. E1-22

The Draft EIR addressed water resources in Section 4.I, Water Resources with supporting data provided in Appendix I of the Draft EIR. Water service to the project site would be provided by the Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA) Santa Clarita Water Division (SCWD). Groundwater sources include the East Subbasin of the Santa Clara River Valley Groundwater Basin (or aquifer) divided into the Alluvial Aquifer and the Saugus Formation. A Groundwater Management Plan was adopted by CLWA and local purveyors (including SCWD) in December 2003 to meet existing and projected water demands and avoid groundwater overdraft (among other management goals). As stated on page 4.I-40, in Section 4.I, Water Resources, of the Draft EIR, based on the analysis provided in the 2005 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) sufficient water supplies (including groundwater) would be available to meet projected demand from future development, which includes the proposed project. As shown on Table 4.I-3 of the Draft EIR, current and planned water supplies available to CLWA include local groundwater, State Water Project (SWP) water, water storage programs, water banking programs, and recycled water. While SWP water and groundwater associated with the western reaches of the Santa Clara River are among the supplies available to the proposed project, it would not be served exclusively by these supplies. Rather, the full range of supplies developed by CLWA would be used within the service area in accordance with the provisions of the UWMP and Groundwater Management Plan. Unless provisions are made by a developer to acquire supplies independently, specific water sources are not assigned on a project-specific basis. As discussed on pages 4.I-41 and 4.I-42 of the Draft EIR, although there is uncertainty regarding the availability of SWP water, based on the Department of Water Resource's 2007 SWP Delivery Reliability Report, sufficient water supplies would be available to serve the proposed project through 2030. Nevertheless, due to the reduction in SWP supply and Los Angeles County water conservation requirements, Mitigation Measures 4.I-1 through 4.I-5 are proposed to further reduce less-than-significant impacts to water supply. These measures include the use of water efficient fixtures, low flush toilets, water efficient irrigation, and drought-tolerant landscaping.

RESPONSE NO. E1-23

The WSA, attached as Appendix I-2 of the Draft EIR, included a discussion of Wanger decisions regarding delta smelt and Chinook salmon/steelhead in footnotes 12 and 13 and on pages 13 through 16. It is acknowledged that these rulings reduce the amount of water pumped from the Sacramento Delta and available to the State Water Project (SWP) for export to CLWA. The information presented in the WSA included the most recent Federal court decisions and Biological Opinions (BO) at the time the WSA was prepared. As described in the 2007 SWP Delivery

Reliability Report (which is incorporated by reference in WSA), simulations to evaluate future (2027) SWP delivery reliability incorporated the current interim court-ordered operating rules related to the delta smelt and climate change impacts to hydrology in the Central Valley to provide a range of estimated water deliveries. Based on this information, CLWA has determined that there are sufficient water supplies available for pending and future developments within the CLWA service area through 2030. Additional updates are provided in footnotes 38 and 39 in Section 4.I, Water Resources of the Draft EIR, based on recent BOs issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on December 15, 2008 and by the National Marine Fisheries Service on June 4, 2009, both of which reduce Delta water exports to the rest of the State. However, the California Department of Water Resources has not issued formal guidance regarding how these BOs would affect the reliability of the SWP supplies. In the absence of such guidance and because the current WSA considers restrictions to the SWP based on the reduction in water pumped from the Delta, a new WSA is not necessary at this time and would not materially change the analysis or alter the conclusions presented in the Draft EIR. Prior to committing to serve the proposed project and before construction could begin, Los Angeles County would request that CLWA/SCWD prepare a water supply verification in compliance with Senate Bill 221 to ensure that adequate water supplies are available.

RESPONSE NO. E1-24

As stated in Response to Comment E1-22, there is adequate groundwater and other available water sources to meet projected water demands within the CLWA service area through 2030 even with reduction of the SWP water supply, including water storage programs, water banking programs, and recycled water. Groundwater is just one of the sources of available supplies. No additional piping or pumps would be required to provide water service to the project site beyond those described on page 4.I-43, Section 4.I, Water Resource of the Draft EIR. As indicated therein, water lines to the project site would connect to the existing 8- and 10-inch pipelines in Sierra Highway, and a new 16-inch line in Sierra Highway would connect the existing CLWA SCWD Deane water tank.

RESPONSE NO. E1-25

The water supply referenced in the comment is well water from the western end of the groundwater basin that is currently used for agricultural use. This is not a supply that would serve the proposed project. The WSA and Section 4.I, Water Resources, of the Draft EIR included a cumulative analysis based on reasonably foreseeable projects identified in the 2005 UWMP and additional information related to the 2007 SWP Reliability Report. Based on this information, and as stated on page 4.I-46 of the Draft EIR, CLWA has determined that there are sufficient water supplies available for pending and future residential and commercial developments within the

CLWA service area through 2030. It is also noted that the Draft EIR and the WSA identify future water supplies associated with the development of Newhall Ranch that contribute to the overall water supply sources for CLWA. These include 18,828 af in the Semitropic Water Storage District Groundwater Banking Project, 1,607 af of Nickel Water, and up to 5,400 af of recycled water (see Table 4.I-3 and pages 4.I-38 and 4.I-39 of the Draft EIR).

RESPONSE NO. E1-26

The Draft EIR addressed ammonium perchlorate on pages 4.I-9 and 4.I-10 in Section 4.I, Water Resources. As stated therein, due to the detection of ammonium perchlorate, four wells were removed from active water service in the Saugus Formation and two wells were removed in the Alluvial Aquifer. In October 2005 one of the Alluvial wells (Valencia Water Company's [VWC] Well Q2) was returned to active water service with the operation of wellhead perchlorate removal technology. VWC's Well 157 was sealed and abandoned and replaced with Well 206 in a non-impacted part of the water basin. As stated on page 22 of the WSA, included as Appendix I-2 of the Draft EIR, of the six wells that were removed from service, four wells with a combined capacity of 7,200 gallons per minute (or approximately 11,600 acre feet per year [afy]) remain out of service. The combined active groundwater source capacity of the Alluvial Aquifer and Saugus Formation (not including the contaminated wells) is 82,000 afy. As stated in the WSA and based on the 2005 UWMP the groundwater is more than sufficient to meet the groundwater component of water supply in Santa Clarita Valley. This was also recently confirmed by a study of the Alluvial Aquifer and Saugus Formation, which supports the 2005 UWMP.[1] See also Response to Comment E1-22, regarding the current and projected ground water supply available to CLWA.

Regarding clean up of groundwater, as described on page 4.I-10 of the Draft EIR, CLWA and the affected Local Purveyors have undertaken a comprehensive groundwater containment, treatment, and restoration project to address perchlorate contamination. The project will intercept the perchlorate plume in the Saugus Formation groundwater. Contaminated water will then be pumped from intercepting wells to the new treatment facility where the chemical will be removed and the treated water used as part of the Santa Clarita Valley drinking water supply. Construction of the treatment facility began in November of 2007 and treatment commenced in the fall of 2009. A permit from the California Department of Public Health is expected in early 2010, at which time the treated water will be used as a water supply.[2]

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[1] *Castaic Lake Water Agency News Release, "Study Shows Santa Valley Clarita Groundwater to be a Reliable Water Supply Now and for the Future," available: http://www.clwa.org/about/pdfs/PressRelease081909.pdf*

[2] *Ford, Jeff, Water Resources Planner, Castaic Lake Water Agency, 2009.*

Regarding health risks and previous litigation related to ammonium perchlorate, these are not comments on the content or adequacy of the Draft EIR and therefore no further response is required. However, a summary of related litigation related to the treatment of contaminated water was provided on page 4.I-9 of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. E1-27

Please see Response to Comment E1-26 regarding reduction of groundwater production due to ammonium percholate contamination, which would not reduce the ability of groundwater supplies to meet existing and projected demand, as analyzed in the 2005 UWMP. Regarding the table "Saugus Formation Wells Actions" (attached as Comment E1-35), this reduction in capacity was taken into consideration by the Perchlorate Settlement Agreement and the analysis presented in Appendix I-1, Water Resources Technical Report of the Draft EIR. Under this agreement, the responsible parties have agreed to pay for replacement wells to compensate. The new wells are in the planning stages and are expected to be operational in 2012.[3]

RESPONSE NO. E1-28

Please see Responses to Comments E1-22 regarding adequacy of water supply, E1-23 regarding cumulative development, and E1-26 and treatment of contaminated groundwater. The resolution is attached as Comment E1-36 and will be forwarded to the decision-makers for their consideration. As described in Section 4.I, Water Resources and Appendix I of the Draft EIR, neither the proposed project nor development within the Santa Clarita Valley relies on water from the four contaminated wells in the Saugus Formation, and as discussed in Responses to Comments E1-26 and E1-27, treated water will be available for use as a water supply in early 2010, and replacement wells are planned to compensate for any reduction in capacity as a result of the ammonium perchlorate treatment facilities. Water supply within the Santa Clarita Valley is adequate to meet existing and projected demand in the Santa Clarita through the year 2030 based on projections in the 2005 UWMP.

RESPONSE NO. E1-29

Both CLWA and CLWA SCWD are mandated to provide water to the Santa Clarita Valley. They do not promote or approve development, other than to verify whether their current and projected water supplies are adequate to serve this development. There is no conflict of interest associated with their supplying water to qualifying projects; this is what they are required to do.

[3] *Ford, Jeff, Water Resources Planner, Castaic Lake Water Agency, 2009.*

The water supply information presented in Section 4.I of the Draft EIR, including Appendix I was provided for agency review during the public comment period of the Draft EIR. In addition to CLWA, Santa Clarita Water Division, and Newhall County Water District, other water resource planning agencies and organizations who received a copy of the Draft EIR for review and comment include the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Water Resources, and California Water Impact Network. The information presented in the Draft EIR is consistent with the 2005 UWMP and 2007 State Water Project Delivery Reliability Report, which also are circulated for agency and public review and comment. In addition, the WSA was included as an appendix to the Draft EIR and thus was available for review during the public comment period**.**

As stated on page 4.I-40 of the Draft EIR, the proposed project was identified as a future land use in the 2005 UWMP and used in conjunction with other pending projects to estimate future water demand. Consistency with the UWMP, 2007 State Water Project Delivery Reliability Report, and other County water conservation requirements would ensure equitable distribution and use of water throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.

RESPONSE NO. E1-30

The comment is noted for the consideration of the decision-makers. The entire region would not be continuous urban and suburban development, as nearly 1,551 acres in the northern portion of the project site would remain as undeveloped open space which is contiguous to the Angeles National Forest. The project site represents only a portion of proposed development within the Santa Clarita Valley. The Draft EIR included a cumulative analysis within each of the environmental topics analyzed in Chapter 4.0 of the Draft EIR. The cumulative analyses evaluated impacts of the project in combination with other new development occurring in the project vicinity. The methodology used for the cumulative analysis, as well as an identification of other new development that is expected to occur is presented in Chapter 3.0 of the Draft EIR. Section 6.C, of the Draft EIR, Growth-Inducing Impacts, evaluated the potential of the proposed project to foster growth. As discussed therein, the proposed project would not foster growth beyond its own contribution to the population base. Also, refer to Response to Comment E1-4 regarding future growth in north Los Angeles County.

RESPONSE NO. E1-31

Please see Responses to Comments E1-22 through E1-29 regarding water supply. As concluded in the Draft EIR, the WSA prepared for the proposed project, and 2005 UWMP, there is sufficient water supplies available to meet projected demand from future development, including the proposed development.

RESPONSE NO. E1-32

The comment, which draws conclusions based on earlier comments, was previously addressed. Please see Responses to Comments E1-3 regarding open space, E1-6 through E1-11 regarding wildlife, and E1-16 regarding fossil resources. Also refer to Response to Comments E1-4 and E1-30 regarding growth in the region.

RESPONSE NO. E1-33

The comment is noted for the consideration of the decision-makers. As described in Response to Comment E1-19, the project includes design features and mitigation measures that address the implementation of green building standards. As described in Response to Comment E1-6, the project would not impact wildlife corridor movement. As noted in Response to Comment E-14, the proposed project would facilitate the extension of existing Santa Clarita Transit bus service along Skyline Ranch Road.

RESPONSE NO. E1-34

Preference for the "development alternative" is noted for the consideration of the decision-makers, however it is not clear what alternative the commenter is referring to. Chapter 5.0, Alternatives, of the Draft EIR presents an analysis of a No Project/No Development Alternative, Reasonably Foreseeable On-Site Development Alternative (200 Residential Lots), Reduced Project Alternative A (800 Residential Lots), and Reduced Project Alternative B (935 Residential Lots). The analysis indicates that two of the reduced density alternatives (Reasonably Foreseeable On-Site Development Alternative and Reduced Project Alternative A), would increase certain project impacts, in particular those related to biological and open space/land use/visual issues. The Reduced Project Alternative B reduces or avoids those adverse impacts and would lessen impacts for most environmental issues. Therefore Reduced Project Alternative B is identified as the environmentally superior alternative. However, with reconfiguration of the Reduced Project Alternative B site plan, traffic impacts on Whites Canyon Road and Plum Canyon Road would increase. Furthermore, the Reduced Project Alternative B would not avoid the project's significant impacts and would not fully meet the project objectives.

RESPONSE NO. E1-35

Please see Response to Comment 27 regarding the information presented in this table.

RESPONSE NO. E1-36

Please see Responses to Comments 26 and 28 regarding contamination and clean up of the Saugus wells and the effect on available groundwater supply.

Letter F1

From: Nancy Corwin [nancyleec2@yahoo.com]
To: Bush, Michele
Cc:
Sent: Tue 8/4/2009 6:43 PM
Subject: Comments on the EIR

Dear Michele Bush,
I wish to address the issue of the proposed Skyline Ranch Project number 04-06-075-(5).
I feel that in interest of our community it would not be wise for this project to move forward.
As stated in the letter sent out by Jon Sanabria the "unavoidable impacts" such as the visual qualities, noise, air quality, law enforcement services, cumulative traffic (which is my biggest concern), solid waste disposal and global climate change are all enormous issues which send up a red flag. **F1-1**
I ask you and the Department of Reginol Planning to halt the passage of this proposal.
Thank you for taking into consideration my concerns.
Mrs. Nancy L Corwin
28150 Haxton Dr.
Canyon Country, CA 91351

From: Nancy Corwin [mailto:nancyleec2@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 04, 2009 6:43 PM
To: Bush, Michele
Subject: Comments on the DEIR

Δεαρ Μιχηελε Βυση,
Ι ωιση το αδδρεσσ τηε ισσυε οφ τηε προποσεδ Σκψλινε Ρανχη Προφεχτ νυμβερ 04–06–075–(5).
Ι φεελ τηατ ιν ιντερεστ οφ ουρ χομμυνιτψ ιτ ωουλδ νοτ βε ωισε φορ τηισ προφεχτ το μοϖε φορωαρδ.
Ασ στατεδ ιν τηε λεττερ σεντ ουτ βψ ϑον Σαναβρια τηε ∀υναϖοιδαβλε ιμπαχτσ∀ συχη ασ τηε ϖισυαλ θυαλιτιεσ, νοισε, αιρ θυαλιτψ, λαω ενφορχεμεντ σερϖιχεσ, χυμυλατιϖε τραφφιχ (ωηιχη ισ μψ βιγγεστ χονχερν), σολιδ ωαστε δισποσαλ ανδ γλοβαλ χλιματε χηανγε αρε αλλ ενορμουσ ισσυεσ ωηιχη σενδ υπ α ρεδ φλαγ.
Ι ασκ ψου ανδ τηε Δεπαρτμεντ οφ Ρεγινολ Πλαννινγ το ηαλτ τηε πασσαγε οφ τηισ προποσαλ.
Τηανκ ψου φορ τακινγ ιντο χονσιδερατιον μψ χονχερνσ.
Μρσ. Ναν χψ Λ Χορωιν
28150 Ηαξτον Δρ.
Χανψον Χουντρψ, ΧΑ 91351

LETTER NO. F1

Nancy L. Corwin
28150 Haxton Dr.
Canyon Country, CA 91351

RESPONSE NO. F1-1

The comment is noted. The commenter references the conclusions of the Draft EIR as stated in the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning's Notice of Public Hearing and Notice of Completion and Availability, distributed on July 30, 2009. The Draft EIR addressed visual qualities in Section 4.E, Visual Qualities; noise in Section 4.G, Noise; air quality in Section 4.H, Air Quality; law enforcement services in Section 4.L, Law Enforcement Services; cumulative traffic in Section 4.F, Traffic/Access (pages 4.F-47 and 4.F-48); solid waste disposal in Section 4.K, Solid Waste Disposal; and global climate change in Section 4.S, Global Climate Change. Supporting technical date and analysis for noise, air quality, traffic, and global climate change were provided in Appendix G, Appendix H, Appendix F, and Appendix K, respectfully.

Letter F2

From: LKakumu@aol.com [mailto:LKakumu@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2009 12:06 PM
To: Bush, Michele
Subject: DEIR County Project Number 04-075-(5)

Our community cannot afford another housing track! The infrastructure is not adequate to accommodate the increase in traffic from opening up Plum Canyon Road southbound unto Whites Canyon. **F2-1**

The intersection at Whites Canyon and Nadal is a nightmare when Canyon High School begins and ends (not to mention the traffic from Leona Cox Elementary School). Numerous accidents occur at this intersection and the Sheriff's department cannot control cars running through the signal or the speeding. **F2-2**

There is already a housing track on hold on Plum Canyon; and when that is completed it will add to the existing traffic and noise, but when you add yet another housing track that becomes a dangerous situation. **F2-3**

Lastly, when a new housing track is built the developer never pays his fair share for infrastructure; and in this economy the tax payer cannot afford another tax increase to cover items that the developer did not pay for. **F2-4**

Sincerely,
Lynn Kakumu
28026 Damar Court
Canyon Country, CA 91351

LETTER NO. F2

Lynn Kakumu
28026 Damar Court
Canyon Country, CA 91351

RESPONSE NO. F2-1

The comment is noted. The Draft EIR analyzed traffic in Section 4.F, Traffic/Access with supporting data provided in Appendix F of the Draft EIR. Future improvements to Whites Canyon Road are shown on the County's Highway Plan and Draft Highway Plan. As stated in pages 4.F-38 through 4.F-42 (Subsection 3.c(8)) of the Draft EIR, access to the project site would be provided through the extension of Plum Canyon Road/Whites Canyon Road on the west (through Tract Map No. 46018) as Skyline Ranch Road, and south to Sierra Highway as shown on the Draft Highway Plan. This proposed alignment was conditionally approved by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. The extension of Whites Canyon Road, under a different alignment is shown on the County's existing Highway Plan but is recommended for deletion by the County due to the amount of grading that would be required and the impact on sensitive biological resources. A comparison of the long-range traffic volumes and alignments under the existing Highway Plan and Draft Highway Plan was depicted on Figure 4.F-14 of the Draft EIR. As concluded in page 4.F-39 of the Draft EIR, the effect of changing the configuration of these roadways would result in little to no change on the surrounding roadway networks.

RESPONSE NO. F2-2

As concluded on pages 4.F-18 and 4.F-19 of the Draft EIR, with implementation of traffic mitigation measures (including intersection improvements and payment of B&T District fees) project impacts on area roadways would be less than significant. As indicated in Table 4.F-11 of the Draft EIR, with the proposed connection of Skyline Ranch Road between Whites Canyon Road and Sierra Highway, traffic volumes on Whites Canyon Road would be reduced by approximately 4,000 daily trips. Because project-generated traffic is estimated to add less than 2,500 daily trips to Whites Canyon Road (based on project trip generation and traffic distribution presented on pages 2-2 and 2-5, respectively of Appendix F, Traffic Impact Analysis), a net decrease in traffic through the Nadal Street intersection is anticipated once the connection to Sierra Highway is completed. Regarding accidents at the intersection due to cars running the signal or speeding, enforcement of existing traffic laws is beyond the scope of the EIR. However, as discussed in Section 4.L, Law Enforcement, development of the proposed project would require payment of a Law Enforcement Facilities Fee and mitigation measures to reduce project impacts on the Sheriff's Department.

RESPONSE NO. F2-3

It is not clear which Plum Canyon housing tract currently on hold the commenter is referring to. However, the analysis of traffic and noise impacts in Sections 4.F, Traffic/Access and 4.G, Noise of the Draft EIR considered development of related projects in the area, such as Tract 46018 west of the project site on Plum Canyon Road, which has been approved but not constructed. As concluded in page 4.F-49 of the Draft EIR, with implementation of mitigation measures, cumulative traffic impacts would be less than significant. As stated in pages 4.G-43 through 4.G-45 of the Draft EIR, development of the proposed project and related projects would result in significant unavoidable mobile noise impacts at off-site locations along segments of Sierra Highway and Whites Canyon Road.

RESPONSE NO. F2-4

The commenter is incorrect. As stated in the Draft EIR the developer would be required to pay a fair share for infrastructure including: Bouquet Canyon and Eastside B&T fees for roadway improvements; annexation and connection fees for wastewater collection and treatment; Law Enforcement Facilities Fees for law enforcement facilities; Los Angeles County Fire Department Developer Fees towards overall Department acquisition, facility improvements, and equipment funding; Developer Fees to the Sulphur Springs School District, Saugus Union School District and William S. Hart High School District towards the construction or modernization of school facilities; Library Facilities Mitigation Fees towards improvement of local library services and resources; and Quimby fees towards the development of park space. In addition, the proposed project includes the dedication of an 11-acre elementary school site to the Sulphur Springs School District and the dedication of an approximately 12-acre fully improved public park to the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. Furthermore, the project would construct the extension of Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway (as Skyline Ranch Road), a major infrastructure improvement proposed by the County in the Draft Highway Plan to improve the regional roadway system.

Letter F3

From: dwohlleben@socal.rr.com
Sent: Sunday, September 13, 2009 9:39 PM
To: Bush, Michele
Subject: Skyline Ranch Road--- Urgent

Hello, I live at and own the property at 29619 Fitch Ave Canyon. Country 91351.Myself and other homeowners in the neighborhood would like to know and see on a good map the panned extension of a road from Plum canyon Road to Sierra Highway. Exactly where it will begin and end??? **F3-1**
We received letter from Jon Sanabria re this matter and I am unable to see exactly, nor find on the website, were this road starts and ends . It goes before a meeting on Sept 16. Thank-you so much for your prompt attention to this.
Sincerely,
Dianne Wohlleben
661 6188023

LETTER NO. F3

Dianne Wohlleben
29619 Fitch Avenue
Canyon Country, CA 91351

RESPONSE NO. F3-1

The letter from Jon Sanabria referenced by the commenter is the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning's Notice of Public Hearing and Notice of Completion and Availability, distributed on July 30, 2009. This Notice included a vicinity map but not a detailed map of the planned roadway extension (i.e., Skyline Ranch Road). The County's notice also included a link to the County's website and the Draft EIR prepared for the project. The Draft EIR provides a more detailed description of the extension of Whites Canyon Road/Plum Canyon Road (as Skyline Ranch Road) to Sierra Highway. Specifically, Figures 2-3, 2-4, 2-6, 2-8, 2-9, and 4.F-14 of the Draft EIR, show the proposed extension. As described on page 2-17, in Chapter 2.0, Project Description of the Draft EIR, Skyline Ranch Road would extend from Plum Canyon Road/Whites Canyon Road on the west through Tract Map No. 46018 (requiring the realignment and partial vacation of Farrell Road), to the southeast and through the project site, ultimately connecting to Sierra Highway just north of Adon Road.

Letter F4

From: Kathryn Marsailes [mailto:kmarsai@fastmail.fm]
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2009 11:34 PM
To: Bush, Michele
Subject: Comments on county project 04-075-(5)

These comments are in regard to environmental impact report for state clearinghouse number 2004101090 county project number 04-075-(5) vesting tentative tract map no. 060922 conditional use permit 04-075 oak tree permit case no. 04-075 highway realignment case no. 200900001. F4-1

I live at 17601 Sierra Hill St. and am concerned about the impact the the above proposed development. Firstly, since I have asthma, the detrimental affect on air quality caused by the extensive grading is worrisome.

The affects of the grading on runoff and possible flooding or mudslides for our area are of also of concern. F4-2 The extension of a road to Sierra Highway, which is seems to be near to Sierra Cross, will probably cause significant congestion. F4-3 Lastly, the report states that "Wildlife diversity on the site is moderate, commensurate with the rather homogeneous nature of the sage scrub and grassland-covered slopes and ridges that comprise most of the site." For your records I am including a list of wildlife that I have seen on my property over the last 8 years. I am not sure what the definition of "moderate wildlife diversity" is for this area, but I would encourage the county to preserve as much of the undeveloped sage scrub areas as possible as well as the other six vegetation communities Skyline Ranch supports according to your report. With so much of the Angeles National Forest having burned in this last fire, it might be wise to preserve more animal habitat.

Over the years on my property alone I have seen:

bobcats
coyotes
raccoons
king snakes
rattlesnakes
gopher snakes
a red coach whip
legless lizards F4-4
screech owls
great horned owls
tarantulas
tarantula wasps
"sun spiders" or solpugids
alligator lizards
fence lizards
roadrunners
rabbits
ground squirrels
monarch butterflies
yellow swallowtail butterflies
moths
mule deer
Southern California toads
oreoles
titmouse(mice?)

peregrine falcons
red-tailed hawks
robins
California quails (large flocks)
hummingbirds
ravens
crows
mourning doves
purple finches
yellow finches
scorpions
broad-winged katydid
cone-nose bugs
ten-lined June beetles
woodpeckers
Jerusalem crickets
And my husband might have seen a young mountain lion because it was a "bobcat, but it had a tail."

I am hoping that you will preserve as much of the natural habitat as you can.

F4-4
Cont'd

LETTER NO. F4

Katherine Marsailes
17601 Sierra Hill Street
Canyon Country, CA 91351

RESPONSE NO. F4-1

The comment is noted. The Draft EIR discussed air quality is Section 4.H, Air Quality with supporting data provided in Appendix H of the Draft EIR. Specifically, air quality impacts from construction activities associated with the proposed project (including grading) were analyzed on pages 4.H-18 through 4.H-27 of the Draft EIR and were determined to be temporarily significant and unavoidable for PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, CO, NO_x, and VOC emissions. The potential health impacts of certain air pollutants on receptors more sensitive to air pollutants (such as residential) are described on pages 4.H-12 and 4.H-13 and the locations of these sensitive receptors are shown on Figure 4.H-1 of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. F4-2

The Draft EIR discussed the effects of grading on runoff, flooding, and mudslides in Sections 4.A, Geotechnical Resources and 4.B, Hydrology and Water Quality with supporting data provided in Appendices B and C of the Draft EIR. As concluded on page 4.A-19, in Section 4.A, Geotechnical Resources, geological impacts associated with slope stability and soil erosion, which contribute to the potential for mudslides, would be limited to the project site and less than significant with incorporation of Mitigation Measures 4.A-3(a) through 4.A-3(o) and 4.A-5 as well as compliance with the standard engineering practices and regulatory requirements. Regarding runoff and flooding impacts during construction (which are also contributory factors for the mudslide potential), as stated on page 4.B-42 of the Draft EIR, with implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.B-2 and 4.B-3 and compliance with other regulatory requirements, impacts from erosion and sedimentation would be less than significant and contained on site.

RESPONSE NO. F4-3

The Draft EIR evaluated traffic in Section 4.F, Traffic/Access with supporting data provided in Appendix F of the Draft EIR. The extension of Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway was analyzed in pages 4.F-38 through 4.F-42 (Subsection 3.c(8)) of the Draft EIR. This proposed alignment was conditionally approved by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and is shown on the Draft Highway Plan. The extension of Whites Canyon Road, under a different

alignment is shown on the County's existing Highway Plan but is recommended for deletion by the County due to the amount of grading that would be required and the impact on sensitive biological resources. A comparison of the long-range traffic volumes and alignments under the existing Highway Plan and Draft Highway Plan was depicted on Figure 4.F-14 of the Draft EIR. As concluded in page 4.F-39 of the Draft EIR, the effect of changing the configuration of these roadways would result in little to no change on the surrounding roadway networks. Furthermore, project-generated traffic impacts on local roadways would be less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.F-1(a) through 4.F-3. Cumulative traffic impacts would also be less than significant with the exception of impacts to Highway 14 between Sand Canyon Road to south of the Sierra Highway interchange. As shown on Figure 2-6, in Chapter 2.0, Project Description of the Draft EIR, Skyline Ranch Road would extend from Plum Canyon Road/Whites Canyon Road on the west through Tract Map No. 46018, to the southeast and through the project site, and connect to Sierra Highway just north of Adon Road and approximately one-third of a mile southwest of Sierra Cross Avenue.

RESPONSE NO. F4-4

The Draft EIR addressed wildlife in Section 4.C, Biological Resources with supporting data provided in Appendix D of the Draft EIR. The term "wildlife diversity" is used in the documentation to refer to two dimensions of wildlife populations on site. The first dimension is the number of species which reflects the diversity of habitats present in terms of the range in biological and physical/structural components. Given that wildlife have preferences for certain habitat types, (for example, grassland has very little diversity in the form of vegetation and physical structure, whereas a grassland may support an abundance in numbers of certain species that prefer grassland as habitat), the number of such species may only be a relatively few. On the other hand, grassland that includes oak trees as an added structural component may support these same species plus species that require trees. Hence, the number of species may be higher. The second dimension is the relative distribution of numbers of animals across a suite of species. For example, based on a mosaic of habitats present where one particular habitat type strongly dominates an area, a few species may represent 90 percent of the individual animals present. In comparison, a mosaic of habitats where several habitat types equally share coverage of a site may support comparable numbers of individuals across a wide range of species. In terms of wildlife diversity, areas that exhibit a greater number of species and a more even distribution of individuals among those species are said to be more diverse than areas where either few species are present or where a few species make up the majority of individuals present. Guided by this principle, page 4.C-20 of the Draft EIR states that "wildlife diversity on the site is moderate, commensurate with the rather homogeneous nature of the sage scrub and grassland-covered slopes and ridges that most of the site." This means that although many species may be present, the numbers of some many species may be limited by the restricted distribution of they prefer. In other words, the statement that wildlife diversity on site

is moderate refers to the predominance of sage scrub habitats and grassland found there and the lack of multiple structural dimensions within those habitats.

Regarding the preservation of natural habitat, as described on page 2-32 through 2-34 in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, of the Draft EIR, and in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, nearly three quarters of the project site (approximately 1,551 acres) in the more sensitive northern portion of the project site would remain undeveloped. Regarding the recent fire, as stated on 4.C-10 of the Draft EIR, even though approximately 100 acres were burned during the Quinn Fire the vegetation communities are expected to fully recover to their pre-burn state within a couple of years.

The list of animals presented in the comment is noted. This information is consistent with the discussion provided in Section 4.C, Biological Resources of the Draft EIR for the project site.

Letter G1

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

FIRE DEPARTMENT

1320 NORTH EASTERN AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063-3294

(323) 890-4330

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN
FIRE CHIEF
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

October 22, 2009

NOV - 5 2009

Ms. Michele Bush
Department of Regional Planning
Impact Analysis Section
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Bush:

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, SUBJECT: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT SKYLINE RANCH PROJECT, COUNTY PROJECT 04-075, STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2004101090, SANTA CLARITA (FFER #200900143)

The Draft Environmental Impact Report has been reviewed by the Planning Division, Land Development Unit, Forestry Division, and Health Hazardous Materials Division of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department. The following are their comments: **G1-1**

PLANNING DIVISION:

1. We have already reviewed this project several times and some of our previous comments have not been incorporated into the Draft EIR. Therefore, we reiterate the following comments:

CHAPTER 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS, SECTION M. FIRE SERVICESAND HAZARDS 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS: **G1-2**

1. Paragraph 2.b.(1) Fire Protection Services/Facilities: Paragraph 1, for clarity, it should be noted the Departmental overview information cited in the first paragraph is from 2007. Since no major changes in the Department have occurred, the 2007 overview information is adequate to address impacts on this project.

2. Paragraph 3 - the second closest Fire Station is now Fire Station 132, placed in service in Spring 2007. Fire Station 132 is located at 29310 Sand Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387, approximately 2 miles east of the project site. It has a 4-person engine company. **G1-3**

Being that Fire Station 132 replaces Fire Station 104 as the second closest Fire Station to the project, the sentence that references a permanent location for Fire Station104 should be deleted since there will be no other reference to Fire Station 104 in the Draft EIR. **G1-3** Cont'd

3. Paragraph 5 - Sentences three and four, which refer to Fire Station 104's statistical information, should be replaced with Fire Station 132's statistical information for the year 2008. Fire Station 132 responded to a total of 704 incidents. Of these, 44 were fire related incidents, 502 were emergency medical incidents, and 158 were other types. **G1-4**

4. Paragraph 6 - The first two sentences should be modified to read: "Funding for LACoFD staffing is provided primarily through property taxes and a voter approved special tax."

5. The Developer Fee Program described above, generates funding for land acquisition and development of new facilities and equipment. **G1-5**

PROJECT IMPACTS

6. Paragraph c.(1) Fire Protection Service: Paragraph 2 - The first sentence should be modified to read: "As described above, the project would be required to pay fees pursuant to the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Developer Fee Program, which would be used toward land acquisitions, new facilities and equipment." Also, the last four sentences of this paragraph should be deleted. It is incorrect to state that fire protection services are funded by recurring revenue to the County's General Fund. The Los Angeles County Fire Department is not a general fund department. It is a special district directly funded by property taxes in the project area. It is the increase in property tax revenue generated by the project that would fund fire protection services. **G1-6**

LAND DEVELOPMENT UNIT:

1. We have no comments at this time. **G1-7**

FORESTRY DIVISION – OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:

1. The statutory responsibilities of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Forestry Division include erosion control, watershed management, rare and endangered species, vegetation, fuel modification for Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or Fire Zone 4, archeological and cultural resources, and the County Oak Tree Ordinance. Potential impacts in these areas should be addressed. **G1-8**

HEALTH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DIVISION:

1. We have no comments at this time. **G1-9**

If you have any additional questions, please contact this office at (323) 890-4330.

Very truly yours,

FRANK VIDALES, ACTING CHIEF, FORESTRY DIVISION
PREVENTION SERVICES BUREAU

FV:lj

LETTER NO. G1

County of Los Angeles Fire Department
Frank Vidales, Acting Chief
Forestry Division
Prevention Services Bureau
1320 North Eastern Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90063-3294

RESPONSE NO. G1-1

Responses from the respective divisions are provided in Responses to Comments G1-2 through G1-9 below.

RESPONSE NO. G1-2

The comment is noted. Regarding citing the date of the overview information, as stated on page 4.M-3 of the Draft EIR, Subsection 2.b(1), Fire Protection Services/Facilities, the majority of the overview information is based on the 2007 Statistical Summary, with minor updates to the service area provided by the Fire Department on May 27, 2009. Therefore, no additional revisions are necessary.

RESPONSE NO. G1-3

The updated fire station information is noted. These revisions have been incorporated into Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G1-4

The updated statistical information is noted. These revisions have been incorporated into Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G1-5

The corrections to the description of funding provisions for the LACFD are noted. These corrections have been incorporated into Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G1-6

The corrections to the description of funding provisions for the LACFD are noted. These corrections have been incorporated into Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G1-7

This comment is noted.

RESPONSE NO. G1-8

The Draft EIR addressed erosion control and watershed management in Sections 4.A and 4.B with supporting technical data and analysis provided in Appendices B and C. Rare and endangered species, vegetation, fuel modification within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, and the County Oak Tree Ordinance were analyzed in Sections 4.C and 4.M of the Draft EIR with supporting information included in Appendix D. Archaeological and cultural resources were discussed in Section 4.D of the Draft EIR with additional technical information included in Appendix E.

RESPONSE NO. G1-9

This comment is noted.

California Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
South Coast Region
4949 Viewridge Avenue
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 467-4201
http://www.dfg.ca.gov

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor
DONALD KOCH, Director

November 5, 2009

Michele Bush
County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
Impact Analysis Section, Room 1348
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Subject: Notice of Completion and Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Skyline Ranch Project, County Permit No. 04-075 in the Santa Clarita Valley, Los Angeles County, California SCH # 2004101090

Dear Ms. Bush:

The Department of Fish and Game (Department) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Skyline Ranch Project. The County of Los Angeles is acting as lead agency for the project. The proposed project is located in the Santa Clarita Valley west of Sierra Highway and north of Highway 14. The proposed project would occupy approximately 2,173 acres and would develop approximately 622 acres of the southern portion of the site, including 1,313 lots consisting of 1,260 residential lots, a 22-acre elementary school site, 10 lots for park areas, 13 debris basin lots, four water tank/booster pump station lots, and 25 open space lots. Three quarters of the site (northern 1,551 acres) is proposed to remain undeveloped, with approximately 1,355 acres dedicated or designated as open space through the establishment of the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA). Approximately 166 acres of undeveloped land in the northern portion of the site on the Cruzan Mesa would remain undeveloped and designated as a Non-Development/Continuing Use Area. Also, within the northern portion of the site, approximately 22 acres would be preserved as a Mitigation Exchange Area for 22 acres of preserve area within adjacent recorded Tract 46018. G2-1

We prepared the following statements and comments pursuant to our authority as Trustee Agency with jurisdiction over natural resources affected by the project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Section 15386) and Responsible Agency (Section 15381) over those aspects of the proposed project that come under the purview of the California Endangered Species Act (Fish and Game Code Section 2050 et seq.) and Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. regarding impacts to streams and lakes. G2-2

The California Wildlife Action Plan, a recent Department guidance document, identified the following stressors affecting wildlife and habitats within the project area: 1) growth and development; 2) water management conflicts and degradation of aquatic ecosystems; 3) invasive species; 4) altered fire regimes; and 5) recreational pressures. The Department looks forward to working with the County of Los Angeles to minimize impacts to fish and wildlife resources with a focus on these stressors. G2-3

The project site supports 12 vegetation communities including: coastal sage scrub, disturbed coastal sage scrub, coastal sage-chaparral scrub, chaparral, non-native grassland, disturbed, barren, holly-leaved cherry scrub, southern vernal pool, developed, sycamore riparian woodland G2-4

and southern willow scrub. The dominant communities on the site are coastal sage scrub and mixed coastal sage–chaparral scrub. These communities are interspersed to varying degrees within the project site and provide habitat for various wildlife species. **G2-4 Cont'd**

According to Appendix D-1, the Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) of the DEIR, the federally listed species identified, or with the potential to occur on-site include: the federally endangered Nevin's barberry (Berberis nevinii), slender-horned spineflower (Dodecahema leptoceras), California orcutt grass (Orcuttia californica), Riverside fairy shrimp (Streptocephalus woottoni), San Diego fairy shrimp (Branchinecta sandiegonensis), unarmored threespine stickleback (Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni), arroyo toad (Bufo californicus), least Bell's vireo (Vireo bellii pusillus), and southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus); the threatened spreading navarretia (Navarretia fossalis), vernal pool fairy shrimp (Branchinecta lynchi), Santa Ana sucker (Catostomus santaanae), California red-legged frog (Rana aurora draytonii), and coastal California gnatcatcher (Polioptila californica); and the candidate San Fernando Valley spineflower (Chorizanthe parryi var. fernandina). **G2-5**

This letter includes our comments regarding the federally listed species you identified, as well as endangered California condor (Gymnogyps californianus) and Quino checkerspot butterfly (Euphydryas editha quino) as they have the potential to occur within the project site.

The Department has the following concerns regarding the potential impacts to sensitive species caused by implementation of the project. **G2-6**

Surveys

The Department concurs with a letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service commenting on this project, dated September 14, 2009 (FWS letter), that information regarding the location of all biological surveys conducted within Skyline Ranch should be disclosed in the DEIR. To facilitate the analysis of potential biological impacts, the entire Skyline Ranch site should be surveyed. It is especially important to survey portions of the site outside of the development footprint if areas not proposed for development are to be conserved for mitigation purposes pursuant to CEQA. **G2-7**

Most of the sensitive plant surveys were conducted in the spring of 2003 and 2005. While we recognize sensitive plant surveys require a substantial commitment of resources, it should be noted that surveys conducted six years ago should not be relied upon to characterize the extent of current site occupation by sensitive plant species.

To enable Department staff to adequately review and comment on the proposed project we recommend the following information, where applicable, be included in the environmental impact report: **G2-8**

1. A complete, recent assessment of flora and fauna within and adjacent to the project area, with particular emphasis upon identifying endangered, threatened, and locally unique species and sensitive habitats (Attachment 1). Depending upon survey protocols used in the above referenced reports, the recent surveys may be adequate. **G2-9**

   a. A thorough recent assessment of rare plants and rare natural communities, following the Department's Guidelines for Assessing Impacts to Rare Plants and Rare Natural Communities.

b. A complete, recent assessment of sensitive fish, wildlife, reptile, and amphibian species. Seasonal variations in use of the project area should also be addressed. Recent, focused, species-specific surveys, conducted at the appropriate time of year and time of day when the sensitive species are active or otherwise identifiable, are required. Acceptable species-specific survey procedures should be developed in consultation with the Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. **G2-9 Cont'd**

c. The Department considers Rare Natural Communities as threatened habitats having both regional and local significance. Thus, these communities should be fully avoided and otherwise protected from project-related impacts (Attachment 2).

2. Impacts to migratory wildlife affected by the project should be fully evaluated including proposals to remove/disturb native and ornamental landscaping and other nesting habitat for native birds. Impact evaluation may also include such elements as migratory butterfly roost sites and neo-tropical bird and waterfowl stop-over and staging sites. All migratory nongame native bird species are protected by international treaty under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (50 C.F.R. Section 10.13). Sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibit take of birds and their active nests, including raptors and other migratory nongame birds as listed under the MBTA. Proposed project activities (including disturbances to vegetation) should take place outside of the breeding bird season (February 1- September 1) to avoid take (including disturbances which would cause abandonment of active nests containing eggs and/or young). If project activities cannot avoid the breeding bird season, nest surveys should be conducted and active nests should be avoided and provided with a minimum buffer as determined by a biological monitor (the Department recommends a minimum 500-foot buffer for all active raptor nests). **G2-10**

3. Impacts to all habitats from City or County required Fuel Modification Zones (FMZ). Areas slated as mitigation for loss of habitat shall not occur within the FMZ. **G2-11**

4. The Department generally does not support the use of relocation, salvage, and/or transplantation as mitigation for impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species. Department studies have shown that these efforts are experimental in nature and largely unsuccessful. **G2-12**

5. A California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Permit must be obtained if the project has the potential to result in "take" of species of plants or animals listed under CESA, either during construction or over the life of the project. CESA Permits are issued to conserve, protect, enhance, and restore State-listed threatened or endangered species and their habitats. Early consultation is encouraged, as significant modification to the proposed project and mitigation measures may be required in order to obtain a CESA Permit. Revisions to the Fish and Game Code, effective January 1998, require that the Department issue a separate CEQA document for the issuance of a CESA permit unless the project CEQA document addresses all project impacts to listed species and specifies a mitigation monitoring and reporting program that will meet the requirements of a CESA permit. For these reasons, the following information is requested: **G2-13**

a. Biological mitigation monitoring and reporting proposals should be of sufficient detail and resolution to satisfy the requirements for a CESA Permit.

b. A Department-approved Mitigation Agreement and Mitigation Plan are required for plants listed as rare under the Native Plant Protection Act.

6. The Department opposes the elimination of watercourses (including concrete channels) and/or the canalization of natural and manmade drainages or conversion to subsurface drains. All wetlands and watercourses, whether intermittent, ephemeral, or perennial, must be retained and provided with substantial setbacks which preserve the riparian and aquatic habitat values and maintain their value to on-site and off-site wildlife populations. The Department recommends a minimum natural buffer of 100 feet from the outside edge of the riparian zone on each side of drainage.

a. The Department requires a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA), pursuant to Section 1600 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code, with the applicant prior to any direct or indirect impact to a lake or stream bed, bank or channel or associated riparian resources. The Department's issuance of a SAA may be a project that is subject to CEQA. To facilitate our issuance of the Agreement when CEQA applies, the Department as a responsible agency under CEQA may consider the local jurisdiction's (Lead Agency) document for the project. To minimize additional requirements by the Department under CEQA the document should fully identify the potential impacts to the lake, stream or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring and reporting commitments for issuance of the Agreement. Early consultation is recommended, since modification of the proposed project may be required to avoid or reduce impacts to fish and wildlife resources. G2-14

The Department concurs with the FWS letter regarding the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and its role in determining which species may occur onsite. Due to recent observations of coastal California gnatcatcher (CCG), the Department recommends a 2009 search of the CNDDB be conducted by the applicant and the BRA be updated. The Department concurs with the FWS letter that there have been observations of CCG in the proposed project environs. Surveys should be conducted for CCG according to FWS protocol immediately prior to project-related activities, including vegetation removal and construction. The Department also concurs with the FWS letter that protocol-level surveys be conducted over the entire Skyline Ranch site where suitable habitat exists to allow the DEIR to adequately address the direct and indirect effects of the project on the CCG. G2-15

The Department recommends that Least Bell's vireo protocol-level surveys be conducted in suitable habitat within the proposed project site including proposed open space dedication areas. As stated in the FWS letter, least Bell's vireos are tied to riparian habitat for nesting, however they have been observed extending their activities into adjacent upland habitats. Least Bell's vireos along the edges of riparian corridors maintain territories that incorporate both riparian and non riparian habitat, including coastal sage scrub. According to information in the BRA, suitable habitat may exist on the proposed development site, and if so, impacts to the least Bell's vireo should be addressed in the DEIR. At a minimum, all potential least Bell's vireo habitat should be assessed and reported to the FWS and the Department. G2-16

Proposed Land Uses

The Department applauds the proposal to set aside 1,551 acres of the project area for on-site mitigation and open space conservation. The Department recommends that the DEIR further clarify how the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA) will be preserved. The Department recommends that an open space conservation plan be developed that includes all open space properties proposed in the project. Within the conservation plan, details of land use should be proposed. This plan would allow sensitive biological resources to be identified and protected G2-17

while identifying potential areas that could provide low impact outdoor public uses. The Department concurs with the FWS letter that the Cruzan Mesa is a biologically diverse system. As stated in the DEIR, this area supports three federally listed species: the vernal pool fairy shrimp, California orcutt grass, and spreading navarretia. The Department recommends that strict conservation guidelines for this area be detailed in an open space conservation plan. **G2-17 Cont'd**

Alternatives

The Department concurs with the FWS letter regarding alternatives. The Reduced Project B Alternative would reduce the size of the currently proposed project in the southern portion of Skyline Ranch, and would not develop on the Cruzan Mesa. As stated above, the Cruzan Mesa is a biologically significant resource area and we agree with the DEIR's determination that the Reduced Project B would be the environmentally superior alternative that meets the project objectives. The Department recommends that the applicant pursue this development alternative. **G2-18**

In summary, the Department concurs with the FWS letter that the DEIR is lacking in the specificity of information regarding the presence of sensitive species and biological resources needed to accurately evaluate and characterize the impacts of the project. The Department recommends that this information be gathered for evaluation by the applicant and the County of Los Angeles to facilitate a full analysis of potential biological impacts. **G2-19**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this DMND. Please contact Mr. Dan Blankenship, Staff Environmental Scientist, at (661) 259-3750 if you should have any questions and for further coordination on the proposed project.

Sincerely,

Edmund Pert
Regional Manager
South Coast Region

Attachments

cc: Ms. Helen Birss, Los Alamitos
Ms. Betty Courtney, Newhall
Mr. Dan Blankenship, Newhall
State Clearinghouse, Sacramento

From: Helen Birss
To: Duarte, Dolores
CC: Blankenship, Daniel; Courtney, Betty
Date: 11/3/2009 3:31 PM
Subject: Re: NOC Skyline Ranch Project DEIR, Santa Clarita
Attachments: CEQA DEIR Skyline Ranch Project Santa Clarita SCH 2004101090.hb.doc

Hi Dolores,
The attached letter has been reviewed and is ready for formatting and Ed's signature. This can go out tomorrow.

Dan, please confirm that this needs both attachments 1 and 2.

Thanks,
Helen

G2-20

>>> Daniel Blankenship 10/19/2009 8:32 AM >>>
Hi Helen, Hope all is going well. I have prepared a comment letter for this project based on concerns that the FWS has with the project. The document didn't make it to me until the filing closed but Betty and I think it is appropriate to go on record with our concerns in order to stay at the table with this project. The project will set aside approximately 1500 acres of open space. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks, Dan

Guidelines for Assessing the Effects of Proposed Projects on Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants and Natural Communities

State of California
THE RESOURCES AGENCY
Department of Fish and Game
December 9, 1983
Revised May 8, 2000

The following recommendations are intended to help those who prepare and review environmental documents determine **when** a botanical survey is needed, **who** should be considered qualified to conduct such surveys, **how** field surveys should be conducted, and **what** information should be contained in the survey report. The Department may recommend that lead agencies not accept the results of surveys that are not conducted according to these guidelines.

