



Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning



*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*

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Director of Planning

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
AND SCOPING MEETING  
“The Skyline Ranch Project”**

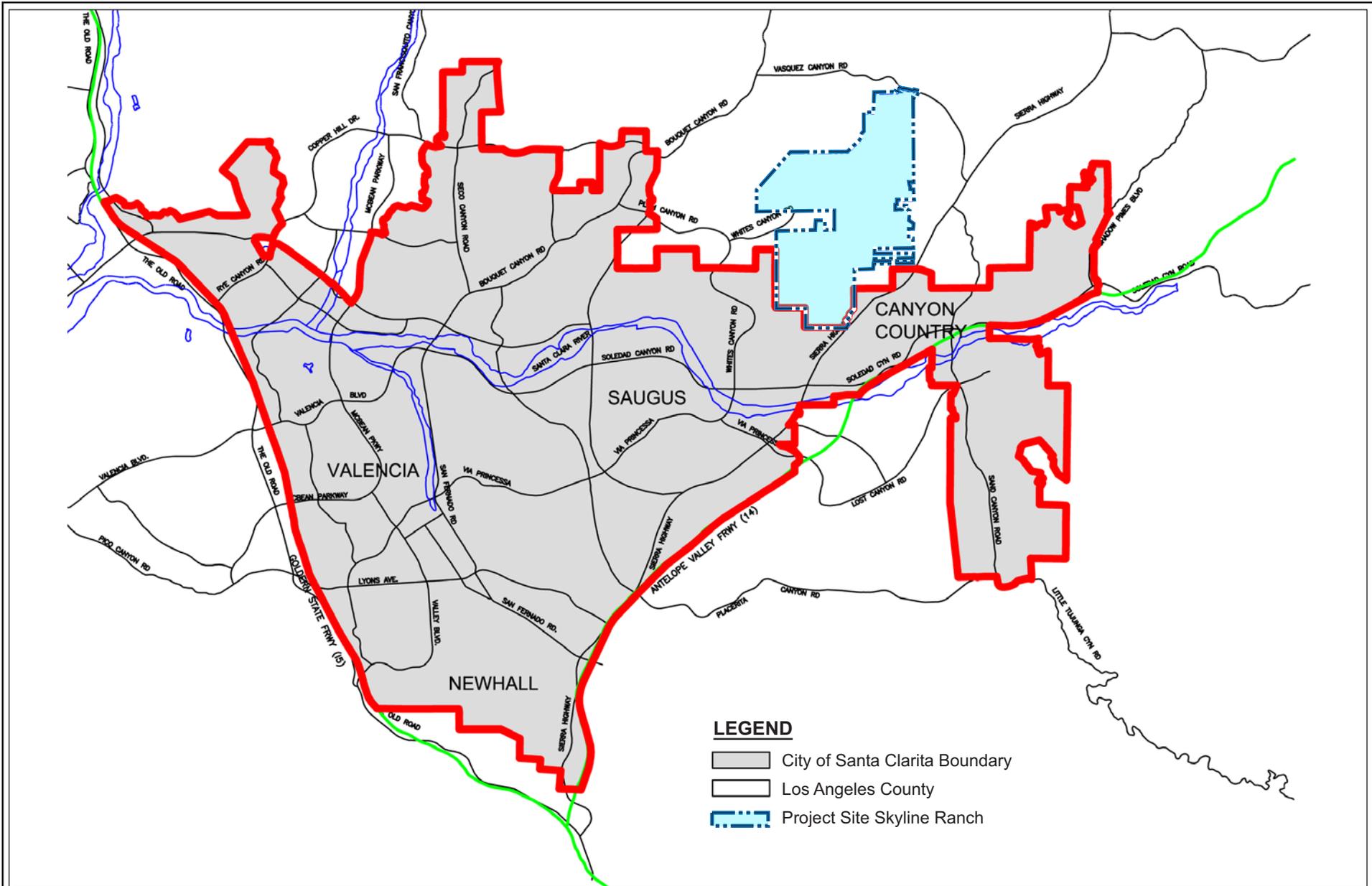
**County Project No. 04-075  
Tentative Tract Map No. 060922  
Oak Tree Permit, Conditional Use Permit, Development Agreement**

