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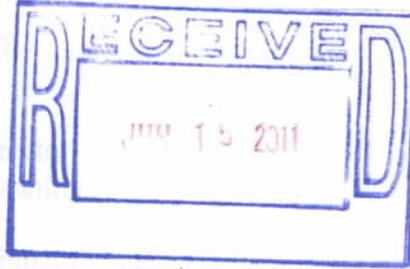
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LATHAM & WATKINS LLP

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June 15, 2011



VIA MESSENGER

Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission
Los Angeles County Dept. of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street
13TH Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Valley Vineyards-Tract No. 066952-(5)
Hearing Scheduled June 29, 2011

Honorable Chair, Modugno and Members of the Commission:

In connection with the upcoming public hearing referenced above, please find the following attached materials for your consideration:

- Summary of green sustainable aspects of Valley Vineyards
- Letter responding to issues raised by Leona Valley residents; and
- Vineyard overlay map depicting areas proposed for vineyards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Peter J. Gutierrez
of LATHAM & WATKINS LLP

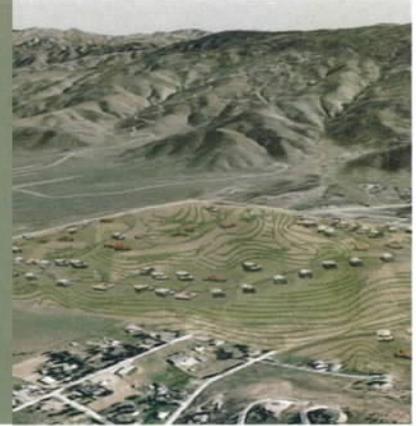
Attachments

cc:

Edel Vizcarra, Planning Deputy
Fifth Supervisorial District

The Vineyards

An Environmentally Sustainable Solution to Land Design
Summary of the Green Aspects of VTTM 066952



Project Description:

- Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 066952: A subdivision of land to create 117 single-family lots, two private street lots and one water tank lot on 292 gross acres;
- Conditional Use Permit No. 200700038: For compliance with non-urban hillside management and density-controlled development provisions, a proposed waste treatment facility [located on each residential lot], and onsite project grading exceeding 100,000 cubic yards of combined cut/fill.

Compliance with All Existing Ordinances

The Vineyards has been designed to adhere to all existing development regulations as well as to implement many state-of-the-art methods for protecting the environment and meeting local, state and national sustainability goals.

No General Plan Amendment is sought nor is any Zone Change requested.

The Vineyards was carefully designed to strictly comply with existing Los Angeles County planning regulations for the Leona Valley area. As such, it is consistent with the current Los Angeles County General Plan, the current Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan, the Primary Zoning (A-2-2 heavy agriculture) for the property, and the Supplemental Zoning that takes the form of the Leona Valley Community Standards District (LVCSA). The Vineyards also fully complies with the County's renowned and widely respected Hillside Management regulations. Additionally, considerations were given to comply with the Draft General Plan Update and the Draft Town and Country Plan Update.

Consistency with Prior Approvals:

Extensive research was conducted to determine the County's policies towards approval of other VTTM's brought to the Planning Commission over the past several years. In particular two issues were consistently seen as a concern by staff and the Planning Commission and therefore The Vineyards sought to limit these impacts specifically.

- Density: Although density calculations allow for 139 units for The Vineyards, we propose to keep the number of lots consistent with the underlying Leona Valley Zoning (1 lot per 2.5 acres of land), so only 117 lots were designed into the plan. Based on recent reviews of County files, in all but one case, *projects subject to density calculations have been approved at, or very near, the maximum thresholds allowed.*
- Grading: The initial design proposed 1,438,555 cubic yards of combined cut and fill, but after consultation with staff this amount was reduced by approximately 300,000 cubic yards, or 20%. This new plan now proposes 1,160,000 cubic yards of combined cut and fill, balanced on site, which is only about 9,800 cubic yards per lot. Based on recent reviews of County files, in all but one project reviewed, *The Vineyards grading quantities were shown to be significantly less (as much as 65% less) with respect to all of the following aspects: per lot (no matter what the size), per residential acreage developed, and per total project acreage.*