1. Botanical surveys are conducted in order to determine the environmental effects of proposed projects on all rare, threatened, and endangered plants and plant communities. Rare, threatened, and endangered plants are not necessarily limited to those species which have been "listed" by state and federal agencies but should include any species that, based on all available data, can be shown to be rare, threatened, and/or endangered under the following definitions:

   A species, subspecies, or variety of plant is "endangered" when the prospects of its survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition, or disease. A plant is "threatened" when it is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future in the absence of protection measures. A plant is "rare" when, although not presently threatened with extinction, the species, subspecies, or variety is found in such small numbers throughout its range that it may be endangered if its environment worsens. G2-21

   Rare natural communities are those communities that are of highly limited distribution. These communities may or may not contain rare, threatened, or endangered species. The most current version of the California Natural Diversity Database's List of California Terrestrial Natural Communities may be used as a guide to the names and status of communities.

2. It is appropriate to conduct a botanical field survey to determine if, or to the extent that, rare, threatened, or endangered plants will be affected by a proposed project when:

   a. Natural vegetation occurs on the site, it is unknown if rare, threatened, or endangered plants or habitats occur on the site, and the project has the potential for direct or indirect effects on vegetation; or
   b. Rare plants have historically been identified on the project site, but adequate information for impact assessment is lacking.

3. Botanical consultants should possess the following qualifications:

   a. Experience conducting floristic field surveys;
   b. Knowledge of plant taxonomy and plant community ecology;
   c. Familiarity with the plants of the area, including rare, threatened, and endangered species;
   d. Familiarity with the appropriate state and federal statutes related to plants and plant collecting; and,
   e. Experience with analyzing impacts of development on native plant species and communities.

4. Field surveys should be conducted in a manner that will locate any rare, threatened, or endangered species that may be present. Specifically, rare, threatened, or endangered plant surveys should be:

   a. Conducted in the field at the proper time of year when rare, threatened, or endangered species are both evident and identifiable. Usually, this is when the plants are flowering.

When rare, threatened, or endangered plants are known to occur in the type(s) of habitat present in the project area, nearby accessible occurrences of the plants (reference sites) should be observed to determine that the species are identifiable at the time of the survey.

b. Floristic in nature. A floristic survey requires that every plant observed be identified to the extent necessary to determine its rarity and listing status. In addition, a sufficient number of visits spaced throughout the growing season are necessary to accurately determine what plants exist on the site. In order to properly characterize the site and document the completeness of the survey, a complete list of plants observed on the site should be included in every botanical survey report.

c. Conducted in a manner that is consistent with conservation ethics. Collections (voucher specimens) of rare, threatened, or endangered species, or suspected rare, threatened, or endangered species should be made only when such actions would not jeopardize the continued existence of the population and in accordance with applicable state and federal permit requirements. A collecting permit from the Habitat Conservation Planning Branch of DFG is required for collection of state-listed plant species. Voucher specimens should be deposited at recognized public herbaria for future reference. Photography should be used to document plant identification and habitat whenever possible, but especially when the population cannot withstand collection of voucher specimens.

d. Conducted using systematic field techniques in all habitats of the site to ensure a thorough coverage of potential impact areas.

e. Well documented. When a rare, threatened, or endangered plant (or rare plant community) is located, a California Native Species (or Community) Field Survey Form or equivalent written form, accompanied by a copy of the appropriate portion of a 7.5 minute topographic map with the occurrence mapped, should be completed and submitted to the Natural Diversity Database. Locations may be best documented using global positioning systems (GPS) and presented in map and digital forms as these tools become more accessible.

G2-21 Cont'd

5. Reports of botanical field surveys should be included in or with environmental assessments, negative declarations and mitigated negative declarations, Timber Harvesting Plans (THPs), EIR's, and EIS's, and should contain the following information:

a. Project description, including a detailed map of the project location and study area.
b. A written description of biological setting referencing the community nomenclature used and a vegetation map.
c. Detailed description of survey methodology.
d. Dates of field surveys and total person-hours spent on field surveys.
e. Results of field survey including detailed maps and specific location data for each plant population found. Investigators are encouraged to provide GPS data and maps documenting population boundaries.
f. An assessment of potential impacts. This should include a map showing the distribution of plants in relation to proposed activities.
g. Discussion of the significance of rare, threatened, or endangered plant populations in the project area considering nearby populations and total species distribution.
h. Recommended measures to avoid impacts.
i. A list of all plants observed on the project area. Plants should be identified to the taxonomic level necessary to determine whether or not they are rare, threatened or endangered.
j. Description of reference site(s) visited and phenological development of rare, threatened, or endangered plant(s).
k. Copies of all California Native Species Field Survey Forms or Natural Community Field Survey Forms.
l. Name of field investigator(s).
j. References cited, persons contacted, herbaria visited, and the location of voucher specimens.

Sensitivity of Top Priority Rare Natural Communities in Southern California

Sensitivity rankings are determined by the Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Data Base and based on either number of known occurrences (locations) and/or amount of habitat remaining (acreage). The three rankings used for these top priority rare natural communities are as follows:

S1.# Fewer than 6 known locations and/or on fewer than 2,000 acres of habitat remaining.

S2.# Occurs in 6-20 known locations and/or 2,000-10,000 acres of habitat remaining.

S3.# Occurs in 21-100-known locations and/or 10,000-50,000 acres of habitat remaining.

The number to the right of the decimal point after the ranking refers to the degree of threat posed to that natural community regardless of the ranking. For example:

S1.1 = very threatened
S2.2 = threatened
S3.3 = no current threats known

Sensitivity Rankings (February 1992)

G2-22

Rank	Community Name
S1.1	Mojave Riparian Forest
	Sonoran Cottonwood Willow Riparian
	Mesquite Bosque
	Elephant Tree Woodland
	Crucifixion Thorn Woodland
	Allthorn Woodland
	Arizonan Woodland
	Southern California Walnut Forest
	Mainland Cherry Forest
	Southern Bishop Pine Forest
	Torrey Pine Forest
	Desert Mountain White Fir Forest
	Southern Dune Scrub
	Southern Coastal Bluff Scrub
	Maritime Succulent Scrub
	Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub
	Southern Maritime Chaparral
	Valley Needlegrass Grassland
	Great Basin Grassland
	Mojave Desert Grassland
	Pebble Plains
	Southern Sedge Bog
	Cismontane Alkali Marsh

S1.2	Southern Foredunes Mono Pumice Flat Southern Interior Basalt Flow Vernal Pool
S2.1	Venturan Coastal Sage Scrub Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub Riversidean Upland Coastal Sage Scrub Riversidean Desert Sage Scrub Sagebrush Steppe Desert Sink Scrub Mafic Southern Mixed Chaparral San Diego Mesa Hardpan Vernal Pool San Diego Mesa Claypan Vernal Pool Alkali Meadow Southern Coastal Salt Marsh Coastal Brackish Marsh Transmontane Alkali Marsh Coastal and Valley Freshwater Marsh Southern Arroyo Willow Riparian Forest Southern Willow Scrub Modoc-Great Basin Cottonwood Willow Riparian Modoc-Great Basin Riparian Scrub Mojave Desert Wash Scrub Engelmann Oak Woodland Open Engelmann Oak Woodland Closed Engelmann Oak Woodland Island Oak Woodland California Walnut Woodland Island Ironwood Forest Island Cherry Forest Southern Interior Cypress Forest Bigcone Spruce-Canyon Oak Forest
S2.2	Active Coastal Dunes Active Desert Dunes Stabilized and Partially Stabilized Desert Dunes Stabilized and Partially Stabilized Desert Sandfield Mojave Mixed Steppe Transmontane Freshwater Marsh Coulter Pine Forest Southern California Fellfield White Mountains Fellfield
S2.3	Bristlecone Pine Forest Limber Pine Forest

G2-22
Cont'd

LETTER NO. G2

California Department of Fish and Game
Edmund Pert, Regional Manager
South Coast Region
4949 Viewridge Avenue
San Diego, CA 92123

RESPONSE NO. G2-1

The comment is noted. This information is presented in Chapter 2.0, Project Description and Section 4.C, Biological Resources of the Draft EIR. However, it is noted that the proposed elementary school site is 11 acres, rather than 22 acres, as stated by the commenter.

RESPONSE NO. G2-2

The comment states roles and responsibilities of the California Department of Fish and Game as a Trustee Agency and Responsible Agency.

RESPONSE NO. G2-3

The comment summarizes biological issues referenced in the California Wildlife Action Plan and is not a comment on the contents or adequacy of the Draft EIR and therefore no further response is required. However, the Draft EIR addressed these issues in Section 4.C Biological Resources with supporting technical data and analysis provided in Appendix D.

RESPONSE NO. G2-4

The comment is noted. The information is presented in Section 4.C, Biological Resources of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G2-5

The content of this comment is similar to comment A2-3 and provides a context for the federally-listed species that are the subject of the letter. No specific comments are provided regarding the California condor or Quino checkerspot butterfly. However, comments on these

species presented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are addressed in Responses to Comments A2-16 and A2-10, respectively.

RESPONSE NO. G2-6

Responses to these concerns are provided below in Responses to Comments G2-7 through G2-19.

RESPONSE NO. G2-7

Please see Responses to Comments A2-5, A2-6, A2-7, A2-12, A2-13, and A2-14 regarding the location, extent, and timing of the biological surveys conducted on the project site and presented in the Draft EIR. As stated in these responses, surveys were conducted over the entire site, including areas outside the development footprint, based on established protocols.

Concerning the reliability of using data derived from sensitive plant surveys conducted in 2003 and 2005, it should be noted that the reliability of plant surveys is highly dependent on rainfall totals during the season they were conducted. According to data collected at the Los Angeles Civic Center and presented in The Los Angeles On-Line Almanac, the 130-year average seasonal rainfall is 15.04 inches. During the 2002-2003 rainy season, 16.42 inches of rain fell at the Civic Center station, indicating slightly higher than normal precipitation. During the 2004-2005 rainy season, 37.96 inches of rain fell at the season, indicating a very wet year. In both cases, conditions for sensitive plant growth are considered to be good to excellent case scenarios that reflect best case conditions for conducting surveys. In addition, surveys conducted prior to the 2007 wildfire represent optimal conditions within the burn area as it may take several years for habitat within this area to fully recover, as stated in Response to Comment G2-9. Therefore, the data presented in the Draft EIR are considered to be accurate and reliable.

RESPONSE NO. G2-8

Please see Responses to Comments G2-9 through G2-19 below regarding the requested information, which has been adequately addressed in the Draft EIR**.**

RESPONSE NO. G2-9

In terms of its approach, focus, and documentation, the Draft EIR's content is consistent with the California Department of Fish and Game's Guidelines for Assessing Impacts to Rare Plants and Rare Natural Communities (attached as Comment G2-21). The Draft EIR also presents the

results of the most recent reliable field surveys for sensitive fish and wildlife since habitats had not recovered adequately from the 2007 wildfire to warrant updated surveys prior to publication of the Draft EIR. It should be noted that due to the well documented fire ecology of chaparral and sage scrub vegetation, the recovery of such habitats may take years to achieve the habitat diversity and structure (and, therefore, the plant and wildlife species holding capacity) of the habitat present at the time of the surveys that were conducted before the wildfire occurred. Finally, impacts on Rare Natural Communities in Southern California (see Comment G2-22) are avoided or minimized to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measures 4.C-1 and 4.C-2. For a more detailed description of biological surveys conducted for the Draft EIR refer to Responses A2-5 through A2-16.

RESPONSE NO. G2-10

The Draft EIR addressed wildlife movement/migratory species in Section 4.C, Biological Resources with supporting technical data and analysis provided in Appendix D-1. The analysis addressed impacts regarding wildlife movement in the project vicinity, habitat for migratory birds (i.e. resting and foraging habitat for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds on Cruzan Mesa), and nesting birds. The analysis identified a potentially significant impact to nesting birds which would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.C-3 which would avoid vegetation clearance during the nesting season or require pre-construction surveys and nest avoidance of 100 feet to 500 feet as determined by the monitoring biologist. As presented in the comment, a minimum 500-foot buffer for all active raptor nests will be considered by the monitoring biologist. However, the presence of intervening topography and/or vegetation may serve as buffering agents that would allow a reduced setback. Also, to clarify the findings presented in Section 4.C, Biological Resources of the Draft EIR, no migratory butterfly roosts or noteworthy migratory bird stop-over or staging habitats are located within the area proposed for development.

RESPONSE NO. G2-11

Impacts to all habitats as a result of the County's fuel modification requirements are described in Table 4.C-5 (footnote b) and Mitigation Measure 4.C-1 of the Draft EIR. Areas slated for mitigation are within the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA) and do not include habitats impacted by fuel modification zones. As stated in Mitigation Measure 4.C-1, Item 1 on page 4.C-72 of the Draft EIR, 642.1 acres (inclusive of fuel modification) would be impacted and 1,355 acres within the SRCA would be preserved.

RESPONSE NO. G2-12

The comment is noted; however, use of relocation, salvage, and/or transplantation as mitigation is not proposed in the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G2-13

The comment is noted. No impacts to any species covered by the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) will occur; and thus no CESA Permit will be necessary. No impacts to plants listed as rare under the Native Plant Protection Act will occur so no California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)-approved Mitigation Agreement and Mitigation Plan is required.

RESPONSE NO. G2-14

A discussion of impacts to drainage features regulated by the CDFG and therefore subject to CEQA is provided on pages 4.C-66 through 4.C-68 of the Draft EIR and mitigation to impacts on 9.30 acres of California Department of Fish and Game jurisdiction is presented in Mitigation Measure 4.C-2 with additional details provided in the Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) included as Appendix D-2 of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G2-15

Please see Responses to Comments A2-8, A2-11, A2-12, A2-13, and A2-14 regarding the California Natural Diversity Database and the presence of the coastal California gnatcatcher.

RESPONSE NO. G2-16

Please refer to Response A2-15 regarding additional surveys to identify least Bell's vireo habitat on the project site. As stated in that response, no suitable habitat for the least Bell's vireo was identified in the Biological Resources Assessment (Appendix D-1 of the Draft EIR) and no further analysis is required.

RESPONSE NO. G2-17

As described in Mitigation Measure 4.C-1, on page 4.C-72, in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, of the Draft EIR, biological resources within the SRCA would be preserved through either a Declaration of Restrictions, Conservation Easement, or dedication or transfer of the land to

a qualified conservation organization approved by the County and include the establishment and funding of a long-term maintenance and management program. The program requires the use of signage, and where appropriate, other management practices to discourage off-road vehicles, domestic pets, and other activities harmful to natural lands. Mitigation Measure 4.C-1 provides a series of performance standards that must be met to ensure significant impacts are avoided. Please see Responses to Comment A2-18, A2-19, and A2-20 regarding protection of the Cruzan Mesa, which is proposed by the County as a Significant Ecological Area due to the regionally significant resources found on site. As stated in these responses, the portion of the Cruzan Mesa within the SRCA would be protected by the maintenance and management program and Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan as described in Mitigation Measure 4.C-2. Furthermore, vernal pools adjacent to the proposed trail alignment would be protected by fencing.

As previously indicated, filming activities are not part of the proposed project. Because the Non-Development Continuing Use Area is primarily comprised of non-native grasslands, disturbed areas, and disturbed coastal sage scrub, and does not provide in-kind mitigation for impacts to any vegetation community from project development, this area was not included within the SRCA.

RESPONSE NO. G2-18

The comments regarding the project alternatives and EIR identification of and Department support for Reduced Project Alternative B as an environmentally superior alternative are noted for the consideration of the decision-makers. However, it should be clarified that the Draft EIR did not simply indicate that Reduced Project Alternative B meets the project objectives. Rather, it states more specifically in Section 5.A, Alternatives, on page 5-59, that: "…Reduced Project Alternative B would not fulfill certain objectives to the same degree as the proposed project. For example, due to the reduction in the amount of residential development, the Alternative would not increase the supply of housing to serve existing and future needs in the Santa Clarita Valley to the same degree as the proposed project. This Alternative would also not fulfill park and recreation objectives to the same extent as the proposed project, since no trail easement would be provided to support the extension of the County Trail System. Additionally, Reduced Project Alternative B would not fulfill the mobility objective of providing for the major highway improvement involving the Whites Canyon Extension to Sierra Highway, as proposed by the project and conditionally approved and shown on the County's Draft Highway Plan. Without this highway improvement as part of the project, the County's ability to complete such a connection could be compromised, as it would not be substantially funded by the project and its implementation, if it were to occur, could be significantly delayed."

RESPONSE NO. G2-19

Please see Responses to Comments G2-7 through G2-18 and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Letter A2 regarding the issues raised by the commenter.

RESPONSE NO. G2-20

Comment noted.

RESPONSE NO. G2-21

Please see Response to Comment G2-9 regarding the attached Guidelines for Assessing the Effects of Proposed Project on Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants and Natural Communities.

RESPONSE NO. G2-22

Please see Response to Comment G2-9 regarding the attached Sensitivity of Top Priority Rare Natural Communities in Southern California.

Letter G3

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

GAIL FARBER, Director

900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
Telephone: (626) 458-5100
http://dpw.lacounty.gov

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
P.O. BOX 1460
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460

November 10, 2009

IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO FILE: LD-1

TO: Paul McCarthy
Department of Regional Planning

Attention Michele Bush

FROM: for Steve Burger
Land Development Division
Department of Public Works

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (DEIR)
SKYLINE RANCH
PROJECT NO. 04-075
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2004101090

We reviewed the DEIR for the Skyline Ranch project. The project includes residential lots, an approximately 11-acre elementary school site, 10 lots for park areas, 13 debris basins, 4 water tank/booster pumps station, and 25 open space lots. **G3-1**

The following comments are for your consideration:

Services-Traffic

The DEIR shall address the following comments, which were included in our September 18, 2008, letter. Please note the milestone indicated in the September 18, 2008, letter has been revised per comments below. **G3-2**

1. We recommend the project's developer work with the Sulphur Springs Union School District to develop traffic circulation plans and drop-off/pick-up procedures for the proposed school. If possible, we recommend implementing a one-way, counter-clockwise, on-site traffic circulation for any valet service and restricting any site access from Skyline Ranch Road. The traffic circulation plan should include informational packets containing the approved drop-off/pick-up procedures as well as brochures on trip reduction strategies such as carpooling and transit services to minimize traffic generation in the area (the brochures should have specific average vehicle ridership goals for students and staff **G3-3**

members). We also recommend the plan include a mechanism for enforcement and levying of noncompliance penalties. The traffic circulation informational packets and the detailed school site plan shall be reviewed and approved by Public Works prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy. **G3-3 Cont'd**

2. Caltrans should be consulted for any possible California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) impacts to the freeway system in the area. Therefore, we ask that you provide Caltrans with a copy of the report so they have an opportunity to review it prior to public circulation. Any written comments received from Caltrans should be submitted to Public Works and included in the DEIR. **G3-4**

3. The City of Santa Clarita should review this document to determine whether they concur with the study's findings of the potential CEQA impacts within its jurisdiction. Any written comments from the City should be submitted to Public Works and included in the DEIR. **G3-5**

If you have any further questions regarding traffic comments, please contact Courtney Sweeney at (626) 300-4721 or by e-mail at csweeney@dpw.lacounty.gov.

Services-Road/Access

We agree with the mitigation summaries relating to the roadways within the County as shown in the DEIR. In addition, the DEIR should disclose the following: **G3-6**

1. Bike lanes are being proposed along Skyline Ranch Road.

2. Approval of the conceptual striping plans and related road plans and permits will be required by Public Works for work within the County's jurisdiction. **G3-7**

If you have any questions regarding road comments, please contact Sam Richards at (626) 458-4921 or by e-mail at srich@dpw.lacounty.gov.

Services-Water/Sewer

Water

1. Santa Clarita Water District is the water purveyor for this area. **G3-8**

2. The DEIR should address the adequacy of the water supply to ensure the capability of water for the project.

3. Submit Will Serve letter from water purveyor(s) that meets the minimum domestic flow requirements as well as fire flow/fire hydrants requirements to Public Works' Land Development Division for review and approval. **G3-8** Cont'd

Sewer

Sewer area study, PC12109AS, dated April 28, 2009, was approved per Mitigation Agreement No. 20090435108 for sewer line upgrade in the City of Santa Clarita. **G3-9**

If you have any questions regarding water and sewer comments, please contact Tony Khalkhali at (626) 458-4921 or by e-mail at tkhalkhali@dpw.lacounty.gov.

Hazards–Others

1. Should any operation within the subject project include the construction, installation, modification, or removal of underground storage tanks, industrial waste treatment or disposal facilities, and/or storm water treatment facilities, Public Works' Environmental Programs Division must be contacted for required approvals and operating permits. **G3-10**

2. Food service establishments may be required to provide a grease treatment device and will be subject to review and approval by Public Works' Environmental Programs Division. **G3-11**

3. All development and redevelopment projects, which fall into one of the Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan project types, characteristics, or activities, must obtain the Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan approval by the appropriate agency. **G3-12**

If you have any questions regarding the environmental comments, please contact Corey Mayne at (626) 458-3524 or by e-mail at cmayne@dpw.lacounty.gov.

If you have any other questions or require additional information, please contact Toan Duong at (626) 458-4945 or by e-mail at tduong@dpw.lacounty.gov.

MA:ca
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LETTER NO. G3

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Steve Burger
Land Development Division
900 South Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91803

RESPONSE NO. G3-1

The comment is noted. This information is presented in Chapter 2.0, Project Description of the Draft EIR. Responses from the respective divisions are provided in Responses to Comments G3-2 through G3-12 below.

RESPONSE NO. G3-2

Please see Responses G3-3 through G3-5 below. The referenced letter includes comments provided by the Traffic and Lighting Division to the traffic consultant (Austin-Foust Associates, Inc.) on the February 29, 2008 Revised Traffic Impact Analysis. The October 2008 Traffic Impact Analysis was revised based on these comments and is included as Appendix F of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G3-3

Comment noted. As indicated on page 2-13 in Chapter 2, Project Description of the Draft EIR, plans for the school will ultimately be developed by the Sulphur Springs School District and will be subject to Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, which contains standards for school site selection, site planning, and construction of school facilities within the State of California. Once developed, plans for the school would also be subject to environmental review by the District, California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and other State and local agencies, as well as final review and approval by the Division of the State Architect. Furthermore, as stated on page 2-1 of the Traffic Impact Analysis (included as Appendix F of the Draft EIR), a traffic study addressing circulation related to the school site will be prepared and submitted at the time a detailed site plan for the school is developed by the school district. Components of the subsequent school plan and anticipated traffic study would include consideration of the recommendations stated by the commenter.

RESPONSE NO. G3-4

Caltrans was consulted during the CEQA process to determine potential impacts to the freeway system. Specifically, Caltrans provided comments on the project's traffic study to the Department of Public Works in a letter dated July 20, 2004 and included in Appendix A of the Draft EIR, stating that the Department's Traffic Impact Study Guidelines should be referenced and impacts should be identified and mitigated along State Highway 14. The concerns were incorporated as part of the Traffic Impact Analysis (pages 6-13 through 6-18) and Section 4.F, Traffic/Access of the Draft EIR (pages 4.F-32 through 4.F-36 and Mitigation Measure 4.F-3). In addition, a copy of the Draft EIR, including the Traffic Impact Analysis, was sent to Caltrans District 7 via Federal Express on July 27, 2009. No comments were received on the Draft EIR from Caltrans.

RESPONSE NO. G3-5

Mr. Ian Pari, City of Santa Clarita Traffic Department was provided a copy of the Draft EIR, including the Traffic Impact Analysis via courier on July 28, 2009. As noted in the December 3rd and December 10th 2009 staff reports for the Skyline Ranch Report and at the public hearing before the Regional Planning Commission held on December 16, 2009, the applicant, the County Department of Public Works, and City of Santa Clarita are continuing to work together to resolve issues on the design of Skyline Ranch Road. Mitigation for the intersection of Sierra Highway and Soledad Canyon Road has now been resolved between the applicant and City of Santa Clarita Traffic Division. See Response to Comment D2-2 for responses to written comments from the City of Santa Clarita on the Draft EIR regarding pedestrian safety and revisions to the project design. See also Section 2.B, Public Hearing Testimony and Responses, for responses to comments from the City of Santa Clarita presented at the public hearings on September 16th and December 16th 2009.

RESPONSE NO. G3-6

The Draft EIR disclosed that bike lanes are proposed along Skyline Ranch Road in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, page 2-14 and Figures 2-8 and 2-14 and Section 4.P, Parks, page 4.P-11. See also revised street sections presented in Section 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G3-7

Comment noted. As stated on page 2-26 in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, all roadways within the project site would be constructed to urban or rural standards as defined by the Department of Public Works. This would include the submissions of plans and permits to the Department of Public Works for review and approval prior to roadway construction for the project. As stated on page 2-17 of the Draft EIR, the realignment of Skyline Ranch Road was conditionally approved by the Department of Public Works on July 19, 2006.

RESPONSE NO. G3-8

The Draft EIR identified the water purveyor, the adequacy of the water supply, and the adequacy of infrastructure in Section 4.I, Water Resources, of the Draft EIR. As stated on pages 4.I-3 and 4.I-4 of the Draft EIR, the Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA) is the water wholesaler who treats and distributes water to the Santa Clarita Water Division (SCWD). The project site is within the service area of the SCWD. As concluded on page 4.I-42 of the Draft EIR, based on the best available information provided in the Department of Water Resources 2007 State Water Project (SWP) Delivery Reliability Report, the 2005 Urban Water Management Plan, and the Water Supply Assessment prepared by CLWA's SCWD, impacts to water supply are considered less than significant. However, due to the reduction in SWP supply and current drought conditions in the County, Mitigation Measures 4.I-1 through 4.I-5 are proposed to ensure project consistency with all applicable water conservation plans, programs, and ordinances. Regarding domestic flow and fire flow requirements, based on a preliminary evaluation by the SCWD (see footnotes 85 and 86 on page 4.I-43 of the Draft EIR) the proposed infrastructure would provide adequate water pressure to meet these requirements. A Will Serve letter (i.e., written verification) from the SCWD to indicate the availability of sufficient water supply and water flow will be submitted to the Public Works Land Development Division, Department of Regional Planning, and Fire Department for review and approval prior to filing any final map.

RESPONSE NO. G3-9

Comment noted. Sewer service is analyzed in Section 4.J, Wastewater Disposal of the Draft EIR. As concluded on page 4.J-6 of the Draft EIR, although project impacts on sewer lines and wastewater treatment facilities would be less than significant, due to cumulatively significant impact on the City-owned line sewer line in Sierra Highway resulting from future development in the Mint Canyon area, the project would include the construction of a new 24-inch sewer line to supplement the existing 21-inch line. Construction of this sewer line would mitigate cumulative impacts on sewer conveyance systems to a less than significant level.

RESPONSE NO. G3-10

Comment noted. No construction, installation, modification or removal of underground storage tanks, industrial waste treatment or disposal facilities is proposed as part of the project. Storm water treatment facilities and related permit requirements and approvals are discussed in Section 4.B, Hydrology and Water Quality in the Draft EIR. To avoid impacts on water quality during construction and operation Mitigation Measures 4.B-2, 4.B-3, and 4.B-4, require that an Erosion Control Plan, Notice of Intent, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, Stormwater Quality Management Plan, and Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan be prepared and submitted to the Los Angeles Department of Public Works, and Los Angeles Regional Control Board for review and approval

RESPONSE NO. G3-11

Comment noted. Any grease treatment device that may be necessary as a result of the operation of the proposed school will be evaluated at the time a detailed site plan is developed by the Sulphur Springs Union School District

RESPONSE NO. G3-12

Comment noted. Please see Response to Comment G3-10 regarding the review and approval of the Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) in Section 4.B, Hydrology and Water Quality in the Draft EIR. A Draft SUSMP was included in Appendix C-1 of the Draft EIR and approved by the Department of Public Works on May 13, 2009.

Letter G4

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—THE RESOURCES AGENCY ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, *Governor*

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
RAMIREZ CANYON PARK
5750 RAMIREZ CANYON ROAD
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October 5, 2009

Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission
Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Skyline Ranch Project DEIR Comments
Project No. 04-075 - Tract Map 060922 - SCH No. 2004101090

Dear Planning Commission Members:

The Cruzan Mesa area is an important component of the multiple mountain ranges along the northern edge of the upper Santa Clara River that are ecologically tied to the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor zone. The Conservancy's December 6, 2004 Notice of Preparation comments were not acknowledged in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) so they are hereby incorporated by reference. **G4-1**

Without question any development approved on the subject property will result in unavoidable significant adverse biological impacts. One of those significant impacts will be the loss of hundreds of acres of habitat and a portion of a blueline drainage riparian system. The DEIR refers to this canyon as the unnamed drainage in the southern part of the site. **G4-2**

It is incumbent on the County to make reasonable attempts to reduce ecological impacts if feasible alternatives exist. Reduced Project Alternative B was a good start at such a goal because it preserves one hundred percent of the unnamed drainage in the southern part of the site. However, the alternative is not feasible because it loads too much traffic onto Whites Canyon Road and Bakerton Avenue. The DEIR analysis does not flat out say that this traffic configuration is physically not workable. However, it would result in substantial adverse traffic impacts to several neighborhoods. Reduced Project Alternative A has too many strikes against it in regards to significant impacts to be feasible. Both alternatives produce secondary significant impacts and both are designed to be doomed politically. **G4-3**

The DEIR is deficient for not including an adequate range of feasible reduced development alternatives. The Final EIR must include the following alternative project for the FEIR to not be deficient. **G4-4**

DEC - 7 2009

Need for Reduced Project Alternative C

This project should be called the Reduced Project Alternative C. The project would be exactly the same as the proposed project in regards to including the Whites Canyon Extension to Sierra Highway. However the footprint of this alternative project would differ from the proposed project by not filling any of unnamed drainage in the southern part of the site other than to the extent necessary to achieve the desired Whites Canyon Extension. It would thus follow the same eastern boundary of the Reduced Project Alternative B. This alternative project footprint provides significant avoidance of a blueline drainage and it meets all of the project objectives. **G4-5**

The alternative project would also provide between 950 and 1,000 units of the same size in the proposed project. It would avoid the need for one of the offsite grading areas. This alterative cannot be dismissed as infeasible simply because it does not provide enough housing to prevent additional housing from occurring further into undeveloped land on other properties in the future. There is no way to define that number and in any case it could then be construed that the whole site should be developed. **G4-6**

The northeastern bulge in the proposed project that fills in a long section of the unnamed blueline stream canyon was conveniently put in to add extra units. If Reduced Project Alternative B is physically feasible, then the Conservancy proposed Reduced Project Alternative C is also physically feasible. The fill that would have gone into the above described northeastern bulge of units can be used for the Whites Canyon Extension. If Alternative B is not physically feasible then that confirms that the DEIR range of alternatives is inadequate. Alternatives must be physically feasible. **G4-7**

In the FEIR, the above described Reduced Project Alternative C must supplant Reduced Project Alternative B as the environmentally superior alternative. Reduced Project Alternative B is not a feasible alternative (because of traffic circulation) and therefore not a valid alternative. The range of FEIR alternatives must be expanded accordingly. **G4-8**

Fee Simple Open Space Dedication a Condition of Grading Permits or Map Recordation

We urge the Commission to require that all of the undeveloped land located outside of the private lots and public rights-of-ways be dedicated in fee simple to a public park agency. Any place where fuel modification is required, the HOA should retain a permanent easement to allow brush clearance consistent with written Los Angeles County Fire Department requirements. To adequately mitigate the project impacts to natural land, **G4-9**

that complete fee simple dedication should occur as a precondition to the issuance of any grading permits or map recordation. **G4-9 Cont'd**

That open space dedication should include all of the site including the area being used for movie production. The entity managing the open space including the Cruzan Mesa vernal pools needs to control all portions of the property that can affect the pools. In addition it is better to have unified management of the open space by a public agency with the public's interest at the forefront. **G4-10**

We concur with the County staff recommendation that the County Biologist work the future land management agency to come up with a range of acceptable filming activities and footprints. The Conservancy supports responsible filming on public lands and makes all efforts to accommodate the needs of the film industry on its multiple properties. **G4-11**

The Conservancy defers to the County if the Department of Parks and Recreation wants to take the land. If not, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) is the obvious choice. In the case of the nearby Spring Canyon tract open space dedication, the Department of Parks and Recreation was not assertive about making sure a permanent maintenance funding source was built into the project approval. If the Department is not definitely and aggressively willing to make that request for permanent maintenance funding to prevent the open space maintenance burden from falling on the rest of the County tax payers, we urge the Commission to require that a permanent funding source and title to the open space go to the MRCA. **G4-12**

Open Space Management Funding

The minimum 1500-acre open space preserve that will result from a project approval on the subject property is the mitigation center piece for a project that proposes over 20 million cubic yards of grading. For that mitigation center piece to provide a quality public experience and to continue to improve in ecological condition, a permanent funding source is imperative. **G4-13**

Filming may produce a variable stream of funding for the management agency but a consistent funding source not dependent on resource disturbance is the only prudent mechanism to protect the public interest. Filming revenue is better suited to go towards habitat restoration.

That open space maintenance funding must be in the form of a Landscape Maintenance District or a Community Facilities District. No other mechanism provides an adequate guarantee to the public. In contrast HOAs can delay funding. **G4-14**

How much funding is necessary? We throw the question back to the Planning Commission. How important is it for public users of the 1500-plus acres of open space to have well maintained trails, restrooms, trash pick up, and ranger patrols? The Commission gets one shot at it in its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, and we urge the Commission to require a dollar amount that guarantees a safe and fulfilling public experience.

If the MRCA were to patrol the land with its sworn law enforcement rangers at current rates, $35,000 annually would provide ten weekly hours of ranger time devoted to the site for 52 weeks a year. To continue that level of service an inflation adjustor must be included. **G4-15**

If porta-potty restrooms are to be included the monthly rental and cleaning cost would also need to be added with an inflation adjustor.

We also recommend an initial one time start up payment of $20-30,000 for adequate gates, fencing, signage, trail refurbishment, focused noxious weed control, and trash clean up.

Suitability of the MRCA to Manage the Property

The MRCA manages over 60,000 acres of open space including approximately 8,000 acres in the upper Santa Clara River watershed. To use the MRCA for maintenance is a simple turn key operation.

The MRCA rangers are sworn peace officers with wildland fire training and naturalist training. The MRCA has six staff ecologists to address management and restoration issues. In addition the MRCA has a full time habitat restoration crew currently doing long term restoration in the Elsmere, Whitney, Pico and Soledad Canyon tributaries of the upper Santa Clara River. The MRCA manages the Tierra Rejada vernal pool in Moorpark with the Endangered Riverside fairy shrimp. The MRCA staff includes a biologist certified to survey for this species in the years the vernal pool adequately fills. **G4-16**

The MRCA also has staff devoted to filming activities. Filming occurs on many MRCA-owned and managed properties on a year-round basis.

Please address any questions to Paul Edelman of our staff at the above address and by phone at (310) 589-3200 ext. 128.

Sincerely,

RONALD P. SCHAFER
Chairperson

LETTER NO. G4

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Ronald P. Schafer, Chairperson
Ramirez Canyon Park
5750 Ramirez Canyon Road
Malibu, CA 90265

RESPONSE NO. G4-1

Comment noted. While the Draft EIR does not explicitly acknowledge the Conservancy's Notice of Preparation comments, the comments were considered in preparation of the Draft EIR and were included as part of Appendix A of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G4-2

The comprehensive analyses of biological resources provided in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, and the associated technical reports provided in Appendix D of the Draft EIR, does not indentify impacts on biological resources as significant and unavoidable as suggested by the commenter. Rather, the Draft EIR identified potentially significant impacts on sensitive plant species, riparian habitat, nesting birds, and oak trees prior to mitigation and concluded that all of the impacts would be mitigated to less than significant levels after mitigation. The mitigation measures provided in the Draft EIR are extensive. Mitigation Measure 4.C-1 addresses the establishment of a 1,355-acre Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA), sets performance standards for the area and lays out management and funding responsibilities. Mitigation Measure 4.C-2 provides for implementation of a Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) that preserves the 1,355-acre SRCA, requires the preservation of 1.53 acres of southern vernal pool and artificial pool habitats that are subject to RWQCB jurisdiction, and requires the establishment of 7.27 acres of sycamore/cottonwood riparian woodland within Plum Canyon. The measure sets out specific criteria and standards for the implementation of the HMMP. Mitigation Measure 4.C-3 addresses potential impacts to nesting birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Mitigation Measure 4.C-4 requires tree planting with specific performance requirements. Mitigation Measure 4.C-5 requires the use of native plant species adjacent to the open space areas.

RESPONSE NO. G4-3

As further described in Chapter 5, Alternatives, of the Draft EIR, Reduced Project Alternatives A and B were selected for evaluation after consideration of a number of alternatives

that were ultimately not carried forward due to failure to meet project objectives and/or determinations that they would not be feasible. The alternatives were not designed as the commentor suggests, to be doomed politically, rather, the alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIR were selected for further consideration because they were capable of reducing and avoiding significant impacts, supporting to some degree the objectives of the proposed project, and were viewed as appropriate to help foster the decision-making process. The alternatives were also selected after considering comments on the Notice of Preparation, including comments from the Conservancy that suggested an alternative that would avoid impacts on the drainage in the southern portion of the site. This suggestion is reflected under Reduced Project Alternative B.

RESPONSE NO. G4-4

The Draft EIR considered a reasonable range of alternatives. As indicated in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a), an EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project but a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that foster informed decision-making. Furthermore, an EIR is not required to consider alternatives which are infeasible.

RESPONSE NO. G4-5

The comment is made that a new alternative, Reduced Project Alternative C, must be evaluated. The suggested alternative is proposed with the intent to avoid filling of the unnamed drainage in the southern part of the site while still allowing for construction of the Whites Canyon Extension to Sierra Highway. For a number of basic reasons, this alternative is not considered feasible. As stated on page 4.A-12 in Section 4.A, Geotechnical Resources, of the Draft EIR, due to the topography of the site approximately 32 percent of the grading for the project, representing approximately 6.4 million cubic yards, is associated with the extension of Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway. If the extension of Whites Canyon were to be retained with residential development still concentrated in the southern portion of the site while also avoiding impacts on the unnamed drainage, more than 6 million cubic yards of soil would need to be exported from the site. This represents a substantial amount of export material estimated to cost from $60 to $120 million dollars when considering loading, hauling, unloading and possible landfill costs. It is estimated that it would take 100 truck trips a day for a period of 15 years to export this much soil. Associated impacts on air quality alone would be four times the significance threshold for NOx over this extended period, along with more than 3,800 tons of greenhouse gases per year. There would also be impacts on traffic, local roadways, and noise due to the number of truck trips per day.

RESPONSE NO. G4-6

The infeasibility of the suggested alternative does not relate to the ability to develop 950 to 1,000 units in the southern portion of the site, rather, as stated in Response G4-5 above, infeasibility relates to grading export costs and associated impacts on the environment.

RESPONSE NO. G4-7

Regarding the feasibility of suggested Alternative C, see Response to Comment G4-5 above. Regarding Alternative B, it should be noted that because it provides an alternate approach to site access, it does not face the massive grading requirements that render suggested Alternative C infeasible. Reduced Alternative B provides 935 lots and avoids impacts on the unnamed drainage.

RESPONSE NO. G4-8

The comment that Reduced Alternative B is not feasible because of traffic circulation, and that it must be replaced by suggested Alternative C as the environmentally feasible alternative, is incorrect. The approach to circulation for Alternative B is feasible, and as demonstrated above in Response to Comment G4-5, the circulation and development scheme suggested with Alternative C is infeasible and it would result in substantially increased significant impacts on air quality and other issues. It is acknowledged that Reduced Alternative B would not fulfill the mobility objective of providing for the major highway improvement involving the extension of Whites Canyon Road.

RESPONSE NO. G4-9

The comments regarding dedication to a public park agency are noted and will be forwarded for consideration to the decision-makers. Provisions for brush clearance would be consistent with Los Angeles County Fire Department requirements as addressed in Section 4.M, Fire Services and Hazards of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. G4-10

The comment regarding the desire for all open space areas to be included under one dedication and managing entity is noted.

RESPONSE NO. G4-11

The comments regarding filming are noted.

RESPONSE NO. G4-12

The Conservancy's willingness to manage the open space lands is noted. Regarding funding for maintenance of open space lands, as indicated in Mitigation Measures 4.C-1 on page 4.C-71 of the Draft EIR, "The applicant shall provide long-term funding to assure management of the property to protect its biological resources in perpetuity."

RESPONSE NO. G4-13

Regarding funding for management of open space see Response to Comment G4-12 above.

RESPONSE NO. G4-14

Regarding funding for management of open space see Response to Comment G4-12 above.

RESPONSE NO. G4-15

Regarding funding for management of open space see Response to Comment G4-12 above.

RESPONSE NO. G4-16

The Conservancy's ability and potential interest in management of the open space lands associated with the project is acknowledged and will be forwarded for consideration by the decision-makers.

2. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES
B. PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY AND RESPONSES

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING
SKYLINE RANCH
SEPTEMBER 16, 2009

Alejandrina Baldwin: Good Morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission. My name is Alejandrina Baldwin and I am a principal planner with the Land Division Section. Item Number 9 this morning is a subdivision to create 1,260 single family lots, 25 open space lots totaling l,882 acres of open space, 13 debris basin lots, 1 public park, 9 private parks, total of 41.6 million cubic yards of grading, and associated permits including a conditional use permit for hillside management, density control development, on-site project grading and temporary materials processing plant. An oak tree permit has been filed on this project for the removal of one oak tree. There is only one oak tree within the project site. The project also requires a highway realignment permit to access the project site as depicted. Access will come from the west side of the project through an extension of Whites Canyon Road, through the project site, south to Sierra Highway. The new road will be named Skyline Ranch Road. The Draft Environmental Impact Report has determined significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to less than significant. These impacts include visual quality and cumulative traffic, among others.

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The project proposes a total of 1,260 units. Based on slope density analysis the calculation for this project the midpoint density of 870 units. The maximum units permitted within this project is 1,302 units. The project to cluster the development onto the southern portion of the site and the northern portion of the project site will remain within open space lots. Density within the project will be transferred onto the southern portion of the project. The northern portion as mentioned, that will remain an open space lots will have building restrictions. This project is

adjacent to residential development through the western southern part of the project, there are single family residential. To the south and southeast of the project there is multi-family residential and single family residential.

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The project will be providing a 12-acre public park to be constructed by the applicant and then dedicated to the Department of Parks and Recreation for maintenance. A draft of the park exhibit will soon come up on the screen. The park will provide various recreational uses including a basketball court, a baseball court and meeting areas. A 2.4-mile trail is proposed along the northern portion of the project site and the southeastern portion of the project site. Along the trail there will be various lookout points. Pedestrian accessibility is provided in various areas of the project via paseos. In addition, an additional, optional pedestrian bridge is proposed near the elementary school lot to allow pedestrian access between the east and west side of Skyline Ranch Road. The 11-acre elementary school is located in the middle of the project site along Skyline Ranch Road. Staff has received an agreement between the applicant and Sulfur Springs School District regarding acceptance of the elementary school lot.

If the school chooses to, they may construct the optional bridge to connect pedestrian traffic from the east to the west side of Skyline Ranch Road onto the elementary school lot.

Next slide please.

The current Countywide General Plan Master Plan of Highways depicts the location of the major highway coming into the project site from the west through the project, through the proposed open space lots connecting to Vasquez Canyon Road. On the exhibit to my left you can see the

current alignment of Vasquez Canyon Road; it would come from Whites Canyon, which is over here to the left straight through the project. This is the current delineation of this highway within the General Plan Master Plan of Highways. This project proposes to realign the highway to take the road through the project site towards the south of the project connecting to Sierra Highway on the southern portion of the project. The highway realignment will prevent a road through the proposed open space lot, which is also within, which is also proposed to be future significant ecological area within the General Plan update and the One Valley One Vision plan. This area is supposed to be the future SEA as it does hold the last vernal pools within Los Angeles County.

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This hearing has been labeled an insist hearing because this project is not complete. Staff cannot recommend approval of this project at this time as submitted. The tentative and exhibit A maps have not cleared the subdivision committee, there are technical holds including a revision of the schematic public park and cross sections for public works requirements. The applicant has continued to work with County staff to resolve these issues and will soon be ready to submit a revision to the map to be circulated through subdivision committee.

The highway realignment permit is not complete. To complete the permit, staff is requesting an additional conditional use permit to be submitted for the off-site grading associated with the construction of the highway. In addition an interdepartmental committee meeting must be held before approval of your commission.

For the realignment of the highway to be adopted, a General Plan amendment must be submitted and approved as the highway that is being realigned is within the Master Plan of Highways within both the General Plan and OVOV. I'm sorry, that does not matter. I'm sorry. If either

the General Plan update or OVOV, which does show the new realignment is approved and adopted prior to this project moving forward, the Plan amendment will not be required. At this time staff does not know if the applicant wishes to continue with the project with a Plan amendment.

Lastly, within the northern part of the project site, filming activity has historically existed, continues and is proposed to be allowed and remain.

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Other filming activity by various filming companies is conducted in a continuous basis. The filming activity takes place within the area proposed to be designated as the Cruzan Mesa Significant Ecological Area, within approximately 100 to 200 feet of the vernal pools. On the exhibit to my right, on the top right, I have identified the filming activity, which is the graded pad. This area also referred to as the Mystery Mesa Ranch or just Mystery Mesa. About 100 to 200 feet there are vernal pools. The pools are fenced, but the Draft Environmental Impact Report has not discussed any impacts that may happen to the pools due to the filming activity that is continuously happening on this project site. The applicant proposes to create this entire area to an open space lot and allow the filming activity to continue within it. Staff does not support continuous filming activity within a proposed open space lot that is proposed to be maintained as natural open space. In addition, the draft EIR has not discussed the possible impacts. Staff is continuing to also research whether a conditional use permit is required to allow the filming activity to continue on a continuous basis.

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At this time staff recommends that this item be continued to a date certain to allow for the applicant to continue working with County staff to clear all map holds, to complete the highway realignment permit including the submission of a conditional use permit and a Plan amendment, and to resolve the filming activity use. This concludes staff's presentation and now I am available for questions.

Commissioner Bellamy: Any questions to staff?

Commissioner Modugno: Miss Baldwin, it seems as if there is an awful lot of work that still needs to be done on this. How much time are you suggesting that you would be needed to complete it, to bring it back to us as a complete case?

Alejandrina Baldwin: At this point staff is waiting for responses from the applicant to see if they would like to continue with this project and the Plan amendment. After staff's analysis we see that we cannot recommend approval of this project without a Plan amendment. I do not know if the applicant wishes go that route. In addition to that, they also need to file an additional CUP and a new map. I believe they are ready to file a new map. I don't know about the other permits so it would be dependent upon how quickly the applicant could come back with the required corrections. A November date has been, I'm sorry a December date has been briefly discussed, which may be possible.

Commissioner Modugno: Alternatively, if we can't come to some conclusion in terms of some time estimates just taking it off calendar in terms of a continuance might make more sense?

Alejandrina Baldwin: We could do that as well. There is one item that wasn't brought up, which is if there is a General Plan amendment filed to allow this project to continue, the Draft

Environmental Impact Report may have to be updated. We are looking into this. If it has to be updated, if we would have to reopen it for circulation, which would add additional time.

Commissioner Modugno: Okay, now we have a meeting in the community on October 5th or, I think it is on the 5th, to begin to discuss the Castaic plan. Is there any One Valley One Vision discussion that is going to take place on that meeting?

Sorin Alexanian: I'm sorry I couldn't hear the question

Commissioner Modugno: A public meeting is taking place in Santa Clarita Valley the evening of I believe Monday October the 5th.

Sorin Alexanian: That is correct.

Commissioner Modugno: And that's looking at the Castaic Community Standards District. Is there also some discussion that evening on One Valley One Vision or in terms of how that interfaces within the One Valley One Vision or no?

Sorin Alexanian: According to the agenda there are two items on October 5th, one is One Valley One Vision and the other is the update, the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan update. They are both related actually.

Commisioner Modugno: In that One Valley One Vision discussion that might have applicability in terms of the road designed through this project? Or is it focusing more on the West Valley.

Sorin Alexanian: I believe that the October 5th is intended for the One Valley One Vision project. But we can certainly look into it and report it to you a little later today.

Commissioner Modugno: The other thing, Ms. Baldwin, this is a case that you are deeply involved in. In the event of your absence, because it looks as though you are going to be taking a leave soon.

Alejandrina Baldwin. Yes, we have prepared for this.

Commissioner Modugno: Okay, there is someone on staff?

Alejandrina Baldwin. They will take over.

Commissioner Bellamy: Okay, thanks. It sounds to me like this is going to be a completely different project when you bring it back.

Alejandrina Baldwin: Excuse me.

Commissioner Bellamy: I said it sounds to me like this is going to be a completely different project when you bring it back.

Alejandrina Baldwin. Um, we don't expect a lot of changes. Mostly there are permits that have to be filed to correctly process this project. I haven't heard of any changes in design. Staff is not recommending changes in design or density at this time.

Sorin Alexanian: Mr. Chair, I am told that on October 5th that you are meeting out in Castiac. Part of the proposal is part of the OVOV is to consider the realignment of the highway I believe as proposed by the applicant.