The County of Los Angeles will be the lead agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project identified above. In compliance with Section 15082 of the CEQA *Guidelines*, the County of Los Angeles is sending this Notice of Preparation to responsible agencies, interested parties and federal agencies which may be involved in approving or permitting the project, and to trustee agencies responsible for natural resources affected by the project. Within 30 days after receiving the Notice of Preparation, each agency shall provide the County of Los Angeles with specific details about the scope and content of the environmental information to be contained in the EIR related to that agency's area of statutory responsibility. In addition to the project actions cited above, permission will be sought for offsite grading on federally owned land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Should such offsite grading be determined to be a project subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), clearance of that aspect of this project will probably be undertaken separately through an Environmental Assessment (EA) or a joint EIR/EA.

The purpose of this Notice of Preparation is to solicit the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

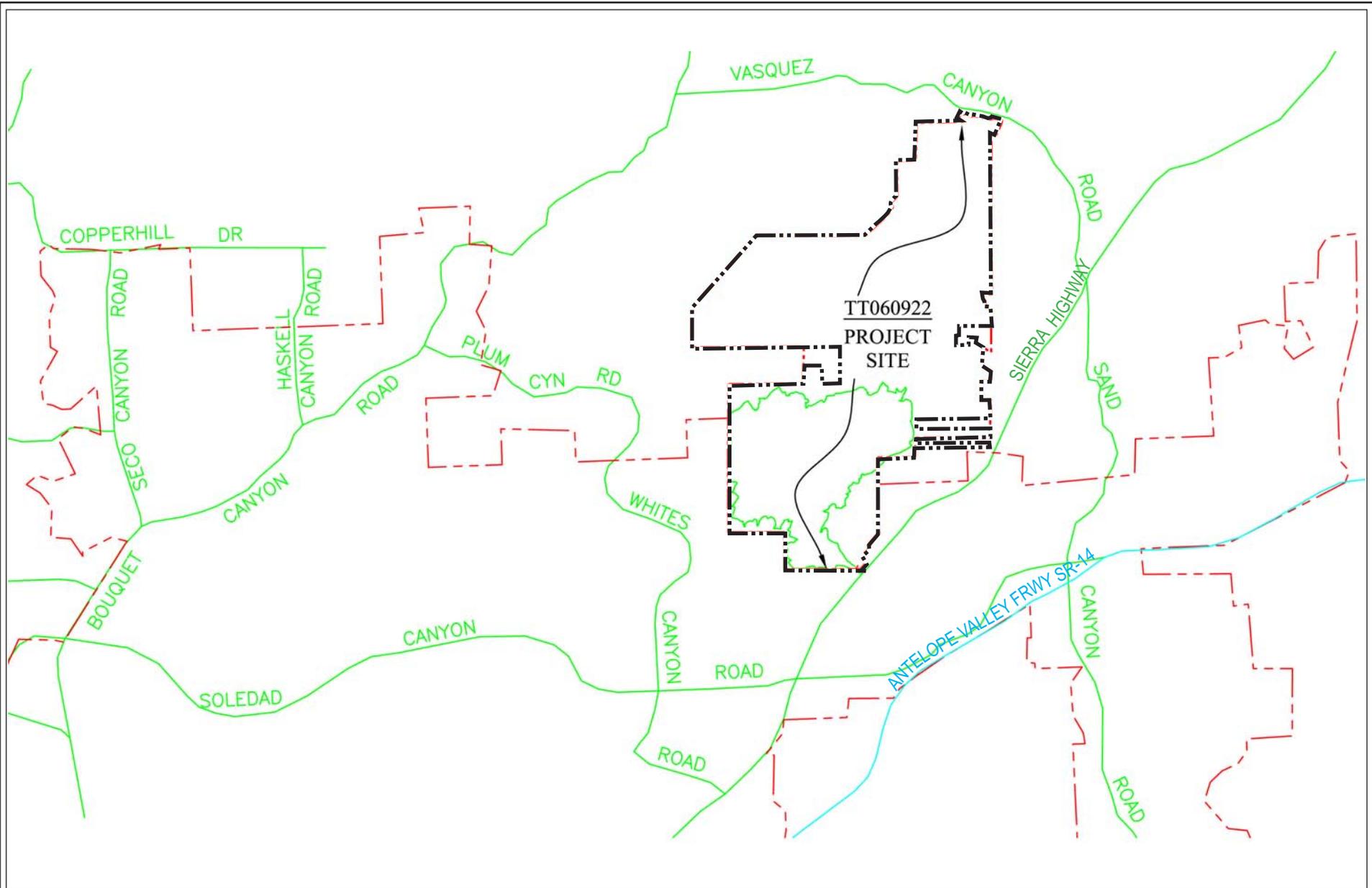
**PROJECT LOCATION**

As shown in Figure 1, the 2,196-acre Skyline Ranch site is located in the Santa Clarita Valley west and north of Highway 14 (Antelope Valley Freeway) and north of the City of Santa Clarita in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The project site includes various parcels west of Mint Canyon