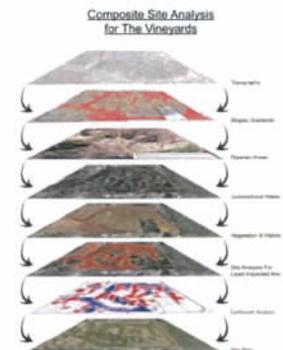
A Model for Sustainable Development

It is the goal of The Vineyards:

- **to create a model** for implementing new Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, such as bio-swales, permeable paving, and rainwater collection systems;
- **to create a model** for advancing alternative wastewater management practices such as lot-specific advanced wastewater treatment systems (ATS) and Evapotranspiration/Infiltration (ET/I) beds;
- **to create a model** for the pilot Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – Neighborhood Design (LEED-ND) methodologies;
- **to create a model** for integrating agricultural elements into a low density residential setting; and
- **to create a model** for complying with Los Angeles County's Hillside Management Regulations.

Negligible Environmental Impacts

The mapping and layering of potential environmental impacts for The Vineyards was carried out by a number of professional consultants before the actual site planning for the residential and agricultural aspects of the property commenced. Only after these studies were completed did the planners commence their unique land design. This resulted in a sensitively planned layout where the physical site dictated the development's configuration rather than creating a plan that dominated and damaged the property. Not only have significant environmental features of the site been preserved, but also, where impacts were detected, controls were built into the plan and, together with the County's regulatory procedures, measures were established to mitigate any potential for adverse consequences.



Comprehensive Riparian Protection

After research of historical documents and a detailed inspection of the site by professional consulting biologists, two (2) seasonal riparian areas were identified as being "jurisdictional wetlands" as defined by the California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG). Both areas were left untouched in the design of the plan so as not to cause any impact to these areas. When one small area was to be impacted by the installation of a road, the design went so far as incorporate a bridge over a small jurisdictional area of a streambed rather than destroy it. *As a result, there will be no adverse impact upon any riparian area within the site boundaries.*



Low Impact Development (LID) and LEED-ND Features

Through the use of the following features, The Vineyards will *manage all of the stormwater that falls on the site as well as any wastewater generated by the individual homes*. Our goal is to capture all water The Vineyards generates – both domestic and natural – recycle it, and then direct it for use in the irrigation of the agricultural elements.

In addition to LID and LEED-ND features, The Vineyards has sought to lessen its impact on carbon emissions caused as a result of land development. For instance, many scientists currently believe that at least 5 percent of humanity's carbon footprint comes from the concrete industry, therefore The Vineyards will use no concrete curbs, gutter, sidewalks or storm drain systems. Driveways will also be required to significantly lessen the use of this material.

Low Impact Development (LID) and LEED-ND Features

Roof Rainwater Harvesting Systems

By using rain barrels for harvesting and storing rainwater from all roof areas, the impacts from storm water runoff will be significantly reduced. This rainwater can then be reused for residential irrigation lessening the impact on commercial water systems while at the same time providing for water recharge. Rainwater which falls on each lot and is not captured by these Rain Barrels is diverted to, and capture by one or more Rain Gardens.



Rain Gardens

A Rain Garden is a planted area in a residential yard or neighborhood engineered to temporarily hold and allow for recharge of rainwater that comes from a house roof, driveway or other open area. Each residential lot will include one or more Rain Gardens to allow for the capture and eventual recharge of rainwater back into the natural aquifer. Additional rainwater which falls on the residential lots and is not captured by either Rain Barrels or Rain Gardens is diverted to and captured by Bio-Swales.