Commissioner Modugno: Again, if we are putting that hearing first and it is the indication that we are moving in that direction with the One Valley One Vision, then that would not require this applicant to file for a General Plan amendment, perhaps. This just depends on the timing of what

is to be done first and so I think the dilemma they are going to be faced with is do we coat tail on back of the One Valley One Vision, which will require some re-pacing of this project, which may then get it into a requirement of having to go out and do the environmental documentation again going over some time period at that.

Sorin Alexanian: One of the dilemmas I believe would be the timing, the OVOV plan would have to go before the Board of Supervisors and that we are not certain how long that process will take and I believe our position is that the highway realignment should be adopted prior to approval of this project.

Commissioner Modugno: Unless applicant chooses to go for General Plan amendment.

Sorin Alexanian: Correct.

Commissioner Modugno: I don't, look it is slightly afternoon. I think we are going to have to adjourn at 1:00 today. This gives about an hour or so and I know you have a number of people who wanted to speak. My choice would be to try and get whatever testimony wants to be made but not dig deeply into the project until a subsequent hearing because Commissioner Valadez is not present with is today and to try and just get testimony on record for those people that don't want to have to make the trip again down here but want to get their comments on file.

Sorin Alexanian: From this chair I should state that there are total of sixteen speaker cards, eight of those speaker cards have indicated that they are part of the applicant's team and then there are two speakers in favor for no position and two have concerns.

Commissioner Helsley: Mr. Chair, I would like to request that we be certain to hear the eight that are not part of the applicant's team and particularly those who have concerns. I would like

to hear them first. I would be of hopes that the applicant to take and pass on their fifteen minute presentation because I think we are going to hear that in more detail at a later time.

Commissioner Modugno: Mr. Chair, could we have, Mr. Moore represents the applicant. If he could just step forward. Please put your name on record.

Charles Moore. Good afternoon, I'm Charles Moore, my business address is 2049 Century Park East, Los Angeles, and I am appearing on behalf of the applicant.

Commissioner Modguno: Mr. Moore, the question is, I think you've understood from our dialogue, we've got a fifty minutes that we are going to be here this morning or this afternoon. One of our commissioners is not present. This is a very important case because of its size and scope. It is also important because we are in a drought period and the state legislature didn't take action recently and they sort of adjourned without addressing the state's water problems.

Charles Moore: We noticed.

Commissioner Modugno: They were too busy with other things, obviously, but that to me is a massive, massive issue that we've got to be able to address. We've got a commissioner not present. There are technical issues that staff has pointed out. I want you to have your full day in terms of being able to present this case to us but I think it would be helpful to us if that could either be limited or wait until we have a continuation of this and at least get on record people's testimony, particular those testimony of people who have concerns about the project that you might then be able to incorporate within your presentation. Again it is up to you.

Charles Moore. Thank you very much. I appreciate the circumstances. I would be remiss that if I didn't point out that we disagree with the necessity for a Plan amendment and new CUP, but

that can all be discussed at a later time. May I suggest there are at least two officials here to speak, one from Sulfur Springs School District and another representative of an association. If we could have the officials speak and then yield to the interested persons and then we can discuss the continuance, I think that works for everyone. Is that what you suggest?

Commissioner Helsley: I would like to go in that direction with one other caveat and that is I don't think that the bridge to the school should be an alternative. I think it is a necessity. **Commissioner Bellamy:** The two officials.

Sorin Alexanian: Did you want to hear from the officials? Alan Ferdman, Vicky Myers. We have David Koontz.

Commissioner Bellamy: After them, the two persons that have concerns. Okay.

Sorin Alexanian: And Ian Perry, also with the City of Santa Clarita and the two individuals that have indicated concerns, Lynn Plambeck and Paul Edelman, are they here? They're here.

Alan Ferdman. Good Morning, Commissioners. My name is Alan Ferdman. I am chair of the Canyon Country Advisory Committee and a forty-four year resident of Canyon Country. The Canyon Country Advisory Committee is comprised of concerned citizens who wish to make Canyon Country a better place to work, live and play. Our goal is work collaboratively with residents, city and County governments, businesses, schools and other community stakeholders to make Canyon Country better then ever. Whenever new development is proposed there are always those individuals who object to growth of any kind and those who sit back and just throw around all those tired terms. How can any developer expect to overcome all that sentiment. In this case, the representatives of Pardee Homes took a practical and realistic approach. To assure

H1-1

the community's questions and concerns were answered and mitigated, they approached the Canyon Country Advisory Committee and provided information about how they felt this development would blend with our community. Pardee Homes has presented its Skyline Ranch project to our group several times and they openly shared updates accomplished as a result of previous meetings and answered new questions. Additionally, they took the time to provide me with a tour of the proposed site and allowing me to view it first-hand. Our group was pleased to see that there would not be any interconnecting residential streets from the Skyline Ranch development to the adjacent neighborhoods, thereby guaranteeing that cut-through traffic would be an issue. We were also pleased that the main roadway providing access to Skyline Ranch would also provide an interconnection between Plum/Whites Canyon and Sierra Highway. We like the Skyline Ranch design with the trails, bike paths, a new park, a new elementary school and the permanently designated open space provided north of the project. Lastly we were impressed with the idea that the east side access would provide the improvement to Sierra Highway, an area sorely needed of attention. We therefore wish show our support for the Skyline Ranch Project, we want to make a special comment about how Pardee Homes made every effort to alleviate concerns our community raised ending with a project that blends with and enhances our community. Thank you very much. **H1-1** Cont'd

Commissioner Bellamy: Thank you. Any questions? Yes maam?

Vicky Myers: My name is Vicky Myers. I'm the assistant superintendent of business for the Sulfur Springs Union School District in Santa Clarita and it is a pleasure to be here to speak on behalf of Pardee Homes. Our district has completed four mitigation agreements with Pardee, which have already resulted in the completion of two elementary schools, the first being Fair Oaks Ranch and the second Golden Oak. I've worked on two of the mitigation agreements and **H1-2**

Pardee works very, very well with our district, taking into account the type of sites that we need, the location, accessibility and the educational needs of our students. When I came on aboard, the Golden Oak site had just been graded and although there were no houses under construction in the tract, Pardee recognized our concern for housing more students and space the needed and went ahead with the construction and it has been completed and opened for a full year and we still do not have any houses in the area, but we have built that school. They worked closely and cooperatively with our district from the beginning of the project to the end and the result was a state-of-the-art facility complete with fully outfitted science lab, lap-top computers at every station, document cameras, smart board televisions, dishwasher, refrigerator, lab tables and stools. It has been a sense of pride for all of the schools in our valley. They've met there and now all the other schools are modeling theirs after what Pardee has built for us. Each of the schools have interactive smart boards and document cameras in every classroom for use in instruction through Kindergarten through 6th Grade. We have a fully operational computer lab 32 students utilize every day. And every school has beautiful landscaping including the running track, they are utilized by the neighborhood community, children on the weekends and after school, we have soccer games there and Little League practices and our school grounds are opened, like I said they are used as parks. We leave them open for the community. Skyline Ranch and Sulfur Springs and Pardee have an agreement in place to designate ten net usable acres for our next elementary school site and for the construction that will house 500 students with the utilities in place to expand to 750 and Pardee has labs, buildings, furnishings and equipment under this Agreement. They have worked closely with our District in the past and our students and staff and the entire Canyon Country community have benefitted greatly from our continued partnership. Thank you.

H1-2

H1-3

Commissioner Bellamy: Thank you very much. Any questions? Thank you. Question?

Commissioner Helsley: I would like to ask – did you find that in your experience with your school district that this is typical of most developers in the area?

Vicky Meyer: No.

Commissioner Helsley: Thank you.

Vicky Meyer: They are exceptional.

Commissioner Bellamy: Thank you very much. Yes sir?

Ian Perry:. Good morning and thank you, Commissioners, for this opportunity. My name is Ian Perry, I am the Senior Traffic Engineer with the City of Santa Clarita. I am here this morning to speak to you regarding the off-site mitigation at the intersection of Sierra Highway and Soledad Canyon Road. Per the EIR, the applicant would be required to add a second southbound left-turn lane, which they have been able to demonstrate that can be accommodated within the existing right of way. However, what I wanted to point out is Sierra Highway on our General Plan and OVOV circulation plan is six-lane major arterial. North of Soledad it is currently four lanes. The City wanted to make sure that the addition of the second southbound left-turn lane doesn't preclude the City's ability to add that third through-lane in each direction north of Soledad. We've been working with the applicant and their engineer over the past year, reviewing various drawings and improvement plans and as of yesterday they have been unable to demonstrate that the left-turn lane doesn't use up so much right of way that the additional through-lanes can be added. I understand that they have had trouble finding right of way documents to establish where the right of way actually is located. However, I would like to add that as of this morning I

H1-4

did receive from their engineer a revised drawing. Now just initially it appears to accommodate what we've be asking. Obviously the City has not had time to review this drawing, by myself and our other engineers. We will continue to work with the applicant and their engineer to insure that those third lanes can be accommodated. H1-4 Cont'd

Commissioner Bellamy: Thank you. Any questions? Yes sir?

David Koontz: Members of the Planning Commission. My name is David Koontz. I am an Associate Planner with the City of Santa Clarita. I just wanted to start off by giving some thanks for the really extraordinary experience that I have had interacting with your Planning and Public Works staff over the past year on this project. We've worked closely with Susie and Alejandrina and Steve Burger and they're most professional and most cooperative and it has been truly a joy to feel that we worked as a team for the common good of the Santa Clarity Valley. I also wanted to acknowledge Pardee. They've responded to numerous concerns that we've expressed to them about various portions of this project. They have met with us, they have made certain changes to the project to try address our concerns and we appreciate that as well. With all of that said, I do want to indicate that during this continuance time there are still a number of technical issues that we believe can be resolved and that we want to resolve and that we think will benefit the project. H1-5

Just to go on record to outline what a couple of them are, with regard to Skyline Ranch Road, which is the major access secondary arterial that will run through the project. Currently, the street section proposed is for a class two bikeway. We have real concerns of the class two bikeway. We would like to see a class one bikeway and we believe that a class one bikeway can be easily accommodated within the right of way they are currently showing. There has been some discussion between the City and County Public Works on this. There are trade-offs in any street section between parkway, sidewalks, bikeway and we believe that there may be some H1-6

trade-offs that will need to be made here, perhaps a non-standard street section will need to be considered. But at the end of the day we think that if we keep working together that we will resolve this and achieve what will be a better bikeway for the residents and a workable street section that will fit with the applicant's current plan. Additional technical issues that we hope to address during this continuance period is currently would be the improvements for Skyline Ranch Road west of the project between the subdivision boundary and Plum Canyon. The current conditions as I read them and their just draft conditions call for only 24 feet of improvement; however, the Shappell project has already dedicated a full 80 foot right of way for their previous Ferrell Road alignment, which this Skyline Ranch Road will connect to. Skyline Ranch Road will be required to dedicate 80 feet as well. With those dedications in place we can't see a strong justification for not going ahead with the 80 foot improvement. It will be a B&T roadway, so the road will be funded anyway. And we just think that the public interest would be served in that regard. And I already spoke to you about off-site mitigation. There is an awful lot of coordination that goes on, on a project like this where the City abuts the project on two sides, where even the sewer from this project runs through the City, where the storm drains connect to the City, where the intersection and entryway on the south are in the City. There is an incredible amount of coordination that has to occur for things to go well and fortunately I am here to tell you that coordination is happening and it is happening very effectively.

H1-6 Cont'd

H1-7

H1-8

Commissioner Bellamy: Thank you. Any questions? Thank you very much. Yes, maam.

Lynn Plambeck. Hi, my name is Lynn Plambeck. I'm here representing Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment. We haven't submitted our comments yet, but we intend to do so, and request that since you're going to continue this hearing apparently that you leave the public comment period open, or re-open it, it closed on Monday technically. We

H1-9

do appreciate having an opportunity to review responses to comments, which wouldn't be available to us if we stood by the 14th date. We also believe this project was improperly noticed. Your own staff report states that it requires a General Plan amendment, but it was not noticed as such. And I think it's inappropriate for all of us to be having to call the department to find out that indeed it needs a General Plan amendment and that it would automatically go to the Supervisors or else it has to go through OVOV. That should have been in the notice. Now it needs a General Plan amendment to the Highway Plan, so that should have been in the notice. You're supposed to notify which entitlements need approval here and we didn't receive that. We are also concerned that there is no development monitoring system printout in the appendices of the EIR. Although it says that it is attached to the notice of preparation, it is in fact not in the DEIR. The development monitoring system is a requirement of the County of Los Angeles General Plan. It is supposed to review infrastructure needs based on what's already been approved, but not built, including projects that are ahead of this one so you get a good overview of the cumulative needs. It is particularly important in this case because there is no sewer to this project. We have huge sewage problems in Santa Clarita. We have a big water quality problem with chloride, we have traffic issues, we have water supply issues. There's several, there are a lot of projects that have already been approved that aren't yet built so we need to have a closer look. And the DMS printout on this project was 2004. It's inappropriate to get a project back five years later and not update the development monitoring system. That amendment was put into effect as a result of a public interest lawsuit and it seems that the planning department would like to forget it exists. That's because no one remembers it's there anymore. But we remember it's there. I would like to talk to you about air quality. As you know we have some of the worst air quality in the nation in Santa Clarita. We are in a non-attainment zone for particulate matter

H1-9 Cont'd

H1-10

H1-11

H1-12

H1-13

and for ozone. And yet we continue to approve these massive project out in distant areas, not close to any public transportation that will necessitate a car. These people are not going to ride their bikes to work even if they have a bike lane. This is contrary to the Governor's initiative on trying to do land use concentrating, SB 375. It is contrary to SCAG's effort to start approving how the more concentrated areas close to transportation nodes. And I just feel that we cannot do it without you, we can't do it when these projects, the old dinosaurs continue to come to you and they just continue to get approved. So as you look at this further I hope you will address these issues. H1-13

Commissioner Bellamy: Thank you. Any questions? Thank you. Lorraine Woodman and Jay Ziff. Mr. Edelman is first, yes.

Paul Edelman: Hello, Commissioners, I'm Paul Edelman representing both the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. At this stage neither Agency can support this project given the fact that the Alternative B, the reduced footprint alternative, is so superior and still provides a tremendous amount of units and more or less meets the project objectives. Generally, and this we expressed in 2004 notice of preparation letter, generally a project that fills a whole blue-line stream, i.e. Mint Canyon, and have that avoidable is something our agencies cannot support. H1-14 The MRCA manages about 60,000 acres of land from the triangle of the Oxnard Coast to Palmdale to Whittier to Ballona Creek and we urge that one way or another, that if County Parks and Recs defers to taking this open space that the property go to the MRCA, the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority. There has to be some funding for maintaining the open space and I know a couple of times I have been up here and deferred the Board of Supervisors to that Rec and Parks that they were going to get in on the landscape maintenance district to fund the open space maintenance. They didn't do it so that the H1-15

track record of Rec and Parks seeking that opportunity is not so hot. So one way or another, please don't approve the project without really good permanent funding for the open space. The mitigation monitoring plan in the DEIR does include provision for permanent funding source, but there is zero specifics in there and we really urge Pardee to work with the staff to come up with something that is solid and will provide enough money. Because really the open space is the centerpiece of the mitigation for this project. It's a great piece of open space and 1,500 acres of land is a lot of land to manage and particularly when you are dealing with a vernal pool that has not had any TLC and quite the opposite of TLC for decades and is really the centerpiece of the centerpiece. The MRCA currently manages another vernal pool with the same endangered species in Ventura County and Tiera Rejada Valley. So we're really, whatever happens has to be a commensurate amount of money to a project that is going to push 20 million cubic yards and put them somewhere else for a total of 40 million cubic yards and millions and millions and millions of dollars of off-site improvements. Somehow we urge that the Commission make, set aside a certain amount of money. You ask well how much money and really the amount of money is what does the public deserve in terms of the visitor use and the land stewardship. It is up to the County and we think that, in our notice of preparation comments we said a minimum of $35,000 per year with inflation adjusted, what that gets you at current rates is about ten hours a week of ranger services and maintenance services and whether or not you think that is enough, whether there should be a port-a-potty there that service that people hiking at that facility that is something we can talk about in the future. And we will submit some written comments. As our notice of preparation letter said include a certain number of thousand dollars for immediate on-site improvements: signage, trails, kiosks, things of that nature. And I'll close with saying that the whole idea of this bouncing along longer with the filming in the vernal pool. And if the map

H1-15

H1-16

H1-17

is approved by not recorded forever and in a lifetime a lot of things happen, grading occurs and maps get recorded many, many, many years after you've taken action or the Board of Supervisors takes an action, that the vernal pools not be allowed to degrade any longer and that filming issue be addressed to a point where there is no degradation occuring. Lastly, and our other concerns in our comment letter in 2004 we said there really should be a large chunk of money to restore the vernal pools too because so much density is being transferred from that area and it is really the right thing to do being a key resource in the County. Other than that thank you for your time.

H1-17 Cont'd

H1-18

Commissioner Modugno: Let me ask you a question. There is a disturbed area for the filming at the present time. Southern California derives a great deal of revenue from filming. If the area is already disturbed and it is near a vernal pool would you have any interest of exploring some possibilities of a continuation of filming and that becomes a funding source to maintaining the open space areas, perhaps improving and doing some things. That whatever agency takes over ownership then also has the right to derive a revenue stream from the area that has already been disturbed. I see that there might be some compromise.

Paul Edelman: The MRCA has an extensive, we have extensive filming on our property and two people devoted, half their job to doing that, and we balance it out. We look at it as a case by case basis. However, in no location do we have a permanent filming ranch on open space dedication area in an SEA. It's more a film crew comes in, does the work, hires a staff biologist proves it and we move on – we don't object that. I think that the main thing being the public made a good deal and not have the filming be the only funding source for the open space when that funding from the filming could actually help maintain other pieces of open space that don't have enough funding that Pardee step up to the plate and provide the bulk of the open space

funding. So we are absolutely not opposed to filming, but if filming, the current filming has impacts on resident or migrant wildlife in certain seasons or the runoff goes into the pool and those are concerns. H1-19

Commissioner Modugno: I was almost reading from staff's earlier comments that they're heading towards eliminating the filming and requiring the applicant to do some restoration of the area – so suddenly that puts the area back in a more natural state, but eliminates potential revenue source. The trade-off here in terms perhaps the area is already disturbed, looking at that again at this point I've not seen it, I don't know what the circumstances or specifics are but there may be a valid position here that could improve the environment.

Paul Edelmen: It is really important to realize that just because something is disturbed, but in ten years left to its own devices it wouldn't qualified as disturbed anymore so it is really an oxymoron, so it is not appropriate to say that something is disturbed that it's permanently disturbed so that's important.

Commissioner Modugno: Okay thank you.

Sorin Alexanian: Thank you very much. That brings us to Mr. Moore. Charles Moore and his team.

Charles Moore: Charles Moore again. Just when you think you've seen every kind of public hearing we something new. We began by hearing that we needed a Plan amendment and the matter had to be put over and we needed a new conditional use permit now we have heard that we have one oak tree and the City is support of the project and staff has no design changes. I don't know whether the Commission, as long as the staff leaves recommendation on the power

point I need to comment. The first bullet point, staff is recommending a continuance because we need to clear subdivision committee holds. Each and every hold is a result of detail changes that have been made recently to accommodate the City. They simply have not had a chance to go to subdivision committee. The subdivision committee will see the changes, they're all changes supported by the City with whom obviously Pardee is negotiating and working closely. File a new conditional use permit. I guess the conditional use permit requested is for off-site grading. There is a conditional use permit now on file for grading on-site and off-site. I have never see an analysis of why we need to break that into two conditional use permits. File a general plan amendment. There is no requirement that every road be described on the general plan. Skyline Ranch may proceed without being depicting on the general plan. Now I would say that Skyline Ranch is depicted in One Valley One Vision. It is depicted in the pending Highway Plan update by the County. So I'm not that concerned about a Plan amendment. As for holding an IEC Meeting, this very meeting may constitute a meeting of the IEC. There is no need to postpone the hearing for that. Resolve filming activity. I heard the staff indicate that there is continuous filming. I've been to the site several times and I've never seen filming. It is a site of intense filming activity I agree but it is not continuous. And I would also say that it is within the conservation area that is to be dedicated to a public agency. Maybe the public agency ought to have something to say about conservation, filming, the funding. Edelman spoke about funding from the filming and certainly the land is proposed to dedicated. I will say that four years ago we had extensive discussions with the enforcement section of planning and resolved the issue of filming. So I don't know what it is reoccurring today. Having said all of that we support a continuance. We look forward to bringing this case to you. I don't' know if it is worth going forward with the beginning of our case. Mr. Bizzelle, Vice President with Pardee, is here and

ready to move forward with perhaps. I must also say we heard all testifiers in opposition. Again, we are supportive of a continuance and we want to continue clearing the technical holds, working further with the City, addressing Mr. Helsley's concern about the turn around and we are getting there. We are supportive of the continuance, we can go forward now only to break in 15 minutes. It is the Commission's choice.

Commissioner Modugno: I think, thank you Mr. Moore, I think the very few comments in opposition and I think we are quite focused and certainly the water issue is one of major concern to all of us. Again I think that I prefaced earlier the legislature sort of ignored the issue this session, which was a disappointment. We know how precious water is to us and yet we have repeatedly every time we turn on the television seen massive amounts being lost through pipe failures in the City of Los Angeles or the amount of the Fire Department has had to use in fighting with these huge fires that are taking place. That is water that is just lost. It is not going to come back to us. So that's an issue that is going to be a major point on this. Then we've got the One Valley One Vision that is going to be proceeding alongside. I think the technicalities that Ms. Plambeck brought up in terms of notification. You weren't suggesting a Plan amendment and therefore it wasn't advertised that way and the staff raised the issue, but I think for us to get down a clean case and have a staff recommendation with it puts us in a much better position to hear a case and see if the staff is prepared to move forward with it, have draft conditions, incorporating those, and having a full commission, I think makes much more sense and I think this is sort of to treat as a preview. **H1-20**

Charles Moore. And we support that point . . . request to continue.

Commissioner Helsley: Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner Bellamy: Yes.

Commissioner Helsley: I greatly appreciate your deferral. I think it makes our discussion via public support via public concern of even greater of importance. I think it was important that we had the opportunity to hear the officials and the concerns that were voice today. I think that the one that is still sticking out there beyond where you commented is and what I've read is the aspect of public transportation. I think that is a major concern and I voiced that to this Commission a number of times that as we looked twenty years ago down the road we may be on bicycles and walking. Electric cars are probably going to be our major form of transportation as we come to peak oil and we start down the slope on the other side. So it is a major concern but I think to protect the community we need to have a community that is going to be something that is a walkable community. I think you have the potential of doing that and we certainly have some very strong supporters to show that you've done diligent work within the community. The quote I think of the day is that you're going to be cutting down one oak tree, one hundred percent of your oak trees are going to be lost. (laughter) **H1-21**

Commissioner Modugno: Do we have the dates certain in mind for this?

Sorin Alexanian: Yes, a three month continuance would take us I believe to December 16th, which is the last meeting of the year for the Commission.

Commissioner Modugno: I see a head nod on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Moore, is that acceptable?

Moore. Yes, it is.

Commissioner Modugno: I will make a motion then that we continue this hearing to a date certain of December 16, 2009.

Commissioner Helsley: Second.

Commissioner Bellamy: It's been moved and seconded. Any further discussion? All in favor.

Commission: Aye.

Commissioner Modugno I want to thank all of you for your patience and holding back your desire to put on the record what I'm sure you have just budding to speak, but we'll hear that at our next hearing.

H. PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (SEPTEMBER 16, 2009)

RESPONSE NO. H1-1

Comment noted.

RESPONSE NO. H1-2

Comment noted.

RESPONSE NO. H1-3

A discussion of the proposed Mitigation Agreement with the Sulphur Springs Union School District is provided in Section 4.N, Education of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. H1-4

Please see Response to Comment G3-5. As noted in this response, mitigation for the intersection of Sierra Highway and Soledad Canyon Road has now been resolved between the City of Santa Clarita and the County Department of Public Works.

RESPONSE NO. H1-5

Comment noted. Please see Responses to Comments H1-6 through H1-8 regarding additional technical issues.

RESPONSE NO. H1-6

The applicant, County Department of Public Works and City of Santa Clarita are continuing to work together to resolve issues on the design of Skyline Ranch Road, including the designation of bikeways. However, standard conditions imposed by the County only require the provision of Class II bikeway. As shown on the October 2009 Tract Map, a Class II Bikeway is proposed along Skyline Ranch Road.

RESPONSE NO. H1-7

The applicant, County of Los Angeles and City of Santa Clarita continue to coordinate on the preferred design of Skyline Ranch Road. However, as shown on the October 2009 Tract Map and as stated in the December 3, 2009 staff report, the proposed County right-of-way for Skyline Ranch Road between the westerly project boundary and the Bension Extension is approximately 82 feet and from the Bension Extension to Plum Canyon/Whites Canyon Road is 80 feet. The conditions referenced by the commenter are "Draft" conditions and will be revised by County staff to reflect the street improvements shown on the current tract map and ultimately approved by the County Department of Public Works and Regional Planning. These revised cross sections of Skyline Ranch Road are presented in Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. H1-8

The Draft EIR addressed project impacts on City and County sewer lines, storm drains, and intersections in Sections 4.J, Wastewater Disposal, 4.B, Hydrology and Water Quality, and 4.E, Traffic/Access.

RESPONSE NO. H1-9

Comments received on the Draft EIR during the formal comment period (i.e., September 14, 2009) and after the formal review period closed, that is up to February 12, 2010 have been responded to in this document. The Final EIR is available for review on the County's website at: http://www.planning.lacounty.gov/case/all

RESPONSE NO. H1-10

This comment was made during the Regional Planning Commission hearing held on September 16, 2009, when the project did not include a request for a General Plan Amendment to amend the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways to realign Whites Canyon Road to the proposed Skyline Ranch Road alignment as a secondary highway from Plum Canyon to Sierra Highway. At the time the Draft EIR was prepared, it was anticipated that the highway realignment would be approved as part of the County's pending updated General Plan and updated Area Plan for the Santa Clarita Valley (or the One Valley One Vision [OVOV] plan). At the time the Draft EIR was prepared, approval of the updated County General Plan was anticipated to be December 2009 and therefore prior to the final public hearing before the Regional Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for the Skyline Ranch Draft EIR. Because the approval process for the updated

County General Plan and OVOV has been delayed, County staff requested that the Skyline Ranch project initiate the General Plan Amendment request for the realignment of Skyline Ranch Road. Because a new entitlement was requested, for the December 16, 2009 continued public hearing at the Regional Planning Commission, the County provided new and revised notices of public hearing in compliance with County Code Sections 21.16.070 and 22.60.174, posted the project site in compliance with County Code Sections 21.16.075 and 22.60.175, and posted the revised notice on the County's website at: http://www.planning.lacounty.gov/case/all and published in The Signal on November 13, 2009 and La Opinion on November 14, 2009. The revised notice included the request for a General Plan Amendment to amend the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways to realign Whites Canyon Road to the proposed Skyline Ranch Road alignment as a secondary highway from Plum Canyon Road to Sierra Highway.

However, the proposed realignment of Skyline Ranch Road, as envisioned in the updated General Plan and OVOV, was described and analyzed throughout the Draft EIR. As stated on page 2-17 in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, of the Draft EIR, this realignment is shown on the County's Draft Highway Plan, a component of the Draft General Plan, and was conditionally approved as Skyline Ranch Road by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works on July 19, 2006. See also Chapters 2.0, Project Description, pages 2-14 through 2-26; 4.A Geotechnical Resources, page 4.A-12 and Figure 4.A-4; and 4.C, Biological Resources, pages 4.C-64 and 4.C-65. The addition of this approval is noted in Chapter 3.0, Corrections and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. H1-11

The Development Monitoring System (DMS) print out is included in Appendix A of the Draft EIR following page 25 of the Initial Study prepared for the project. As stated on page 3 of the Initial Study, "as required by the Los Angeles County General Plan, DMS shall be employed in the Initial Study phase of the environmental review procedures . . ." A list of 48 related projects comprised of approved and pending projects in the County of Los Angeles and the City of Santa Clarita is provided in Chapter 3.0, Cumulative Impact Analysis Methodology, Table 3-1, in the Draft EIR. As also described on page 4.F-16 in Section 4.F, Traffic/Access of the Draft EIR, this list was last reviewed and updated on December 2007. This list of related projects used in the Draft EIR provides a more up to date and appropriate basis for the EIR evaluations than the DMS print out. It also supports a conservative analysis since not all the related projects will be approved and/or fully built out and some of the related projects will be constructed and occupied after the proposed project has been built and occupied. Regarding the provision of sewer service to the project site and related projects, this was analyzed in Section 4.J, Wastewater Disposal with supporting data provided in Appendix J, of the Draft EIR. As concluded in the analysis, project impacts to waste water disposal would be less than significant. Cumulative impacts on the City's sewer line capacity would be less than significant with the construction of a new 24-inch sewer line (proposed as part of

the project), and payment of fair share fees and/or construction of a relief sewer line as required by the City.

RESPONSE NO. H1-12

The Draft EIR addressed water quality in Section 4.B, Hydrology and Water Quality, traffic issues in Section 4.F, Traffic/Access, and water supply in Section 4.I, Water Resources with supporting data provided in Appendices C-3, F, and I, respectively. Project and cumulative impacts on water quality and traffic were less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures, with the exception of cumulative impacts to Highway 14 between Sand Canyon Road to the south of the Sierra Highway interchange which would be cumulatively significant. Project and cumulative impacts on water supply are less than significant; however, mitigation measures are proposed to ensure consistency with local and regional water conservation objectives.

See Response to Comment H1-11regarding the DMS and cumulative development analyzed in the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. H1-13

The Draft EIR discussed air quality is Section 4.H, Air Quality with supporting data provided in Appendix H of the Draft EIR. As described in Response to Comment E1-12, the South Coast Air Basin, of which the Santa Clarita Valley is a part, is in a non-attainment zone for particulate matter. However, there is a trend towards the reduction of particulate matter concentrations over time. As shown on Table 4.H-2, Section 4.H, Air Quality of the Draft EIR, the Basin is also in non-attainment for ozone. As depicted on Table 4.H-3 of the Draft EIR, the number of days that national and California air quality standards are exceeded for ozone concentration has been reduced over time. As stated on page 4.H-40 of the Draft EIR, the project's operational emissions and the project's contribution to region-wide emissions would result in a significant and unavoidable air quality impact. Regarding the commenter's assertion that the proposed project is contrary to SB 375 and SCAG's efforts to concentrate development near transportation nodes, please refer to responses to SCAG's comments, in particular Responses to Comments D1-5, D1-6 and D1-7. As stated in these responses, the project includes a system of landscaped pathways, paseos, a pedestrian bridge, and bike lanes that encourage and support walking and bicycling to the school and parks located on the project site, and to offsite areas as well (as described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description of the Draft EIR). The proposed project would also facilitate the extension of Santa Clarita Transit bus service to the project site. In addition, the proposed project would provide housing that would occur adjacent to existing housing and a proposed mixed-use development to the west. Consistent with the intent of SB 375, the project incorporates relevant objectives, features,

and mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as described in Section 4.S, Global Climate Change, pages 4.S-23 through 4.S-29.

RESPONSE NO. H1-14

As described in Section 5.E, Reduced Project B: 935-Residential Lot Alternative, pages 5-55 and 5-56, although this alternative would have less impact on biological resources it would not meet key objectives of the proposed project, including the extension of the Mint Canyon trail and the extension of Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway, as shown on the County's Draft Highway Plan. Alternative B was developed to avoid impacts on the drainage channel and was based, in part, on comments on the Notice of Preparation provided by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Since the September 16, 2009 public hearing additional comments were submitted by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (see Letter G4) that proposed a new Alternative C. Please refer to Responses to Comments G4-5 through G4-8, for a discussion of this alternative.

RESPONSE NO. H1-15

The Conservancy's willingness to manage the open space lands is noted. Regarding funding for maintenance of open space lands, as indicated in Mitigation Measures 4.C-1 on page 4.C-71 of the Draft EIR, "The applicant shall provide long-term funding to assure management of the property to protect its biological resources in perpetuity."

RESPONSE NO. H1-16

Regarding funding for management of open space see Response to Comment H1-15 above.

RESPONSE NO. H1-17

The comment regarding filming activities in proximity to the vernal pools is noted. Please see Response to Comment A2-18 regarding filming within the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area and preservation of the vernal pools. Filming activities within the Non-Development Continuing Use area may continue, as described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, of the Draft EIR.

RESPONSE NO. H1-18

Regarding funding for management of open space see Response to Comment H1-15 above.

RESPONSE NO. H1-19

Please see Response to Comments H-17 and A2-18 regarding filming activities.

RESPONSE NO. H1-20

The Draft EIR addressed water supply in Section 4.I, Water Resources with supporting data and analysis presented in Appendix I of the Draft EIR. As stated on page 4.I-40, in Section 4.I, Water Resources, of the Draft EIR, based on the analysis provided in the 2005 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) sufficient water supplies would be available to meet projected demand from future development, including the proposed project. As discussed on pages 4.I-41 and 4.I-42 of the Draft EIR, although there is uncertainty regarding the availability of State Water Project (SWP) water, based on the Department of Water Resource's 2007 SWP Delivery Reliability Report, sufficient water supplies would be available to serve the proposed project through 2030. Nevertheless, due to the reduction in SWP supply and Los Angeles County water conservation requirements, Mitigation Measures 4.I-1 through 4.I-5 are proposed to further reduce less-than-significant impacts to water supply. These measures include the use of water efficient fixtures, low flush toilets, water efficient irrigation, and drought-tolerant landscaping.

RESPONSE NO. H1-21

Comment acknowledged. The proposed project would facilitate the extension of Santa Clarita Transit bus service to the project site. As described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description of the Draft EIR, the proposed project would include features of a walkable community such as landscaped pathways, paseos, hiking trails, and a pedestrian bridge that encourage walking and to the school and parks located on the project site, and to offsite areas as well.

I1 Public Hearing Transcript

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING
SKYLINE RANCH
DECEMBER 16, 2009

Chairman Bellamy: Thank you very much. Okay, we'll move on to public hearings. Item number six.

Susan Tae: Good morning Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission. My name is Susan Tae and I'm with the land division section of the Department of Regional Planning. As you may recall, Skyline Ranch is a subdivision to create 1,260 single family residential lots, thirteen debris basin lots, twenty five open space lots totaling 1,770 acres of open space. The twelve acre public park lot, nine private parks, and an elementary school within unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley. Associated permits include a conditional of use permit for Hillside Management, density control development, onsite grading and an onsite temporary materials processing facility for use during grading and construction of the project. An Oak Tree Permit was filed for the removal of one tree. There's only one oak tree within the project boundaries. The project also requires a highway realignment for the project's main access. Access will be provided by Skyline Ranch Road, an extension of White's Canyon Road/Plum Canyon Road through the project site in order to extend down south to Sierra Highway. This project was first before you on September 16, 2009. During a public hearing, six persons testified regarding the project, including the City of Santa Clarita, SCOPE, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the Sulfur Springs School District. After hearing from interested persons as well as the applicant, your Commission continued the public hearing to December 16th. The draft Environmental Impact Report has determined significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to less than significance, including impacts to visual quality, cumulative traffic, noise, and air quality, among others. Additional entitlements have also been filed since the September public hearing, including a general plan amendment and an additional CUP for off-site work. As mentioned, the project proposes a total of 1,260 single family lots. Based on the project's slope density analysis, the mid-point density is 870 and the maximum permitted is 1,302 units.

[Eric, if we could have the next slide please . . .]

The project proposes to cluster the development within the southern portion of the project site, with the remaining portion of the project site as open space. Density within the project was transferred onto the southern portion of the project, as you can see from the exhibit shown on the right screen. The remaining 1,700 acres, including the northern part known as Mystery Mesa, will remain as permanent open space with development restrictions. Open space lot number 1293, which includes 1,490 acres, will be dedicated to County Parks and Recreation. Open space will include natural areas, re-landscaped slopes, parks and trails. The project's main access is Skyline Ranch Road, a proposed secondary highway . . .

[If we could have next slides . . . Eric, on the left side I think we need to go back two slides. One more slide back, sorry about that. One more forward. No, um . . . slide five? On the left. Yeah. Thank you.]

The project's main access is Skyline Ranch Road, a proposed secondary highway, as you can see on the exhibit on the right hand screen that is the red line through the project site. The project does provide a loop circulation system from Skyline Ranch Road to serve the northeast and southwest portions as North and South Main Streets. Those are shown in blue, providing access to both sides of Skyline Ranch Road. Local residential streets connect to Main Street to provide direct driveway access to the homes. Roundabouts or traffic circles, which are shown in the black circle, are also proposed as intersections of North and South Main Street and Skyline Ranch Road. The project is adjacent to existing residential, there is single family residential directly to the southwest of the project site, and multi-family to the southeast and south. The City of Santa Clarita is immediately to the south and southwest as well.

Next slide . . . The applicant will be providing a twelve acre turnkey public park shown on the left screen. It's the largest green bush that's shown approximately where "Sheet Two" is labeled. This turnkey public park once constructed will be transferred to County Parks and Recreation. The park exhibit also depicts on the right screen, the park exhibit depicts the park with various recreation uses, including a baseball field and basketball court. On the left screen

are also shown private parks that total approximately nine acres and those are distributed throughout the developed area. Private parks will be maintained by the homeowners' association.

Next slides please . . . Next feature of the project is the public and private trail system. A system of public and private trails is proposed. The Mint Canyon Trail is a public trail within the large open space lot and is shown with the future staging area. Future construction would be coordinated through Parks and Recreation. The private trails are comprised mainly of existing trails that connect both to the public trail and to the paseos and street sidewalks within the developed area. These will be maintained by the homeowners' association. The pedestrian accessibility, this accessibility is also provided within the developed area of the project through paseos. Paseos are designed to connect to more remote cul-de-sacs and provide connection to the parks and sidewalks. A pedestrian bridge across Skyline Ranch Road near the elementary school is also part of the project and is no longer an optional element of the project. Stairs will provide more direct access from the bridge to the northeast part of the project site. All accessible access is still maintained through along the paseos/sidewalk connection. Additional project entitlements, general plan amendment has been filed. There are currently two highways mapped on a general plan's master plan of highways within the project site. As you can see on the exhibit on the right screen, the first is Whites Canyon Road. This is a road that travels northward; it starts at the west, excuse me, it starts at the east and then heads north through the large open space lot to Vasquez Canyon Road. Oh, excuse me, that is west. And that's a major highway. The second is Cruzan Mesa Road, which basically bisects the property, that is proposed as a limited secondary highway and is mapped going east to west. The project proposes to delete Cruzan Mesa Road and re-designate Whites Canyon as a secondary highway to be renamed as Skyline Ranch Road. The associated highway realignment also considers the change in location of this highway from its current mapped location to serve as the primary access. The general plan amendment has been filed to effect these proposed changes. These amendments are consistent with those proposed under the pending general plan update, as well

One Valley One Vision. However, since the project needs its own amendment . . . However, the project needs its own amendment because should it move forward, it would need standalone entitlements independent from the general plan update and One Valley One Vision. The additional entitlement also filed is the CUP for offsite grading. An additional CUP had been filed to address this grading construction that's necessary for Skyline Ranch Road west to Plum Canyon/Whites Canyon Road. The offsite grading consists of 535,000 cubic yards of cut and 37 cubic yards of fill. Before this morning's hearing continued hearing notices, including these new entitlements, were distributed and notice was also published in The Signal and La Opinion.

Next slide. Holds that were discussed at the last public hearing have since been resolved. One of the holds was regarding filming activity. The subject property contains an area that's popular for filming, and this area's proposed within open space lot 1293. After further consultation, staff has determined that the filming activity and the model that they're proposing does not require a CUP or to be included as part of the project. The onsite filming activities are already regulated through existing provisions, and in the future if the filming does change then the CUP would be required at that time. On the right screen the filming activity is shown on the north, uh, northeast corner of the project site. It's shown as a disturbed area adjacent to the vernal pools. And also resolved what was raised at the September 16 hearing was questions regarding the proposed mitigation area. 21.6 acres were required by the Army Corps of Engineers for the adjacent project, which is tract map number 46018. This mitigation area will be set aside within this project's open space lot 1293. After further consultation with both applicants however, we had resolved any concerns with the mitigation area as proposed since this will remain natural, and is consistent with the intended use of the open space area to remain natural. There are pending project issues at today's hearing. There are technical holds relating to the tentative and Exhibit A map. These maps were distributed to the Subdivision Committee after the September public hearing and, as of today, two technical holds still remain. These include proof of offsite easements for the grading and access, as well as approval of a proposed booster pump station. An interdepartmental engineering committee, or IEC, meeting is also still

required for formal recommendation on the highway realignment. The applicant has provided the necessary materials and staff anticipates scheduling the meeting with Planning and Public Works early next year. IEC recommendation will be forwarded to your Commission before final action. And additional information was received this morning and distributed this morning for the Oak Tree Permit. We received formal recommendations from the Forester regarding the request. The project proposes one removal and the arborist report has identified proposed mitigation as if it were a heritage tree, although the Forester indicated that technically today it's not anticipated that it is of heritage size. The Forester has concurred with their recommended conditions for ten mitigation trees and with the change to fifteen gallon trees to be planted. The project proposes modified street cross-sections for three main roads: Skyline Ranch Road and the North and South Main loop roads. These modified street designs were reviewed by County Public Works and recommended for approval. The City of Santa Clarita however, has alternate streets that Public Works at this point is not recommending for approval. There are also interim cross-sections for some of these roads. The interim designs are intended to be constructed first, and only if traffic warrants it additional improvements will be required to be constructing the streets to full capacity. All landscaping within the streets are proposed to be maintained by the Landscape Maintenance District. The alternate cross-section is also proposed where the sidewalk is adjacent to the car travel lanes and the parkway or landscaped area is adjacent to the front yards of the properties. With the alternate cross-section, the six feet of landscaping can be counted towards the lot area and used for setbacks. However, more recently staff has been evaluating requests for alternate cross-sections as it differs from the traditional neighborhood street design and potentially detracts from walkability by forcing pedestrians to navigate street furniture, utility boxes and other encroachments within the right of way. The sidewalks must also narrow and shift when the alternate cross-section comes in contact with the driveway entrance for the individual single family homes. And this is to meet ADA requirements. Staff has been consulting with Public Works on a recommendation regarding the alternate cross-section, and for this project staff does not have an objection with the alternate cross-section

proposal. Staff is, however, recommending additional setbacks for the garage portions of the homes. This would ensure that any car parked within the driveway portion of the lot would not obstruct the sidewalk. Staff is recommending a minimum of eighteen feet of clearance to allow for this . . .

The project proposes phasing of development with multiple final maps. Phase One, or the unit 01 map, will record approximately 1,325 acres of open space within lot 1293. Access will also record before the first recordation of the single family homes insuring access. The second unit map will include the public park, and the eighth unit map will include the school site. Flag lots are also proposed, four among the 1,260 lots that are proposed. Although few flag lots exist in nearby residential areas, flag lots can be compatible with new developments and proposed as part of a new community. These four flag lots are proposed off of cul-de-sacs and could be found consistent if all the homes are developed together and any concerns regarding new flag lot homes affecting existing residential would not be the case. The project proposes six areas of future entry monumentation. Four are within the County, and one is located offsite . . . oh, excuse me, one is located within the project and three within the adjacent project. Two are proposed within the City of Santa Clarita and all will be required to comply with applicable regulations at the time of sign installation. The subdivision project is also exempt from the Low Impact Development ordinance and would continue to be exempt. Green building and drought tolerant landscaping ordinances are enforced at the building permit stage and all of these ordinances will apply if future construction however, goes beyond the vesting time limits of the Map Act. In conclusion, staff, if the Commission agrees with the staff, the staff recommends that the Commission continue this matter to a date certain to allow the applicant to clear the remaining holds, for IEC to hold its meeting, and for the Final EIR with the associated documents and draft findings and conditions to be prepared. Staff is now available to answer any questions.

Chairman Bellamy: Any questions of staff?

Commissioner Modugno: Mr. Chairman, thank you Ms. Tae for the presentation. One of the points which was raised at the last hearing I think, echoed by the Commission, was water. And I know that the applicant has provided some information on updates in terms of where the State's heading with water, but ability to serve here is going to be very critical in terms of moving this project forward. Do you have any comment on water or where that stands at the present time?

Susan Tae: The water analysis in the draft environmental document was relied on a previous letter that had been issued by the Castaic Lake Water Agency and our impact analysis section has evaluated this letter in terms of this project and feels comfortable that the water availability provided in the Castaic Lake Water Agency still applies. There is additional discussion that the applicant is intending include in the Final Environmental Impact Report, however staff at this time feels comfortable that the water availability analysis is sufficient.

Chairman Bellamy: Any further questions of staff?

Commissioner Helsley: Yes, please, Mr. Chairman. With what's happening in the State Water Project, I think that we need to re-evaluate with current information the water situation. We don't really have a solution in the Delta yet. We do have tremendous amounts of water that are being held back for fish and Delta environmental concerns. I have a couple of other questions. The first, the easy one. And that is the Oak Tree report from the Forester goes so far that as we put conditions on this, I want to be certain that there is an added condition that as the oak trees are planted that there is an infusion of microrhizomes within the soil, and that there is an acorn planted with each tree that is planted not just a 15 gallon tree. Because the acorn will out produce that tree and it will be healthier root zone. But there needs to be added the microrhizomes. And the pump stations, these are in the sanitation series, in the sanitation lines? I1-1

Steve Burger (Public Works): The pump stations I believe are for the water system, and actually from what I understand I think that issue has been worked out. When we come back for final conditions we will clarify, but I believe, from what I understand and the applicant may be able to clarify, from what I read this morning the pump stations are already moved from the project.

Commissioner Helsley: There is fire flow at the higher elevation?

Steve Burger: Yes.

Commissioner Helsley: Are they providing any . . . We had in Yorba Linda in the last fire that went through a dry zone. One of the concerns I have is that if we have pump stations that are going to be pumping out good fire flow pressures, there needs to be a tank at the far end of that, which I didn't see on the plans and maybe I missed something. I1-2

Steve Burger: Yeah, I can double-check that there's a couple of different ways that the water companies handle it. One is to have redundant pumping systems that would, with including backup power sources, that could handle that scenario. The other one, which is the more set failsafe like you said is the tanks. I'll take a look at that and Public Works will take a look at that and review it and make sure that there is appropriate methods to handle fire flow.

Commissioner Helsley: The backup I think is the other one in that there needs to be two forms of power to that pump station as it goes forward. I can concur with the driveway setbacks, I think that's a very good move. I have concerns still in relation to Cruzan Mesa Road being removed because I think in the future as we look at this area that's going to be developing, this is not the last of the developments out there and so, I think that road should be maintained. I would like to have Public Works relate to that and come back with, okay why if we're going to delete it, why and how do we carry traffic for those other developments that are going to up and beyond this development. Because I think that if we shortchange the community otherwise. Thank you. I1-3

Chairman Bellamy: Any further questions of staff? Thank you. Do we have speaker cards?

Sorin Alexian: Yes. Mr. Chairman, we had a total of 11 speaker cards. Seven speakers represent the applicant and his consultants. I'd like to call on Jim Bizzelle. Also Robert Thomson. Jay Ziff is the EIR consultant available for questions. Mark Sikand and Craig Yang are the engineers. Charles Moore and Daryl Zerfass. Mr. Bizzelle? Is Mr. Bizzelle here? Please come forward.

Chairman Bellamy: Okay any persons that want to speak on this agenda item or any agenda item today would you please stand and be sworn in. Raise your right hand. Do you and each of

you swear or affirm under penalty of perjury that the testimony you may give and the matters now pending before this Commission shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

All: I do.

Chairman Bellamy: Thank you. And the applicant will have 15 minutes. Please give your name.