between the Santa Clara River and Vasquez Canyon. As illustrated in Figure 2, the site is roughly defined by Sierra Highway (Mint Canyon) on the east and southeast, residential communities on the south and southwest, Plum Canyon Road on the west, Bouquet Canyon Road to the northwest, and Vasquez Canyon Road to the northeast.



Not to Scale  
Source: Sikand, 2004

Figure 1  
Regional Location Map



Not to Scale

Source: Sikand, 2004

Figure 2  
Vicinity Map

## **EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS**

As shown in Figure 3, the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan Land Use Policy Map designates the project site as U1 (Urban 1.1 to 3.3 dwelling unit [du]/ acre), U2 (Urban 3.4 to 6.6 du/acre), U3 (Urban 6.7 to 15 du/acre), N (Non-Urban 0.5 to 1.0 du/acre), W (Floodplain), and HM (Hillside Management).

As shown in Figure 4, the County of Los Angeles Zoning Code designates the project site for agricultural uses, including A-2-1 (Heavy Agricultural), and A-1-1 and A-1-10,000 (Light Agricultural).

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Land Use**

The project applicant proposes to develop approximately 592 acres of the site with 1,325 single-family residential lots ranging in size from 4,830 to 7,350 square feet along with a 10-acre school site and approximately 10 acres of public park land. Development is proposed for the southern portion of the property where slopes of 25 percent or less are located. The northern 1,604 acres of the site would remain preserved as open space and managed by an as yet to be determined entity. A copy of the map is included as Figure 5.

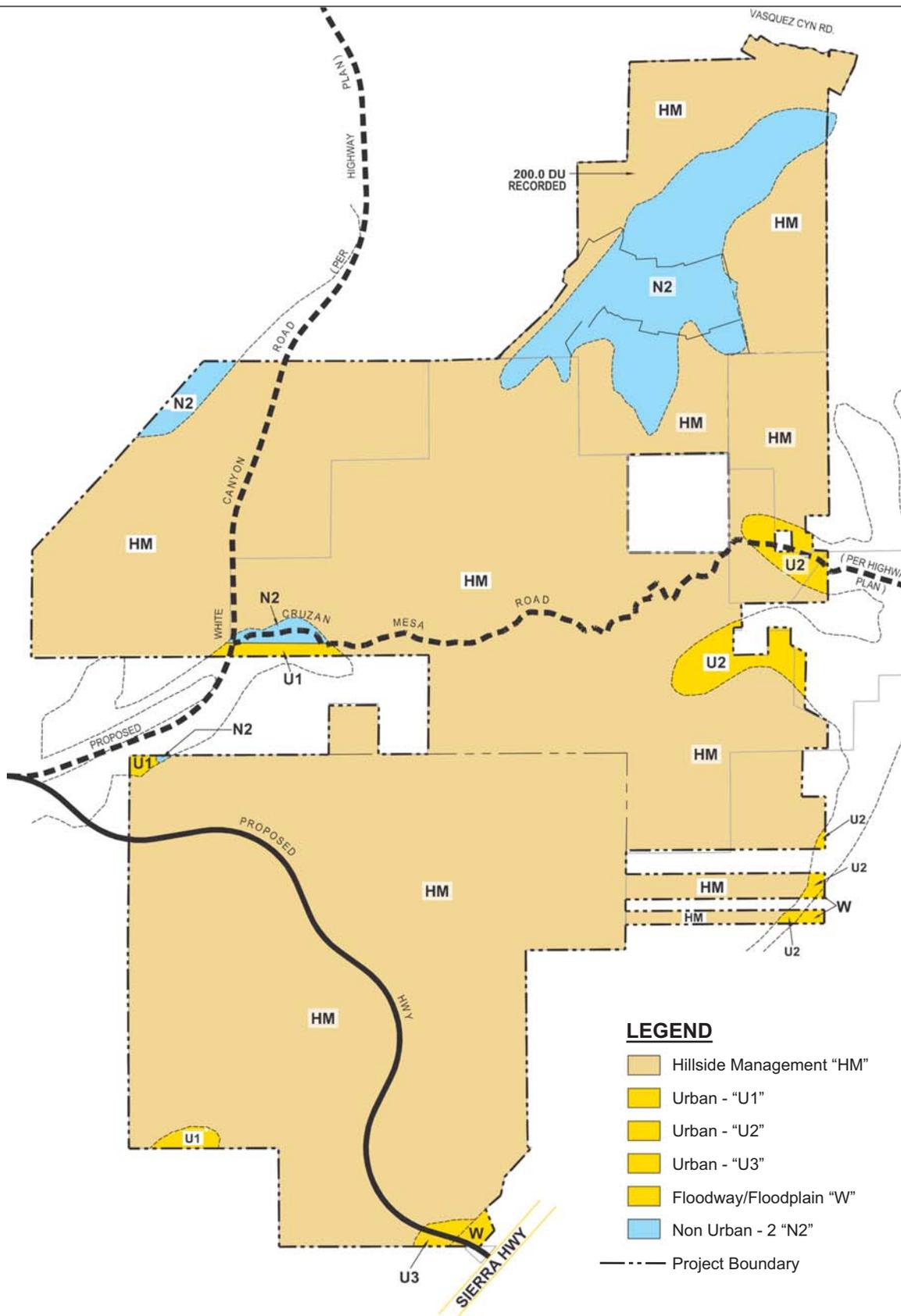
### **Grading**

Grading and associated earthwork would require the movement of approximately 20 million cubic yards of earth (cut/fill) that would occur exclusively on the southern 592 acres of the 2,196-acre site and immediately adjacent properties to the southeast and west for project access. Approximately 32 percent of the grading would be associated with a proposed off- and on-site public street improvement to extend Whites Canyon Road to the project site. Within the 592 acre portion of the property, mass grading would take place to provide for major roads and infrastructure, establish drainage patterns and for creation of building pads for the various land uses within the project.

The overall grading and earthwork proposal includes approximately 10.54 acres off-site associated with the extension of Whites Canyon Road to Plum Canyon Road. For approximately 1.42 acres of this off-site area, permission will be sought to undertake grading on land owned by the Federal government. Approximately 65,000 cubic yards of fill would be placed on this property with a maximum fill depth of 100 feet.