Jim Bizzelle: Jim Bizzelle. And we're getting warmed up with the Powerpoint presentation. Good morning. As I said my name is Jim Bizzelle, Vice President of Community Development for Pardee Homes. Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to truly thank staff for all of their support bringing this project forward. Behind me today is our Skyline Ranch team to answer any questions you might have. I've broken our brief presentation into three sections: overview of Pardee Homes, our involvement in the Santa Clarita community, a few more details about our Skyline Ranch project. And with that . . . thank you. Pardee Homes began over 80 years ago and has been developing master planned communities since the early 30s. We are very proud of the communities we have developed. We entered the Santa Clarita Valley in the early 70s and still have a major presence there. Our Phillips Ranch project is one of our recent master planned communities in the Santa Clarita Valley and it's the first master planned community in Canyon Country. Pardee Homes develops communities from beginning to end. In several cases we bring out amenities earlier than required and we keep our commitments that we make to the community. For example, Golden Oak Community School opened in September 2008. We developed a site and funded construction of the school, even before a house was built. Pardee Homes also recognizes it takes more than homes and streets to build a community. We also support the many elements that make up the fabric of a city or a region. For instance, last month we worked with the City of Santa Clarita and the Sherriff's Department to name a street at our Golden Valley Ranch project in honor of a fallen deputy. Here you see the deputy's sons pull away the drape revealing the street name. Part of our stewardship to the environment is Pardee Homes Living Smart program. Our Living Smart program involves four key areas of sustainable

construction. These features also mean lower energy and water cost for homeowners. Since the Living Smart program was pioneered, Pardee Home has developed or is committed to more than forty Living Smart neighborhoods and over 5,000 Living Smart homes. One of our elements of Living Smart program is water smart. This list shows some of the aspects of our water smart program. Pardee Homes brought to north Los Angeles County the first California Green Builder certified home. These homes are located in our Fair Oaks Ranch community in Santa Clarita. I should note that a California Green Builder certified home uses about 20,000 gallons less water a year than newer, similarly built non-green homes. As you can see, all of our efforts have resulted by being recognized by many organizations as an environmental-friendly builder. Our Skyline Ranch project will provide Santa Clarita with the items listed to your right, plus a new major road that will only help traffic circulation route on that side of the valley. In addition, we will add to the major trail network in this area of the Santa Clara Valley. As we look closer into our community, this map shows you several key features that will be included in our project. A neighborhood loop system, pocket parks, bike paths, trails or paseos connecting neighborhoods and the school, a turnkey elementary school, a community public park that will be constructed at the beginning. Here is a conceptual rendering of our community public park, which will include tennis courts, basketball courts, baseball courts, excuse me, basketball fields, multipurpose field, top-notch playgrounds and an amphitheatre. Skyline Ranch will provide more than 70 percent of its project as open space. In addition, we help secure the County's proposed SEA by acquiring lands from 36 different property owners. The SEA is outlined in red. Now, I would like to show you some photos of the planned open space. This is Plum Canyon Creek, Plum Canyon trail headed north, a view looking south into the open space, one of our vernal pools located on Cruzan Mesa aka Mystery Mesa, and finally I'll end this presentation with some of the testimonies made in the September public hearing. This is from the chair of the Canyon Country Advisory Committee. With that I'm available to answer any questions you might have and thank you.

Chairman Bellamy: Thank you. Any questions?

Commissioner Helsley: Mr. Chairman, could you go back to slide number 22 and 23 for me please? Are those of the same pool?

Jim Bizzelle: No they're not.

Commissioner Helsley: This is one that's down slope?

Jim Bizzelle: This actual pool is located more closer to Plum Canyon Creek, which would be, this is north looking up to Mystery Mesa. It's on the southwest on this photograph.

Commissioner Helsley: Thank you. And I would just make a point that I commend you on the bridge that you're planning to put in for the transportation of school children. Thank you.

Chairman Bellamy: Thank you. Can't hear you.

Charles Moore: Charles Moore. My business address is 2049 Century Park East, Los Angeles. Just very, very briefly, I think I must join Mr. Bizzelle in the commending staff. This project was applied for five or six years ago. It's undergone numerous reviews of the EIR and I think it's important to place it in its historical context. The application was filed at a time when the County was proposing a very controversial, widely publicized update of its significant ecological area maps. This project respected that proposed SEA boundary, and what you see is a development that was the result density transfers. The planning director personally, at the time it was Jim Hartl and Mr. Sanabria carried forward a very complicated density transfer in order to respect and protect that proposed SEA boundary. Unfortunately, the boundary is still proposed but Pardee has respected it and I think its will benefit generations. I remember Daryl Koutnick early on, we came to Daryl Koutnick, who was a biologist for the County at the time and I said, "Why is this SEA boundary so important?" to him. And I remember his words. He said that he felt that the vernal pools and the Mesa were the most important resource in the entire Santa Clarita Valley. I think this department and Pardee Homes are to be credited for the tremendous effort, it took a lot of time to devise the program, but I think the protection of these 1,700 acres of open space is a credit to everyone involved. To Mr. Helsley's point about preserving the roads on the plan of highways, initially Public Works was to bring forward in a general plan update the addition of Skyline Ranch and the illumination of the roads through the Mesa. Those

roads, even if they are deleted, still can be designed/devised in the future, but those roads I think are being removed with the tremendous support of Federal and State environmental agencies. The design is simply environmentally unacceptable to environmental agencies, and if there is a future need it probably could be addressed at a future time. I would like to just comment on Mr. Helsley's points concerning water supply. I'm very proud of our environmental consultants and our water supply experts. I know a few weeks ago this Commission was faced with an unfortunate need to postpone work on your OVOV plan because of CLWA's comments concerning the water supply analysis in the EIR. You'll note that CLWA is not similarly making a statement here. In fact, our water supply consultant works regularly with CLWA. There's not one statement about water supply that we have made either in the EIR or in updates or in various communications that we have not first put before CLWA. We, as a policy, never file anything about water supply without first ensuring the support of CLWA. I can confidently say that the EIR in its present form has the most up-to-date information. Today there is no more up-to-date information than what our supplements and addendas contain. That's not to say that there won't be additional information, and I am sure that as this case moves forward through the Commission, to Final EIR stage, and indeed through the Board of Supervisors, and indeed through final map processing, there will be a continuing of additional water supply information. The materials we supplied you I think are interesting from the Department of Water Resources as they attempt to digest the new water supply laws. So we expect regular updates, but I can confidently say there is no more current information available. With that I just want to thank staff again and recommend that you follow the recommendation of Susie Tae and we look forward to coming back as soon as possible. Hopefully, in January or February I suppose, with a Final EIR.

Chairman Bellamy: Any questions?

Commissioner Helsley: Mr. Chairman, you gave us a handout that was attached to your letter.

Charles Moore: Yes, Mr. Helsley, that's from the State.

Commissioner Helsley: And the Department of Water, California Department of Water Resources, and the last, I guess, three pages of it are something I think we have to really tee our water supply to, and that's the water bond, Safe, Clean, and Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2010. But that's dependent upon the vote in November. So we won't know the answer to that in February. And, I think that that's a critical issue as we go forward with all but very, very small projects that are going to be requiring water. There was a comment that your homes save 200,000 gallons of water and that sounds like a big number, but if you consider that a home uses probably 320,000 gallons of water minimum, that number becomes another saving and I commend you for the saving, don't get me wrong there, but we're talking about something that's very small compared to the large use of the average residence in the state of California, Southern California. And so I still have concerns.

Charles Moore: Of course, and even the passage of the bond does not bring California home safe. It is a many year process, of course. It'll take the cooperation of all levels of government, the public as well. Take many years.

Chairman Bellamy: Thank you. The next two. Anyone else on the applicant's team that wishes to speak at this time?

Charles Moore: A consultant's here if you have any questions, but I think…

Chairman Bellamy: I'd like to call on Ian Perry from the City of Santa Clarita. Also Martin Rasnick, Tyler Gold, and the last speaker is Joyce Mason. Yes, sir, give your name.

Ian Perry: Good morning Chair Bellamy, members of the Commission. My name is Ian Perry. I am senior traffic engineer at the City of Santa Clarita. When I was here before you back in September, for the previous public hearing for this project, there were two issues that the City had from a traffic standpoint on the project. One was the proposed mitigation at Soledad Canyon Road and Sierra Highway, and the other was the cross-section of Skyline Ranch Road. I'm happy to report that we've been working very strongly with the applicant's engineer, Sikand Engineering, and have resolved the issue at Soledad and Sierra Highway. The City's now comfortable with the mitigation as shown, and it can fit within the existing right of way, and so

I1-4

we now accept that mitigation as it is designed. And the second item regarding the cross-section of Skyline Ranch Road as the County staff person mentioned during her presentation, the site plan currently shows two sets of cross-sections for Skyline Ranch Road: the County proposed section and the City's alternate section. While we are still working with County Public Works staff to reach a compromise, our goal is that the next time this project is before you for approval that there'll just be one set of cross-sections for Skyline Ranch Road that are agreed to by both the City and the County and you won't have to deal with the issue of two competing cross-sections. And so we're encouraged, we had a very productive discussion just yesterday afternoon with Steve Burger and Public Works staff. I'm working toward a compromise and so that is still the goal of both City and County staff. I1-5

Chairman Bellamy: Thank you. Any questions? Thank you very much. Yes, sir.

Martin Rasnick: Yes, good morning, my name is…sorry about that, my name is Martin Rasnick, I'm at Glenn Lukos Associates. I'm also part of the project team. I'm the jurisdictional delineation consultant. I wonder if you have any questions, I'm here to answer them. Thank you.

Chairman Bellamy: Questions? Thank you sir.

Martin Rasnick: Thank you.

Chairman Bellamy: Next two.

Tyler Gold: My name's Tyler Gold. I'm a landscape architect with L.A. Group Design Works. And I'm here to answer any of the questions you might have regarding the landscape . . . Thank you.

Chairman Bellamy: Yeah, last person. That concludes the speaker cards. Commissioner Modugno.

Commissioner Modugno: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for your presentations and for attendance today. The discussion back and forth on the water, and Mr. Moore, thank you very much for providing this information that Commissioner Helsley referenced. This is way beyond the scope of our pay range. I think it's way beyond this project, it is a very complex

issue that the State is wrestling with. The State wrestles with it with federal judges and protecting a species, you know, through a capriciousness and arbitrary sort of determination, water supply is yanked and added to and the City of Los Angeles is notified that its allocation is being cut down to 5% of its request. Various agencies have to deal with it. Water is something the State has lived with in terms of shortages and excesses throughout its history. I don't know if this will ever be concluded to the satisfaction of all parties. I think we have to move along with cases with information that we have and we have to rely upon those who are experts and I hope there will be a more recent update again by Castaic Lake Water Agency is going to be some providing as we look closer to the conclusion of this. I think this project as designed with its smart features is where we want to head with development. We didn't ask the landscape fellow questions, but I applaud the applicant and their consultants in terms of having the sensors on the sprinklers, to the extent to which there's going to be some drought tolerant plantings. There is other issues, and they seem to be things that the County is trying to promote, for instance type of housing that we'd like to see more of not less of. And to the extent to people move into this type of housing and move out of other housing that may then be recycled to other purposes or updated over time I think is going in the right direction. Let me state just a very, very minor, simple issue. When you talked about the driveways and making car clearance make sure that somewhere in that the garage doors are rollup doors because people tend to, if they don't have a rollup door, back up further and they don't get as close to it, so we want to make sure there is sufficient clearance on that because we don't want to block the sidewalks for it. I look forward to this project coming back to us, and in concluding I appreciate Mr. Perry's comments from the City of Santa Clarita in terms of working with Mr. Burger and hopefully there will be a resolution and we will only have one and we won't have to sort of decide, well do we want to go with the City or County on this one? But there is consistency on their part. Do we have the date certain?

Sorin Alexian: Yes, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, I checked with staff and the earliest date that we feel we can come back with all the information would be the first meeting in March, that would be March 3rd. That's our recommendation.

Chairman Bellamy: If there are no other comments, I move that the Planning Commission continue the public hearing on the date certain of March 3, 2010 in order the technical, some technical clearance in the subdivision be received, interdepartmental engineering committee to meet for its recommendation to this body in preparation of filing an Environmental Impact Report with findings and facts, a statement of overriding considerations, and in draft findings and conditions for the project.

Commissioner Helsley: I second the motion, but I would like to have discussion.

Commissioner Esther Valdez: I'd like to just speak to that motion for a second. I'm obviously not a water expert and I'm sure we have many many wise water experts who've been working on this bond, etc. At what point do we stop and take a deep breath and consider how many more large subdivisions are we going to approve until we know what the real situation is with respect to water. And there is a secondary reason for that. This is a very big subdivision and I'm really proud of the kind of things that have put out and the SEA, etc. But, if we do have some very serious issues with water, etc., would we not want to consider additional restrictions on the use of water for large subdivisions? Would that not be something that would be wise and all? I think as we're going forward, it's just a comment that I have here in light of the dire straits that we have with respect to water. You know, we don't want to be accused at some point that we were frittering while Rome was burning, and we're not looking at implications of this, not because we would want to deny this subdivision at all, I would not say that, but I would at this point indicate would we want to increase the use of recycled water in the ways in which this subdivision is going to be constructed or even consider that if something happens we would be able to come back and add that. We don't know and there's such an uncertainty, and I understand that the developer wants to move forward, but in light of uncertainty, during this interim period that we're coming back, I'd like to think about that a little bit. There's a lot of

I1-6

homes that have built up over a great number of years I'm sure, and in our economy I doubt if they'll be building other phases or even two phases at the same time. But just a concern that I had, an overall concern, not just for this project, but as we're looking at other developments in going forward, so I support the motion for the continuance. I1-6 Cont'd

Commissioner Helsley: I support the motion, and I don't want you to get the idea that I dislike the development. I think this development is planned, it is taking in and coordinating very effectively with concerns that the County has, the concerns the community has had, and I think it's met many of those very, very effectively. I do have, maybe a little different position than Commissioner Modugno in that, I think we do have to say that before we consider land use is a reasonable use, that if there's no water available, we have a problem. At what point do we say no water is available? I don't think we're at that point yet, but I think we have a constraint on that water, maybe for the next eight to ten years that is going to be very, very strong, and I would hate to see a situation where we go with the landscaping that I see is projected and the nice homes, then all of a sudden find a very difficult thing for the family that moved in to have enough water to maintain those facilities. And so I think the legislature kind of said that as we do land use planning, they want us to be sure that there's an adequate water supply, and that they take that seriously. With the November election, I'm afraid I didn't have confidence in the people voting that in due to the pork that's been attached to that bill or that bond. I think that they've kind of been disingenuous in their saying that they solved the water problem, or have tried to solve the water problem, but that's my personal opinion. As we look at this, I think a comment in relation to reuse, I realize you don't have a treatment facility real close but it might be worthwhile putting in the piping, to have a reuse supply in the public medians and you have some fairly large community slopes that can be irrigated with reclaimed water. You have the potential as you build this, to build the homes or the lots so that they can have a system for water collection during the rainy season . . . I'm guessing it's not like Ohio where you get a rain every month or two. Now and if you get six weeks without water back there, why that's a drought. And here we go months and months and many months without water, and our vegetation has I1-7

adapted to that. But those are things that might maintain the green environment around the house a little more effectively. I don't know whether you want to be on the forefront of gray water use or that type of thing, but I think that's another thing that might be explored as this development moves forward. I greatly appreciate your extra effort in moving it off of the Mesa, and moving it down into the southern portion. The original general plan maps I think projected this development basically up on the Mesa. And I commend you for really working diligently to put it down into close contact with other developments.

I1-7 Cont'd

I1-8

Chairman Bellamy: This concludes our discussion. All in favor of the motion?

All: Aye.

Chairman Bellamy: Thank you. We're going to take a ten minute break.

[Ten minute break]

I. PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (DECEMBER 16, 2009)

RESPONSE NO. I1-1

This request will be incorporated by the Department of Regional Planning, Land Division Section as a condition of project approval.

RESPONSE NO. I1-2

The Draft EIR addressed pump stations and fire flow pressures in Sections 4.I, Water Resources and 4.M, Fire Services and Hazards. As indicated on page 4.I-43 of the Draft EIR, In order to provide sufficient amounts of water and adequate water pressure to the project, a series of on-site water booster/pump stations and water tanks are proposed, including a two-million gallon water tank in the northwestern portion of the site and two one-million gallon tanks in the northeastern portion of the site. As determined by the Santa Clarita Water Division and in compliance with Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD) requirements, the project would meet the fire flow requirements of 1,250 gallons per minute and 20 pounds per square inch for a duration of two hours. (See pages 4.M-10 and 4.I-43 of the Draft EIR.) In addition, project plans would be reviewed by the LACoFD prior to the issuance of building permits to ensure adequate fire flow (as also specified under Mitigation Measure 4.M-1(b). Therefore, impacts related to water supply infrastructure and fire flow would be less than significant. Based on additional refinements to Figure 4.I-2, Conceptual Water Plan, since publication of the Draft EIR the alternative booster station in the northwestern portion of the development area is now designated as a booster station and the booster station on the center of the development area is now designated as an alternative booster station. Please refer to revised Figure 4.I-2, Conceptual Water Plan in Chapter 3.0, Correction and Additions to the Draft EIR, in this Final EIR.

RESPONSE NO. I1-3

The removal of Cruzan Mesa Road has been considered by the County Department of Public Works and was described in Chapters 2.0, Project Description and 4.F, Traffic Access with supporting data provided in Appendix F of the Draft EIR. As stated on page 4.F-39 of the Draft EIR, "[This] future roadway segment, as currently shown on the Highway Plan, [has] been recommended for elimination by the County due to the amount of grading that would be required and the impact the proposed alignment would have on sensitive biological resource areas." As shown on the Draft Highway Plan and as proposed by the project, Whites Canyon Road would extend from Plum Canyon Road on the west to the southeast and through the project site as Skyline

Ranch Road, ultimately connecting to Sierra Highway. A comparison of long range average daily traffic volumes under the current plan and the proposed project alignment was described on pages 4.F-39 through 4.F-42 and shown on Figure 4.F-14 and Table 4.F-11 of the Draft EIR. As concluded in this discussion, the proposed alignment would result in reduced traffic volumes on the surrounding roadway system in some locations and increased volumes in other locations. However, the project alignment would carry a higher volume of through traffic than the current plan.

RESPONSE NO. I1-4

Comment noted.

RESPONSE NO. I1-5

The applicant, the County Department of Public Works, and City of Santa Clarita are continuing to work together to resolve issues regarding the specifics of the design of Skyline Ranch Road.

RESPONSE NO. I1-6

Please see Response to Comment H1-20 regarding the analysis of water supply. As concluded in this response, although impacts on water supply would be less-than-significant, additional mitigation measures are proposed due to local and regional drought conditions. Regarding the use of recycled water, please see Response to Comment I1-7.

RESPONSE NO. I1-7

The applicant is considering the feasibility of providing infrastructure for the potential future use of reclaimed water. Long-range plans identify recycled water infrastructure in the vicinity of the project site. The Castaic Lake Water Agency's (CLWA) Recycled Water Master Plan (*CLWA Draft Report, Recycled Water Master Plan, Kennedy-Jenks Consultants, May 2002*) shows that an 8-inch recycled water pipeline is planned for White's Canyon Road, south of the project site, at which point it veers east, ending just west of the site's southerly border and a 24-inch line is planned to end south of the site along the Sierra Highway, north of its intersection with Soledad Canyon Road. The final layout would be determined once this phase of the Recycled Water Master Plan was ready to be developed and once specific customers were identified.

The feasibility of using recycled water from these lines depends on multiple factors, including the timing of the proposed development in relation to the timing of the recycled water

infrastructure. CLWA is currently designing Phase 2a of the Recycled Water Master Plan, which would serve the area along Newhall Ranch Road. Phase 2b is planned to connect to the Honby Booster Pump Station and would extend farther to the east. The 8-inch and 24-inch pipelines described above may be connected to Phase 2b. The schedule for Phase 2b has yet to be determined, however, and it is contingent upon the results of a flow study being conducted for Phase 2a. Additionally, the site's topography may prove to be a constraint. As shown in the Recycled Water Master Plan, the proposed 8-inch and 24-inch recycled water lines would terminate near a reservoir located at a 1680-foot elevation. The portion of the Skyline Ranch site that would be developed contains elevations that are up to several hundred feet higher. The engineering feasibility of connecting the project site to the recycled water infrastructure would need to be evaluated. Should providing recycled water prove to be technically and economically feasible based on timing and engineering considerations, there should be no constraints to recycled water being made available to the site (personal communication, Jeff Ford, CLWA, January 27, 2009).

RESPONSE NO. I1-8

Comment noted.

3.0 CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE DRAFT EIR

This chapter provides changes or additions made to the Draft EIR based on comments received during the public review period, as well as other edits to provide additional clarification. Deletions are shown with ~~strikethrough~~ and additions are shown with underline. Changes to the Draft EIR are indicated below under the respective EIR section heading. The revisions are minor changes that do not constitute significant additional information that alter the outcome of the environmental analysis or require recirculation of the document (CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pages ES-12 and ES-13, Table ES-1, Environmental Impact column (B. Hydrology and Water Quality) and corresponding Mitigation Measure column (4.B-1) have been revised as follows:

> Construction of the proposed project would not have a significant impact on flow rates for a 50-year storm within the five watersheds that would be affected by the project. In addition, the project would not change drainage patterns in a manner that would increase flood potential. However, the proposed project could have an effect on Sierra Highway in an area that is designated as a FEMA ~~AO~~ Flood Zone A, which is defined as subject to 100-year ~~shallow~~ flooding, due to construction of Skyline Ranch Road. In order to achieve the grade necessary to connect this roadway to the proposed developed areas of the site, an area of fill would be required near the roads intersection with Sierra Highway. This potential for displacement of flood plain area is considered a significant impact.
>
> **4.B-1:** Final drainage improvement plans for the project shall ensure that there is no displacement of flood plain area in the vicinity of Sierra Highway and its intersection with proposed Skyline Ranch Road through construction of a culvert, bridge, or combination thereof, within the flood plain area. Final drainage improvement plans and the culvert or bridge shall be designed during the engineering stage by a licensed engineer to ensure that the water surface shall be equal or lower than existing conditions both downstream and upstream of the proposed project entrance along Sierra Highway and adjacent properties during a 50-year storm event and that post-development flow rates shall be less than existing conditions downstream along Sierra Highway and adjacent properties. Final drainage improvement plans to achieve these standards shall

be designed to the satisfaction of, and approved by, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and City of Santa Clarita, Department of Public Works.

Pages ES-32, Table ES-1, Environmental Impact column (C. Biological Resources) column has been revised as follows:

The proposed project would have the potential to result in indirect impacts to biological resources as a result of construction activities and development of the site associated with drainage (increased urban run-off and pollutant concentration), lighting, noise, barriers, ~~invasive species,~~ and ~~brush management~~ introduced humans and pets. However, as further discussed in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, these indirect impacts were determined to be less than significant.

Pages ES-43and ES-44, Table ES-1, Mitigation Measure column (4.D-2(a), 4.D-2(b), and 4.D-2(c) have been revised as follows:

4.D-2(a) Paleontological Survey and Treatment Program. Prior to the implementation of grading or construction related activities, a qualified paleontologist shall be retained by the applicant to survey the project area to relocate known fossil localities, and determine the most sensitive areas. A qualified paleontologist is defined as a paleontologist meeting the criteria established by the Society for Vertebrate Paleontology including institutional affiliations/credentials, ability to recognize and recover vertebrate fossils in the field, local geological and biostratigraphic expertise, proficiency in identifying vertebrate fossils, publications in scientific journals. Following the survey, a paleontological resources monitoring and mitigation program will be developed by the qualified paleontologist that will include salvage of known fossil resources, areas that will be monitored during project-related earth-moving activities. The paleontological resources monitoring and mitigation program shall be submitted to the County for review and approval prior to construction grading activities. The program shall define specific procedures for construction monitoring; emergency discovery; sampling and data recovery, if needed; museum storage of any specimen and data recovered; preconstruction coordination; and reporting. Any curation costs shall be incurred by the applicant.

4.D-2(b) Paleontological Monitoring. The ~~paleontologist~~ paleontological monitor, who has been trained by a qualified paleontologist to identify invertebrate fossils, shall monitor earth-moving construction activities at depths determined to be sensitive as specified in the County approved monitoring plan. Monitoring will not be conducted in areas where the ground has been previously disturbed

or in areas where exposed sediment will be buried, but not otherwise disturbed.

4.D-2(c) Paleontological Data Recovery. Prior to the start of grading or construction related activities, construction personnel involved with earth-moving activities shall be informed of procedures to follow if fossil remains are encountered. In the event that paleontological resources are encountered during construction-related earth-moving activities, all work shall cease within the immediate area and be redirected elsewhere until the paleontological monitor has evaluated the situation and provided recommendations for the protection of, or mitigation of adverse effects to, significant paleontological resources assessed. Upon such discoveries, the contractor shall notify the applicant and Los Angeles County. Procedures for mitigating potential impacts to significant paleontological resources shall follow the monitoring and mitigation program previously developed under this mitigation measure. Construction work within this area shall resume upon approval from the principal project ~~paleontologist~~ paleontological monitor.

Because initial site access for approximately 300 units would be provided from Whites Canyon Road/Plum Canyon Road to the west, page ES-48, Table ES-1, Environmental Impact column (F. Traffic/Access) and corresponding Mitigation Measures column (4.F-2(b)) have been revised as follows:

The proposed project would construct a network of collector roads to provide local access and construct an important regional roadway improvement long planned by the County to extend Whites Canyon Road (as Skyline Ranch Road). The provision of access to the proposed project during the later construction phases would also require intersection improvements at Skyline Ranch Road at Sierra Highway, which should be designed to accommodate the eventual widening of Sierra Highway.

4.F-2(b) Sierra Highway at Skyline Ranch Road: Prior to the issuance of the ~~first~~301st building permit the project shall construct a new intersection for project access; provide one northbound left-turn lane, two northbound through lanes, two southbound through lanes, one eastbound left-turn lane, and two eastbound right-turn lanes; and install a traffic signal. The placement of the new west leg should be of sufficient distance from the Sierra Highway centerline to allow for the eventual addition of a third southbound through lane as identified in the City of Santa Clarita General Plan Circulation Element.

Page ES-50, Table ES-1, Environmental Impact column (F. Traffic/Access) has been revised as follows to include the provision of a pedestrian bridge:

Pedestrian access routes to the proposed elementary school on-site would be provided by fully improved streets with full-width sidewalks and a pedestrian bridge across Skyline Ranch Road for residential areas north and east of Skyline Ranch Road. Pedestrians crossing Skyline Ranch Road would be able to use the pedestrian bridge, crosswalks or the traffic signal adjacent to the school at Skyline Ranch Road and Main Street South. Compliance with the Caltrans Pedestrian Safety manual would ensure that impacts related to pedestrian safety would be less than significant. In addition, and independent of the proposed project, a traffic study addressing the school site will be required by the County when a detailed site plan for the school is developed by the District.

Page ES-68, Table ES-1, Environmental Impact column (M. Fire Services and Hazards) has been revised as follows:

The project's residents would increase the demand for Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD) staffing, equipment, and facilities. As such, the proposed project would potentially result in deficiencies in fire service. The project would be required to pay fees pursuant to the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Developer Fee Program, which would be used toward land acquisitions, ~~facility improvements~~ new facilities, and ~~partial funding of new~~ equipment. However, while ~~general fund~~ these revenues have historically supported adequate levels of fire protection services in the area, if sufficient funding for LACoFD services is not maintained by the County, a potentially significant impact could occur.

Page ES-72, Table ES-1, Environmental Impact column (P. Parks) has been revised as follows:

Based on the Los Angeles County Code (LACC) park requirement formula, the proposed project is required to provide 12.23 net acres of on-site park space that meets Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (LADPR) criteria. The proposed project would provide approximately 18 acres of park space, including a fully improved ~~10.6~~ 9.2 acre public park. Because the ~~10.6~~ 9.2 acres of public park space is less than the 12.23 acres required by LADPR, payment of in-lieu fees would also be required. With the payment of fees and development and conveyance of a fully-improved park to LADPR, impacts related to the provision of parks and recreational facilities would be less than significant.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Page 1-1 has been revised as follows:

A. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW OF THE EIR PROCESS

The County of Los Angeles is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Skyline Ranch project. The 2,173-acre Skyline Ranch site is located in the Santa Clarita Valley west of Sierra Highway, north of Highway 14 (Antelope Valley Freeway) and the City of Santa Clarita in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The project applicant proposes to develop approximately 622 acres of the site with 1,260 single-family residential lots with pads ranging in size from 5,775 to 7,350 square feet along with an approximately 11-acre elementary school site, approximately 12 acres (~~10.3~~ 9.2 net) of public parkland to be dedicated to the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, and approximately 6 acres of private parkland to be maintained by a homeowners' association. Nearly three quarters of the site, the northern 1,551 acres located in the northern portion of the site, is proposed to remain undeveloped, with 1,355 acres dedicated or designated as natural open space through the proposed establishment of the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA). Approximately 166 acres in the northern portion of the site on Cruzan Mesa would remain undeveloped and designated as a Non-Development/Continuing Use Area. Also in the northern portion of the site, approximately 22 acres would be preserved as a Mitigation Exchange Area for 22 acres of preserve area within adjoining recorded Tract 46018, that would be disturbed due to the construction of Skyline Ranch Road.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Section 2.0, Project Description, pages 2-4 through 2-36 of the Draft EIR have been revised to show minor revisions and clarifications primarily based on additional details for the construction of the Mint Canyon Trail trailhead; additional entitlements required for Skyline Ranch Road, off-site grading, and the materials processing facility; and the provision of a pedestrian bridge across Skyline Ranch Road to the proposed school site. New or revised figures are indicated in the figure title and provided within this section of the Final EIR.

B. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Section 15124(b) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) include a statement of the objectives, including the underlying purpose of the project. Presented below are the objectives of the proposed project:

1. Land Use Planning Objectives

- Develop in a location that is adjacent to existing and planned infrastructure, urban services, transportation corridors, and major employment centers.
- Cluster development within the site to preserve significant biotic resource areas and other natural open space while reducing landform alteration and avoiding a scenic ridgeline.
- Provide development and transitional land use patterns that are compatible with surrounding communities and land uses.
- Increase the supply of housing to serve existing demand and future needs associated with forecasted population growth in the Santa Clarita Valley.
- Provide sites for a public elementary school and a public park to serve residents of the project and others in nearby communities.
- Create a pedestrian friendly environment which encourages pedestrian access between neighborhoods, parks, and a public elementary school.

2. Mobility Objectives

- Provide a major regional roadway improvement that will also serve the site, consistent with the alignment being proposed in the County's Draft Highway Plan.
- Provide a safe, walkable community, through the use of enhanced landscaped sidewalks and paseos segregated from vehicle traffic.
- Enhance pedestrian safety through the use of innovative traffic calming techniques, which may include roundabouts, designed to slow traffic while providing continual traffic flow.
- Provide bike lanes and an extension of existing bus service along Skyline Ranch Road to facilitate the use of alternative transportation.

3. Park and Recreation Objectives

- Provide on-site recreational opportunities, including an improved public park, private passive neighborhood and pocket parks, and hiking trails convenient and accessible to residents.

- Support extension of the County Trail System (Mint Canyon Trail) by dedicating an easement in the northern portion of the site to the County from Vasquez Canyon Road to the Plum Canyon Fire Road and southwesterly to a lookout point (approximately ~~2.2~~2.5 miles).

4. Resource Conservation Objectives

- Avoid development in regionally significant biotic resource areas located on Cruzan Mesa by designating a 166-acre portion of the site as a Non-Development/Continuing Use Area.

- Preserve other significant biotic resources in the northern portion of the site through establishment of one or more voluntary conservation easements, land dedications, or land set asides over a 1,355-acre area to be known as the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA).

- Promote water conservation through use of drought-tolerant, fire-retardant, and native plants.

- Promote energy reduction, sustainable building practices, health enhancement, and water conservation into housing design, construction, and operation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while also reducing the operating and maintenance costs of housing.

- Provide landscaping along the perimeter of the site with a mix of native, drought-tolerant, low-fuel, and non-invasive plant species to serve as buffer between improved areas of the site and adjacent natural open space in order to protect sensitive biotic resources.

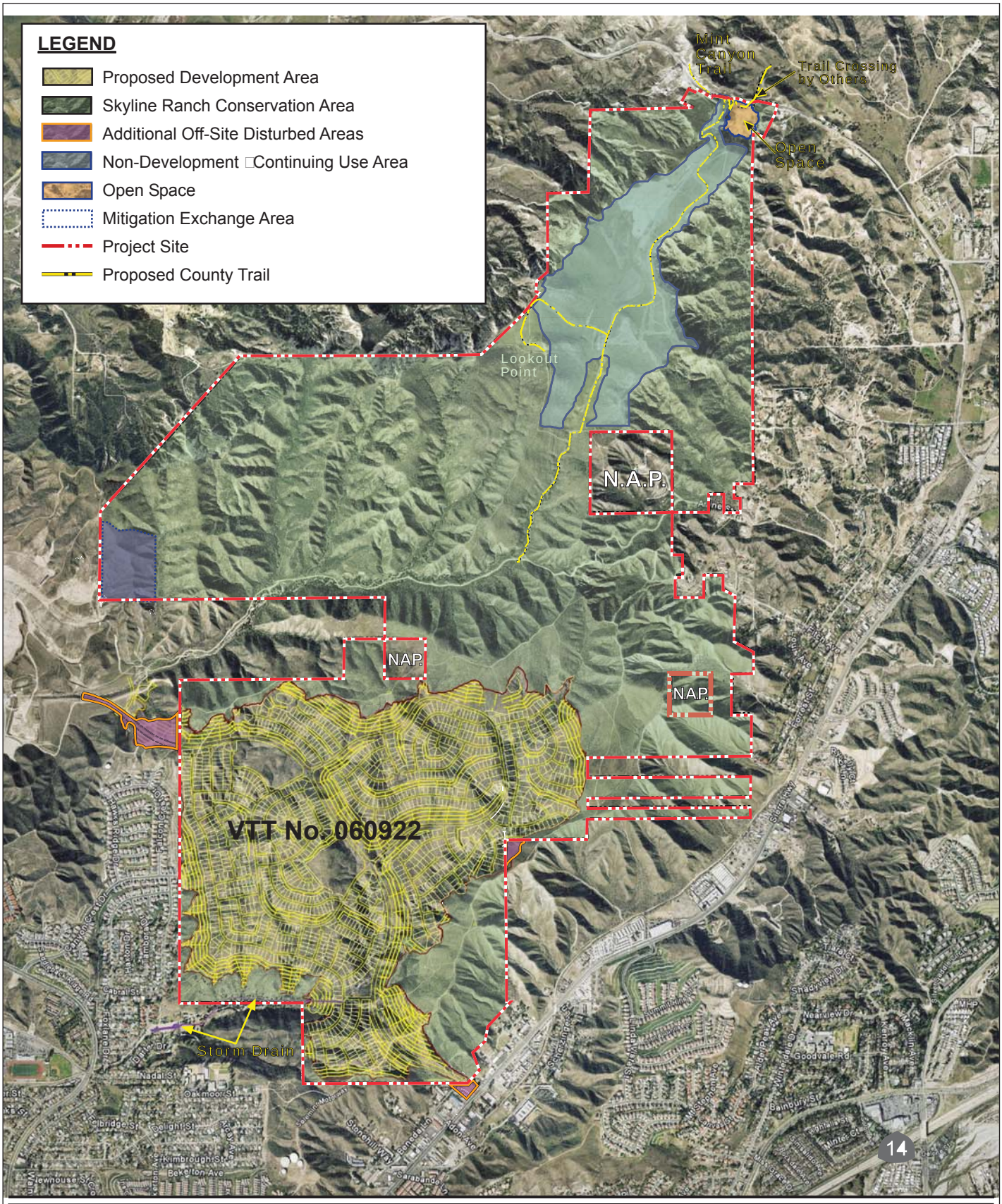
C. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The project applicant proposes to develop approximately 622 acres of the site with 1,260 single-family residential lots with pads ranging in size from 5,775 to 7,350 square feet, an approximately 11-acre elementary school site, approximately 12 acres of fully improved public parkland to be dedicated to the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, and approximately 6 acres of private parkland to be managed by a homeowners' association. Development is proposed for the southern portion of the property where slopes of 25 percent or less predominate. As further described below, nearly three quarters of the site (the northern 1,551 acres) is proposed to remain undeveloped, with approximately 1,355 acres dedicated or designated as natural open space through establishment of the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA). The SRCA would be managed, as appropriate, to preserve the natural open space.

Approximately 166 acres in the northern portion of the site on the Cruzan Mesa, would remain undeveloped and designated as a Non-Development/Continuing Use Area. Also, within the northern portion of the site approximately 22 acres would be preserved as a Mitigation Exchange Area for 22 acres of preserve area within adjacent recorded Tract 46018, that would be disturbed due to the construction of Skyline Ranch Road. These three areas would preserve nearly all of the undeveloped areas of the site and simultaneously provide approximately 80 percent of the lands being proposed by the County for establishment of the Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pools Significant Ecological Area (SEA). Figure 2-3 (Revised), Aerial View—Development and Conservation Areas, on page ~~2-7~~ 3-9 presents an aerial view showing the southern portion of the site proposed for development and the northern portion of the site that includes the proposed SRCA and other open space areas. Also shown on Figure 2-3 (Revised) is a proposed trailhead entrance and trail that would extend the existing Mint Canyon Trail from Vasquez Canyon Road to the Plum Canyon Fire Road primarily along an existing dirt path and southwesterly towards a lookout point. The proposed trail extension would run a total distance of approximately ~~2.2~~2.5 miles within portions of the SRCA and Non-Development/Continuing Use Area. As detailed in Figure 2-4 (New), Mint Canyon Trail Entrance, on page 3-10, the proposed trail extension would include a 1,400 linear feet switchback trail with a variable width of 6-8 feet at the Mint Canyon Trail trailhead entrance at Vasquez Canyon Road.

The Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 060922 (~~Figure 2-4~~ Figure 2-5 (Revised), Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 060922, on page ~~2-10~~ 3-11), subdivides the development area of the project property into 1,313 lots, including 1,260 residential lots, 10 lots for park areas, 1 lot for a school site, 13 debris basin lots, 4 water tank/booster pump station lots, and 25 open space lots.[4] Primary access to the tract is provided by the proposed extension of Whites Canyon Road from Plum Canyon to the southeast through the project interior ultimately connecting to Sierra Highway. A detail of the proposed entry and other offsite improvements is shown on ~~Figure 2-5~~ Figure 2-6, Proposed Entry and Other Off-Site Improvements, on page ~~2-11~~ 3-12. These include cul-de-sac improvements at Canyon Crest and Bookham Drive and a cul-de-sac and hammerhead turnaround at Beneda Lane; a 78-inch storm drain and trapezoid channel that extends southwest approximately 1,300 feet off-site and discharges into an existing County flood control channel parallel to Goodvale Road and storm drains within Bookham Drive and Bakerton Avenue that would connect to the on-site storm drain system; proposed water lines within Sierra Highway; and downsizing an existing debris basin at the easterly terminus of Foxlane Drive.

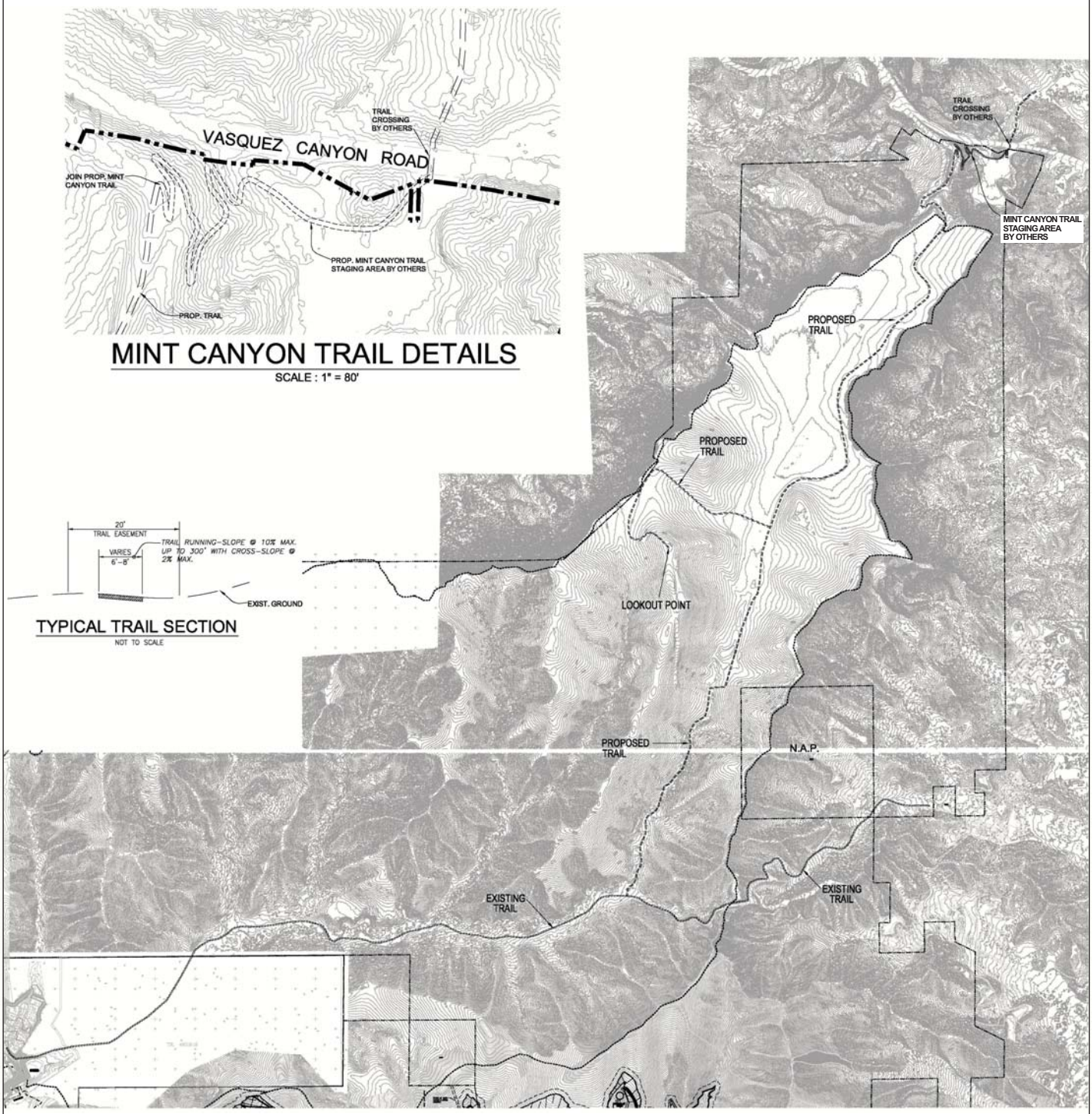
[4] *The number and size of lots within Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 060922 may be subject to change; however such changes would not increase the number of residential lots, decrease the amount of open space or parks, or alter the overall footprint of the approximate 622 acre area proposed for development. In addition, the location of the proposed 11-acre school site may be subject to change within the development area based on the determination of the Sulphur Springs School District, Office of the State Architect, and County of Los Angeles; however the size of the site to be conveyed to the District would remain the same.*



PCR

Figure 2-3 (Revised)
Aerial View - Development and Conservation Areas

Source: PCR Services Corp., Sikand Engineering, and NRC, 2009



PCR

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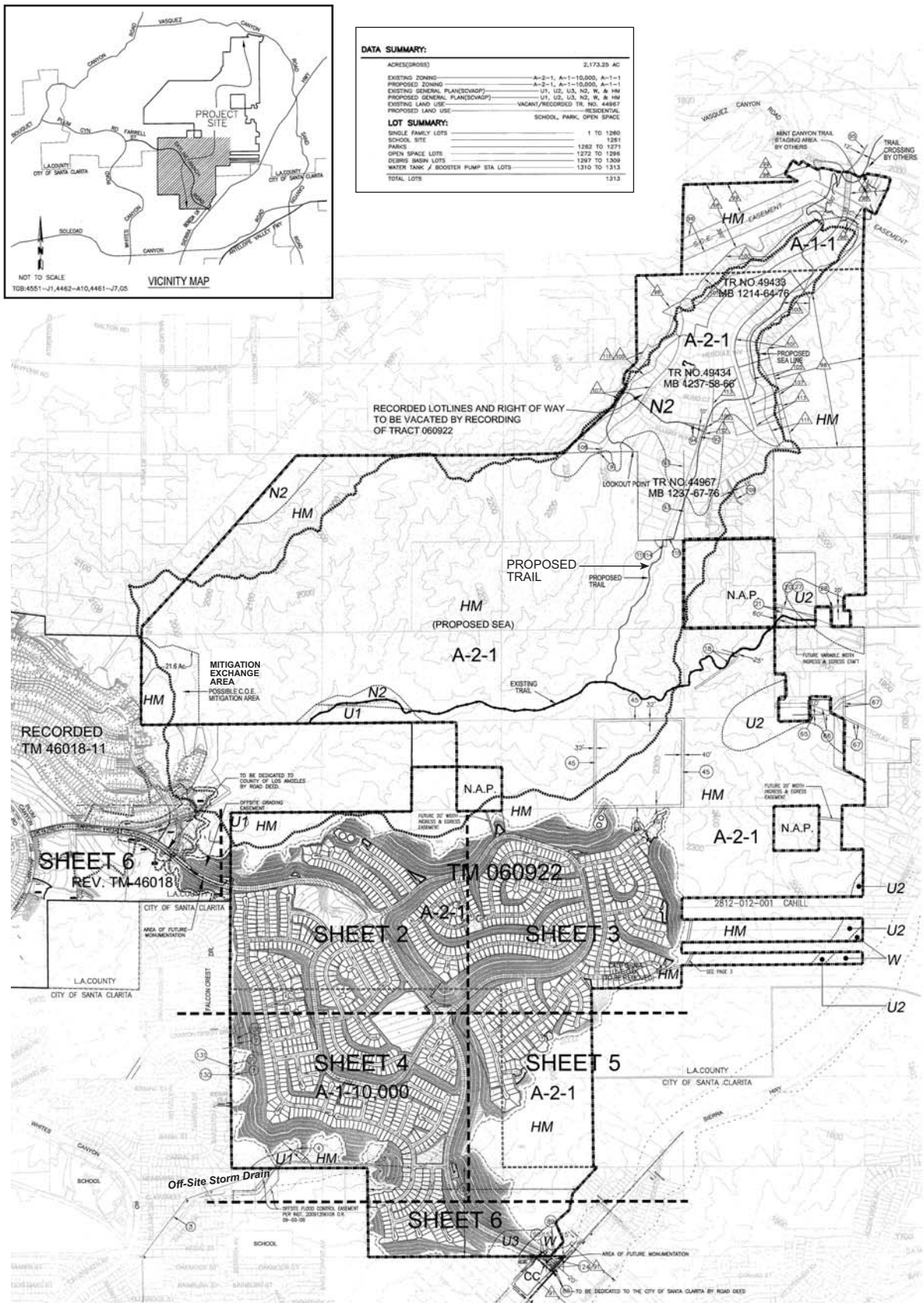
Figure 2-4 (New)
Mint Canyon Trail Entrance

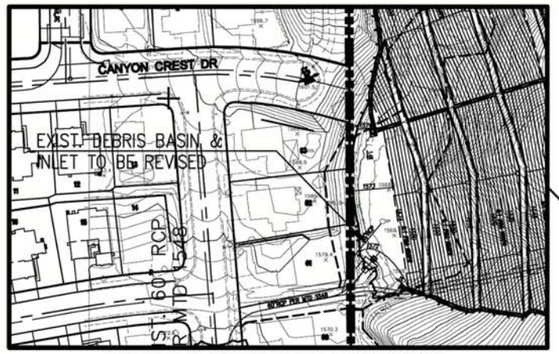
Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009



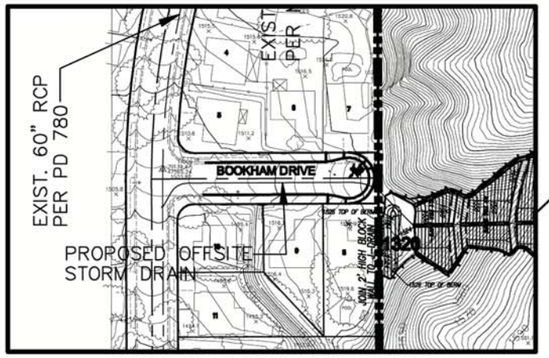
PCR

Figure 2-5 (Revised)
Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 060922

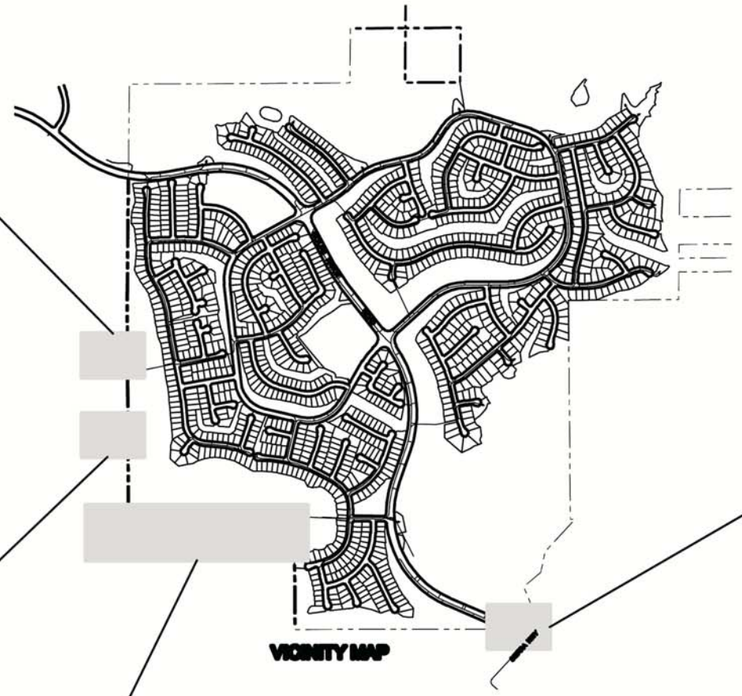
Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009



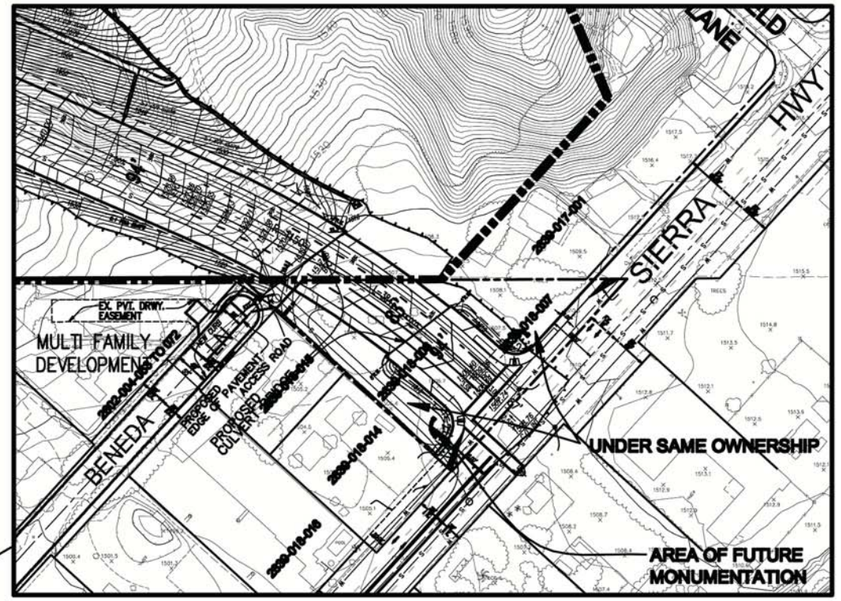
CANYON CREST DR. EX. TURNAROUND



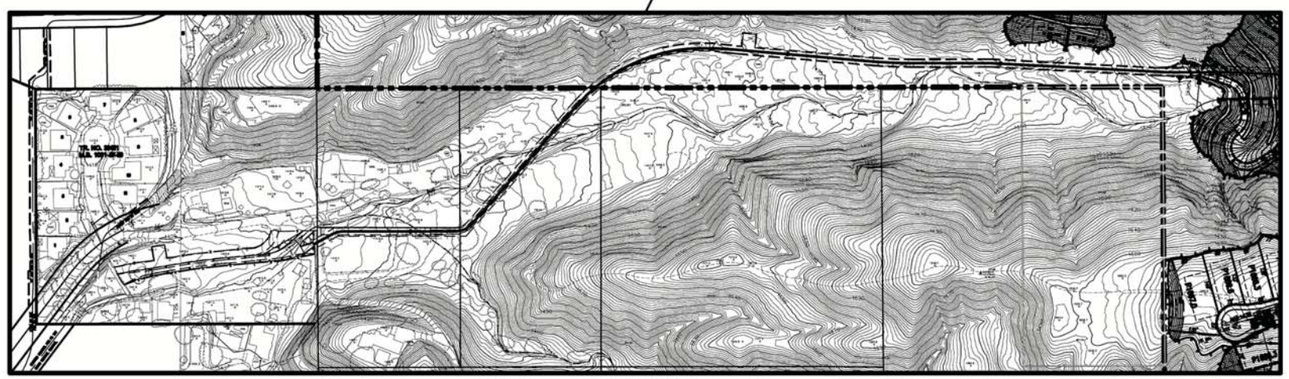
BOOKHAM DR. PROP. TURNAROUND



VICINITY MAP



PROP. SKYLINE RANCH ROAD/SIERRA HWY. INT.