### **Infrastructure**

The project will construct a network of collector roads to provide local access to land uses associated with the proposed project. Primary access to the tract is provided by the off-site extension of Whites Canyon Road from Plum Canyon on the west (through Tract Map No. 46018), through the project site as Skyline Ranch Road, ultimately connecting to Sierra Highway in the southeast. This roadway is planned for two travel lanes in each direction separated by a center median and containing landscaped parkways of variable width within a 100-foot right-of-way. Local roadways would extend off Whites Canyon Road within a 50-foot right of way. All roadways within the project site will be constructed to urban standards as defined by the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works.



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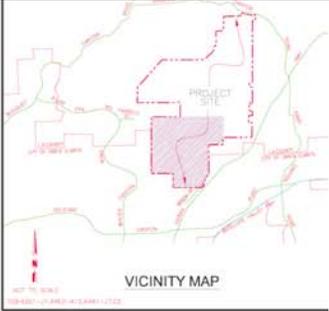
Source: Sikand, 2004

Figure 3  
Existing General Plan Designation



**LEGEND**

--- Project Boundary

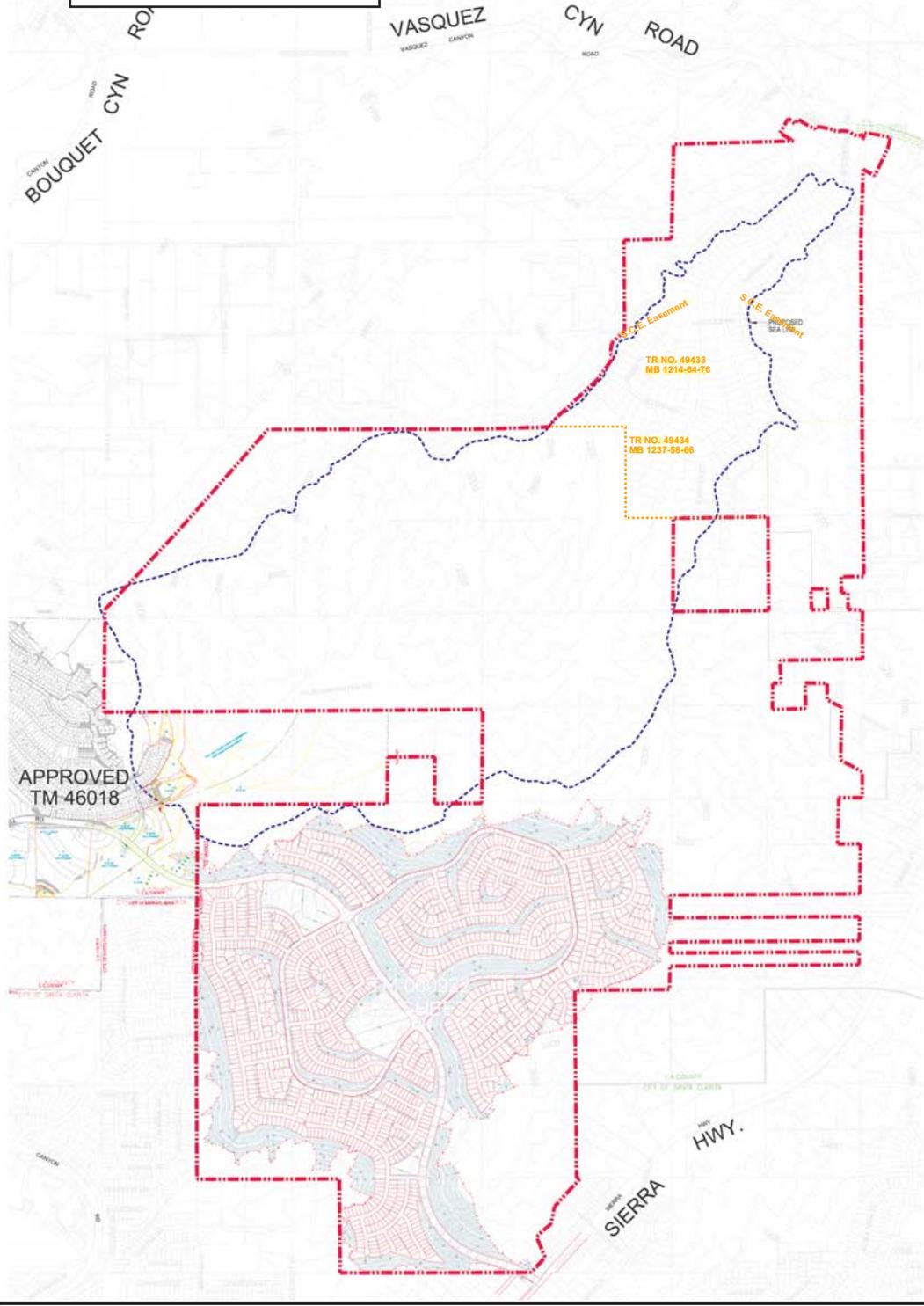


DATA SUMMARY

ACRES(GROSS)	2.196 AC
EXISTING ZONING	A-2-1, A-1-10,000, A-1-1
EXISTING GENERAL PLAN(SCVAGP)	U1, U2, U3, N, W, & HW
EXISTING LAND USE	VACANT/RES. TR. NO. 44667
PROPOSED LAND USE	RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL PARK, OPEN SPACE

LOT SUMMARY	
SINGLE FAMILY LOTS	1 TO 1325
SCHOOL SITE	1326
PARKS	1327 TO 1329
OPEN SPACE LOTS	1330 TO 1346
TOTAL LOTS	1346



Not to scale

Source: Sikand, 2004

Figure 5  
Vesting Tentative  
Tract No. 060922

A system of landscaped trails and walkways, called paseos, is proposed to provide a safe and attractive means of pedestrian access from residential neighborhoods to the elementary school and park sites. The paseos would adjoin Skyline Ranch Road and certain residential collector streets, and would be separated from vehicular traffic.

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 including water quality basins prior to discharge into the existing storm drain network serving nearby developed uses.