PROP. 76" STORM DRAIN

PCR

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009

Figure 2-6
Proposed Entry and Other Off-Site Improvements

Table 2-1, Skyline Ranch Project Land Use Summary, on page ~~2-12~~ 3-14 provides a breakdown of the proposed project's land uses. The primary components of the project are described in more detail below.

1. Proposed Land Uses and Improvements

a. Residential Land Uses

The 1,260 single-family homes would be characterized by a traditional lot orientation at net densities ranging from 3.0 to 4.0 dwelling units per acre on lots with pads ranging in size from 5,775 to 7,350 square feet. All lots are proposed to be located along public streets. There would be a mix of housing types with three to six bedrooms. Homes would be one or two stories and would range in size from 2,400 square feet to 4,700 square feet. An illustrative conceptual site plan of the proposed residential development is depicted in ~~Figure 2-6~~ Figure 2-7, Skyline Ranch - Conceptual Site Plan, on page ~~2-13~~ 3-15.

As further described in Section 4.Q, Land Use, the proposed project includes a proposed density transfer of 200 residential units from recorded Tract Map No. 44967, which is located within the proposed northern open space area of the site. Additional density would also be transferred from other areas of the site designated for Urban, Floodway, and Non-Urban uses.

The transfer of urban density within the project site is considered appropriate and supportive of County policies by concentrating development proximate to urban areas, preserving regionally significant biotic resources and open space proposed to be incorporated into a County SEA, avoiding a major ridgeline and areas prone to flooding, and substantially reducing grading and associated impacts that would otherwise be required to serve more remote areas with urban infrastructure.

The preliminary landscape design concept for the project, also shown on ~~Figure 2-6~~ Figure 2-7, is intended to create an aesthetically pleasing and highly livable residential environment. This would be achieved through a combination of streetscape elements, enhanced landscaped pedestrian circulation routes (such as paseos and parkways), parks, and common area landscaping. Along the perimeter of the site, landscaping would consist of a mix of native, drought-tolerant, low-fuel, and non-invasive plant species that would provide a transition between natural open space areas and improved areas of the site while supporting biological resource, aesthetic, and fire safety priorities. Within the residential community, landscaping would be provided along the streets and manufactured slope areas.

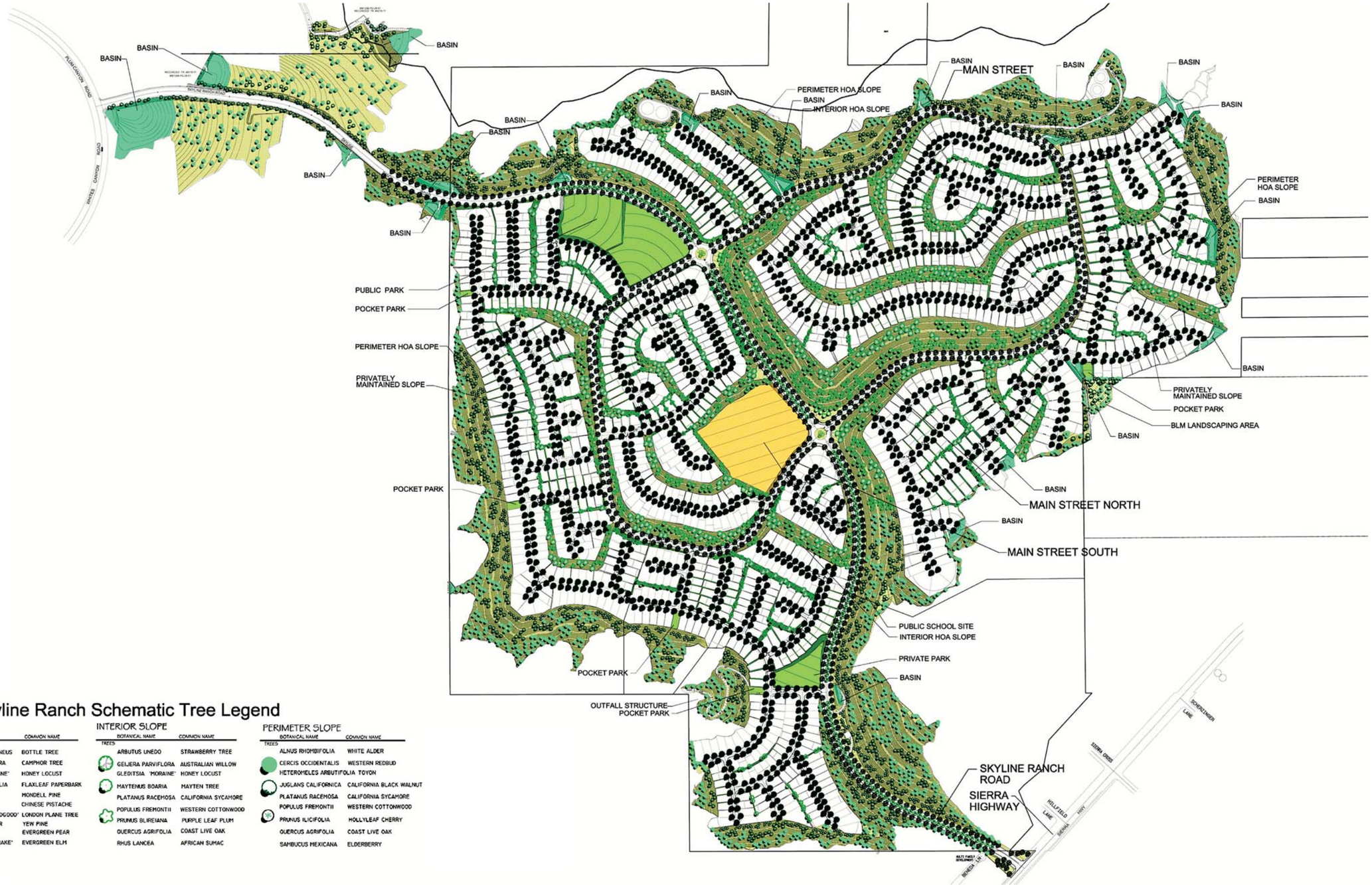
Table 2-1

Skyline Ranch Project
Land Use Summary

DEVELOPMENT AREA	
Residential Lots	
Number of Single Family Lots	1,260
Total Area of Pads/Side Lot Slopes	11,582,604 s.f. (265.9 acres)
Percent of Total Site	12.2%
Range of Pad Sizes	5,775 s.f. to 7,350 s.f.
Average Pad Area	9,253 s.f.
Range of Pad Widths	55 feet – 70 feet
Average Pad Depths	105 feet
Common Area – Roads (Private)	
Road Rights-of-Way	5,074,740 s.f. (116.5 acres)
Percent of Total Site	5.4%
Range of Road R-O-W Widths	58 feet to 94 feet
Paved Road Area/Bike Lanes	3,007,884 s.f. (69.0 acres)
Sidewalks	935,044 s.f. (21.5 acres)
Parkways	1,132,560 s.f. (26.0 acres)
Common Area	
Landscaped Slopes	8,746,848 s.f. (200.8 acres)
Debris Basin Lots	304,920 s.f. (7.0 acres)
Water Tank Lots	91,476 s.f. (2.1 acres)
School	505,296 s.f. (11.6 acres)
Parks	778,417 s.f. (17.9 acres)
Percent of Total Site	11.0%
Total Development Area	621.8 acres
Percent of Total Site	28.6%
OPEN SPACE AREA	
Open Space (All natural/undeveloped)	
Total Open Space Area	67,579,855 s.f. (1,551.4 acres)
Percent of Total Site	71.4%
Total Site Area	**2,173.3 acres**

Note: Total site area does not include off-site areas to the west (29.5 acres) and south (1.4 acres) associated with the extension of Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway, 2 acres of manufactured slope/drainage area to the east, or 0.88 acres (approximately 1,300 linear feet) to the southwest required for the 78-inch storm drain and related improvements.

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009.



Skyline Ranch Schematic Tree Legend

STREET TREES

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
TREES	
BRACHYCHITON POPULNEUS	BOTTLE TREE
CINNAMOMUM CAMPHORA	CAMPHOR TREE
GLEDITSIA TRI. 'MORAINE'	HONEY LOCUST
MELALEUCA LINARIIFOLIA	FLAXLEAF PAPERBARK
PINUS ELDARICA	MONDELL PINE
PISTACHA CHINENSIS	CHINESE PISTACHE
PLATANUS ACE. 'BLOODGOOD'	LONDON PLANE TREE
PODOCARPUS GRACILOR	YEW PINE
PYRUS SPP.	EVERGREEN PEAR
ULMUS PARVIFOLIA 'DRAKE'	EVERGREEN ELM

INTERIOR SLOPE

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
TREES	
ARBUTUS UNEDO	STRAWBERRY TREE
GEIJERA PARVIFLORA	AUSTRALIAN WILLOW
GLEDITSIA 'MORAINE'	HONEY LOCUST
MAYTENUS BOARIA	MAYTEN TREE
PLATANUS RACEMOSA	CALIFORNIA SYCAMORE
POPULUS FREMONTII	WESTERN COTTONWOOD
PRUNUS BLIREIANA	PURPLE LEAF PLUM
QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA	COAST LIVE OAK
RHUS LANCEA	AFRICAN SUMAC

PERIMETER SLOPE

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
TREES	
ALNUS RHOMBIFOLIA	WHITE ALDER
CERCIS OCCIDENTALIS	WESTERN REDBUD
HETEROMELES ARBUTIFOLIA	TOYON
JUGLANS CALIFORNICA	CALIFORNIA BLACK WALNUT
PLATANUS RACEMOSA	CALIFORNIA SYCAMORE
POPULUS FREMONTII	WESTERN COTTONWOOD
PRUNUS ILICIFOLIA	HOLLYLEAF CHERRY
QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA	COAST LIVE OAK
SAMBUCUS MEXICANA	ELDERBERRY

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Figure 2-7
Skyline Ranch - Conceptual Site Plan

Source: LA Group, Inc., 2007.

b. Elementary School Site

An approximately 11 acre parcel of land on the site is proposed to allow for the construction of an elementary school by the Sulphur Springs School District (District). As proposed, the school site would be developed, operated, and maintained under a contemplated agreement between the District and the applicant. The school site would be located to the west of the proposed intersection of Skyline Ranch Road and Main Street (see ~~Figure 2-6~~ Figure 2-7) with a pedestrian bridge proposed across Skyline Ranch Road to provide access to the school site from residential areas to the north and east of Skyline Ranch Road. The elementary school is intended to accommodate up to 750 K-6 students. The specific design of the school facilities and ultimate location within the development area would be subject to Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, which contains standards for school site selection, site planning, and construction of school facilities within the State of California. Once developed, plans for the school would also be subject to environmental review by the District, California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and other State and local agencies, as well as final review and approval by the Division of the State Architect.

c. Recreation Areas

An approximately 12 acre site is proposed for an improved public park in the northwestern residential portion of the site. This public park, which would be fully improved as part of the project and then dedicated to the County of Los Angeles and operated and maintained by the County Department of Parks and Recreation, is intended to serve the recreational needs of the new residential community. A conceptual park plan has been conditionally approved by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. As shown on ~~Figure 2-7~~ Figure 2-8, Proposed Public Park Plan, on page ~~2-16~~ 3-17, the proposed park would include areas for active and passive recreation such as a multipurpose ballfield, a basketball court, volleyball court, children's play area, picnic areas, a community gathering area, seating and lawn areas, and a meandering pathway. The park would also include restrooms and a parking lot.

In addition to the public park, a number of smaller private parks and recreational amenities are proposed. An approximately 2.5-acre private park for passive recreation is proposed in the southern residential portion of the site along Skyline Ranch Road, and eight small pocket parks, totaling approximately 3.7 acres, are proposed within the residential development area. As shown on ~~Figure 2-8~~ Figure 2-9, Proposed Parks and Trails Locations, on page ~~2-17~~ 3-18, recreational amenities also include approximately two miles of hiking trails along the western, northern, and eastern perimeters of the development area, approximately one mile of paseos, and approximately eight miles of bike lanes. The trail along the western perimeter of the project site connects to the adjacent single family residential area. The trail along the northern perimeter includes two lookout points. The trail along the eastern perimeter also serves as fire access and connects to vacant land to the east. There are several paseos

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Figure 2-8
Proposed Public Park Plan

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009

PCR

No scale

Figure 2-9
Proposed Parks and Trails Locations

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009

located within landscaped slope areas that provide access to the parks from residential areas. Bike lanes are proposed along Skyline Ranch Road, Main Street North, and Main Street South. All proposed trails, paseos, and bike lanes are subject to County approval.

d. Infrastructure

(1) Arterial/Collector Roadways

The project would construct a network of collector roads to provide local access to land uses associated with the proposed project. Development of the project as proposed would also provide a secondary highway improvement that would extend Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway. This roadway improvement would be consistent with plans shown on the County of Los Angeles Draft Highway Plan, a part of the Draft General Plan (September 2008). This Draft General Plan is currently available for public review, with final approval anticipated by ~~December 2009~~ spring 2012.[5] The existing Los Angeles County Highway Plan currently shows an extension of Whites Canyon Road being routed through the property's undeveloped area with a connection to Vasquez Canyon Road. The Plan also shows a future roadway segment for Cruzan Mesa Road between Whites Canyon Road and Sierra Highway. Issues associated with constructing these roadways as shown in the Highway Plan have been under consideration by the County due to the amount of grading that would be required and the impact the proposed alignments would have on sensitive biological resource areas. Consequently, the County is proposing a change to the Highway Plan that would realign Whites Canyon Road to connect with Sierra Highway instead of Vasquez Canyon Road with Cruzan Mesa Road eliminated as part of this change. With this proposal, no change or new access to Vasquez Canyon Road would result. The roadway improvement proposed by the project is in keeping with the County's preferred alignment and shown on the Draft Highway Plan, where Whites Canyon Road would be extended from Plum Canyon on the west (through Tract Map No. 46018) to the southeast and through the project site as Skyline Ranch Road, ultimately connecting (through property owned by the applicant in the City of Santa Clarita) to Sierra Highway just north of Adon Avenue. The realignment of Whites Canyon Road, between Plum Canyon Road and Sierra Highway, was conditionally approved as Skyline Ranch Road by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works on July 19, 2006 under IEC P270. ~~It is expected that the extension of Whites Canyon Road/Skyline Ranch Road, will lead to an amendment to the Los Angeles County Highway Plan upon~~ Because approval of the County's Draft General Plan has been delayed, County staff requested that the Skyline Ranch project initiate the General Plan Amendment request to amend the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways to realign Whites Canyon Road to the proposed Skyline Ranch Road.

[5] *The Draft General Plan, including the Draft Highway Plan is available for public review at: http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan#anc-download*

Construction of Skyline Ranch Road as proposed could deny access to a portion of recorded Tract Map 46018-11 located to the west of the Skyline Ranch site, as the Tract Map was to be served by Farrell Road, as set forth in the County's Highway Plan at the time of Tract Map approval. To maintain full access to Tract Map 46018-11 with construction of Skyline Ranch Road, it is proposed that a portion of Farrell Road be vacated and a new road added to connect Skyline Ranch Road to the Tract Map, as shown on ~~Figure 2-9~~ Figure 2-10, Skyline Ranch Road Realignment, on page ~~2-19~~ 3-21. The off-site area required for grading and construction of the connecting roadway falls within areas of disturbance ~~previously evaluated for~~ associated with the development of Tracts 46018-11 and revised Tentative Tract Map 46018~~-12~~. While the off-site grading required to support the construction of the connecting roadway would be undertaken as part of the proposed project under a separate conditional use permit, in the event the uses approved under recorded Tract Map 46018-11 are not constructed first, funding and construction of the roadway would be undertaken by the applicant as part of the proposed project.[6] The construction of Skyline Ranch Road would impact 21.6 acres of a preserve area established for recorded Tract 46018. Therefore a 21.6 acre Mitigation Exchange Area would be established as part of the proposed project to ensure a preserve area is retained.

Both on- and off-site grading would be required to provide for the extension of Whites Canyon Road to the west through the development area of the site to connect with Sierra Highway to the south. Off-site grading would occur west of the development area, within Tract Map No. 46018. Approximately 535,000 cubic yards of cut and 37,000 cubic yards of fill would be required off-site to extend Whites Canyon Road to the project site. Off-site and south of the development area, within approximately 1.37 acres owned by the applicant, approximately 6,500 cubic yards of fill would be required off-site in order to provide access to the site from Sierra Highway. Overall on- and off-site grading quantities associated with the extension of Whites Canyon Road is approximately 6.4 million cubic yards (or 32 percent of all grading required for the project).

In order to provide access to the project site at Skyline Ranch Road, Sierra Highway is proposed to be widened from the existing two northbound and two southbound through lane configuration by approximately 28 feet at the project entrance and within existing right-of-way to provide one northbound left-turn lane, two northbound through lanes, two southbound through lanes, one eastbound left-turn lane, two eastbound right-turn lanes, and a traffic signal. A proposed striping plan is shown on ~~Figure 2-10~~ Figure 2-11, Sierra Highway Striping Plan, on page ~~2-21~~ 3-22. A cross-section of Sierra Highway at this location is shown on ~~Figure 2-11~~ Figure 2-12, Sierra Highway at Skyline Ranch Road Cross Section, on page ~~2-22~~ 3-23.

[6] *The approved tract map was evaluated in a 1988 certified Final EIR, Project No. 85-628. In the event Tract Map 46018-11 is revised, this roadway might not be necessary.*

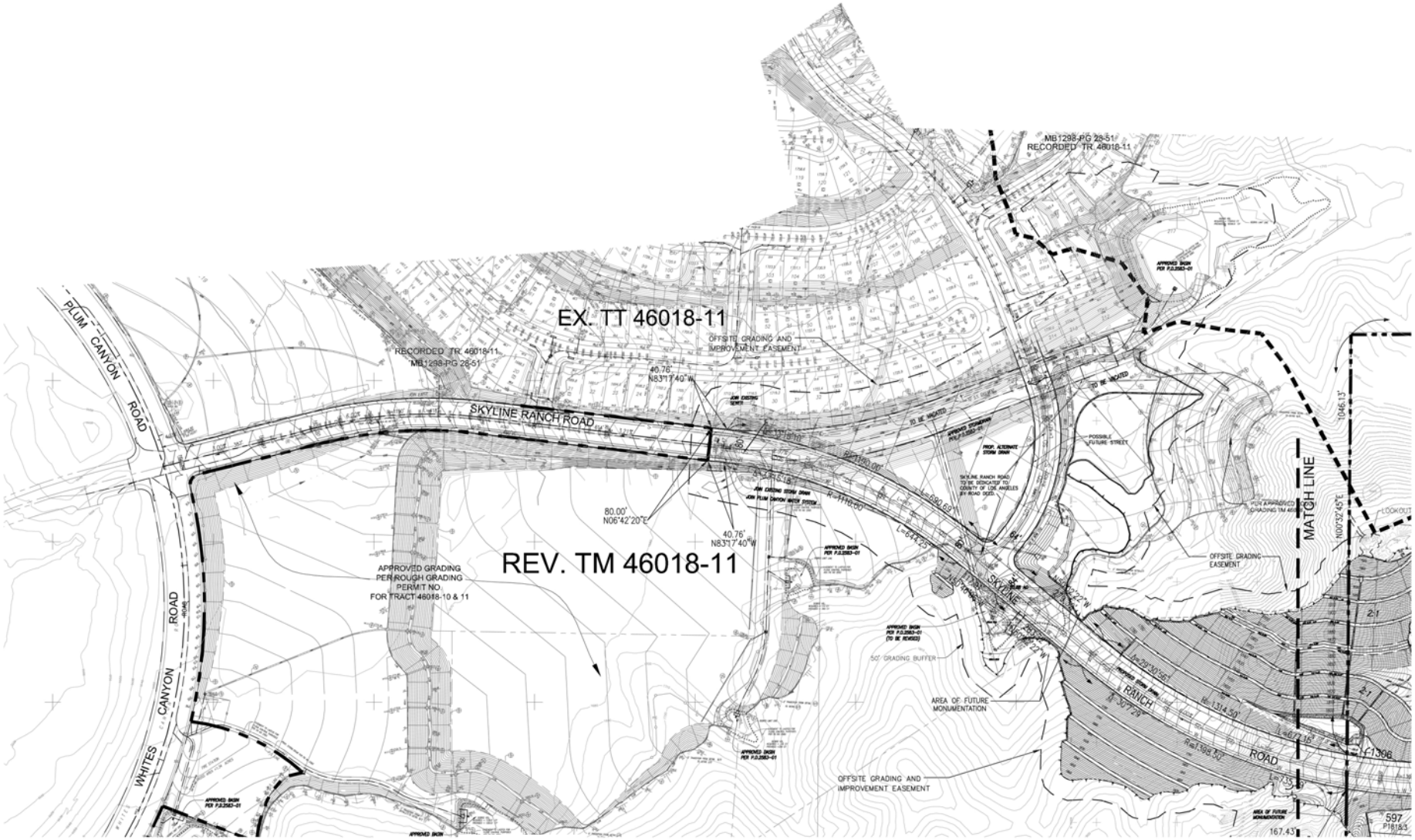

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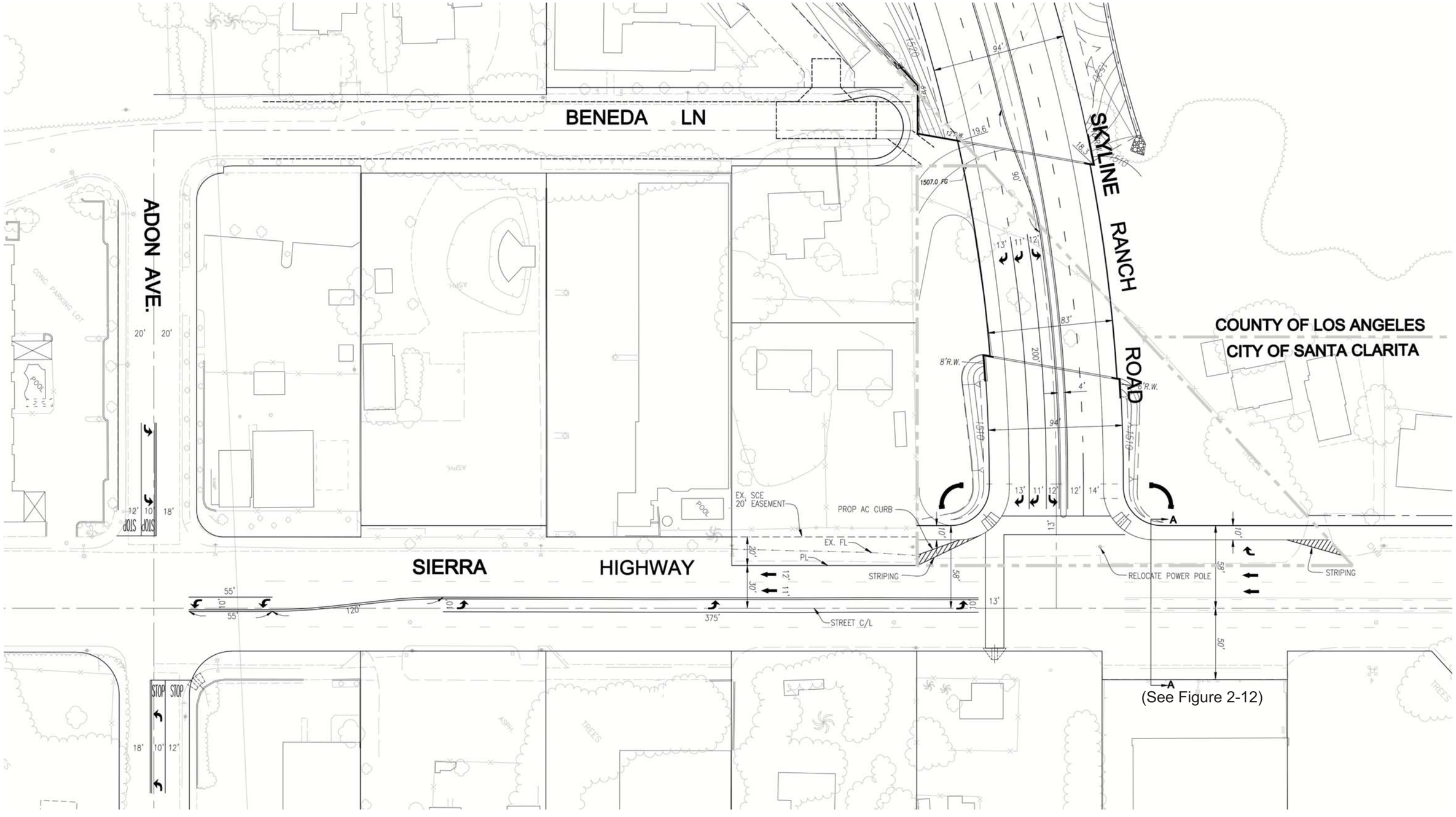
Figure 2-10
Skyline Ranch Road Realignment (Off-Site)

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009



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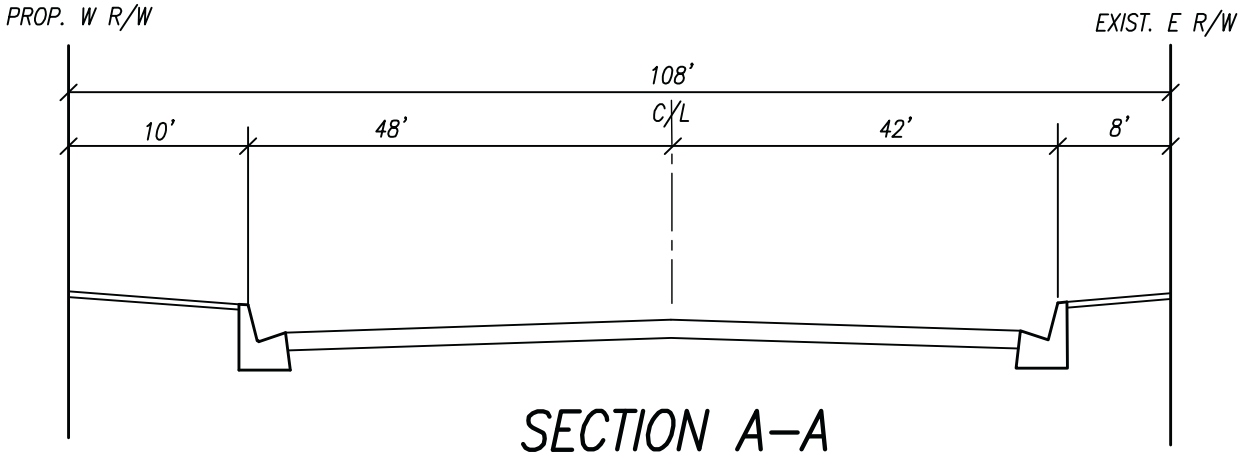
Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009

Figure 2-11
Sierra Highway Striping Plan



FUTURE 108' R.O.W. SECTION AT INTERSECTION
(See Figure 2-11)

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Figure 2-12
Sierra Highway at Skyline Ranch Road Cross Section

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009

Development of the proposed entrance would include an ~~83~~88-foot right-of-way with sidewalks and a Class II bike lane at Skyline Ranch Road, as shown on ~~Figure 2-12~~ Figure 2-13 (Revised), Skyline Ranch Road Bridge Entrance Cross Section, on page ~~2-23~~ 3-25. In addition, construction of the entrance would require a cul-de-sac and hammerhead turnaround at the northeasterly terminus of Beneda Lane to provide adequate separation from Skyline Ranch Road.

As illustrated in ~~Figure 2-13~~ Figure 2-14 (Revised), ~~Conceptual Rendering of the~~ Skyline Ranch Road Cross Section, on page ~~2-24~~ 3-26, ~~Figure 2-14~~ Figure 2-15 (Revised), Conceptual Rendering the Skyline Ranch Road ~~and Interior Loop Road~~ Cross Sections, on page ~~2-25~~ 3-27, and Figure 2-16, Interior Loop Road Cross Section, on page 3-28 the extension of Whites Canyon Road through the project site is planned for two travel lanes in each direction. Through most of the site the travel lanes would be separated by a center median containing landscaped parkways of variable width within a 94-foot right-of-way. North of the public park, for approximately 100 feet, Skyline Ranch Road would narrow to an ~~80~~82-foot right-of-way with two travel lanes in each direction ~~and no center median~~. As shown on ~~Figure 2-15~~ Figure 2-17, Conceptual Rendering of Roundabout Street Cross Section, on page ~~2-28~~ 3-29, a roundabout is proposed for the intersection of Skyline Ranch Road with Main Street North and Main Street South with two-lane approaches each direction on Skyline Ranch Road and one-lane approaches each direction on Main Street. The roundabout would include an approximate 50-foot radius landscaped central island in the center and a paved median and walkway on Skyline Ranch Road. Local roadways would extend off Whites Canyon Road within a 70-, 64-, 60- or 58-foot right-of-way, as shown in Figures 2-16, ~~2-16, 2-17, and 2-18~~ 2-18, 2-19, and 2-20 on pages ~~2-29, 2-30, and 2-31~~ 3-28, 3-30, 3-31, and 3-32, respectively. All roadways within the project site would be constructed to urban or rural standards as defined by the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works.

(2) Drainage

As proposed, on-site surface run-off would be intercepted by curb, debris, and/or desilting inlets and conveyed to a network of storm drains that lead to a series of treatment structures, prior to discharge into a proposed 78-inch storm drain and concrete-lined trapezoid channel that would extend approximately 3,300 linear feet, of which 1,300 feet would extend offsite to the southwest. The proposed storm drain and channel would connect with an existing County Department of Public Works flood control channel. The construction of this facility would take approximately six months and would occur during the second phase of grading. Development of the storm drain would require a flood control easement from the County Department of Public Works. In addition, an easement of approximately 800 linear feet and total area of 16,000 square feet would be required from one property owner located to the southwest. Surface water runoff from the site would also be collected by storm drains within Bookham Drive and Bakerton Avenue to the west. Energy dissipaters, such as rip rap, would be placed at the discharge points of each storm drain outlet. In addition, within and adjacent to the project

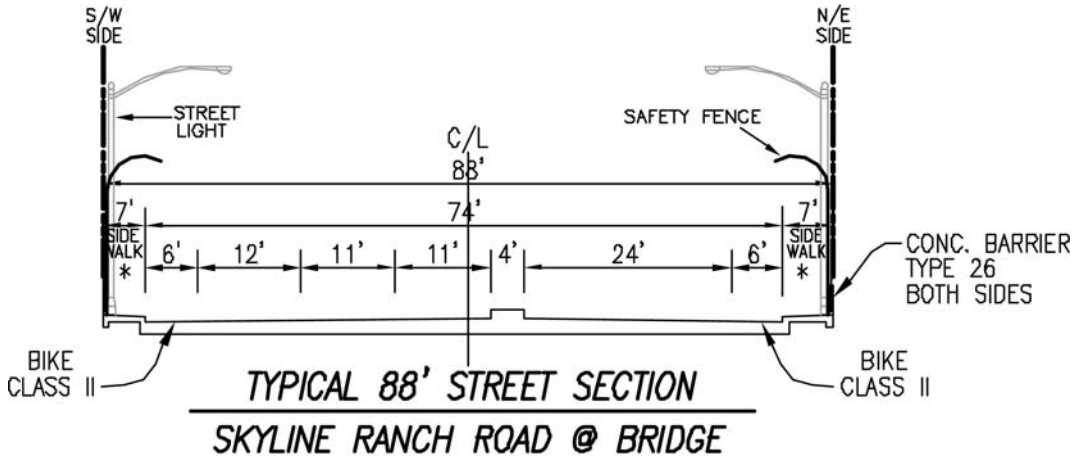

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Figure 2-13 (Revised)
Skyline Ranch Road
Bridge Entrance Cross Section

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009

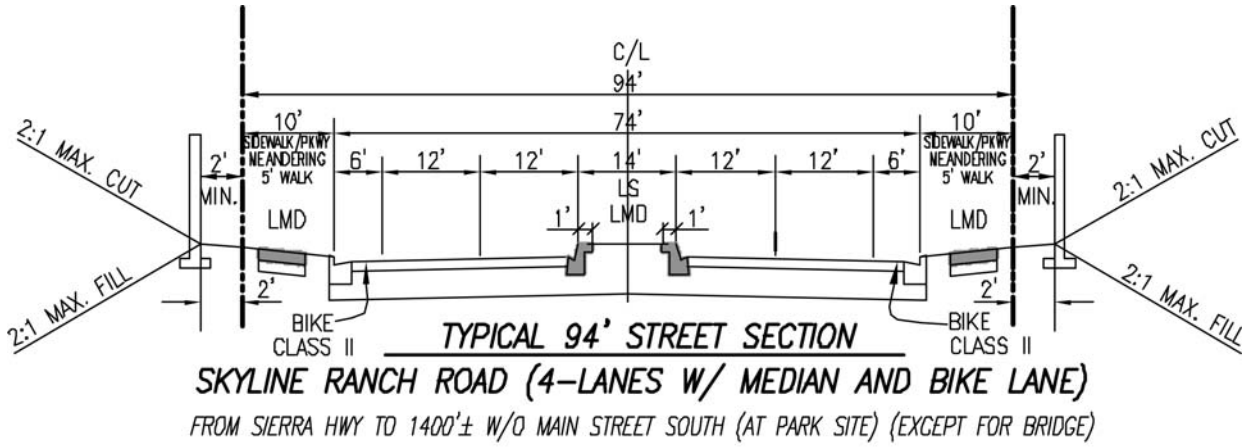

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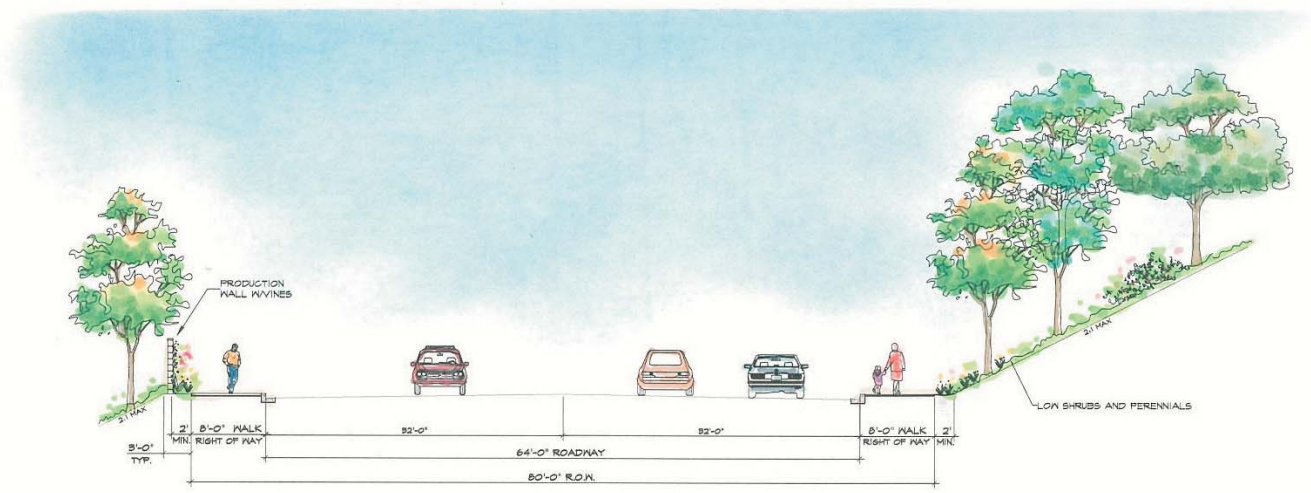
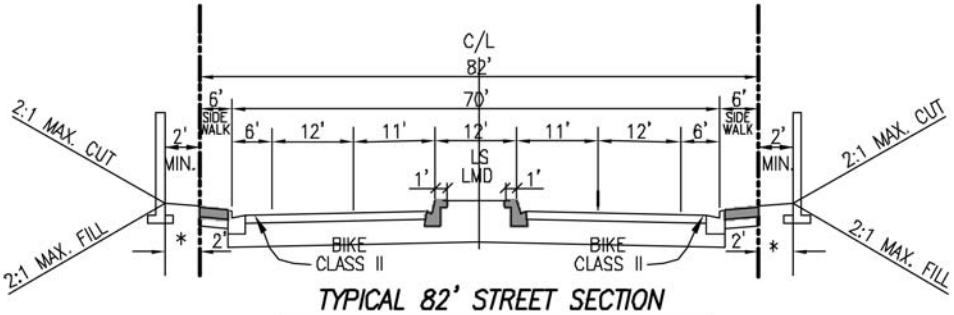
Figure 2-14 (Revised)
Skyline Ranch Road Cross Section

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009



SKYLINE RANCH ROAD - 80' R.O.W. STREET

FROM BENSION EXTENSION TO WHITES CANYON ROAD



TYPICAL 82' STREET SECTION

SKYLINE RANCH ROAD (4-LANES W/ MEDIAN AND BIKE LANES)

FROM 1400'± W/O MAIN STREET SOUTH (AT PARK SITE) TO BENSION EXTENSION

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Figure 2-15 (Revised)
Conceptual Rendering of the Skyline Ranch Road Cross Sections

Source: L.A. Group, Inc., 2006; Sikand Engineering 2009

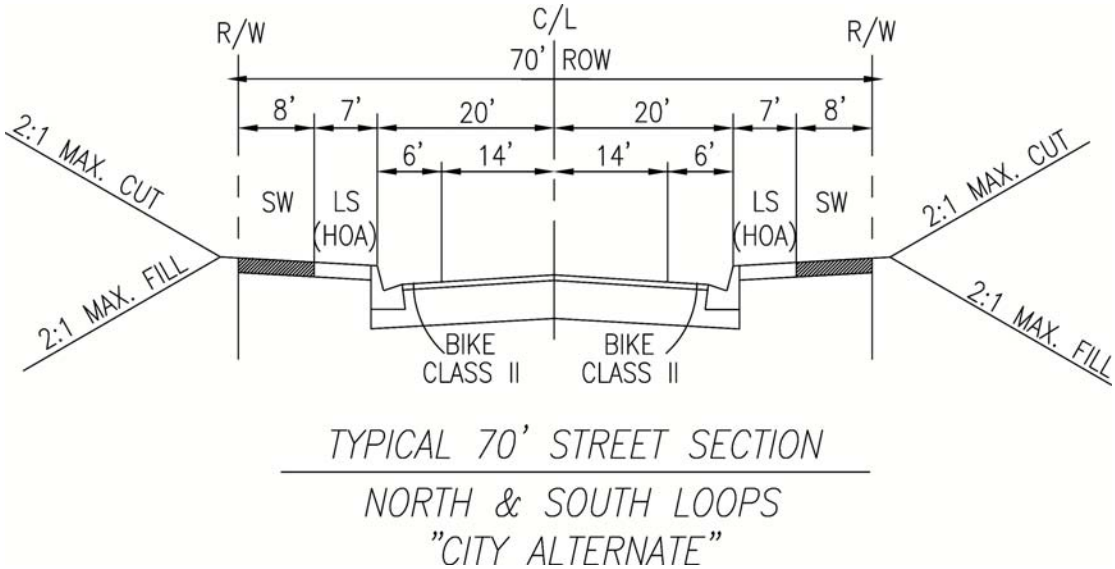

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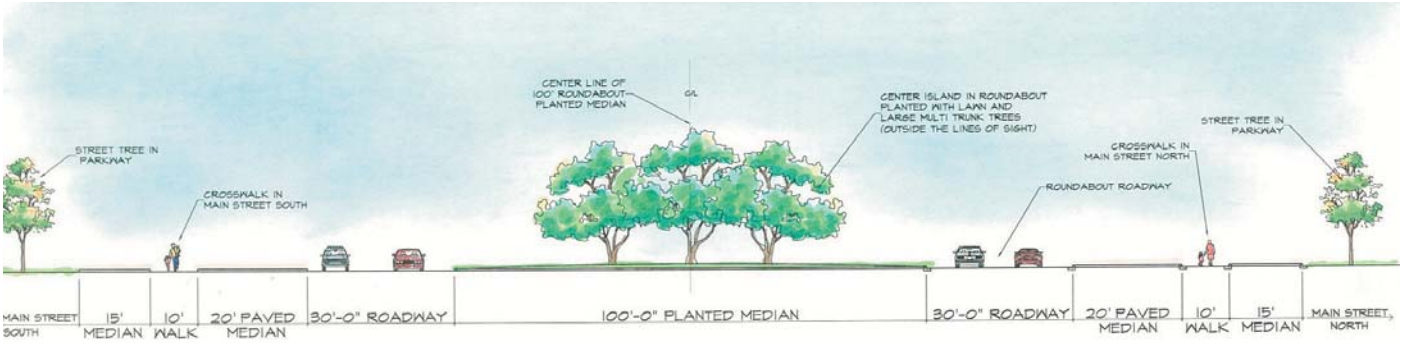
Figure 2-16
Interior Loop Road Cross Section

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009



ROUNDABOUT STREET SECTION

SKYLINE RANCH ROAD AT MAIN STREET NORTH AND SOUTH

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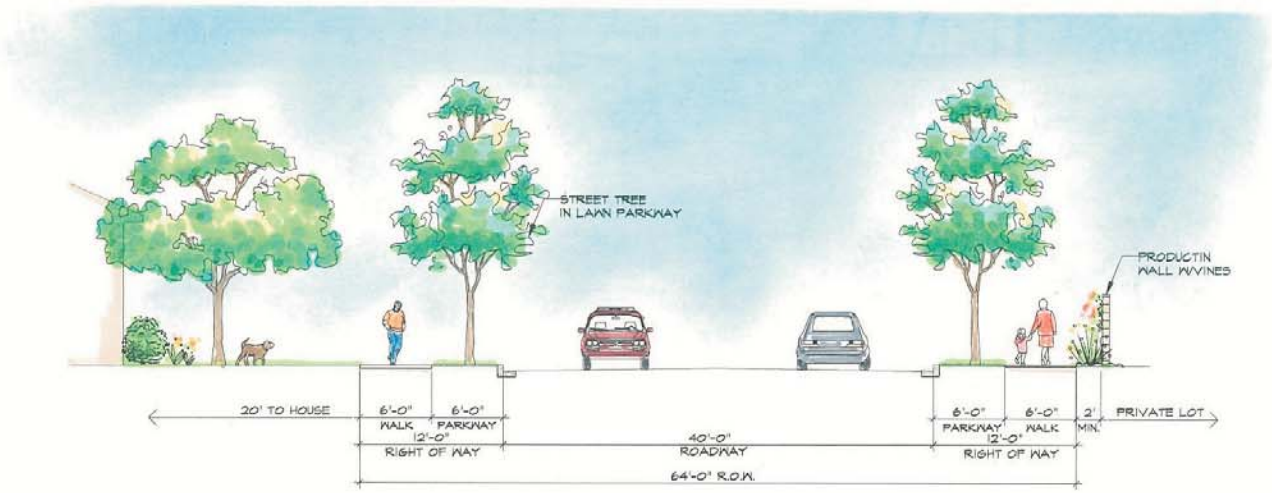
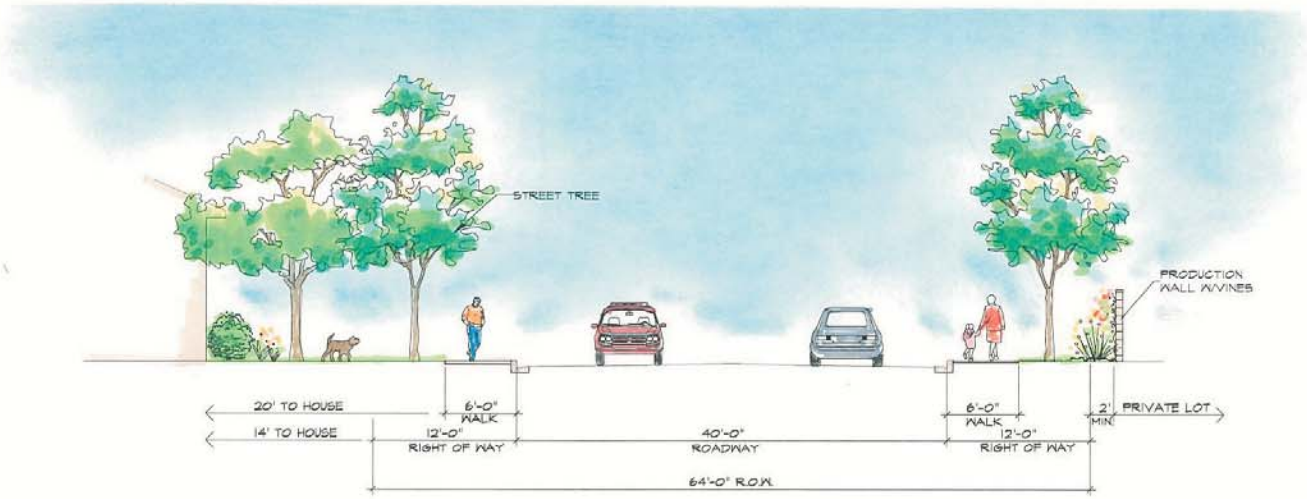
Figure 2-17
Conceptual Rendering of Roundabout Street Cross Section

Source: L.A. Group, Inc., 2006; Sikand Engineering, 2009



TYPICAL INTERIOR STREET - 64' R.O.W. LOCAL STREET



TYPICAL ALTERNATE INTERIOR STREET - 64' R.O.W. LOCAL STREET

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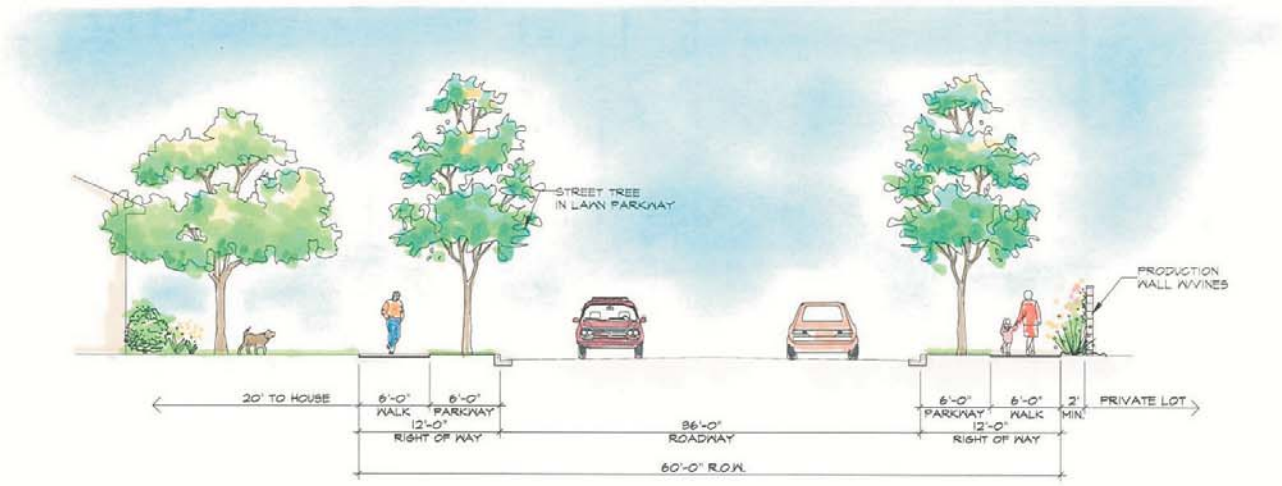
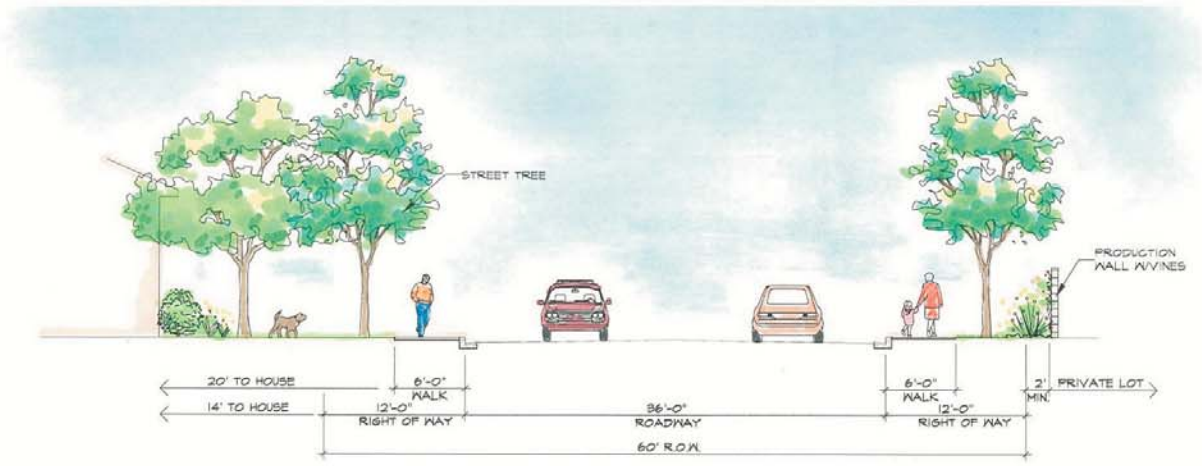
Figure 2-18
Conceptual Rendering of Interior Local Street (64' R.O.W.) Cross Sections

Source: L.A. Group, Inc., 2006



TYPICAL INTERIOR STREET - 60' R.O.W. LOCAL STREET



TYPICAL ALTERNATE INTERIOR STREET - 60' R.O.W. LOCAL STREET

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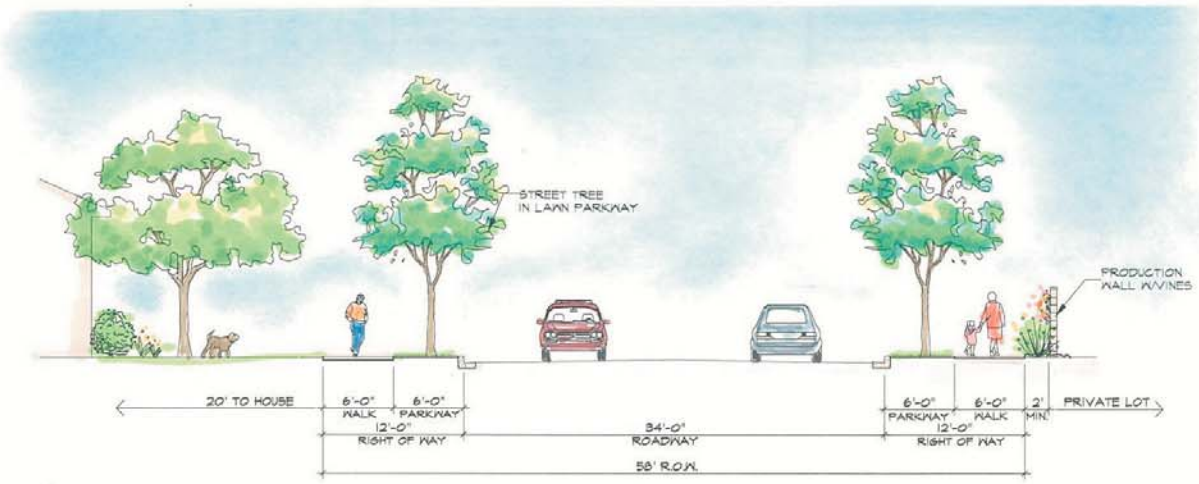
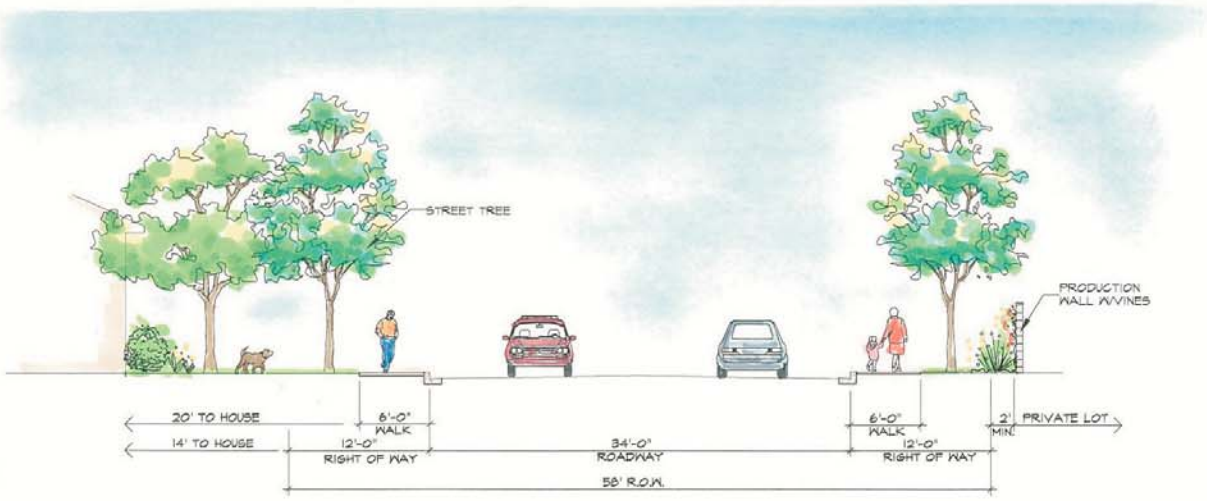
Figure 2-19
Conceptual Rendering of Interior Local Street (60' R.O.W.) Cross Sections

Source: L.A. Group, Inc., 2006



TYPICAL INTERIOR STREET - 58' R.O.W. LOCAL STREET



TYPICAL ALTERNATE INTERIOR STREET - 58' R.O.W. LOCAL STREET

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Figure 2-20
Conceptual Rendering of Interior Local Street (58' R.O.W.) Cross Sections

Source: L.A. Group, Inc., 2006

site, 18 desilting basins would be constructed or rebuilt and placed to reduce downstream flow rates and debris volumes. The proposed storm drain system and the general locations of the desilting basins are included in Section 4.B, Hydrology and Water Quality, of this EIR (see Figure 4.B-3, Proposed Storm Drain and Desilting Basin Map, on page 4.B-21).

Because the proposed project entrance at Skyline Ranch Road and Sierra Highway is located within a flood zone, and in order to reduce runoff on to Sierra Highway, the proposed drainage and flood control features at the project entrance include a bridge over a series of culverts and catch basins which would allow water from Sierra Highway to flow under Skyline Ranch Road. As preliminarily designed, these features would minimize the potential for the project to contribute to downstream and upstream flooding during a 50-year storm event.

(3) Potable Water

The Santa Clarita Water Division (SCWD) of Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA) would provide water service to the Skyline Ranch project. SCWD water supply infrastructure is the closest to the project site and, therefore, the SCWD has the ability to more readily serve the proposed project. In 1999, CLWA purchased SCWD. After the purchase, Section 15.1 was added to the CLWA Law (Act 9099b of the California Water Code Uncodified Acts) to clarify SCWD's ability to provide retail water service. Section 15.1 authorizes SCWD to exercise retail water authority within a specified area (SCWD service area square). The SCWD service area square overlaps with portions of Newhall County Water District's (NCWD) boundaries. Within the overlap area, NCWD has the exclusive authority to provide water service, unless it consents to SCWD providing service. The project site is located within the overlap area. NCWD has consented to SCWD serving the project by entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CLWA on September 19, 2005. Accordingly, SCWD is authorized to serve the proposed project pursuant to Section 15.1 of CLWA Law, Water Code Section 12944.7, and the MOU.

In order to provide sufficient amounts of water and adequate water pressure to the area proposed for development, three water storage tanks and two water booster/pump stations are proposed on four lots. The water tanks would include a two-million gallon tank in the northwest portion of the developed area and two one-million gallon tanks in the northeastern portion of the developed area. All water tanks would consist of an aboveground welded steel tank supported by reinforced concrete ring footings. The tank would be designed and constructed to meet American Water Works Association (AWWA), National Sanitary Foundation (NSF) and other industry standards for domestic water storage. A total of four million gallons of storage capacity would be available to meet the emergency and fire flow storage capacity requirements necessary to support the project upon completion. The project would have two on-site water pressure zones, an 1842 zone and a 2117 zone that would each serve approximately half the development. The location of the water storage tanks, water booster stations, water pressure zones, and water

lines are included in Section 4.I, Water Resources, of this EIR (see Figure 4.I-2). Potable water would be conveyed to on-site uses via a network of 6- to 16-inch pipes that would be located primarily beneath the planned roadway alignments. The proposed system would connect to existing 8- and 10-inch pipelines located in Sierra Highway. In addition, a new 16-inch pipeline would be provided as part of the project to connect the existing SCWD Deane water tank to the on-site infrastructure via Sierra Highway.

(4) Wastewater

Wastewater generated by the proposed project would be conveyed to and treated to a tertiary level at Santa Clarita Valley Joint Sewerage System, which is operated by the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (CSD). Collection and conveyance would occur by gravity flow within a network of 8-, 10-, and 12-inch pipes placed beneath on-site roadways. The sewer collector lines serving the site would connect to an existing 21-inch City sewer within Sierra Highway. In addition, to address future development within the Mint Canyon area, the project would ultimately include the construction of a new 24-inch sewer line to supplement the existing 21-inch line in Sierra Highway. The additional line would extend approximately 3,000 feet in Sierra Highway from the CSD trunk sewer in Soledad Canyon Road to Sarabande Lane within the City of Santa Clarita. Refer to Section 4.J, Wastewater Disposal, of this EIR for a more detailed discussion of project wastewater generation, collection and treatment.

(5) Grading

Grading and associated earthwork would require the movement of approximately 20.8 million cubic yards of earth (cut/fill) on the southern 622 acres of the 2,173-acre site, with approximately 33.7 acres of grading occurring on immediately adjacent properties to the west, east, south, and southwest. Of the overall grading quantity, approximately 32 percent (or 6.4 million cubic yards) would be associated with the proposed public improvement to extend Whites Canyon Road to Sierra Highway, both on- and off-site. Within the 622-acre portion of the property, mass grading and remedial grading would take place for major roads and infrastructure, to establish drainage patterns, and to create building pads for the various land uses within the project. Mass and remedial grading would occur over an approximate 24 month period in three phases.

The overall grading and earthwork proposal includes approximately 33.7 acres of off-site grading on adjacent areas to the west, east, south, and southwest. Most of this off-site grading, 29.5 acres located west of the development area and 1.4 acres located to the south, is associated with the extension of Whites Canyon Road from Plum Canyon Road to Sierra Highway and would require approximately 535,000 cubic yards of cut and 37,000 cubic yards of fill. For approximately two acres of this off-site area, located east of the development area, a Right-Of-Way (ROW) Grant has been issued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to allow for

construction of a water diversion structure and manufactured slope area after infilling on federally-owned land managed by the BLM. Approximately 65,000 cubic yards of fill, with a maximum fill depth of 100 feet, would be placed on this BLM property to support the water diversion structure and associated slope area. The construction of the off-site portion of the proposed storm drain (approximately 0.88 acres) to the southwest would require approximately 16,000 cubic yards of grading.

Grading would occur at the proposed Mint Canyon Trail trailhead entrance at Vasquez Canyon Road to provide a switch back trail of approximately 1,400 linear feet, as shown on Figure 2-4. Grading would occur within a variable width of 6-8 feet with an approximate depth of 4 feet and approximately 500 cubic yards of cut and fill to be balanced on site. Grading would occur within an area of approximately 7,405 square feet that is primarily dirt with little to no vegetation features.

A materials processing facility is proposed to be located in the northeast corner of the development area and away from existing residential areas (approximately 3,000 feet to the east and northeast and separated by major ridgelines). The facility would process approximately 68,000 cubic yards of excavated soil for use as base material for concrete and asphalt under a Conditional Use Permit. During grading, excavated materials would be stockpiled and then used as needed during construction for streets and as cover for utility trenching. The material would be excavated, sorted, then crushed or sifted, and stockpiled on site. This would reduce the need to truck in base material to the project site. Operation of the facility would commence after the first phase of grading and end prior to final phase of occupancy for an overall duration of approximately 24 months. The facility would process a maximum of 300 cubic yards per day. The materials processing facility would be located adjacent to the final phase of development and sited at a sufficient distance to minimize noise and vibration effects on adjacent residences as further described in Section 4.G, Noise.

e. Construction Phasing and Schedule

Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to occur incrementally through 2017, with completion of a first phase of construction expected in 2011. No specific time frames have been established for succeeding phases of development. The overall grading operation would begin the first quarter of 2010 and would include clearing/grubbing, sub-drain construction, erosion control, and finish grading, all of which is anticipated to take approximately 24 months with three phases. As discussed above, a total quantity of approximately 20.8 million cubic yards of earth would occur on the southern 622 acres of the 2,173-acre site and immediately adjacent properties to the west, east, and south.

Other site preparation activities include sewers, water, streets, dry utilities, entry monumentation, and landscaping/irrigation. It is preliminarily estimated that site improvements would be completed in segments after grading is complete to accommodate and serve the current phase or succeeding phase of development. Construction of storm drains, sewers, water, and streets, respectively, are expected to start in a sequential manner after site grading begins. Completion of the storm drains would coincide with conclusion of grading activities. Sewer, water and street improvements, respectively, are expected to be completed in a staggered finish after the site is graded. Construction of dry utilities and entry monumentation would start well after grading is concluded with completion expected shortly after streets are in place. The last site improvements undertaken are common area landscaping and irrigation. These improvements would generally be started after all utilities (wet and dry) are in place and functional.

2. Proposed Open Space

As further described below, roughly 1,551 acres concentrated in the northern portion of the project site is proposed to remain undeveloped. Approximately 1,355 acres of this area, representing 62 percent of the project site, would be dedicated or designated as natural open space and managed through the proposed establishment of the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA). Approximately 166 acres of land in the northern area, referred to as the Non-Development/Continuing Use Area, would remain undeveloped. No change to currently allowed uses within this area is proposed; however, as part of the density transfer approval for the proposed project, a Declaration of Restrictions (or similar recorded land use restriction) in favor of the County of Los Angeles would be placed on use of the land to prevent commercial, residential, institutional, recreational, or industrial structures from being built in the future. In addition, approximately 21.6 acres within the northern portion of the site would be preserved as replacement habitat for 21.6 acres of preserve area within recorded Tract 46018 that would be disturbed due to the proposed construction of Skyline Ranch Road. The 21.6-acre "Mitigation Exchange Area" for the adjacent tract would be established separately from the SRCA through an agreement between the applicant, Shapell-Monteverde Partnership (owner of recorded Tract 46018), the Army Corps of Engineers, and the County of Los Angeles. The remainder of the undeveloped northern area, approximately 9 acres, would be designated as open space without conservation easements or restrictions.

A substantial portion of the area to remain undeveloped is the subject of a proposed Significant Ecological Area (proposed Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pools SEA) designation as part of the current Los Angeles County General Plan update. As further described in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, this area includes mesas, canyons, interior slopes, and a seasonally flowing wash. As proposed by the County, the Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pools SEA would encompass 958 acres within and adjacent to the northern areas of the project site. The SEA designation has been proposed by the County in large part due to the presence of two vernal pools: the Cruzan Mesa vernal pool complex and the smaller Plum Canyon vernal pool. Vernal

pools are regionally unique biotic communities that support a variety of special-status plant and animal species. The Cruzan Mesa and Plum Canyon vernal pools support the federally and state endangered California Orcutt grass, as well as the federally threatened spreading navarretia and vernal pool fairy shrimp. The vernal pools also provide potential habitat for several additional non-agency listed special status species. In addition to the vernal pools, the proposed Cruzan Mesa SEA supports coastal sage scrub and holly-leaved cherry scrub, both of which are considered sensitive/declining vegetation communities by the California Department of Fish and Game. All areas of the project site within the County's proposed Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pools SEA are proposed as open space and would fall either within the proposed SRCA, the Non-Development/Continuing Use Area, or Mitigation Exchange Area for recorded Tract 46018. The proposed SRCA and Non-Development/Continuing Use Area are described below.

The Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA)

The proposed project would, through one or more voluntary conservation easements, land dedications, or land set asides establish the SRCA, which would cover approximately 1,355 acres concentrated within the northern area of the Skyline Ranch property. The SRCA area includes habitat types such as coastal sage scrub, coastal sage chaparral scrub, chaparral, holly-leaved cherry scrub, and small areas of southern willow scrub. This area also includes the Plum Canyon vernal pool and four smaller pools on the southern portion of the Cruzan Mesa. The SRCA would be managed by an as yet undetermined agency, non-profit organization, conservation-oriented entity, or other entity approved by the County of Los Angeles with experience in the area of natural resource conservation. The SRCA would have associated with it an on-going maintenance and management program to insure the long-term persistence of the area's biotic resources. Direct and indirect degradation of habitat would be prevented in part through steep topography that separates the SRCA from the proposed development area and through the prohibition or restriction of uses within the SRCA. The SRCA would include signage where appropriate to discourage off-road vehicles, domestic pets, and other activities harmful to natural lands. Following project approval, any continued use of lands within the proposed SRCA for activities, such as film-making, would be subject to approval by the SRCA habitat manager and restricted to uses that are not incompatible with the resource conservation objectives of the SRCA. As described in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, of this EIR, conservation of these 1,355 acres would be sufficient to provide in-kind mitigation for impacts to coastal sage scrub, coastal sage-chaparral scrub, and holly-leaved cherry scrub resulting from the proposed project. The SRCA would also support the additional planting of 7.27 acres of sycamore riparian woodland within Plum Canyon.

Non-Development/Continuing Use Area

Approximately 166 acres of the northern area would remain undeveloped with restrictions placed on use of the land to prevent buildings from being established within this area.

This Non-Development/Continuing Use Area includes most of the Cruzan Mesa, including a large, bisected vernal pool and its associated watershed. As described in Section 4.C, Biological Resources, the vast majority of this 166-acre area supports non-native grasslands, disturbed areas, and disturbed coastal sage scrub. As such, this area does not provide in-kind conservation mitigation for impacts to any vegetation community that would result from the proposed project. A Declaration of Restrictions (or similar, recorded land use restriction) would be placed over the 166-acre area to prevent buildings from being established within this area. Filming and film-making activities which have historically occurred within the area may continue.

D. INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

The purpose of this Draft EIR is to assist the County of Los Angeles, as the Lead Agency under CEQA, in the decision-making process for the project. In accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code, §21002.1), the intended uses of this Draft EIR are to identify the significant environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project, to indicate the manner in which these significant effects can be mitigated or avoided, and to identify alternatives to the proposed project. This Draft EIR is a Project EIR as defined by the *State CEQA Guidelines* (§15161).

A series of approvals, entitlements, and permits would be required for project implementation from the County of Los Angeles, City of Santa Clarita and various other public agencies. Discretionary approvals associated with the proposed project may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. County of Los Angeles

- Vesting Tentative Tract Map approval (for the development of 1260 residential lots) pursuant to Subdivision Code Subsections 21.38.010 through 21.38.080;
- General Plan Amendment to amend the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways to realign Whites Canyon Road to the proposed Skyline Ranch Road alignment as a secondary highway from Plum Canyon Road to Sierra Highway:
- Conditional Use Permit for work associated with offsite grading and construction of Skyline Ranch Road and temporary onsite materials processing facility;
- Conditional Use Permit for Density-Controlled Development pursuant to Zoning Code Subsection 22.56.205 and Hillside Management Areas pursuant to Zoning Code Subsection 22.56.215;

- Oak Tree Permit (for removal of one oak tree) pursuant to Zoning Code Subsections 22.56.2050 through 22.56.2260;
- Approval to construct a 70-foot non-standard right-of-way within a local interior street;
- Other approvals, subsequent to discretionary approval, including those from the following agencies:
  - County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Sewer Line Connection Permit);
  - Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (Building Permit, Grading Permit, Improvement Plan Permit, General Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit, Flood Control Easement);
  - Los Angeles County Fire Department (Approval of Alternative cul-de-sac/ turnaround on Beneda Lane).

2. Other Agencies

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for impacts to Waters of the U.S.);
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (Design Approval);
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (Right-of-Way Grant);
- California Department of Fish and Game (Streambed Alteration Agreement under Section 1602 of the State Fish and Game Code for impacts to jurisdictional streambed and associated riparian habitat);
- California Department of Transportation;
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (Los Angeles Region):
  - NPDES General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit;
  - RWQCB General Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit;
  - Water Quality Certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act for impacts to Waters of the State;
- South Coast Air Quality Management District;
- Castaic Lake Water Agency (Water Service Agreement);

- City of Santa Clarita (Encroachment Permit, Approval of Alternative cul-de-sac/ turnaround on Beneda Lane, Interim Offer of Dedication).

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Section 4.A, Geotechnical Resources

Page 4.A-12, has been revised as follows:

(2) Soils

(a) Slope Stability

The project site would be graded to provide for major roads and infrastructure, establish drainage patterns and for creation of building pads for the various land uses within the project. Remedial grading in the form of buttress and stability fills would also be required for graded slopes that expose unfavorable geologic conditions or unsuitable soils. Approximately 20,800,000 cubic yards of soil would be graded within the southern 622 acres of the site, and on 33.7 acres of adjacent property to the east, west, south, and southwest. Approximately 32 percent of the grading (6.4 million cubic yards) would be associated with the proposed public improvement to extend Whites Canyon Road from Plum Canyon Road, through the site to connect with Sierra Highway.

<u>Minor grading (approximately 500 cubic yards of cut and fill to be balanced on site) would be required within the northeast portion of the project site to construct the entrance to the proposed Mint Canyon Trail at Vasquez Canyon Road. Grading would occur within a variable width of 6-8 feet with an approximate depth of 4 feet to provide a switch back trail of approximately 1,400 linear feet. The overall area of disturbance is approximately 7,405 square feet within an area that is primarily dirt with little to no vegetation features. Grading for the trail could include erosion control measures as needed, such as sandbagging, to minimize soil erosion and stormwater runoff. Due to the limited extent of grading associated with the Mint Canyon Trail entrance, impacts would be less than significant.</u>

Section 4.B, Hydrology and Water Quality

Page 4.B-11, has been revised as follows:

(2) Flood Plains

The southwest portion of Watershed A and a small portion of Watershed D ~~is~~ are within Flood Zone A as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the ~~Federal~~ Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panel No. ~~0607290365C~~ 06037C0840F for the communities of Los Angeles County (Community Number 065042) and Santa Clarita (Community Number 060729).[4] Flood Zone A is defined as an area subject to 100-year floods with an undetermined base flood elevation. ~~Similarly, a small portion of Watershed D is situated within a designated Zone AO. Zone AO is defined as an area subject to 100-year shallow flooding (usually sheet flow on sloping terrain) with average depth of 1 to 3 feet with an undetermined base flood elevation. The AO~~ Flood Zone A, ~~with a 2-foot depth of runoff,~~ affects Sierra Highway and areas adjacent properties southeast of the project site. These areas are subject to periodic flooding primarily as a result of large amounts of debris volume from Mint Canyon that clogs the bridge entrance near Sierra Highway and Scherzinger Lane. Two existing storm drain outlets are located north of the bridge. Watershed D is located within the County Flood Plain Boundary. The County Flood Plain Boundary is used to designate areas subject to 50-year floods, as shown on the recorded County Floodway maps. The 50-year flow rates were recently recalculated and adjusted by the County of Los Angeles, Water Resources Division, Hydrologic Development Section, as described under Methodology, below. As a result, the Calculated Existing County Flood Plain Boundary is slightly different than the ~~Existing~~ Recorded County ~~Flood Plain~~ Floodway Boundary shown on the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) Floodway Map

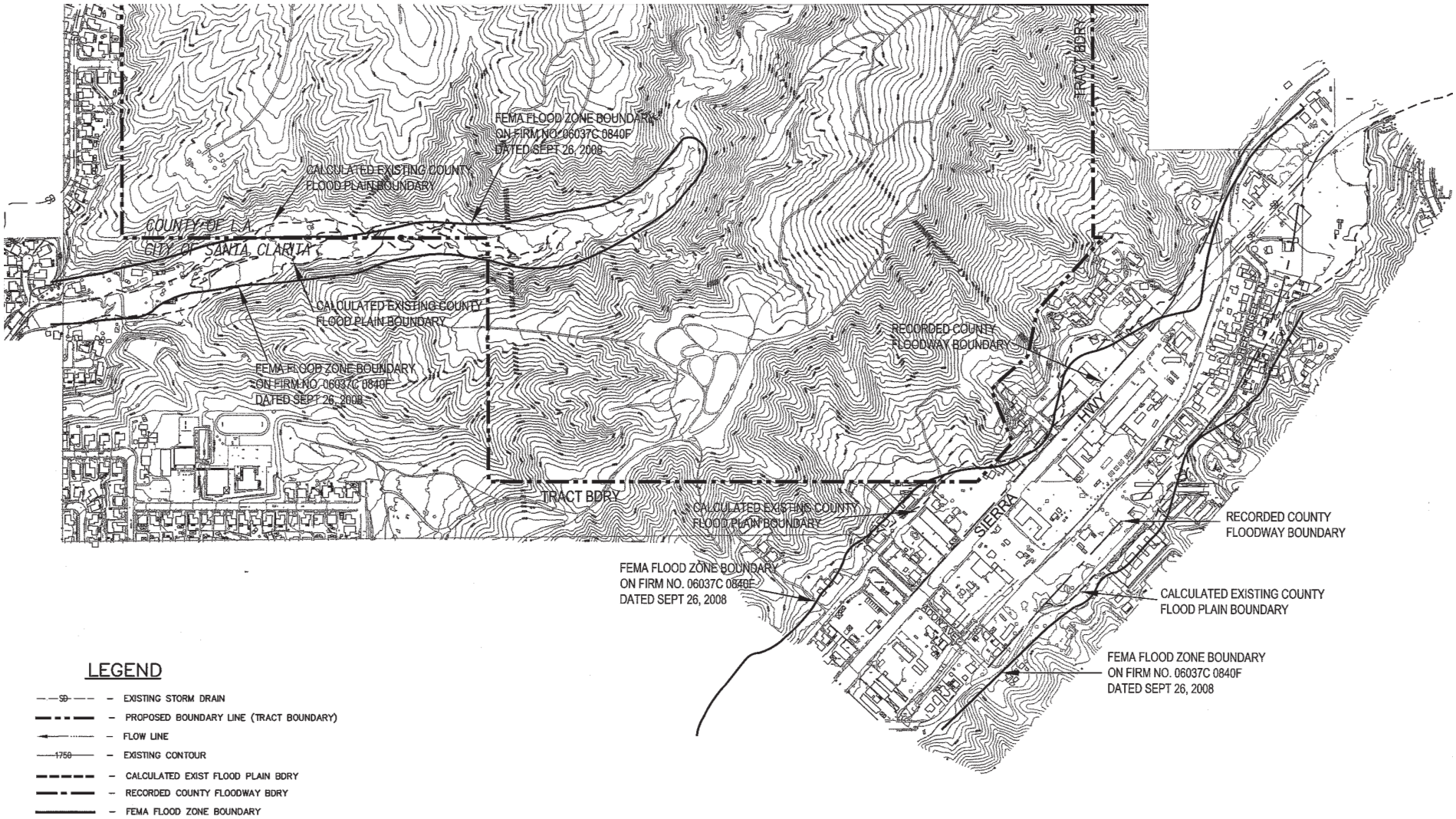
Page 4.B-13, Figure 4.B-2 (Revised), Existing County and FEMA Flood Plain Designations, has been revised to include the current FEMA FIRM reference.

Page 4.B-25 has been revised as follows:

(2) Flood Plains

As previously indicated, discharge of runoff from Watershed D currently occurs as sheet flow to Sierra Highway and adjacent properties southeast of the site near the project entrance, with a 2-foot depth of runoff in an area that is designated as a FEMA ~~AO~~ Flood Zone A, ~~subject to 100-year shallow flooding of 1 to 3 feet in depth~~ subject to 100-year floods with an undetermined base flood elevation. Construction of Skyline Ranch Road at Sierra Highway has the potential to increase flooding upstream (i.e., to the southeast of the proposed entrance) during a 50-year storm event due to the displacement of flood plain area with fill required to connect these roadways. Development of the entrance is proposed to include a bridge over a series of culverts and catch basins, which would allow water from Sierra Highway to flow under Skyline Ranch Road in order to minimize the potential for flooding at the project entrance and reduce the flow rate along Sierra Highway during a 50-year storm event. For comparison purpose, between

[4] *FEMA FIRM Panel No. ~~0607290365C, September 29, 1989~~ 06037C0840F, September 26, 2008.*



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Not to scale

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009

Figure 4.B-2 (Revised)
Existing County and FEMA Flood Plain Designations

the proposed drainage condition and the existing drainage condition in drainage area D and D2, there is a decrease in total flow rate of 21 cfs. However, with the construction of the proposed catch basin along Sierra Highway at the project entrance, the flow rate along Sierra Highway would be reduced by 40 cfs during a 50-year storm event, as depicted in the Flood Plain Analysis report and maps (see Appendix C-2 of this EIR). The water surface level would not rise above existing conditions during 50-year storm events. In addition, a change is proposed to the County Flood Plain Boundary as shown on Figure 4.B-5, Proposed County Flood Plain Boundary, on page 4.B-27. Construction of the proposed entrance would not encroach into the Recorded County Floodway Boundary. Although, as proposed, impacts on flooding would be less than

Page 4.B-26, Figure 4.B-5 (Revised), Proposed County Flood Plain Boundary, has been revised to include the current FEMA FIRM reference.

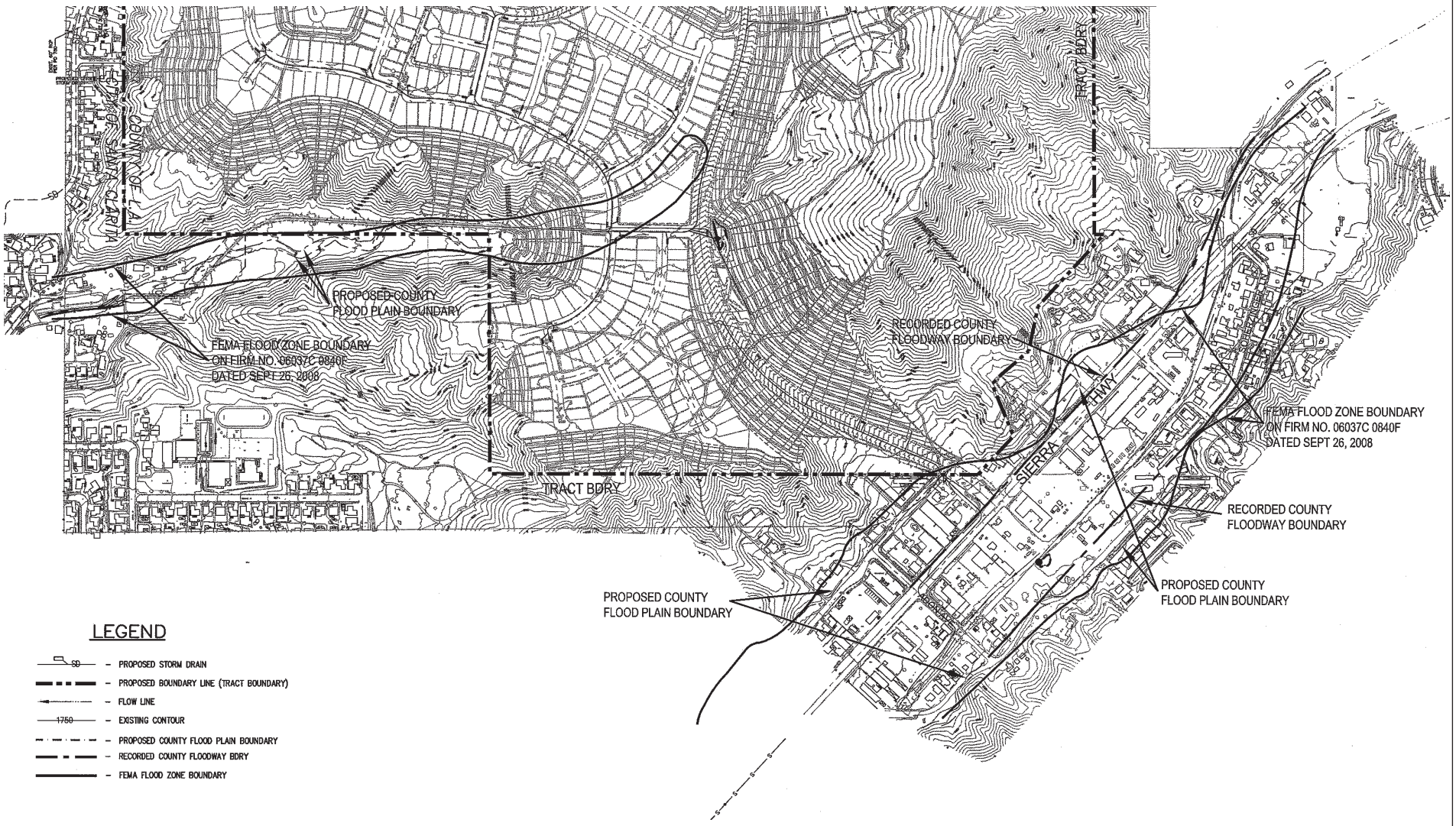
Page 4.B-33, Mitigation Measure 4.B-1 has been revised as follows:

4.B-1 *Final drainage improvement plans for the project shall ensure that there is no displacement of flood plain area in the vicinity of Sierra Highway and its intersection with proposed Skyline Ranch Road through construction of a culvert, bridge, or combination thereof, within the flood plain area. Final drainage improvement plans and the culvert or bridge shall be designed during the engineering stage by a licensed engineer to ensure that the water surface shall be equal or lower than existing conditions both downstream and upstream of the proposed project entrance along Sierra Highway and adjacent properties during a 50-year storm event and that post-development flow rates shall be less than existing conditions downstream along Sierra Highway and adjacent properties. Final drainage improvement plans to achieve these standards shall be designed to the satisfaction of, and approved by, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and City of Santa Clarita, Department of Public Works.*

Section 4.C, Biological Resources

Pages 4.C-2 and 4.C-3 have been revised as follows:

As further described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, and as shown in Figure 2-3, Aerial View-Development and Conservation Areas, the Skyline Ranch project site includes an approximately 622-acre development area (grading only) in the southern portion of the study area, with nearly three quarters or approximately 1,551 acres in the northern portion of the site to remain undeveloped. Approximately 1,355 acres of the undeveloped area would be dedicated or designated and managed as natural open space through the proposed establishment of the Skyline



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Not to Scale

Source: Sikand Engineering, 2009

Figure 4.B-5 (Revised)
Proposed County Flood Plain Boundary

Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA). A total of 166 acres on the Cruzan Mesa, the Non-Development/Continuing Use Area, would remain undeveloped with restrictions placed on use of the land to prevent buildings from being established. The remaining nine acres of undeveloped area in the northern portion of the site would be designated as open space without conservation easements or restrictions. In addition, some grading would occur in the northeast portion of the project site for the proposed Mint Canyon Trail entrance at Vasquez Canyon Road within a primarily dirt area with little to no vegetation. Approximately 60.8 acres off-site would be altered to accommodate fuel modification, remedial grading, and access roads. Collectively the project site and off-site areas are referred to herein as the study area. Much of the northern portion of the study area has been of interest to the County, and falls within the proposed Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pools Significant Ecological Area (SEA) being considered in an update to the County General Plan. All portions of the study area within the County's proposed SEA are located outside of the proposed Skyline Ranch development area and off-site areas subject to project-related grading and alteration with the exception of minor grading associated with the Mint Canyon trailhead. The SRCA and the Non-Development/Continuing Use Area are further described below under Subsection 3, Project Impacts, c. Relevant Project Features.

Page 4.C-66, third paragraph, has been revised as follows:

The proposed project would not impact southern vernal pool or southern willow scrub habitat because the project development area does not include development or grading in the northern portion of the study area where these resources occur. Grading associated with the Mint Canyon trail entrance would also not affect these resources, since grading would occur within a primarily dirt area with little to no vegetation features and approximately 3,000 feet north of the vernal pools.

Page 4.C-68, first and second paragraph, has been revised as follows:

storm drain. However, this would be restored to pre-project conditions following grading and all on-site areas will become part of the SRCA. Thus, as these impacts would be temporary and would be restored to the existing conditions after project development, impacts to jurisdictional waters off-site are considered less than significant.

Grading associated with the Mint Canyon trail entrance would have no impacts to ACOE, CDFG or RWQCB jurisdiction.

Section 4.D, Cultural and Paleontological Resources

b. Paleontological Resources

Pages 4.D-21 and 4.D-22, Mitigation Measure 4.D-2(a), 4.D-2(b), and 4.D-2(c) have been revised as follows:

4.D-2(a) *Paleontological Survey and Treatment Program. Prior to the implementation of grading or construction related activities, a qualified paleontologist shall be retained by the applicant to survey the project area to relocate known fossil localities, and determine the most sensitive areas. A qualified paleontologist is defined as a paleontologist meeting the criteria established by the Society for Vertebrate Paleontology including institutional affiliations/credentials, ability to recognize and recover vertebrate fossils in the field, local geological and biostratigraphic expertise, proficiency in identifying vertebrate fossils, publications in scientific journals. Following the survey, a paleontological resources monitoring and mitigation program will be developed by the qualified paleontologist that will include salvage of known fossil resources, areas that will be monitored during project-related earth-moving activities. The paleontological resources monitoring and mitigation program shall be submitted to the County for review and approval prior to construction grading activities. The program shall define specific procedures for construction monitoring; emergency discovery; sampling and data recovery, if needed; museum storage of any specimen and data recovered; preconstruction coordination; and reporting. Any curation costs shall be incurred by the applicant.*

4.D-2(b) *Paleontological Monitoring. The ~~paleontologist~~ paleontological monitor, who has been trained by a qualified paleontologist to identify vertebrate fossils, shall monitor earth-moving construction activities at depths determined to be sensitive as specified in the County approved monitoring plan. Monitoring will not be conducted in areas where the ground has been previously disturbed or in areas where exposed sediment will be buried, but not otherwise disturbed.*

4.D-2(c) *Paleontological Data Recovery. Prior to the start of grading or construction related activities, construction personnel involved with earth-moving activities shall be informed of procedures to follow if fossil remains are encountered. In the event that paleontological resources are encountered during construction-related earth-moving activities, all work shall cease within the immediate area and be redirected elsewhere until the paleontological monitor has evaluated the situation and provided recommendations for the protection of, or mitigation of adverse effects to, significant paleontological resources*

assessed. Upon such discoveries, the contractor shall notify the applicant and Los Angeles County. Procedures for mitigating potential impacts to significant paleontological resources shall follow the monitoring and mitigation program previously developed under this mitigation measure. Construction work within this area shall resume upon approval from the principal project ~~paleontologist~~ paleontological monitor.

Section 4.E, Visual Qualities

Page 4.E-3, Footnotes 1 and 2 have been revised as follows:

1 The County is currently updating the General Plan and has prepared a Draft General Plan (September 2008) that is available for public review at: http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan. An EIR that addresses the environmental impacts of the amended plan is expected to become available in the fall/winter of 2010. Adoption of the updated Countywide General Plan is estimated for spring 2012. Until this Draft Plan is approved, the existing General Plan is the current governing document.

2 The Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan, which encompasses the County of Los Angeles and the City of Santa Clarita, is currently being updated as the "One Valley One Vision," program (OVOV). ~~Drafts of the Plan Elements are currently being reviewed and public hearings on the plan are expected to occur in the later part of 2009, with adoption occurring in 2010.~~ The Draft Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report were released for public review in September 2009. These documents are currently being revised and will be recirculated later this year. Public hearings are scheduled through 2010 with adoption anticipated to occur in late 2010 or early 2011. Until such time as this Plan is adopted, the County's existing Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan prevails.

Page 4.E-13 has been revised as follows:

As the residential lots begin to be developed on-site, the appearance of the proposed development area would change in an incremental fashion from undeveloped open space to a developed suburban area. Impacts on receptors and travelers along Sierra Highway, the only existing major public thoroughfare adjacent to the project site, would be somewhat limited as construction would primarily occur on the other side of the significant ridge along the eastern boundary of the project site. However, receptors and motorists along Sierra Highway would have a view of graded slopes on both sides of Skyline Ranch Road near the southern entrance to the project site, and of the gap in the ridgeline created for the road. Impacts on these views during construction would be significant and unavoidable until landscaping and planting have been established.

Although construction of the Mint Canyon Trail trailhead entrance at the northeast portion of the project site would be visible from Vasquez Canyon Road and nearby trails, due to the limited extent and duration of grading activities and lack of notable vegetation removal, impacts would be less than significant.

Section 4.F, Traffic/Access

Page 4.F-39, second paragraph has been revised as follows:

This alignment was conditionally approved by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works on July 19, 2006 and is recommended as Secondary Highway (with an 80-foot standard right-of-way width and two lanes in each direction). ~~Therefore, it is anticipated that the County would amend its Highway Plan in favor of the project alignment as part of~~ Because the General Plan Update Process has been delayed, the amendment to the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways is proposed under this project to realign Whites Canyon Road to the proposed Skyline Ranch Road. Figure 4.F-14, Long-Range Average Daily Traffic Volumes (In Thousands) — Current County Plan and Proposed Project Alignment), on page 4.F-40 illustrates the location of these roadways according to the current Highway Plan and shows the proposed realignment and deletion, as shown on the Draft County Highway Plan for comparison.

Page 4.F-44 has been revised as follows:

(9) Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian access routes to the proposed elementary school onsite would be provided by fully improved streets with full-width sidewalks with a pedestrian bridge across Skyline Ranch Road for residential areas north and east of Skyline Ranch Road. Pedestrians crossing Skyline Ranch Road would be able to use the pedestrian bridge, crosswalks or the traffic signal adjacent to the school at Skyline Ranch Road and Main Street South.

Because initial site access for approximately 300 units would be provided from Whites Canyon Road/Plum Canyon Road to the west, page 4.F-47, Mitigation Measure 4.F-2(b) has been revised as follows:

4.F-2(b) *Sierra Highway at Skyline Ranch Road: Prior to the issuance of the ~~first~~301st building permit the project shall construct a new intersection for project access; provide one northbound left-turn lane, two northbound through lanes, two southbound through lanes, one eastbound left-turn lane, and two eastbound right-turn lanes; and install a traffic signal. The placement of the new west leg should be of sufficient distance from the Sierra Highway centerline to allow for the eventual addition of a third southbound through lane as identified in the City of Santa Clarita General Plan Circulation Element.*

Section 4.G, Noise

Page 4.G-22 has been revised as follows:

c. Impact Analysis

A total of 1,260 residential dwelling units, an approximately 11 acre elementary school site, approximately 12 acres of public parkland, approximately 6 acres of private parkland, supporting roadways (including the proposed Whites Canyon Road extension to Sierra Highway), and infrastructure improvements are proposed on 622 acres in the southern portion of the 2,173-acre Skyline Ranch site. The remaining 1,551 acres in the northern portion of the site would remain undeveloped. The 622-acre development area would be graded, with grading and building construction activities occurring as close as 25 feet from the existing residential subdivisions to the west. Grading would also occur along the southernmost property line, which abuts large lot single-family residences and multi-family residences north of Beneda Lane and Stonehill Way. The project site also abuts residences along Hillfield Lane and Sierra Cross Avenue west of Sierra Highway, however, no grading or construction is proposed in close proximity to these residences. Grading would occur at the northeast portion of the project site for the proposed Mint Canyon Trail trailhead entrance. There are also offsite construction activities associated with the utility and road improvements planned for Foxlane Drive, Canyon Crest, Bookham Drive, Bakerton Avenue, and Goodvale Road near west and southwest portion of the project boundary; and within Beneda Lane and Sierra Highway, near the project entrance.

(1) Construction Noise Impacts

(a) Background

Project development activities would primarily include site preparation (grading and excavation) and construction of internal roadways and other infrastructure, driveways, and structures. The project applicant proposes to develop approximately 622 acres of the site with 1,260 single-family residential lots along with an approximately 11-acre elementary school site, approximately 12 acres of public parkland, and approximately 6 acres of private parkland. Off-site construction activities would occur on approximately 29.5 acres for the extension of Whites Canyon Road/Plum Canyon Road from the northwest to the project site and associated drainage basins, approximately 2 acres for landscaped slope area to the east, and approximately 1.4 acres for the extension of Skyline Ranch Road to Sierra Highway to the south. Grading would occur at the northeast portion of the project site for construction of the proposed Mint Canyon Trail trailhead entrance at Vasquez Canyon Road to provide a switchback trail of approximately 1,400 linear feet. Offsite construction would also include cul-de-sac/hammerhead turnaround improvements at Canyon Crest, Beneda Lane, and Bookham Drive; a 78-inch storm drain and

trapezoid channel that extends to the southwest near Goodvale Road and proposed storm drains within Bookham Drive and Bakerton Avenue; and downsizing an existing debris basin at the easterly terminus of Foxlane Drive. In addition, the project would include a sewer line and water line within Sierra Highway. Construction of the off-site portion of the 78-inch (approximately 0.88 acres) would extend approximately 1,300 feet to the southwest and require approximately

Page 4.G-29 has been revised as follows:

The construction of 78-inch storm drain and concrete-lined trapezoid channel installation would also use open-cut trenching techniques. Construction noise levels would be expected up to 86 dBA at the noise sensitive receptors within 50 feet near Goodvale Road. Construction noise from the storm drain and concrete-lined trapezoid channel installation would be considered a temporary significant impact. The estimated 86 dBA noise level represents the worst-case condition when heavy construction equipment would be operating near Goodvale Road. A materials processing facility would be located in the northeast corner of the development area. The facility would process approximately 68,000 cubic yards of excavated soil for use as base material for concrete and asphalt. The nearest noise-sensitive uses, single-family residential uses, are located approximately 3,000 feet to the east and northeast of the Materials processing facility site and separated by major ridgelines. The grading activity related noise level of 86 dBA at a reference distance of 50 feet would be up to 51 dBA at the single-family residential uses. As the grading related noise would not exceed 60 dBA threshold of significant, impacts would be less than significant.

Although noise from grading activities associated with the construction of the Mint Canyon Trail entrance may be audible from users of the nearby trails, in general, noise sensitive uses are not located near proposed trail entrance. Therefore, due to the distance from noise sensitive receptors, the short duration of construction activity, and intervening topography and roadway noise, impacts from grading activities would be less than significant.