Wastewater would be collected and conveyed by a gravity flow network of pipes placed beneath on-site roadways. The sewer collector lines serving the site will connect to a sewer trunk main that extends along Sierra Highway.

The site is currently located in an area served by both the Santa Clarita Water Division (SCWD) and the Newhall County Water District. However, detachment from the Newhall County Water District is proposed as part of the project since the SCWD has existing distribution infrastructure in place that can more feasibly serve the project. In order to provide sufficient amounts of water and adequate water pressure to the project, a series of water storage reservoirs are proposed within two on-site water zones. Potable water would be conveyed to on-site uses via a network of 6" to 12" pipes that are located primarily beneath the planned roadway alignments.

#### **DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS REQUESTED**

Actions from the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning needed to develop the property as proposed include: 1) Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 060922; 2) Conditional Use Permit (04-075) for a Residential Planned Development, development in a Hillside Management Area, and for the movement of more than 100,000 cubic yards of earth; 3) Oak Tree Permit (04-075) for removal of one oak tree; and 4) a Development Agreement (04-075) with the County of Los Angeles. Among actions being sought from other agencies, detachment from the Newhall County Water District and annexation to the SCWD is proposed.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

Topography consists of modest- to steep-sloped ridgelines and canyons. The site drains to the west and southwest into the Santa Clara River basin. The terrain is generally rugged, but has few exposed rock outcroppings. South of Plum Canyon, the terrain rises gently from southwest to northeast where it joins the pass at the headwaters of Plum Canyon. North of Plum Canyon is a series of side canyons and associated slopes and ridges. These ridges slope southwestward from Cruzan Mesa and northward into Vasquez and Bouquet Canyons farther to the north.