Section 4.H, Air Quality

Page 4.H-22 has been revised as follows:

The entire project construction duration is estimated to be seven years with site preparation and grading commencing in 2010 and building construction completed in 2017. It is assumed that site preparation would be performed in a single phase. Site preparation would consist of approximately 20.8 million cubic yards of earthwork which would occur on the southern 622 acres of the 2,173-acre site and on adjacent properties to the west and south for project access, and to the east for landscaped slopes. The cut/fill from this earthwork would be balanced at the project site and there would be no soil import or export. A portable material

processing facility (rock crushing) is expected to be operated during the site preparation phase. Use of an on-site material processing facility would reduce the truck trips necessary for importing concrete and asphalt base. Emissions from the material processing facility are included in the overall project analysis. Details are presented in Appendix H.

Although site preparation and grading are expected to occur during a single phase, certain areas may be ready for building construction before the entire site is graded. It is assumed that building construction could occur in some areas while site grading is underway in other areas of the site. In order to represent a worse case analysis, it was assumed that site grading and several building construction phases would be occurring simultaneously (overlapping).

Construction activities would also include the trailhead entrance to the Mint Canyon Trail at the northeast corner of the project site off of Vasquez Canyon Road. The proposed trail extension would include a 1,400 linear feet switchback trail. Grading for this portion of the trail would occur within a variable width of 6-8 feet with an approximate depth of 4 feet and approximately 500 cubic yards cut and fill to be balanced on site. Due to the distance of grading activities from sensitive receptors and the short duration of construction, impacts on air quality from construction of the trail entrance would be less than significant.

Section 4.I, Water Resources

Page 4.I-6, Figure 4.I-2 (Revised), Conceptual Water Plan, has been revised to show the new locations of the alternative booster station and booster station.

Section 4.K, Solid Waste Disposal

Page 4.K-5, Table 4.K-1, Footnotes g and h have been revised as follows:

[g] *Limited to Scholl Canyon ~~Watershed~~Wasteshed as defined by City Ordinance ~~#4782~~#4780.*
[h] *Limited to the Calabasas ~~Watershed~~Wasteshed as identified by Los Angeles County Ordinance #91-0003.*

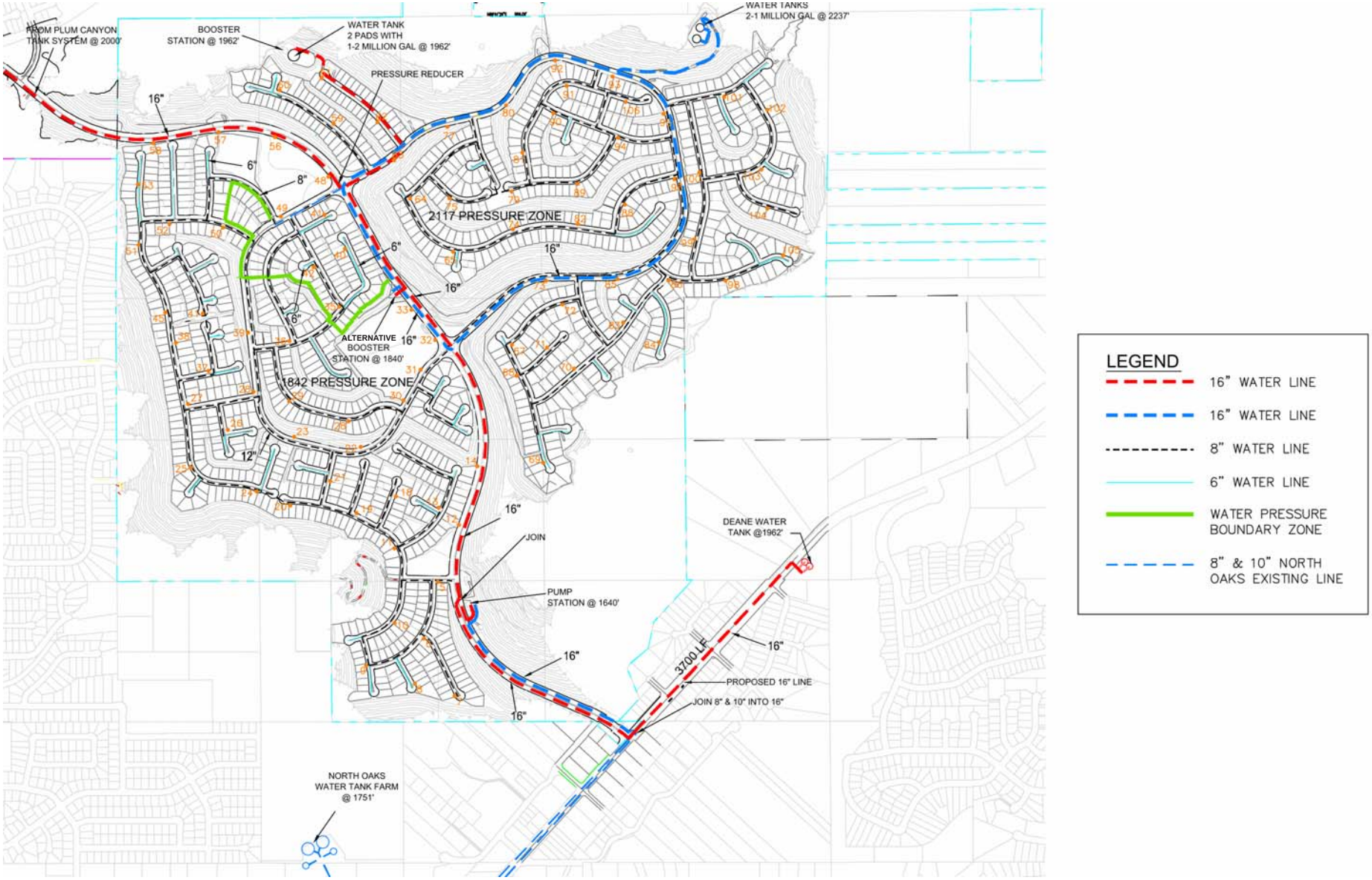
Section 4.M, Fire Services and Hazards

Pages 4.M-3 and 4.M-5 have been revised as follows:

b. Environmental Setting

(1) Fire Protection Services/Facilities

The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD) provides fire protection services to the unincorporated areas of the County and 58 cities, as part of the Consolidated Fire Protection



Scale in approximate feet
Source: Sikand Engineering, 2008.

PCR

Figure 4.I-2 (Revised)
Conceptual Water Plan

District. In addition to fire protection services, the LACoFD also provides special operations services including fire prevention, hazardous materials, emergency medical services, lifeguards, forestry, urban search and rescue, and terrorism response. As of 2007, LACoFD had a staff of approximately 4,767 persons, which include captains, firefighters, firefighter paramedics, administrative personnel, and others. The LACoFD's service area covers 2,305 square miles and approximately1,215,921 households. With 21 battalions, 163 fire stations, and 263 engine companies (22 in training) in 9 geographical divisions, the LACoFD serves over 4.1 million residents.[4]

The project site is located within Battalion 6 of the LACoFD's District, which includes the unincorporated areas of the Santa Clarita Valley and the City of Santa Clarita. As shown in Figure 4.M-1, Existing and Proposed Fire Stations in the Project Vicinity, on page 4.M-4, within the project vicinity, there are 12 existing and 13 proposed fire stations. The LACoFD is not divided into distinct service areas. The closest available units are dispatched as needed to an emergency incident anywhere within its territory.

The closest fire station to the project site is Fire Station 107, located at 18239 West Soledad Canyon, Canyon Country, approximately 1 mile south of the site. This station currently provides the primary response for the project site during emergency incidents. Fire Station 107 is staffed with a 3-person engine company and 2 firefighter paramedics. The second closest fire station is Fire Station ~~104~~ 132, ~~temporarily~~ located at ~~26201 Golden Valley~~ 29310 Sand Canyon Road in the City of Santa Clarita, approximately ~~2.5~~ 2 miles ~~southwest~~ east of the site. This station currently houses a 4- person ~~quint (a combination engine/ladder truck apparatus)~~ engine company. ~~The permanent location for Fire Station 104 will be at 26901 Golden Valley Road (at the intersection of Soledad Canyon Road), but a timeframe has not been established.~~ Additionally, the LACoFD has indicated that Fire Station 128 to be located at 28450 Whites Canyon Road, is planned to be operational by the end of 2010.[5] Once constructed and operational, this new station would be located approximately 0.75 mile from the site, and is expected to replace Fire Station 107 as the primary responder for the project site.

The LACoFD strives to maintain a minimum first-due response distance for a new project based on the project's density. Since the critical factor for fire containment is structure

[4] *2007 Statistical Summary, Los Angeles County Fire Department available online at: http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/PDFs/StatSummary.pdf accessed May 18, 2009; Updated information provided via email correspondence by Lorraine Buck, Supervising Planning Analyst, Los Angeles County Fire Department, May 27, 2009.*

[5] *Telephone communication with Debbi Aguirre, Planning Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department, January 14, 2005 and Danny Kolker, Planning Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department, April 9, 2007. Updated information provided by Lorraine Buck, Supervising Planning Analyst, Los Angeles County Fire Department, via email correspondence May 27, 2009 and Frank Vidales, Acting Chief, Forestry Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department, letter dated October 22, 2009.*

separation, the project's relevant density is the density within the developed area, after subtracting open space. The actual density for the proposed project is considered low-urban/ suburban. Therefore, according to the LACoFD, the minimum response distance for the project is three miles from the closest fire station.[6]

In 2008, Fire Station 107 responded to a total of 2,926 incidents. Of these, 58 were fire-related incidents, 2,362 emergency medical incidents, and 506 miscellaneous incidents (e.g., false alarms, hazardous conditions, unspecified, etc.). Fire Station ~~104, from its temporary location,~~ 132 responded to a total of ~~412~~704 incidents in 2008. Of these total incidents, ~~14~~44 were fire-related incidents, ~~2878~~502 were emergency medical incidents, and ~~120~~158 miscellaneous incidents).[7] The LACoFD has indicated that their first-due response time targets in low-urban/suburban areas is 6 minutes for basic life support incidents requiring the dispatch of an engine company and 10 minutes for advanced life support incident requiring the dispatch of paramedic units.[8]

Funding for LACoFD staffing is provided primarily through property taxes and ~~. Also,~~ a ~~special~~ voter-approved special tax passed in 1997. ~~and the~~ The LACoFD Developer Fee Program, described above, ~~contributes financial resources~~ generates funding for land acquisition, ~~facility improvements~~ development of new facilities, and ~~partial funding of~~ equipment. The LACoFD has indicated that additional manpower, equipment, and facilities are needed in the project area.[9] However, limited tax revenues have restricted the LACoFD's ability to meet new growth needs. While general plans have been developed for

Pages 4.M-8 and 4.M-9 have been revised as follows:

As described above, the project would be required to pay fees pursuant to the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Developer Fee Program, which would be used toward land acquisitions, ~~facility improvements~~ new facilities, and ~~partial funding of new~~ equipment. The Developer Fees are adjusted annually to ensure that adequate levels of fire protection service are

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[6] *Telephone communication, Danny Kolker, Los Angeles County Fire Department, January 14, 2005.*

[7] *Telephone communication with Debbi Aguirre, Planning Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department, January 14, 2005 and Danny Kolker, Planning Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department, April 9, 2007. Updated information provided by Lorraine Buck, Supervising Planning Analyst, Los Angeles County Fire Department, via email correspondence May 27, 2009 and Frank Vidales, Acting Chief, Forestry Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department, letter dated October 22, 2009.*

[8] *Op.Cit., Danny Kolker, January 14, 2005 and Frank Vidales, Acting Chief, Forestry Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department, letter dated October 22, 2009.*

[9] *Written correspondence, David Leineger, Forestry Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department, October 8, 2004; ~~and~~ telephone communication with Danny Kolker, Op. Cit., April 9, 2007; and Frank Vidales, Acting Chief, Forestry Division, Los Angeles County Fire Department, letter dated October 22, 2009.*

maintained. It is expected that these fees would be sufficient to off-set project demand on LACoFD services. Importantly, the Developer Fee Program has helped fund improvements in the area that would serve the project site, particularly future Fire Station 128, to be located at 28450 Whites Canyon Road, approximately 0.72 mile from the site. This station is planned to be operational by 2010. Additionally, once residential units are occupied, the project would generate annually recurring revenue ~~to the County's General Fund in the form of taxes and other miscellaneous charges (e.g., sales tax, property tax, utility users tax, library fees, etc.)~~ in the form of property taxes. A portion of such revenue would be used to address costs associated with demand for LACoFD operations and staffing. ~~The allocation of revenue to a specific municipal service is determined through the County's budgeting process by the County Board of Supervisors.~~ While ~~general fund~~ these revenues have historically supported adequate levels of fire protection services in the area, if sufficient funding for LACoFD services is not maintained by the County, a potentially significant impact could occur.

Section 4.P, Parks

Pages 4.P-11 and 4.P-12 have been revised as follows:

c. Impact Analysis

As described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, the project would provide approximately 18 acres of public and private park space, which include a 12-acre public neighborhood park, a 2.5-acre private park, and eight pocket parks totaling approximately 3.7 acres. The proposed public park would be fully improved and provide ~~10.6~~ 9.2 acres of parkland dedicated to the LADPR. As shown on Figure 2-7, Proposed Park Plan, the public park would include the following features: a community gathering area and shade structure; a children's play area with parents' seat wall; picnic tables; grass volleyball area; open lawn area; basketball court; ballfield with bleachers; multi-use ballfield; a comfort station with restrooms, a drinking fountain, and storage room; and parking for 20 cars. In addition, security lighting, trash enclosures, and locking gates would also be provided.[11] The neighborhood park and pocket parks would be maintained by a homeowners' association. Other proposed recreational amenities within the development area, as depicted on Figure 2-8, include approximately two miles of hiking trails along the western, northern, and eastern perimeters of the development area, approximately one mile of paseos, and approximately eight miles of bike lanes located along Skyline Ranch Road, Main Street North and Main Street South. The undeveloped northern portion of the site would also include a trail easement of approximately ~~2.2~~2.5 miles that would connect to the Mint Canyon Trail to the north and the existing Plum Canyon fire road to the

[11] *Written correspondence, James Barber, Section Head, Land Acquisition/Developer Obligations, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, October 20, 2008.*

south, and southwesterly towards a lookout point. A portion of the Mint Canyon Trail off of Vasquez Canon Road would be graded to provide a switch back trail of approximately 1,400 linear feet. The location of the public park and trail easement are shown on Figure 4.P-1.

As indicated above, LACC requires that new subdivisions dedicate on-site parkland, development improvements, and/or the payment of in-lieu fees to meet the recreational demands of its residents. The project proposes the development of 1,260 single-family detached dwelling units. As indicated by the LADPR, based on the LACC park requirement formula, the proposed project is required to provide 12.23 net acres of on-site park space that meets LADPR criteria.[12] The proposed project would provide approximately 18 acres of parkland, including a fully improved ~~10.6~~ 9.2-acre public park as described above. Because the ~~10.6~~ 9.2 acres of public park space is less than the 12.23 acres required by LADPR, payment of in-lieu fees would also be required. However, because the total park development costs exceed the in-lieu fee requirements, these costs will be credited against and eliminate payment of in-lieu fees. With the ~~payment of fees and~~ development and conveyance of a fully improved park to LADPR, impacts related to the provision of parks and recreational facilities would be less than significant. Although not credited under LACC park requirement formulas, it should also be noted that the project would also provide approximately two miles of hiking trails, one mile of paseos, approximately eight miles of bike lanes, and ~~2.2~~ 2.5 miles of trail easement associated with the Mint Canyon Trail.

Pages 4.P-13 and 4.P-14 have been revised as follows:

As discussed above, the Santa Clarita Valley faces no shortage of regional park space. The Subregion Area currently has a ratio of 21.9 acres of regional park space per 1,000 residents, which exceeds the standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents. Thus, the existing supply of regional park space would be sufficient to accommodate the project's 4,158 new residents. Based on the above, impacts on regional parks are considered less than significant.

The proposed trail alignment in the northeastern portion of the site was developed based on consultation with the ~~LADPR~~ LADPR and adjusted for site topography and other site conditions. As depicted on the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan Trails Map, the trail would connect with the existing Mint Canyon Trail and extend south towards the Plum Canyon Fire Road. In addition, a portion of the trail would extend west and south and terminate at a lookout point for a total trail easement length of approximately ~~2.2~~ 2.5 miles. This proposed alignment is shown on ~~Figure 2-3, Aerial View – Development and Conservation Area, on page 2-7~~ Figure 2-4, Mint Canyon Trail Entrance on page 2-8. The proposed trail would require the dedication of

[12] *Written correspondence, James Barber, Section Head, Land Acquisition/Developer Obligations, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, October 20, 2008. The entire parkland obligation and in-lieu fees, as determined for 1,270 units, would be provided as a condition of project approval for the 1,260 units now proposed.*

a variable width trail easement for the Mint Canyon Trail to the satisfaction of the LADPR and National Forest Service. As discussed previously, approximately 1,400 linear feet of the Mint Canyon Trail entrance would be developed in the northeastern portion of the site to provide a switch back trail. Beyond the provision of this beneficial trail improvement to facilitate the extension of the existing Mint Canyon Trail to the project site, the proposed project would not conflict with or have an impact on the trail as it is located in an area of the site that will remain as open space and is remote from the development area. As analyzed in Section 4.E, Visual Qualities, there would be no impacts on views from existing and proposed trails north, northeast, and northwest of the project site, or on views from the proposed trail, since areas proposed for development are not visible from the north due to a major intervening ridgeline. Although construction of the Mint Canyon Trail trailhead entrance at the northeast portion of the project site would be visible from Vasquez Canyon Road and nearby trails, due to the limited extent and duration of grading activities and lack of notable vegetation removal, impacts would be less than significant.

4. MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures would be necessary as the project would not result in significant impacts on parks and recreational facilities.

5. CUMULATIVE PROJECT IMPACTS

The analysis of cumulative project impacts on parks and recreational facilities is based on population projections as analyzed in Section 4.R, Population, Housing and Employment, of this EIR. The geographic area for cumulative impacts on local recreational space is the Santa Clarita Valley, and the geographic area for cumulative impacts on regional recreation space is the project's Subregional Area. Based on the analysis in Section 4.R, Population, Housing and Employment, the 2017 population for the project's unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley is projected to be 309,418 persons and the 2017 population for the project's Subregion Area is projected to be 887,968 persons. This forecasted growth will increase the demand for local and regional park space.

As discussed above, in accordance with the Los Angeles County Code, the project would provide approximately ~~10.6~~ 9.2 acres of fully-improve public park space ~~and in-lieu fees~~ to meet the recreational demands of its residents within the park planning area, as determined by LADPR. Similarly, any new residential projects would be subject to the same park space requirements. Therefore, it is anticipated that the future demand for local parks would be accommodated by privately-funded park space (via compliance with the LACC park requirements), and the project would not result in a cumulative impact on local park space.

Existing regional park space is sufficient to accommodate the projected 2017 population of the project's Subregion Area. Assuming that there will be no increases in the acreage of regional park space, there will be 15.1 acres of regional park space per 1,000 residents in 2017, which would still exceed the County's standard for regional park space within the Subregion Area. Furthermore, beyond meeting local park land requirements, the proposed project would provide approximately two miles of hiking trails, eight miles of bike lanes, ~~2.2~~ 2.5 miles of trail easement associated with the Mint Canyon Trail, along with dedication of approximately 1,355 acres of open space for the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area which is expected to have some allowance for public access. Thus, given that the project fully mitigates its impacts and would not have a cumulatively considerable effect on demand for parkland, no cumulative impacts on regional park space would occur in combination with other projects identified in Chapter 3.0, Cumulative Impact Analysis Methodology.

Section 4.Q, Land Use

Page 4.Q-3, Footnote 2 has been revised as follows:

[2] *The County is currently updating the General Plan and has prepared a Draft General Plan (September 2008) that is available for public review at: http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan. An EIR that addresses the environmental impacts of the amended plan is expected to become available in the fall/winter of ~~2009~~ 2010. Adoption of the updated Countywide General Plan is estimated for ~~2010~~ spring 2012. Until this Draft Plan is approved, the existing General Plan is the current governing document.*

Page 4.Q-9, first paragraph, has been revised as follows:

statement and development of a Background Report. ~~Drafts of the Plan Elements are currently being reviewed and public hearings on the plan are expected to occur in the later part of 2009, with adoption occurring in 2010.~~ The Draft Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report were released for public review in September 2009. These documents are currently being revised and will be recirculated later this year. Public hearings are scheduled through 2010 with adoption anticipated to occur in late 2010 or early 2011. Until such time as this plan is adopted, the County's existing Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan prevails.

Page 4.Q-16, first paragraph, has been revised as follows:

trash enclosures, and locking gates would also be provided.[7] Project development would be organized along a system of internal roadways, sidewalks and parkways. Internal roadways would link to the regional network via the extension of Whites Canyon Road from the west

[7] *Written correspondence, James Barber, Section Head, Land Acquisition/Developer Obligations, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, October 20, 2008.*

through the project site east to Sierra Highway. This roadway is planned for two travel lanes in each direction separated by a center median and containing landscaped parkways of variable width within an 88- to 94-foot right-of-way northerly to the public park site and within an 80- to 82-foot right-of-way from the park site to Whites Canyon Road. The extension of Whites Canyon Road was conditionally approved as Skyline Ranch Road by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works on July 19, 2006 and is shown on the Draft Highway Plan.

Page 4.Q-23, first paragraph, has been revised as follows:

this connecting roadway has been proposed pursuant to consultation with the County and has been conditionally approved by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works as Skyline Ranch Road. The Los Angeles County Highway Plan currently shows an extension of Whites Canyon Road being routed through the property's proposed northern open space area and the SEA proposed by the County with a connection to Vasquez Canyon Road. The plan also shows a future roadway segment for Cruzan Mesa Road between Whites Canyon Road and Sierra Highway. Issues associated with constructing these roadways as shown in the Highway Plan have been of concern to the County due to the amount of grading that would be required and the impact the proposed alignments would have on sensitive biological resource areas, and the County's interest in establishing an SEA on the project site. The proposed project would support the County's interests in protecting a proposed SEA and eliminating the need to provide the roadways through this regionally significant biological resource area by transferring development to the southern portion of the project site, and providing a new roadway between Whites Canyon Road and Sierra Highway which could serve as an alternative routing. This proposed roadway has been conditionally approved by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and, under the current County General Plan Update process, the roadway connection proposed by the project is shown on the Draft Highway Plan. ~~Implementation of an amendment to the Highway Plan will be at the discretion of the County as part of their General Plan update independent of the proposed project.~~ Because the County's General Plan Update process has been delayed, the amendment to the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways is proposed under this project to realign Whites Canyon Road to the proposed Skyline Ranch Road and Sierra Highway.

Page 4.Q-30, first paragraph, has been revised as follows:

Further, the project would be consistent with zoning regulations as implemented through the Conditional Use Permit provisions and underlying zoning. Maximum building heights would not exceed 35 feet and setbacks would be consistent the setback requirements (20 feet for front yards (14 feet from the sidewalk), 5 feet for side yards, and 15 feet for rear yards). The location of buildings would be subject to the requirements of the Conditional Use Permit. Furthermore, a Conditional Use Permit would be required for the offsite grading and construction of Skyline

Ranch Road from the western project boundary to Whites Canyon Road and for the temporary operation of a materials processing facility in the northeast corner of the development area.

Section 4.R, Population, Housing and Employment

Page 4.R-4, Footnote 3 has been revised as follows:

[3] *The County is currently updating the General Plan and has prepared a Draft General Plan (September 2008) that is available for public review at: http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan. An EIR that addresses the environmental impacts of the amended plan is expected to become available in the fall/winter of ~~2009~~ 2010. Adoption of the updated Countywide General Plan is estimated for ~~2010~~spring 2012. Until this Draft Plan is approved, the existing General Plan is the current governing document.*

Page 4.R-6, Second Paragraph, has been revised as follows:

The Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan was initially drafted prior to the incorporation of the City of Santa Clarita, and was later amended to reflect the incorporation. The City of Santa Clarita is responsible for land use decisions within its jurisdiction, while the County is responsible for land use decisions in the unincorporated area in which the project site is located. However, the project site is located adjacent to the City of Santa Clarita, and would contribute to the overall land use relationships in the area. Because the land use relationships within the City of Santa Clarita and the surrounding unincorporated areas are interrelated, the City and County are cooperatively preparing a 20-year plus Valleywide General Plan, referred to as the "One Valley One Vision," program (OVOV). The OVOV would supplant the existing Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan. Visioning activities for this program began in Summer 2000, with subsequent preparation of a Vision and Guiding Principles statement and development of a Background Report. ~~Drafts of the Plan Elements are currently being reviewed and public hearings on the plan are expected to occur in the later part of 2009, with adoption occurring in 2010.~~ The Draft Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report were released for public review in September 2009. These documents are currently being revised and will be recirculated later this year. Public hearings are scheduled through 2010 with adoption anticipated to occur in late 2010 or early 2011. Until such time as this plan is adopted, the County's existing Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan prevails.

Page 4.R-13, Fourth Paragraph, Second sentence has been revised as follows:

The project's population change in relation to the three analysis areas is presented in Table 4.R-4, Proposed Project Population, Household, and Employment Impacts, on

page 4.R-15.[6] The population of the proposed project site is projected to increase by ~~4,191~~ 4,158 during the 2007 to 2017 period.

Section 4.S, Global Climate Change

Page 4.S-5, Second Paragraph, has been revised as follows:

An additional bill related to AB32, SB 97, requires the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR), by July 1, 2009, to prepare, develop, and transmit to the Resources Agency guidelines for the feasible mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions or the effects of greenhouse gas emissions, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), including but not limited to, effects associated with transportation or energy consumption. The Resources Agency will then be required to certify and adopt the guidelines by January 1, 2010, and to periodically update the guidelines to incorporate new information or criteria established by the CARB pursuant to AB32.[10] The OPR released a technical advisory on addressing climate change through CEQA Review on June 19, 2008. This guidance document outlines suggested components to CEQA disclosure: quantification of GHG emissions from a project's construction and operation, determination of signifiance of the project's impact to climate change, and if the project is found to be significant, the identification of suitable alternatives and mitigation measures. On April 13, 2009 OPR submitted to the Secretary for Natural Resources its proposed amendments to the State CEQA Guidelines. These were adopted by the Natural Resources Agency on December 30, 2009 following additional public comment and two public hearings. On December 31, 2009, the Natural Resources Agency transmitted the adopted CEQA amendments to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). The OAL has 30 working days to review this information. The adopted amendments will become effective 30 days after OAL completes its review and submits them to the Secretary of State for inclusion in the California Code of Regulations.

Pages 4.S-9 and 4.S-10 have been revised as follows:

[6] *The analysis presented in Table 4.R-4 is based on projections in the SCAG 2008 RTP. As such, the analysis is consistent with SCAG Policy 3.01 that states, "The population, housing, and job forecasts, which are adopted by SCAG's Regional Council and that reflect local plans and policies, shall be used by SCAG in all phases of implementation and review."*

[10] *Senate Bill No. 97, Chapter 185, approved by Governor Schwarzenegger and filed with the Secretary of State, August 24, 2007.*

3. PROJECT IMPACTS

a. Thresholds of Significance

The CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.7, define a threshold of significance as an identifiable quantitative, qualitative or performance level of a particular environmental effect, non-compliance with which means the effect will normally be determined to be significant by the agency and compliance with which means the effect normally will be determined to be less than significant. CEQA gives wide latitude to lead agencies in determining what impacts are significant and does not prescribe thresholds of significance, analytical methodologies, or specific mitigation measures.[16] CEQA leaves the determination of significance to the reasonable discretion of the lead agency and encourages lead agencies to develop and publish thresholds of significance to use in determining the significance of environmental effects. However, neither the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), the air pollution control agency for all of Orange County and the urban portions of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, nor the County of Los Angeles, the lead agency for the proposed project, have yet established significance thresholds for GHG emissions.[17, 18] The regulations required to meet the State goals under AB32 are still under development~~, expected to be finalized by January 1, 2008, and implemented no later than January 1, 2010~~. Furthermore, pursuant to SB 97, guidelines to be prepared by OPR for addressing greenhouse gas emissions under CEQA ~~will not be adopted until January 1, 2010~~ <u>have been adopted by the Natural Resources Agency and are pending final review and approval by the OAL</u>. Accordingly, at this time there is no formal guidance under CEQA and no available standards by which the approval of a real estate development project can be judged to support or hinder attainment of the State's goals relating to GHG abatement. Furthermore, it is difficult to predict the specific impact of one project's incremental contribution to the global effects of GHG emissions due to a variety of factors, including the complex and long term nature of such effects and the global scale of climate change.[19]

Pages 4.S-24 and 4.S-25 have been revised as follows:

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[16] *Climate Change and CEQA, Presentation to the Climate Action Team, Cynthia Bryant, Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, September 19, 2007.*

[17] *Personal Communication, AQMD Legal Offices, October 4, 2007.*

[18] *Personal Communication, Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, Impact Analysis Section, August 28, 2007.*

[19] *Ibid. OPR indicates in the Climate Change and CEQA Presentation to the Climate Action Team that complex questions must be answered before a consistent, effective, and workable process can be developed for evaluating climate change under CEQA. Some of the questions cited include: What constitutes a new GHG emission? What is the appropriate baseline for calculating new emissions? What makes a project's GHG emissions significant? Is the effect of climate change too speculative to be considered a significant environmental impact? How much mitigation is enough to reduce the impact so it is not significant?*

(3) Park and Recreation Objective

- Provide on-site recreational opportunities, including an improved public park and private passive neighborhood and pocket parks convenient and accessible to residents.

- Support extension of the County Trail System by dedicating an easement in the northern portion of the site to the County from Vasquez Canyon Road and terminus of the existing Mint Canyon Trail to the Plum Canyon Fire Road and southwesterly to a lookout point (approximately ~~2.43~~ 2.5 miles).

(4) Resource Conservation Objectives

- Avoid development in regionally significant biotic resource areas located on Cruzan Mesa by designating a 166-acre portion of the site a Non-Development/Continuing Use Area.

- Preserve other significant biotic resources in the northern portion of the site through establishment of one or more voluntary conservation easements, land dedications, or land set asides over a ~~1,378~~ 1,355-acre area to be known as the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA).

5.0 ALTERNATIVES

Page 5-4 has been revised as follows:

c. Park and Recreation Objectives

- Provide on-site recreational opportunities, including an improved public park, private passive neighborhood and pocket parks, and hiking trails convenient and accessible to residents.

- Support extension of the County Trail System (Mint Canyon Trail) by dedicating an easement in the northern portion of the site to the County from Vasquez Canyon Road to the Plum Canyon Fire Road and southwesterly to a lookout point (approximately ~~2.2~~ 2.5 miles).

Page 5-6 has been revised as follows:

- Alternate Site Configurations: Other configurations for development on the site beyond those considered in detail below were considered, including large lot residential development of approximately 900 units located on approximately 470 acres in the central portion of the site that would be served by a Cruzan Mesa Road segment between Whites Canyon Road and Sierra Highway. This alternative was not pursued in part because this roadway segment has been rejected in favor of the preferred alignment which was conditionally approved as Skyline Ranch Road by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works on July 19, 2006 and being supported ~~and carried forward~~ by the County as part of their general plan update. Because the approval process for the general plan update process has been delayed, County staff requested that the Skyline Ranch project initiate the General Plan Amendment to realign Whites Canyon Road/Skyline Ranch Road.

Page 5-13 has been revised as follows:

p. Parks

Under the No Project/No Development Alternative, the project site would remain undeveloped and undisturbed. As such, this Alternative would not result in any demand for parks and recreational facilities in the area, and, thus, the need for such facilities would not increase beyond current levels. Under the No Project/No Development Alternative a trail easement in the northern portion of the site that connects to the regional trail system would not be provided to the County. Since the No Project/No Development Alternative would not affect local parks and recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of such facilities, no impacts to parks and recreation would occur. This is in contrast to the proposed project where impacts on parks and recreational facilities would be less than significant and more than offset through the provision of a 12-acre (~~10.6~~ 9.2 net acres) fully improved public park site, payment of fees, bike lanes, hiking trails, other private parks, and a dedicated trail easement.

6.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

Pages 6-3 and 6-4 have been revised as follows:

1. Direct Growth-Inducing Impacts in the Surrounding Environment

A project would directly induce growth if it would remove barriers to population growth such as a change to a jurisdiction's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance which allowed new residential development to occur. Although the proposed project includes a request for a General Plan Amendment to the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways to realign Whites Canyon Road to Skyline Ranch Road as a secondary highway to Sierra Highway, this improvement is

consistent with plans shown on the County of Los Angeles Draft Highway Plan currently recommended by the County. As analyzed in Section 4.F, Traffic/Access of the Draft EIR, this proposed alignment would result in little to no change on the surrounding roadway network in comparison to the existing roadway alignment shown in the current Highway Plan. The proposed project would also be developed through a Condition Use Permit (CUP) in accordance with the County Zoning Ordinance. In addition, the density of the project, which involves a density transfer from the northern portion of the site to the southern portion of the site, would be consistent with the provisions of the General Plan and the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan. This density transfer within the project site would allow the northern 1,551 acres of the site to remain undeveloped, concentrating residential development to the south. The placement of housing in the southern portion of the site would provide residential uses, a public school, and a public park, in areas adjacent to other residential neighborhoods, which lie immediately west and south of the project site already served by fully-established utility services and infrastructure.

4.0 MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

This Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP), which is provided in Table 4-1, has been prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081.6, which requires adoption of a MMP for projects in which the Lead Agency has required changes or adopted mitigation measures to avoid significant environmental effects. The County of Los Angeles is the Lead Agency for the proposed Skyline Ranch project and is therefore responsible for administering and implementing the MMP. The decision-makers must define specific reporting and/or monitoring requirements to be enforced during project implementation prior to final approval of the project. The primary purpose of the MMP is to ensure that the mitigation measures identified in the Draft and Final EIR are implemented thereby minimizing identified environmental effects.

The MMP for the proposed project will be in place through all phases of the project, including design, construction, and operation. The County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning (DRP) shall be responsible for administering the MMP. The DRP will also ensure that monitoring is documented through periodic reports and that deficiencies are promptly corrected. The designated environmental monitor will track and document compliance with mitigation measures, note any problems that may result, and take appropriate action to remedy problems. The project applicant is responsible for implementing all mitigation measures and demonstrating the effectiveness of the mitigation measures.

Each mitigation measure is categorized by impact area, with an accompanying identification of:

- The action required;
- When monitoring to occur (e.g., prior to issuance of grading permit, prior to issuance of building permits, post-construction/ongoing);
- The responsible agency or party; and
- The monitoring agency or party.

Table 4-1

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
A. GEOTECHNICAL RESOURCES				
Prior to issuance of grading or building permits, the following mitigation measures shall be revised as necessary to support an equivalent or greater level of environmental protection based on a design-level geotechnical investigation completed to the satisfaction of the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works:				
4.A-1: The following materials are considered unsuitable and shall be removed and recompacted in the grading of the site: existing fill soils, colluvial deposits and slopewash, alluvial deposits, landslide debris, and terrace deposits. Their removal and recompaction mitigate the potential for seismic settlement.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW
4.A-2: Landslides (or portions thereof) that remain in place and are not removed and recompacted following the grading of the project site shall be designated as Restricted Use Areas, in accordance with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LACDPW) requirements. Landslides designated as Restricted Use Areas and landslides that are removed and recompacted are identified in the Geotechnical Investigations prepared by Geolabs-Westlake Village (dated March, 6, 2004, August 23, 2004, January 3, 2005, November 16, 2006, April 13, 2007, and August 28, 2008).	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
4.A-3(a): Interior slopes with daylighted bedding conditions shall be analyzed for appropriate buttress design. Tall cut slopes in the southerly portion of the site are anticipated to expose friable, uncemented bedrock zones and large cobbles and boulders. Several of these slopes require stabilization in order to mitigate the potential for raveling and dislocation of cobbles and boulders. All stability fills and buttresses shall be provided with backdrains and shall incorporate the generalized stability fill key dimensions for the "refacing" of planned cuts slopes.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW
4.A-3(b): Fill caps for cut/fill lots shall be constructed to provide uniform foundational support for future structures. Shallow cut lots and cut/fill lots shall be provided with a minimum 5-foot cap of compacted fill. Cut/fill lots underlain by 10 feet or less of compacted fill on the fill portion of the lot shall have the cut portion overexcavated a minimum of 5 feet below finish grade and replaced with compacted fill, thus providing a fill cap with a minimum 5-foot fill thickness. For those transition lots with 10 to 20 feet of fill on the fill side, the cut side shall be provided with a minimum 7-foot-thick fill cap. For those transition lots with in excess of 20 feet of fill on the fill side, the cut side shall be provided with a minimum 10-foot-thick fill cap. Fill caps shall extend a minimum of 5 feet beyond the perimeter footings. Where the backslope is 3:1 or steeper, the last bench prior to reaching the undercut shall be at least 15 feet in width. The 15-foot-wide bench is intended to	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
reduce the steep dip of the fill-bedrock contact commonly created during undercutting.				
4.A-3(c): All vegetation, trash debris, or other deleterious material shall be stripped from the area to be graded. These materials shall be removed from the site and deposited at a local landfill or recycled on site. Soils bearing sparse grasses may be thoroughly mixed with at least ten parts clean soil and incorporated into the engineered fill. Other materials shall be removed from the site.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan Field verification	Prior to issuance of grading permit During grading	Applicant Applicant	DPW/DRP DPW/DRP
4.A-3(d): Fill slopes, which toe onto sloping ground, shall be founded in bedrock, below the compressible surface soils. The key shall be at least 20 feet wide and 3 feet deep (measured on the downslope side). The bottom of the key shall be graded so that there is at least 1 foot of fall across its width (toward the upslope side). The key shall be located in front of the toe of slope (as shown on the plan) so that the outside limit of the key lies at or beyond a 1:1 projection from the planned toe of the slope.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW
4.A-3(e): Fill-over-cut slopes shall have the fill founded on a 20-foot-wide bench cut into the bedrock or, where bedrock is not present in the cut portion of the slope, on a key cut below the toe of the slope. The 20-foot bench shall be graded to provide at least 1 foot of fall toward its upslope side. If keyed below the toe of slope, then the key shall be at least 20 feet wide, 3 feet deep (below the toe), and tilted (at least 1 foot) into the slope. The cut portion of the slope shall be exposed (and observed by a representative of a	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan Field verification	Prior to issuance of grading permit During grading	Applicant Applicant	DPW Representative of qualified geotechnical firm

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
qualified geotechnical firm) prior to constructing the fill portion of the slope.				
4.A-3(f): Exposed surfaces shall be scarified, moistened, or air-dried, as appropriate, and compacted to 90 percent of the material's maximum dry density prior to placement of fill.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan Field verification	Prior to issuance of grading permit During grading	Applicant Applicant	DPW DPW
4.A-3(g): Where the ground slopes steeper than 5:1 (horizontal: vertical), the fill shall be properly benched into bedrock.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan Field verification during grading	Prior to issuance of grading permit During grading	Applicant Applicant	DPW DPW
4.A-3(h): All fill slopes shall utilize mixed soils [sand with some proportion of fines; i.e., clayey sand] in the outer 20 feet of the fill slope in order to minimize the potential for surficial slope deterioration.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW
4.A-3(i): Fill materials shall be placed in thin lifts, watered to near the material's optimum moisture content (or to near two percent over optimum moisture content and compacted to the applicable level of relative compaction prior to placing the next lift).	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan Field verification	Prior to issuance of grading permit During grading	Applicant Applicant	DPW DPW
4.A-3(j): The 90 percent relative compaction standard applies to the face of fill slopes. This may be achieved by overfilling the constructed slope and trimming to a compacted finished surface, rolling the slope face with a sheepsfoot, or any method that achieves the desired product.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
4.A-3(k): All retaining walls constructed within the project site shall be constructed in accordance with the Los Angeles County Building Code requirements and a design-level geotechnical investigation.	Submittal and approval of Building Plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW
4.A-3(l): Backfill for retaining walls shall be properly compacted. An impervious cap shall be provided at the top of the backfill to retard infiltration of water.	Submittal and approval of Building Plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW
4.A-3(m): Slope setbacks set forth in the Los Angeles County Building Code shall be applied to residences and appurtenant structures. Structures situated within the setback area shall require special foundation design, which might include deepening footings, pile/caisson construction, and/or consideration of creep loads.	Submittal and approval of Building Plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW
4.A-3(n): Backfill for utility trench excavations shall be compacted to at least 90 percent relative compaction. Where installed in sloping areas, the backfill shall be properly keyed and benched.	Submittal and approval of Improvement Plans	Prior to issuance of Improvement Plan	Applicant	DPW
4.A-3(o): Those lots exposed to ascending natural slope conditions shall be provided with drainage ditches or swales, berms or impact walls, and/or small slopes descending from the pads to the natural slopes, to provide protection from potential debris flow hazard.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
4.A-4: Expansive lithologies shall be over-excavated where encountered within lots and streets in order to mitigate the potential for differential expansion. The depth of such over-excavation shall range between 7 and 10 feet.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan Field verification	Prior to issuance of grading permit During grading	Applicant Applicant	DPW DPW
4.A-5: During grading, soils containing significant fines content (cohesive soils) shall be preferentially placed in the outer five feet of fill slopes. In addition, the required 90 percent relative compaction standard shall be applied to the outer face of fill slopes in order to reduce the amount if infiltration and erosion. Cut slopes exposing erodible bedrock formations shall require stabilization with engineered fill.	Submittal and approval of Grading Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW
B. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY				
4.B-1: Final drainage improvement plans for the project shall ensure that there is no displacement of flood plain area in the vicinity of Sierra Highway and its intersection with proposed Skyline Ranch Road through construction of a culvert, bridge, or combination thereof, within the flood plain area. Final drainage improvement plans and the culvert or bridge shall be designed during the engineering stage by a licensed engineer to ensure that the water surface shall be equal or lower than existing conditions both downstream and upstream of the proposed project entrance along Sierra Highway and adjacent properties during a 50-year storm event and that post-development flow rates shall be less than existing conditions downstream along Sierra Highway and adjacent properties. Final drainage improvement plans	Submittal and approval of final drainage plans/Drainage Concept Plan	Prior to issuance of phased grading permit	Applicant	DPW/City of Santa Clarita

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
to achieve these standards shall be designed to the satisfaction of, and approved by, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and City of Santa Clarita, Department of Public Works.				
4.B-2: Prior to issuance of grading permits, the construction contractor shall prepare an Erosion Control Plan (ECP) that incorporates BMPs to specifically address and reduce the potential for erosion and sedimentation impacts on downstream receiving waters. The project shall include any combination of the following erosion control BMPs: Hydraulic mulch, preservation of existing vegetation, hydroseeding,[1] streambank stabilization, diversion of runoff (such as earth dikes, temporary drains, slope drains), velocity dissipation devices (outlet protection, check dams, and slope roughening/terracing), and dust control measures (such as sand fences and watering). Sedimentation control BMPs may include filtration devices and barriers (such as silt fencing, check berms, debris basins, sediment traps, fiber rolls, sandbags, gravel inlet filters, and straw bale barriers) and/or settling devices (such as sediment traps or basins). Stabilization control BMPs may include blankets, reinforced channel liners, soil cement, fiber matrices, geotextiles, or other erosion resistant soil coverings or treatments. The construction entrance(s)/exit(s) should also be stabilized (e.g. aggregate underdrain with filter	Submittal and approval of Erosion Control Plan/Drainage Concept Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW/LARWQCB

[1] *California Stormwater Quality Association, California Stormwater BMP Handbook—Construction, January 2003.*

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
cloth). Specific application of these BMPs shall occur before site runoff is discharged to proposed and existing off-site storm drain/flood control channel systems that ultimately discharge water to the Santa Clara River. The ECP shall be reviewed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board for inclusion of appropriate and effective erosion and sedimentation controls.				
4.B-3: Prior to issuance of any grading permits, a Notice of Intent (NOI) and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be prepared by the construction contractor and submitted to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board for approval. The SWPPP shall meet all applicable regulations by requiring controls of pollutant discharges that utilize best available technology economically achievable (BAT) and best conventional pollutant control technology (BCT) to reduce pollutants. The SWPPP shall be certified in accordance with the signatory requirements of the General Construction Permit. The SWPPP shall be developed and amended or revised, when necessary to meet the following objectives: • Identify all pollutant sources including sources of sediment that may affect the quality of storm water	Submittal and approval of Notice of Intent and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan/ Drainage Concept Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW/LARWQCB/ Construction Contractor

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
discharges associated with construction activity (storm water discharges) from the construction site; • Identify non-storm water discharges; • Identify, construct, implement in accordance with a time schedule, and maintain Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce or eliminate pollutants in storm water discharges and authorized non-storm water discharges from the construction site during construction; and, • Develop a maintenance schedule for BMPs installed during construction designed to reduce or eliminate pollutants after construction is completed (post-construction BMPs).Paving operations shall be performed using measures to prevent runoff pollution. In compliance with the SWPPP, non-stormwater level BMPs shall be implemented that include controls and objectives for vehicle and equipment maintenance, cleaning, and fueling, and potable water/irrigation practices. Material/waste management BMPs shall include: liquid waste management, spill prevention and control, hazardous waste management, and sanitary/septic waste management. Specific BMPs to be implemented by the construction contractor may include but are not necessarily limited to the following: • Paving operations shall be performed using measures to prevent runoff pollution;				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
• Wash out areas for concrete trucks, construction vehicles and equipment, paint and stucco equipment, and other construction materials shall be designated, and containment measures employed, to prevent discharges of wash water; • Vehicle and equipment maintenance and fueling activities shall occur off-site to the degree feasible; • Construction area, street and pavement washing shall be controlled to preclude discharges of wash water; • Discharging super-clorinated water pipe and sprinkler system flushing and test water to the storm drain system shall be prohibited; • All waste shall be properly stored and disposed of off-site; • Employees and subcontractors shall be trained in the prevention of storm water contamination; • Hazardous material (specifically chlorine- and ammonia-containing products) shall be stored in elevated (e.g., on palates or a deck) and covered structures to prevent any contact between the chemicals and irrigation or precipitation; • All hazardous and chemical materials generated during construction (i.e., diesel fuel, hydraulic fluid, motor oil, etc.) shall be cleaned up and disposed of in compliance with Federal, State, and local laws, regulations and ordinances; and				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
• All structure construction and painting areas shall be enclosed, covered, or bermed to prevent run-on/run-off in these areas and associated contamination of storm water.				
4.B-4: Prior to approval of a NPDES Stormwater Permit No. CAS004001 (Order No. 01-182) and issuance of a grading permit, the applicant or an applicant designee shall complete and have approved a Stormwater Quality Management Plan (SQMP) and a Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) outlining usage of BMPs for non-point source pollution control measures to address pollutants from such sources as roofing materials, atmospheric deposition, grease, oil, suspended solids, metals, solvents, phosphates, fertilizers and pesticides. Post-construction structural or treatment BMPs shall be designed to meet performance standards that mitigate (treat) storm water runoff from either: 1) the 85th percentile 24-hour runoff event determined as the maximized capture storm water volume for the area, from the formula recommended in Urban Runoff Quality Management, WEF Manual of Practice No. 23/ASCE Manual of Practice No. 87, (1998), or; 2) the volume of annual runoff based on unit basin storage water quality volume, to achieve 80 percent or more treatment by the method recommended in California Stormwater Best Management Practices Handbook—Industrial Commercial, (1993), or: 3) the volume of runoff produced from a 0.75 inch storm event, prior to its discharge to a storm water conveyance system; and, 4) the volume of runoff produced from a historical-	Submittal and approval of Stormwater Quality Management Plan and Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan/ Drainage Concept Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit and approval of an NPDES Permit	Applicant	DPW/LARWQCB

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
record based reference 24-hour rainfall criterion for "treatment" (0.75 inch average for the Los Angeles County area) that achieves approximately the same reduction in pollutant loads achieved by the 85th percentile 24-hour runoff even. Furthermore, project BMPs and design features shall control peak flow discharge to provide stream channel and over bank flood protection, based on design criteria selected by the local agency. The range of BMPs, which shall meet the performance standards identified above, shall include but not be limited to the following to the extent feasible: <u>Site Planning and Design BMPs</u> Minimize Impervious Area and Directly Connected Impervious Areas • Minimize impervious areas by incorporating landscaped areas over substantial portions of the project area. [For the Skyline Ranch Project, the area designated solely for uses with impervious surfaces are about 401 acres or 18 percent of the entire project site. This means the remaining 1,772 acres or 82 percent will be either vacant or in uses with impervious ground surface such as landscaped and park areas.] • If possible, minimize directly connected impervious areas by draining parking lots to landscaped areas, desilting (secondary infiltration) basins or other previous surfaces to promote filtration and infiltration of storm water, if landscaping slopes				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
are less than 2 percent and the area is not directly adjacent to steep slopes (which promotes further erosion); or the area is being treated with catch basin inserts. Furthermore, lot runoff (from the pervious surfaces) shall be infiltrated from the graded pad areas through onsite pervious soils. • To the extent practicable, utilize vegetated areas (e.g., parks, setbacks, end islands, and median strips) for biofiltration and/or bioretention of nuisance and storm runoff flows from parking lots. <u>Selection of Construction Materials and Design Practices</u> • Select building materials for roofs, roof gutters and downspouts that do not include exposed copper or zinc. • Construct streets, sidewalks, and parking lot aisles to the minimum widths as specified in the Los Angeles County Department of Public Work's requirements (also in compliance with regulations for the Americans with Disabilities Act) for safety requirements for fire and emergency vehicle access and incorporate landscaped buffer areas between sidewalks and streets. <u>Conserve Natural Areas</u> • Concentrate or cluster the development on the least environmentally sensitive portions of the project site while leaving the remaining land in a natural, undeveloped condition. [For the Skyline Ranch				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
Project, about 1,551 acres of the site (71 percent of the project site) is proposed to remain undeveloped, including 1,355 acres to be designated as natural open space through the establishment of the Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA) .] • Maximize canopy interception and water conservation by preserving existing native trees and shrubs and planting additional native or drought tolerant trees and large shrubs. [For the Skyline Ranch Project, approximately 71 percent of the project site is proposed to remain undeveloped, and along the perimeter of the site, landscaping would consist of a mix of native, drought-tolerant and non-invasive plant species.] <u>Protect Slopes and Channels</u> • Protect slopes and minimize erosion potential by covering highly erodible soils with vegetative cover (preferably native or drought tolerant plants), route flows safely from or away from steep and or sensitive slopes, stabilize disturbed slopes. All slopes within the project should be designed and constructed to minimize erosion. • Protect channels and minimize erosion by controlling and treating flows in landscaping and/or other controls prior to reaching existing natural drainage systems; stabilize channel crossings; ensure that increases in runoff velocity and frequency caused by the project do not erode				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
the channel; install energy dissipaters (riprap), at the outlets of storm drains, culverts and conduits. <u>Source (non-structural) Control BMPs</u> • Drain Inlet Stenciling or Signage. Stenciling (or signage) is intended to raise public awareness and limit illegal dumping of trash, debris, oil, and other pollutants into storm drains. "Stenciling" may be accomplished via a traditional stencil or via the use of grates with text such as “Warning! Drains to Ocean” notes or other equivalent symbols. All catch basins and inlets shall be stenciled. • Irrigation Controls and Management. Irrigation controls shall be implemented to ensure that irrigation is conducted efficiently. Where feasible, plants with similar watering requirements shall be grouped in order to reduce excess irrigation runoff and promote surface filtration. Efficient irrigation systems may include computerized and/or radio telemetry that controls the amount of irrigation based on soil moisture or other indicators. • Proper Application of Fertilizers and Pesticides. Best management practices shall be implemented to minimize the application of fertilizers, pesticides, and other landscape management products on slopes and landscaped areas maintained by the homeowner’s association (HOA) and/or landscape maintenance districts (if any). Examples of these management practices include, but are not to limited to: the use of slow release				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
fertilizers, applying fungicides only to greens to limit the use of pesticides, and closely monitoring weather forecast to ensure appropriate timing (during dry periods) for the application of landscape management products. • Community Education Program. Public education shall be used to reduce the potential for hazardous materials entering the storm drain system. This shall be accomplished through distribution of brochures or other materials to property managers, owners and occupants, and employees at the time of initial sale or lease of property or hiring of employees and periodically thereafter. Brochures shall discuss, among other topics and as appropriate for the audience: 1) the importance of downstream water bodies, the storm water system, management of fertilizers, pesticides, and other harmful chemicals, 2) the impacts of dumping oil, antifreeze, pesticides, paints, and other pollutants into storm drains and proper handling and disposal of these materials, 3) effective cleaning practices such as the cleaning of vehicles only in maintenance areas where the water will be recycled or routed to the sanitary sewer system to prevent nuisance flows, 4) the benefits of the prevention of excessive erosion and sedimentation, 5) the benefits of proper landscaping practices, 6) pavement clean-up practices, 7) the impacts of over-irrigation, 8) swimming pool draining practices, and 9) other relevant issues.				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
• Prevention of Nuisance Flows. Grease traps shall be included for school cafeterias (if any). Draining swimming pools into storm drains shall be prohibited. These flows shall be properly connected to sewer lines. • Pavement Sweeping Program. The majority of roads in the project area are proposed to be dedicated to the public, and would thus be maintained by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. The County has street sweeping programs that will help control trash, vegetation debris and sediment that may accumulate on roadways. Other non-public roadways shall also be periodically swept. • Litter Control Program & Design of Trash Storage Areas. A program for litter control shall be implemented to control litter in common areas. The program may include standards for proper placement and emptying of trash receptacles, practices to ensure that trash bins are maintained in the closed position, and regular removal of trash from parking and landscaped areas. In conjunction with the litter control program, trash storage areas shall be designed to prevent introduction of pollutants into runoff. The design principles to prevent this pollution from occurring are using impervious surfaces for storage areas which prevent run-on from adjacent areas, ensuring that there is no connection of trash drains to the storm drain system, and keeping lids on all trash				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
receptacles in addition to the use of roofs or awnings to minimize direct precipitation. • Proper Connection and Maintenance of Sewer Lines. Sewer lines shall be properly connected and adequately maintained. • Activity Restrictions (Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions). For source control BMPs, County maintenance and implementation of BMPs or Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) shall be prepared requiring maintenance and implementation of BMPs by the HOA for the purpose of surface water quality protection, or use restrictions shall be developed through lease terms. • BMP Maintenance. Los Angeles County shall assume responsibility for the inspection and maintenance of structural BMPs within their boundaries. For the public school site, the school district with jurisdiction shall be responsible for the inspection and maintenance of structural BMPs. For private roads and private parks the HOA shall be responsible for BMP maintenance. • Common Area Drainage Facility Inspection. Privately-owned common area drainage facilities shall be inspected each year and, if necessary, cleaned and maintained prior to the storm season. <u>Structural and Treatment Control BMPs</u> Implementation of NPDES General Permit requirements entails the use of post-construction				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
structural controls that will remain in service to protect water quality throughout the life of the project. Therefore, these BMPs will need to be regularly maintained for proper function. As Los Angeles County will assume maintenance of BMPs in public rights-of-way, the main structural BMPs recommended below are systems that the County currently approves of for use within their jurisdiction. Final selection, design and siting of structural BMPs will ultimately depend on the project-wide drainage plan approved by the County. The following BMP options were selected due to their relative effectiveness for treating potential pollutants from the project site; as well as consideration for County of Los Angeles requirements and acceptance of these systems (as they would be maintained by the County), site feasibility, relative costs and benefits; and other constraints. The recommended BMP design flow rates, volumes, types and other specifications will be provided during final design stage of the project (with hydrology map approval). • Hydrodynamic Separator Systems and Gross Solids Removal Devices. Hydrodynamic Separation Systems (HSS) and Gross Solids Removal Devices (GSRDs) are flow-based, flow-through BMPs that are installed within a storm drain line in order to remove large sediment particles and associated storm water pollutants, as well as trash, oils, and grease. HSS and/or GSRDs, such as a Continuous Deflective Separator (CDS), manufactured by CDS Technologies, Inc., supplemented with oil absorbent materials (such as pellets), are				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
recommended for use at various locations in the proposed storm drain systems. Depending on the particular model and manufacturer, maintenance shall occur quarterly to yearly for clean-outs. Cleaning after a storm event may also be required. Inspection is required to make certain that the unit is operating correctly and to make any repairs. • Stormscreen. The StormScreen is a manufactured patented BMP by CONTECH Stormwater Solutions, Inc., designed to remove mostly trash and debris and larger suspended solids at high flow rates. The StormScreen is comprised of a grouping of StormScreen cartridges placed in a precast or cast-in-place concrete vault. Although maintenance may be required within six (6) months of project completion due to erosion occurring on newly constructed sites, it is intended that the StormScreen be maintained annually by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Flood Control Division. For the StormScreen maintenance, during the first year, an inspection is recommended every other month for the first six months of operation in order to develop an ongoing maintenance schedule. A visual inspection can be conducted without entering the vault. Sediments and water must be disposed of in accordance with all applicable waste disposal regulations. • Catch Basin Inserts. Catch basin inserts are flow-based BMP options for consideration at various locations to treat runoff before it enters the storm				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
drain system by filtering or screening out sediments and associated storm water pollutants during dry weather and low flow events. During large flow events, they are typically designed to allow storm water runoff to bypass the inlet device and continue directly into the storm drain system. Although treatment levels are generally low for the pollutants of concern for this project, the inserts would provide pre-treatment of storm water runoff prior to further treatment at downstream BMPs. Drainage inserts could be replaced with HSS or GSRDs that perform similar functions and are interchangeable. At the time of final design, if the implementation of a CDS is deemed infeasible, a catch basin insert may be used in its place. Although maintenance requirements vary greatly depending on the particular model and manufacturer, they are typically maintained quarterly to yearly for clean-outs. Cleaning after a storm event and in anticipation of storm events after extended dry periods or periods of typical debris removal is recommended. Inspection will be required to make certain that the unit is operating correctly and to make any repairs.				
• Detention/Retention Basins. Detention and retention basins require a fairly large amount of space to build them. Basins can be used on sites with slopes up to about 15 percent. The design should incorporate enough elevation drop from the basins inlet to the outlet to ensure that flow can move through the system. These systems require				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
regular maintenance (semi-annual and annual), as well as sediment removal from the forebay every 5 to 7 years and monitoring the sediment accumulation and removal when the volume has been significantly reduced (about every 25 to 50 years). Basins shall be properly maintained to avoid safety hazards.				
C. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES				
4.C-1 Mitigation for grading and fuel modification impacts (calculated 200 feet beyond the limits of grading) to 467.9 acres of combined **coastal sage scrub** and **disturbed coastal sage scrub** (452.3 acres within on- and off-site, and 15.6 acres within on- and off-site fuel modification zones), 77.0 acres of **coastal sage-chaparral scrub** (69.9 acres within on- and off-site grading and 7.1 acres within on- and off-site fuel modification zones), and 2.8 acres of **holly-leafed cherry scrub** (2.1 acres within on-site grading and 0.7 acre within on- and off-site fuel modification zones) shall be provided by establishing a 1,355 acre conservation area [Skyline Ranch Conservation Area (SRCA)] within the northern portion of the study area as shown in Figure 2-3, Aerial View-Development and Conservation Area. The applicant shall cause the preservation of this 1,355-acre area through either a Declaration of Restrictions or a Conservation Easement, or dedication or transfer of the land to a conservation organization committed to the preservation of the land in perpetuity. A Declaration of Restrictions, Conservation Easement, or similar	Prepare a Declaration of Restrictions, Conservation Easement, or dedication or transfer to ensure the preservation of the 1,355 acre Skyline Ranch Conservation Area	Prior to transfer of SRCA	Applicant	DRP/Qualified Biologist

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
recorded instrument shall be placed and recorded in this area to ensure its long-term preservation. The applicant shall arrange for the long-term management of the property to ensure the long-term persistence of the property's biological resources through a non-profit organization, conservation-oriented entity, or entity with experience in biological resource conservation approved by the County. The applicant shall provide long-term funding to assure the management of the property to protect its biological resources in perpetuity. The SRCA includes approximately 623.9 acres of coastal sage scrub, 115.8 acres of disturbed coastal sage scrub, 248.6 acres of coastal sage-chaparral scrub, and 10.6 acres of holly-leafed cherry scrub. This area shall be preserved as natural open space. These 1,355 acres provide substantial ecological value based on the quantity, quality, and regional value of the habitats preserved. Establishment of the 1,355-acre SRCA shall achieve the following performance standards: 1. Provision of sufficient quantity of habitat to offset vegetation impacts associated with the proposed project. When considering coastal sage scrub, disturbed coastal sage scrub, coastal sage-chaparral scrub, and holly-leafed cherry scrub collectively, this 1,355-acre area will provide close to 2:1 preservation of like and contiguous habitats [1,354.6 acres preserved vs. 642.1 acres impacted (621.7 acres impacted by grading and 20.4 acres impacted by fuel modification)]. Preserved habitats are similar to those impacted				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
by the project and most vegetation communities (with the exception of sycamore woodland), regionally common species, and special status plant and wildlife species impacted by the project are represented within the SRCA.				
2. An on-going maintenance and management program shall be adequately funded and implemented to ensure the long-term integrity of biological resources within the 1,355-acre SRCA. Direct and indirect degradation of habitat shall be prevented in part through steep topography that separates the SRCA from the proposed development area and through the prohibition or restriction of uses within the SRCA. 3. The SRCA shall include signage, where appropriate, and other management practices to discourage off-road vehicles, domestic pets, and other activities harmful to natural lands. 4. Any continued use of lands within the SRCA (such as film-making) shall be subject to approval by the SRCA habitat manager and restricted to uses that are not incompatible with the resource conservation objectives of the SRCA.	Establishment, submittal, and approval of maintenance and management program for the SRCA to DRP	Post-Construction/Ongoing	Applicant and subsequent owner(s)	DRP/Qualified Biologist
5. A 21.6-acre Mitigation Exchange Area shall be provided to replace the 21.6 acres of preserve area that would be disturbed within Tract 46018 due to the construction of Skyline Ranch Road. This shall be established separately from the SRCA through an agreement between the applicant,	Establish a 21.6-acre Mitigation Exchange Area through an agreement between the applicant, Shapell-Monteverde Partnership,	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DRP/ACOE

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
Shapell-Monteverde Partnership (owner of the recorded Tract 46018), the Army Corps of Engineers, and the County of Los Angeles.	the Army Corps of Engineers, and the County of Los Angeles			
6. Following grading operations any areas that have been disturbed within the 50-foot grading buffer zone; which includes coastal sage scrub (10.7 acres), disturbed coastal sage scrub (6.1 acres), coastal sage-chaparral scrub (3.3 acres), non-native grassland (1.8 acres), disturbed (0.8 acres), holly-leaved cherry scrub (0.7 acres) and sycamore riparian woodland (0.2 acres), shall be restored to pre-graded conditions by a qualified biologist. Restoration shall be designed to provide the same vegetation resources and habitat value as those removed within the buffer zone. At the end of all project grading, proposed restoration actions within the buffer zone (if necessary) shall be presented in a restoration plan provided to the County. Following approval by the County, restoration shall be initiated and completed according to the approved restoration plan.	Submittal and approval of a restoration plan	Following grading operations and prior to issuance of building permit	Applicant	DRP/Qualified Biologist
4.C-2: As detailed in the Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) prepared by GLA, mitigation for impacts to 5.22 acres of Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and RWQCB jurisdiction, none of which consists of jurisdictional wetlands, and 9.30 acres of California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) jurisdiction (of which 2.91 acres is vegetated riparian habitat) shall be accomplished by the applicant through the following:	Comply with provisions of Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan and obtain permits from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and from the California Department	Prior to transfer of SRCA	Applicant	DRP/ACOE/LARWQCB/CDFG

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
1. The preservation of 1,355 acres of natural open space within the SRCA through the use of a conservation easement or the dedication of such land to a qualified conservation organization. This 1,355-acre area includes approximately 5.35 acres of ACOE and RWQCB jurisdiction, none of which consists of jurisdictional wetlands and approximately 5.71 acres of CDFG jurisdiction (of which 0.31 acre is vegetated riparian habitat). 2. The preservation of 1.53 acres of southern vernal pool and artificial pool habitats within the SRCA subject to RWQCB jurisdiction. 3. On-site establishment of 7.27 acres of sycamore/cottonwood riparian woodland within Plum Canyon. As described further in the HMMP, the proposed 7.27-acre sycamore riparian woodland (mitigation site) will be established within portions of Plum Canyon on-site within the SRCA as shown in Figure 4.C-7, Proposed Conservation and Mitigation Areas, on page 4.C-74. Hydrology is currently present at the mitigation site and the mitigation site supports Cortina sandy loam and Saugus loam which are conducive to the establishment of sycamore riparian woodland. An ACOE-approved reference site will be used prior to implementation of the mitigation program to provide the necessary data to measure the performance of the mitigation site.	of Fish and Game			

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
The plant palette for the proposed mitigation site includes the planting of two riparian species; 727 one-gallon containers of Fremont cottonwood and 1,818 one-gallon containers of western sycamore. One-gallon upland buffer species will also be planted including chamise, hoaryleaf ceanothus, California buckwheat, deerweed, coast prickly pear, snake cholla, scrub oak, white sage, black sage, and our Lord's candle. A seed mix of 12 native shrub and herbaceous species will also be used. The planting of a sycamore riparian woodland in the vicinity of the holly-leafed cherry woodland is not intended to, nor is it expected to, result in an inadvertent conversion of the riparian area from holly-leafed cherry to sycamore woodland. The creation of 7.27 acres of sycamore riparian woodland within Plum Canyon within the SRCA is expected to provide an overstory on the edges of the holly-leafed cherry woodland that replicates the conditions currently found in Drainage 5 (where impacts are proposed). On-site occurrences of both species indicate that they can exist concomitantly without the risk of conversion from one type to another altogether. With appropriate spacing and the use of drip irrigation on the planted sycamores, the existing swath of holly-leafed cherry will not be adversely affected by the addition of the sycamore riparian woodland.				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
The HMMP includes a number of features to ensure the success of the mitigation site including supervision by a qualified habitat restoration specialist, a 5-year qualitative and quantitative monitoring program, contractor education, the use of mycorrhizal fungi, supplemental irrigation, regular maintenance (e.g., exotic vegetation control, pest control, trash removal), and adaptive management assurances. The Hybrid Functional Assessment (HFA) conducted by GLA (2009) concluded that the proposed project, considering off-setting mitigation measures, would result in a 25 percent increase in the total functionality of the aquatic features remaining within the SRCA after project implementation. In addition to the measures proposed above, the project will require permits from the ACOE under section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) under section 401 of the CWA, and from the CDFG under section 1602 of the State Fish and Game Code. Should the ACOE, RWQCB, and/or CDFG impose additional or greater mitigation measures on the project for these impacts, those measures – to the extent that they exceed what is required by the measures contained herein – may be substituted for the measures set forth herein, as the County does not intend to require the project to mitigate twice for the same impact once the project has already mitigated the impact below a level of significance.				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
4.C-3: In order to avoid impacts to nesting birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and raptors protected by State Fish and Game Code, project grading and vegetation removal should take place outside of the nesting season, roughly defined as mid-February to mid-August. If grading or vegetation removal is to take place during the nesting season, a biologist acceptable to Los Angeles County shall be present during vegetation clearing operations to search for and flag active nests so that they can be avoided. A raptor survey will also be required in the unnamed canyon prior to the fill of that drainage. An avoidance buffer of 100 to 500 feet (exact radius to be determined by the monitoring biologist) will be fenced around any active raptor nests and impacts to nests will be avoided until after the nesting season is over. After mitigation the anticipated impact on nesting birds is less than significant. The results of the nesting bird construction monitoring will be provided in writing to the CDFG and County Department of Regional Planning (DRP).	If grading or vegetation removal is to take place during the nesting season, a biologist shall survey and mark active nesting areas to avoid	Prior to grading	Applicant	Qualified Biologist/DRP/CDFG
	Conduct a raptor survey of the unnamed canyon prior to the fill of that drainage and delineate an avoidance buffer	Prior to grading	Applicant	DRP/CDFG
	Provide written report documenting results of nesting bird construction monitoring/Field verification	After grading	Applicant	DRP/CDFG/Qualified Biologist
4.C-4: To mitigate the loss of the coast live oak on-site (32 inches diameter at breast height [dbh]) in the southeastern section of the study area, an oak tree permit will be obtained from the County. The impacted oak tree will be replaced at a minimum ratio of 10:1 in the appropriate location at the interface between development and undeveloped areas. This ratio is in excess of the mitigation ratio set forth in the County ordinance, which is 2:1.	Obtain oak tree permit	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
No mitigation is necessary for oak woodlands regulated under SB 1334 because no oak woodlands occur within the study area.				
The loss of two California junipers within mixed coastal sage chaparral scrub shall be replaced in the landscaping scheme along roadways and in parks and other recreational areas at a minimum ratio of 3:1. Trees grown from local area stock shall be used, along with salvaged trees from the development area where possible.	Submittal and approval of Landscape Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DRP
To mitigate the potential loss of the coast live oak off-site, the Applicant shall obtain an oak tree removal permit from the City of Santa Clarita for the coast live oak tree that may be adversely impacted by trenching for the proposed 78-inch pipeline installation, prior to initiation of pipeline trenching and construction. To the extent feasible, impacts to areas within the drip line (or root system) should be avoided during construction.	Avoid root system during grading or obtain oak tree removal permit Field verification	Prior to issuance of grading permit During grading/construction	Applicant	DRP/DPW/City of Santa Clarita/Qualified Biologist
4.C-5: To mitigate potentially significant indirect impacts to open space areas adjacent to fuel modification zones due to the possible spread of invasive plant species, the proposed project shall incorporate the use of native plant species to the maximum extent practicable and avoid the use of plant species known to be highly invasive adjacent to open space areas. The plant palette for the fuel modification areas adjacent to open space areas shall be consistent	Submittal and approval of Fuel Modification Plan and Landscape Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	Fire Department/DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
with the County of Los Angeles Fire Department Fuel Modification Plan Guidelines[2] and shall focus on native species provided in the table of desirable plant species.				
D. CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES				
4.D-1(a): Archaeological Monitoring. Archaeological Monitoring. At the commencement of project grading or construction, all workers associated with earth disturbing activities (particularly remedial grading and excavation) shall be given an orientation regarding the possibility of exposing unexpected archaeological material and/or cultural remains by a qualified archaeologist who satisfies the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for Archaeology (prehistoric/historic archaeology) pursuant to 36 CFR 61. The archaeologist shall also instruct the workers as to what steps are to be taken if such a find is encountered. Due to the moderate sensitivity and possibility of buried cultural materials within the project area, it is recommended that initial grading and ground disturbing activities in areas determined to be sensitive (primarily those areas proximal to recorded sites) be monitored by an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeology (prehistoric/historic archaeology) pursuant to	Provide orientation to all workers associated with earth disturbing activities. Monitor initial grading and ground disturbing activities. Stop work if cultural remains are discovered and notify the applicant and County. If necessary, formulate and implement a mitigation plan.	Prior to and during grading/construction	Applicant	Qualified Archaeologist/DPW

[2] *County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Fuel Modification Unit, Prevention Bureau, Forestry Division, Brush Clearance Section. Fuel Modification Plan Guidelines. January 1998. Available at http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/Forestry/PDF/FuelModificationPlan.pdf.*

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
36 CFR 61. The archaeologist shall have the authority to stop work if sensitive or potentially significant cultural remains are discovered during excavation or ground disturbing activities. Test excavations may be necessary to reveal whether such cultural materials are significant. In the event the archaeologist indicates that a significant or unique archaeological/cultural find has been unearthed, grading operations shall cease in the affected area until the geographic extent and scientific value of the resources can be reasonably verified. Upon such discoveries the archaeologist shall notify the applicant and Los Angeles County. Any excavation and recovery of resources shall be performed by a qualified archaeologist using standard archaeological techniques. If necessary, a mitigation plan shall be formulated. Work in the area shall only resume with the approval of the project archaeologist. Artifacts, notes, photographs, and other project materials recovered during the monitoring program shall be curated at a facility meeting federal and state standards.				
4.D-1(b): Human Remains. If human remains are unearthed, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC will then identify the person(s) thought to be the Most Likely	Stop work if human remains are discovered and notify County Coroner. If the remains are Native American then follow recommendations of Most Likely Descendent for disposition.	During grading/construction	Applicant	DPW/County Coroner/NAHC/MLD Representative

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
Descendent (MLD) of the deceased Native American, who will have 24 hours to make a formal recommendation as to disposition of the remains. All work associated with the remains will be done respectfully, and with recognition that the remains are considered sacred. All work in the area of the remains will be monitored by an authorized representative of the MLD.				
4.D-2(a): Paleontological Survey and Treatment Program. Prior to the implementation of grading or construction related activities, a qualified paleontologist shall be retained by the applicant to survey the project area to relocate known fossil localities, and determine the most sensitive areas. A qualified paleontologist is defined as a paleontologist meeting the criteria established by the Society for Vertebrate Paleontology including institutional affiliations/credentials, ability to recognize and recover vertebrate fossils in the field, local geological and biostratigraphic expertise, proficiency in identifying vertebrate fossils, publications in scientific journals. Following the survey, a paleontological resources monitoring and mitigation program will be developed by the qualified paleontologist that will include salvage of known fossil resources, areas that will be monitored during project-related earth-moving activities. The paleontological resources monitoring and mitigation program shall be submitted to the County for review and approval prior to construction grading activities. The program shall define specific procedures for construction monitoring; emergency discovery; sampling and data recovery, if	Conduct paleontological survey. Submittal and approval of a paleontological resources mitigation and monitoring program.	Prior to issuance of grading permit and during grading/construction	Applicant	Qualified paleontologist/DPW

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
needed; museum storage of any specimen and data recovered; preconstruction coordination; and reporting. Any curation costs shall be incurred by the applicant.				
4.D-2(b): Paleontological Monitoring. The paleontological monitor, who has been trained by a qualified paleontologist to identify vertebrate fossils, shall monitor earth-moving construction activities at depths determined to be sensitive as specified in the County approved monitoring plan. Monitoring will not be conducted in areas where the ground has been previously disturbed or in areas where exposed sediment will be buried, but not otherwise disturbed.	Monitor sensitive areas as determined in the County approved monitoring plan.	During grading/construction	Applicant	Qualified Paleontologist/DPW
4.D-2(c): Paleontological Data Recovery. Prior to the start of grading or construction related activities, construction personnel involved with earth-moving activities shall be informed of procedures to follow if fossil remains are encountered. In the event that paleontological resources are encountered during construction-related earth-moving activities, all work shall cease within the immediate area and be redirected elsewhere until the paleontological monitor has evaluated the situation and provided recommendations for the protection of, or mitigation of adverse effects to, significant paleontological resources assessed. Upon such discoveries, the contractor shall notify the applicant and Los Angeles County. Procedures for mitigating potential impacts to significant paleontological resources shall follow the monitoring and mitigation program previously developed under this mitigation measure. Construction work within this	Provide orientation to all workers associated with earth disturbing activities. Stop work if paleontological resources are encountered. Evaluate resources and provide recommendations for mitigation. Notify the applicant and County.	Prior to and during grading/construction	Applicant	Qualified Paleontologist/DPW

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
area shall resume upon approval from the principal project paleontological monitor.				
E. VISUAL QUALITIES				
4.E-1: During construction, the applicant or his contractors shall locate equipment, stockpiles, and staging areas out of direct public or private view to the extent feasible.	Field Verification	During construction	Applicant	DPW/DRP
4.E-2(a): To reduce the significant aesthetic impact associated with graded slopes and paved terrace drains along the southern entrance to the project site, the slopes on both sides of proposed Skyline Ranch Road shall be revegetated and landscaped as soon as feasible following grading and roadway development. Landscaping in this area shall be selected and planted to screen proposed terrace drains from public views and to merge ornamental and native materials such that sharp contrasts in form and color with undeveloped areas are avoided.	Revegetate and landscape slopes on both sides of Skyline Ranch Road Field Verification	After grading	Applicant	DRP/DPW
4.E-2(b): A landscape plan for the planned residential development shall be prepared by a Landscape Architect with a plant palette that will merge ornamental and native materials such that shape contrasts in form and color are avoided with adjacent undeveloped areas. Trees and shrubs on streets, slopes and ridgelines should emphasize mounded rather than columnar forms (such as palm trees and cypress). Plantings on the hillsides to the south and east of the entry road shall be specifically selected, sized, and placed to soften angular forms created by grading at	Submittal and approval of Landscape Plan Maintain landscaping/Field verification	Prior to issuance of grading permit Post Construction/Ongoing	Applicant HOA	DRP DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
the interface of manufactured slopes and natural hillsides. Furthermore, every effort shall be made as grading plans are finalized and during grading to create rounded landforms that are generally reflective of the natural topography of the area. Planting of common landscape areas shall be undertaken as soon as possible following grading to avoid prolonged view degradation. Landscaping on the site shall be routinely maintained by a homeowners association and/or through Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs) throughout the life of the project. The landscape plan shall be subject to review and approval by the County prior to issuance of any grading permits.				
F. TRAFFIC/ACCESS				
4.F-1(a): Plum Canyon Road at Skyline Ranch Road/Heller Circle (South)): Prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the project shall redesign and construct the new east leg (Skyline Ranch Road) to include one left-turn lane, one shared left/through lane, and one right-turn lane; and restripe the existing west leg (Heller Circle South) to consist of one left-turn lane and one shared through/right-turn lane; and restripe the existing north leg (Plum Canyon Road) left-turn pocket to allow the left-turn movement. Implementation of improvements and fair share determination shall be coordinated with adjoining Tract 46018, since many of the stated improvements are conditions of approval for Tract 46018 and are required to be in place prior to occupancy of Tract 46018 or the proposed project.	Coordinate roadway improvements for Plum Canyon/Skyline Ranch Road/Heller Circle and payment of fair share fees with adjoining Tract 46018	Prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy	Applicant	DPW

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
4.F-1(b): Golden Valley Road at Plum Canyon Road: The project shall pay its fair share (53 percent) to restripe the northbound Golden Valley Road approach to provide a second left-turn lane, for a total of two northbound left-turn lanes, one northbound through lane, and one northbound right-turn lane. Timing of improvement shall be determined by the County based on Bridge and Thoroughfare (B&T) District priorities.	Payment of fair share fees	Prior to final tract map approval	Applicant	DPW
	Submittal and approval of striping plans for Improvements to Golden Valley Road	Prior to final tract map approval	Applicant	DPW
	Construction of improvements	To be determined based on B&T District priorities	Applicant	DPW
4.F-2(a): Sierra Highway at Soledad Canyon Road: The project shall pay its fair share (100 percent) to add a second southbound left-turn lane, for a total of five approach lanes and reconfigure the approach lanes as two left-turn lanes, two through lanes, and one right turn lane, so as to mirror the northbound approach. This improvement may require the acquisition of additional right-of-way to widen the southbound approach of the north leg. Timing of improvement shall be determined by the City based on B&T District priorities.	Payment of fair share fees	Prior to final tract map approval	Applicant	DPW/City of Santa Clarita
	Submittal and approval of striping plans for improvements to Sierra Highway	Prior to final tract map approval	Applicant	DPW/City of Santa Clarita
	Construction of improvements	To be determined based on B&T District priorities	Applicant	DPW/City of Santa Clarita
4.F-2(b): Sierra Highway at Skyline Ranch Road: Prior to the issuance of the 301st building permit the project shall construct a new intersection for project access; provide one northbound left-turn lane, two northbound through lanes, two southbound through lanes, one eastbound left-turn lane, and two eastbound right-turn lanes; and install a traffic signal. The placement of the new west leg should be of sufficient distance from the Sierra Highway centerline to allow	Submittal and approval of striping plans for intersection improvements to Sierra Highway at Skyline Ranch Road	Prior to final tract map approval	Applicant	DPW/City of Santa Clarita
	Construction of improvements	Prior to issuance of the 301st building	Applicant	DPW/City of Santa Clarita

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
for the eventual addition of a third southbound through lane as identified in the City of Santa Clarita General Plan Circulation Element.		permit		
4.F-3: In the event the State approves a Caltrans impact fee mitigation program prior to implementation of the proposed project, the applicant shall pay a fair share to fund programmed improvements to Highway 14 that would mitigate the project's contribution to cumulative impacts on the highway. Such improvements may include the addition of HOV lanes, truck lanes, and additional mixed flow lanes to the segments of Highway 14 between Sand Canyon Road to south of the Sierra Highway interchange, that have been identified in the Short Range Plan outlined in the North County Combined Highway Corridors Study.	Payment of fair share fees if Caltrans impact fee mitigation program approved and implemented by the State	Prior to implementation of the project (if Caltrans impact fee program implemented)	Applicant	DPW/Caltrans
G. NOISE				
4.G-1(a): Construction truck routes and equipment shall, to the extent feasible, avoid residential areas and roadways adjacent to noise sensitive receptors.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures Field Verification	During construction During construction	Applicant/Contractor Applicant/Contractor	DPW DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
4.G-1(b): Wherever heavy duty truck traffic associated with project construction utilizes roadways with adjacent noise sensitive receptors, the trucks shall avoid peak hour traffic in order to minimize potential truck idling in proximity to these receptors.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures	During construction	Applicant/Contractor	DPW
	Field Verification	During construction	Applicant/Contractor	DRP
4.G-2(a): All construction activities within 300 feet of an occupied single- or multi-family residential lot shall be restricted to between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Monday through Friday, and between 8:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. on Saturday. Construction work shall be prohibited on Sundays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, Memorial Day, and Labor Day.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures	During construction	Applicant/Contractor	DPW
	Field Verification	During construction	Applicant/Contractor	DRP
4.G-2(b): The construction contractor shall provide at least 72-hour advance notice of the start of construction activities to all noise sensitive uses within 300 feet of on-site and off-site occupied residences. Notification shall be by mail. The announcement shall state specifically where and when construction activities will occur, and provide contact information for filing noise complaints. Notices shall provide tips on reducing noise intrusion, for example, by closing windows facing the planned construction.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures	Prior to beginning construction/During construction	Applicant/Contractor	DPW/DRP
	Prepare and distribute notice	Prior to beginning construction/During construction	Applicant/Contractor	DPW/DRP
4.G-2(c): When construction operations occur within 300 feet of on-site or off-site occupied residences, all feasible measures to reduce construction equipment noise levels at the residences shall be employed. These measures shall include among other things changing	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures	During construction	Applicant/Contractor	DPW/DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
the location of stationary construction equipment to increase the distance between the equipment and the receptors, shutting off idling equipment, notifying residents in advance of construction work, and installing temporary acoustic barriers around stationary construction noise sources.	Install temporary acoustic barriers Field verification	During construction During construction	Applicant/Contractor Applicant/Contractor	DRP DRP
4.G-2(d): Prior to construction of structures on the residential lots east of existing residences east of Falcon Crest Drive and Bakerton Avenue, temporary acoustic barriers shall be erected along the rear lot lines within 300 feet of the western site boundary. The extent of this requirement, including the height, length, number of properties, etc., shall be determined by an acoustical consultant retained by the applicant with access to project-related design and construction information. These barriers may be constructed of any solid material, shall be continuous with no gaps, and shall remain in place until building construction on these lots is completed.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures Prepare acoustical study Install temporary acoustic barriers Field verification	Prior to building construction Prior to building construction Prior to building construction During construction	Applicant/Contractor Applicant Applicant Applicant	DPW/DPH Acoustical Consultant/DPW/DPH DRP DRP
4.G-3(a): Prior to construction of any residential development along Skyline Ranch Road a detailed acoustical analysis report prepared by a qualified acoustical consultant shall be submitted to the County for review and approval. For all on-site single family residences that have rear and/or side yard lines within 100 feet from the centerline of the proposed Skyline Ranch Road, the acoustical analysis report shall describe and quantify the noise sources impacting the area and the measures required to meet the 60 dBA CNEL residential noise standard. Based on a	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures Submittal and approval of a detailed acoustical analysis report Field verification	Prior to building construction Prior to building construction Prior to occupancy	Applicant Applicant Applicant	DPW/DPH Acoustical Consultant/DPW/DPH DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
preliminary acoustical analysis included in Appendix G of this Draft EIR, the placement of a 6-foot high solid masonry wall is recommended at the locations shown in Appendix G, Figures 1 through 8, in order to achieve this noise standard.				
4.G-3(b): Balconies, greater than six (6) feet in depth, are considered exterior living areas and must also meet the exterior noise standard. Therefore, balconies shall either be discouraged from exposure to exterior noise levels greater than the 65 dBA CNEL (residences that are within 50 feet from the edge of the proposed Skyline Ranch Road) standard for single-family residences through architectural or site design, or balconies shall be enclosed by solid noise barriers, such as 3/8-inch glass or 5/8-inch Plexiglas or other equally effective construction materials to a height specified by a qualified noise consultant.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures	Prior to building construction	Applicant	Acoustical Consultant/ DPW/DPH
4.G-3(c): All on-site single-family residences within 50 feet of the Skyline Ranch Road right-of-way shall include whole-house air conditioning so that windows facing the roadway may be closed without compromising a comfortable interior living environment.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures Install air conditioning	Prior to building construction Prior to occupancy	Applicant Applicant	DPW/DPH DPW/DPH
4.G-4(a) Prior to issuance of building permits, a detailed acoustical analysis study shall be prepared by a qualified acoustical consultant for all on-site single family residences that have rear and/or side yard lines within line-of-site of the proposed school and/or park	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW/DPH

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
and shall be submitted to the County. This acoustical analysis report shall describe and quantify the noise sources impacting the area. In the event the report shows that noise levels for the residences would exceed applicable standards, measures shall be required to reduce noise to levels that are within applicable standards. Such measures may include: • Locate student pick-up/drop-off and parking areas as far away from residences as feasible; • Arrange school buildings such that they will provide shielding between the play field and the residences; or • Provide acoustical walls with sufficient mass, length and height to break the line-of-sight between the residences and the play field. The acoustical analysis report shall be subject to review and approval by the County and shall ensure compliance with applicable noise standards in the County Code.	Submittal and approval of a detailed acoustical analysis report	Prior to building construction	Applicant	Acoustical consultant/ DPW/DPH
4.G-4(b) Prior to completion of plans for the proposed elementary school and public park, a detailed acoustical analysis report shall be prepared by a qualified acoustical consultant in consultation with the Sulfur Springs School District and the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. The requirements set forth in the report shall ensure that on-site single family residences that have rear and/or side yard lines within line-of-site of the proposed school and/or park are not subject to unacceptably high levels	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing noise attenuation measures Submittal and approval of a detailed acoustical analysis report	Prior to construction Prior to completion of plans for proposed elementary school and public park	Applicant Applicant	DPW/DPH DPW/DPH

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
of noise (i.e., noise levels in excess of the standards provided in the County Code) from school yard or park activities. The acoustical analysis report, subject to review and approval by the County, shall include requirements relating to the locations of courts and playfields and the materials and heights of property walls as necessary to support compliance with applicable noise standards in the County Code.				
H. AIR QUALITY				
4.H-1(a): Develop and implement a construction management plan, as approved by the County of Los Angeles prior to issuance of a grading permit, which includes the following measures recommended by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) to implement SCAQMD Rule 403.	Submittal and approval of a construction management plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	DPW/SCAQMD
	Implement construction management plan	During construction	Applicant	DPW
a. Ground cover shall be replaced in disturbed areas as quickly as practicable; b. Soil stabilizers/dust suppressants shall be applied to inactive disturbed areas in sufficient quantity and frequency to maintain a stabilized surface; c. Haul roads and site access roads shall be watered no less than three times daily; d. Disturbed surfaces shall be watered no less than two times daily; e. All stockpiles shall be covered with tarps as soon as practicable;	Field verification	During construction	Applicant	DRP/DPW

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
f. Travel speed on unpaved surfaces shall not exceed 15 miles per hour;				
g. Provide a publicly visible sign and directly notify property owners in the vicinity of a contact person and telephone number to call regarding dust complaints; the contact person shall respond with appropriate corrective actions within 24 hours;				
h. Prohibit construction vehicle idling in excess of 10 minutes;				
i. Stockpiles, haul routes, staging locations, and parking areas shall be located as far as possible from adjacent residential uses;				
j. Pave or place gravel on all construction access roads at least 100 feet on to the site from the main road;				
k. Configure construction parking to minimize traffic interference;				
l. Provide temporary traffic controls when construction activities have the potential to disrupt traffic to maintain traffic flow (e.g., signage, flag person, detours);				
m. Schedule construction activities that affect traffic flow to off-peak hours (e.g., between 7:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. and between 10:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M.);				
n. Develop a construction traffic management plan that includes the following measures to address				

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
construction traffic that has the potential to affect traffic on public streets: • Consolidate truck deliveries • Provide temporary dedicated turn lanes for movement of construction trucks and equipment on and off of the site; o. Suspend use of all construction equipment operations during second stage smog alerts. Contact the SCAQMD at 800/242-4022 for daily forecasts; p. Use electricity from power poles rather than temporary fossil fuel-powered generators; and q. Use methanol- or natural gas-powered mobile equipment and pile drivers instead of diesel if readily available at competitive prices.				
4.H-1(b): Maintain construction equipment and vehicle engines in good condition and in proper tune as per manufacturers' specifications and per SCAQMD rules, to minimize exhaust emissions.	Submittal and approval of a construction management plan	During construction	Applicant	DPW
4.H-1(c): All on-site heavy-duty construction equipment shall be equipped with diesel particulate traps as feasible.	Submittal and approval of a construction management plan	During construction	Applicant	DPW
4.H-2(a): Subdivisions and buildings will be required to exceed Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (also known as the California Building Standards Code) 2005 requirements by 15 percent.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing Green Building Ordinance requirements	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW/DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
4.H-2(b): Lighting for public streets, parking areas, and recreation areas shall utilize energy efficient light and mechanical, computerized or photo cell switching devices to reduce unnecessary energy usage.	Submittal and approval of a Lighting Plan with note referencing Green Building Ordinance requirements	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW/DRP
I. WATER RESOURCES				
4.I-1 All appliances such as showerheads, lavatory faucets and sink faucets shall comply with efficiency standards set forth in Title 20, California Administrative Code Section 1604(f). Title 24 of the California Administrative Code Section 1606(b) prohibits the installation of fixtures unless the manufacturer has certified to the California Energy Conservation compliance with the flow rate standards.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing Green Building Ordinance requirements	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW/DRP
4.I-2 Low flush toilets shall be installed as specified in California State Health and Safety Code Section 17921.3 and the County Green Building Ordinance.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing Green Building Ordinance requirements	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW/DRP
4.I-3 All common area irrigation areas shall be capable of being operated by a computerized irrigation system which includes an onsite weather station/ET gage capable of reading current weather data and making automatic adjustments to independent run times for each irrigation valve based on changes in temperature, solar radiation, relative humidity, rain and wind. In addition, the computerized irrigation system shall be equipped with flow sensing capabilities, thus automatically shutting down the irrigation system in	Submittal and approval of a Landscape Plan with note referencing Green Building Ordinance requirements	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW/DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
the event of a mainline break or broken head. All common area irrigation controllers shall also include a rain sensing automatic shutoff.				
4.I-4 Common area landscaping shall emphasize drought-tolerant vegetation. Plants of similar water use shall be grouped to reduce over-irrigation of low-water-using plants. Those areas not designed with drought-tolerant vegetation shall be gauged to receive irrigation using the minimal requirements.	Submittal and approval of a Landscape Plan with note referencing Drought-Tolerant Landscaping Ordinance requirements	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW/DRP
4.I-5 Residential occupants shall be informed as to the benefits of low-water-using landscaping and sources of additional assistance in such.	Provide information to residents	Post occupancy	Applicant	DRP
L. LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES				
4.L-1(a): Prior to issuance of building permits, the project shall incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) features into the project, in coordination with and to the satisfaction of the Sheriff's Department. Such features should include, but are not limited to the following: • Lighting in parking lots and low-level security lighting; • Provision that doors and windows are visible from the street and between buildings; • Lighting of building address numbers to ensure visibility from the street for emergency response agencies; and • Landscaping that would minimize opportunities for hiding.	Submittal and approval of final plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	Sheriff's Department

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
4.L-1(b): Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall provide the Sheriff's Department with plans indicating the project's street circulation system and building addresses to facilitate emergency response.	Submittal and approval of final plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	Sheriff's Department
M. FIRE SERVICES AND HAZARDS				
4.M-1(a): Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall pay fees pursuant to the Developer Fee Program or make an in-lieu donation, as determined appropriate by the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD).	Payment of fees or in-lieu donation	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	LACoFD
4.M-1(b): Development of the project shall occur in accordance with all applicable code and ordinance requirements for construction, access, water mains, fire flows, and hydrants.	Submittal and approval of final plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	LACoFD
4.M-1(c): Project buildings shall adhere to all applicable State and County Fire and Building Codes.	Submittal and approval of final plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	LACoFD
4.M-1(d): The project shall provide adequate emergency access. Access roads shall: • Provide a minimum width of 20 feet; • extend to within 150 feet of any exterior portion of all structures; • meet the minimum width requirements prescribed by the LACoFD; • be constructed with an all-weather surface; • have a minimum of 10 feet of brush clearance on each side;	Submittal and approval of final plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	LACoFD

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
• have an unobstructed vertical clearance clear-to-sky with the exception of protected tree species; • have a vertical clearance of 13.5 feet when protected tree species are overhanging; and • have a turning radii of no less than 32 feet.				
4.M-1(e): A turning area satisfactory to the LACoFD shall be provided for all driveways exceeding 150 feet in length and at the end of all cul-de-sacs.	Submittal and approval of final plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	LACoFD
4.M-1(f): All fire lanes must be a minimum of 26 feet in width (clear-to-sky) and marked "NO PARKING—FIRE LANE."	Submittal and approval of final plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	LACoFD
4.M-1(g): All access devices and gates for the proposed school shall comply with California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Article 3.05, including providing a minimum paved access width of 26 feet for circulation purposes.	Submittal and approval of final plans	Prior to completion of plans for proposed elementary school and public park	Applicant/Sulphur Springs School District	DRP/LACoFD
4.M-1(h): Proposed traffic calming measures shall be submitted to the LACoFD for review and approval.	Submittal and approval of applicable measures	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	LACoFD
4.M-1(i) All fire hydrants shall: • Measure 6"x4" x 2-1/2" brass or bronze, conforming to current AWWA standard C503 or approved equal; • On-site hydrants shall be installed a minimum 25 feet from a structure or protected by a two- hour rated firewall;	Submittal and approval of final plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	LACoFD

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
• Fire hydrants shall be installed, tested, and accepted prior to construction; • Vehicular access to fire hydrants shall be provided and maintained serviceable throughout construction.				
4.M-2: Prior to the issuance of any grading permit, a Fuel Modification Plan, consistent with the Fuel Modification Plan Guidelines, shall be submitted for review and approval by the Department of Regional Planning and the Forestry Division of the LACoFD to reduce the threat of wildfire. The Fuel Modification Plan shall require that applicant or homeowners association provide and maintain fuel modification and brush clearance zones around each on-site structure. Said plan shall be approved by the Forestry Division prior to completion of final landscape plans.	Submittal and approval of Fuel Modification Plan	Prior to issuance of grading permit	Applicant	LACoFD/DRP
S. GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE				
GHG Reduction Measure GCC-1: The builder shall strive to construct at least 10 percent of dwelling units in the proposed project with LIVINGSMART® features so as to achieve a minimum of 25 percent reduction in projected GHG emissions. The builder commits to offer enhanced advertising, education, and, if needed, other incentives to encourage market acceptance of these various energy- and water-conserving options.	Submit a copy of approved Building Plans with note referencing Green Building Ordinance requirements	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW/DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
GHG Reduction Measure GCC-2: The builder shall plant approximately 40 trees per landscaped acre as a means to capture (sequester) carbon dioxide emissions and to provide shade to the buildings, which can decrease the need for air conditioning.	Submittal and approval of a Landscape Plan with note referencing Green Building Ordinance requirements	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	DPW/DRP
GHG Reduction Measure GCC-3: To facilitate the extension of existing bus service to include Skyline Ranch Road, the builder shall work with the Santa Clarita Transit District to design and provide bus turnouts and shelters along Skyline Ranch Road.	Identify bus stop locations, turnouts, and shelters on final plans	Prior to issuance of building permits	Applicant	Santa Clarita Transit District/DRP
GHG Reduction Measure GCC-4: In order to increase awareness of green building practices and to promote water and energy conservation, the builder will develop and implement a green educational program. The program will include but not necessarily be limited to a pamphlet that educates and promotes conservation practices that homeowners can implement, with specific guidance on landscaping with drought tolerant plants, use of efficient irrigation systems, compact florescent lighting, and other measures that help lower GHG emissions.	Develop and implement green educational program and provide information to residents	Post occupancy	Applicant	DRP

Table 4-1 (Continued)

Skyline Ranch Mitigation Monitoring Program

Mitigation Measures	Action Required	When Monitoring to Occur	Responsible Agency or Party	Monitoring Agency or Party
COMPLIANCE				
As a means of ensuring compliance of above mitigation measures, the applicant and subsequent owner(s) are responsible for submitting compliance reports to the Department of Regional Planning for review, and for replenishing the mitigation monitoring account if necessary until all mitigation measures have been implemented and completed.	Submittal and approval of compliance report and replenishing mitigation monitoring account	Yearly and as required	Applicant and subsequent owner(s)	DRP
The subdivision shall conform to the design standards and policies of the Department of Public Works.	Submittal and approval of Public Works Plans	Prior to Final Map Approval	Applicant	DPW/DRP

As the applicant, I agree to incorporate these changes/conditions into the project, and understand that the public hearing and consideration by the Hearing Officer and/or Regional Planning Commission will be on the project as changed/conditioned.

_____ _____

Applicant Signature Date

☐ No response within 10 days. Environmental Determination requires that these changes/conditions be included in the project.

_____ _____

Staff Signature Date

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