The site has no active land uses other than on Cruzan Mesa. The northern portion of Cruzan Mesa is currently being leased by SLS Film Works as an outdoor movie location. Portions of Cruzan Mesa have been used for cattle grazing and are the site of a sizable vernal pool. Land ownership of the entire Skyline Ranch site is in private holdings. Recorded Tract Map No. 44967 of 200 lots on 360 acres is included within the northern boundary of this project.

The Skyline Ranch site supports seven vegetation communities as classified by Holland (1986): non-native grassland, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, coastal sage-chaparral scrub, holly-leaved cherry scrub, vernal pool, sycamore riparian woodland, and highly disturbed areas, with minor elements of other plant communities present. The dominant communities on the site are coastal

sage scrub and coastal sage–chaparral scrub, with the former best represented on south-facing slopes and ridgelines and the latter mostly on north-facing slopes. True chaparral with scrub oaks is restricted primarily to shaded north-facing slopes in the northern portion of the project site. Non-native grassland predominates on mesas, ridgelines, and gentler south-facing slopes, but as with chaparral, in many areas it is transitional with coastal sage scrub and clearly represents an early stage of sage scrub following past soil disturbance.

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. The highest diversity occurs in Plum Canyon and an unnamed canyon to the southwest, which have the best developed plant community structure and greatest diversity of habitat types. Cruzan Mesa, the northern portion of the 1,604 acres of the project site proposed to remain preserved as open space, has seasonal pools and extensive grassland, offers additional habitat for a different array of species, and the long escarpment along the northern end of this area provides nesting habitat for several species of raptors. The pools also offer resting and foraging habitat for a number of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds in the spring and early summer. Biological survey data from 2002 and 2003 confirmed the presence of four plant species and twelve wildlife species that are recognized as regionally or locally “sensitive”, but are not federally or State-listed.

The Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning prepared an Initial Study for the Skyline Ranch project and determined that a project EIR is required. A copy of the Initial Study is included as an attachment to this NOP.

The attached Initial Study was prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15063 and provides a preliminary analysis of the potential environmental effects to be analyzed in the Project EIR. The Initial Study provides a description of the project, including the location; a description of the environmental setting; and an identification of the project's potential environmental effects relative to hazards (geotechnical, flood, fire and noise); resources (water quality, air quality, biota, cultural resources and visual resources/aesthetics), services (traffic/access, sewage disposal, education, fire/sheriff and utilities) and other potential impact categories (general, environmental safety/hazardous materials, land use, population/housing/employment and mandatory findings of significance).

Based on the preliminary analysis, the Initial Study determined that the project may have potentially significant effects relative to the various impact categories, including: hazards (geotechnical, flood, fire and noise), resources (water quality, air quality, biota, cultural resources, and visual resources/aesthetics), services (traffic/access, sewage disposal, education, fire/sheriff and utilities) and other (general, environmental safety/hazardous materials, land use and recreation).

#### **SCOPING MEETING**

To assist in local participation, a Scoping Meeting will be held to present the proposed project and to solicit suggestions from the public and responsible agencies on the content of the Draft EIR. This meeting will be held in the Canyon Country Joanne Darcy Library located at 18536 Soledad Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91351 on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION REVIEW AND COMMENTS**

The review period for the Notice of Preparation will be from October 25 to November 24, 2004. Copies of the NOP are available for review at Canyon Country Library located at 18536 Soledad Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91351; Valencia County Library at 23743 West Valencia Boulevard, Santa Clarita, CA 91355; Newhall County Library at 22704 West 9th Street, Santa Clarita, CA 91321; as well as at the Department of Regional Planning, at the address below, and its website [http://planning.co.la.ca.us/drp\\_agnd.html](http://planning.co.la.ca.us/drp_agnd.html) Tentative Tract Map No. 060922. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than November 30, 2004. Please direct all written comments to the following address. In your written response, please include the name of a contact person in your agency.

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