Bio-Swales

In The Vineyards, the bio-swales have been engineered to be a combination of 12-foot wide parkways, which parallel both sides of all interior streets. These systems act to capture and direct excess rainwater from individual lots and streets into Bio-Infiltration and Bio-Retention Systems located throughout the project. They also have the dual purpose of creating approximately 5 miles of hiking and riding trails within the community.



Bio-Infiltration and Bio-Retention Systems

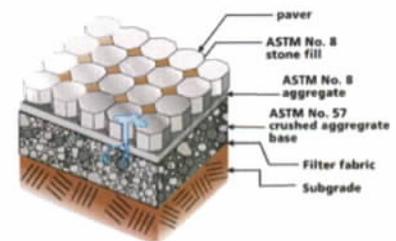
The introduction of vegetation, permeable paving, soil amendments, and sub-surface storage tanks in the roundabouts located at all intersections within The Vineyards will have the effect of transforming these islands into Bio-Retention/Infiltration systems to allow for further groundwater recharge. (see Roundabouts below)

Permeable Paving

Permeable paving materials will also be used on driveways, portions of streets, bio-swales and other surfaces where allowed by the County to allow for water recharge.

Driveways

As much as 20 percent of the impervious coverage in a residential subdivision can be attributed to concrete driveways. The Vineyards design incorporates several techniques to significantly reduce impervious coverage and use of concrete associated with driveways including: 1) use of permeable paving materials and aggregate storage under wearing surfaces, 2) limit impervious surfaces to two tracks with remainder in reinforced grass-crete or other pervious surfaces, and 3) direct surface flow from driveways to compost amended soils, Rain Gardens, Bio-Retention areas or other dispersion and infiltration areas.



Advanced Wastewater Treatment Systems

Recognizing the need for more sophisticated, environmentally sound wastewater treatment options, The Vineyards has sought an alternative to the common septic system. Research has shown that highly sophisticated, non-polluting, enhanced domestic wastewater treatment systems have been in use throughout the United States, including California, for many years. *The advanced treatment of the wastewater from these systems has the effect of making the resultant effluent up to 98% cleaner than effluent produced by the common septic system.* Furthermore, after this water is treated on each residential lot, it is then conveyed to four Evapotranspiration/Infiltration (ET/I) areas set aside within the development where the water is further processed to an even higher degree of purity and then use for irrigation. All of this is done underground so as not to impact the visual aspect of the plan.



Open Space and Recreation

Approximately 2/3rds of the site will be dedicated to permanent natural and open space. This will include about 70 acres for vineyards in addition to approximately 3 miles dedicated to the County Department of Parks and Recreation for riding and hiking trails, horse staging areas, rest areas and overlooks. Additionally, approximately 5 miles of publicly accessible riding and hiking trails will be provided for the use and enjoyment by all.



Minimizing Traffic Impact on the Community

The civil and traffic engineers were charged with the task to limit the impact of The Vineyards traffic upon residents of 87th Street and Leona Avenue. In order to accomplish this, two important features were incorporated into the project design: First, all interior roads were designed to force vehicles to use Bouquet Canyon Road. Second, gates were added to stop outside traffic from using The Vineyards streets as a short cut to existing residential and commercial areas of Leona Valley proper. As a result only a very small amount of the traffic generated by The Vineyards – 10% or only about 56 cars leaving and returning in any 24-hour period – will potentially impact these sensitive areas.

Emergency Access for Existing Leona Valley Residents

Presently, over 280 homes in Leona Valley have only one point of access to and from the community. This presents two basic problems: 1) in the event of an emergency evacuation, all of these homes would be required to drive a single point of exit, and 2) all emergency vehicles would be hindered by limited access into the community due to the resultant congestion at this single point of entry. The plan for The Vineyards adds this much needed and necessary second emergency access to and from the community.

Roundabouts at All Intersections

The Vineyards has engineered Roundabouts into all interior intersections. The benefits to safety and traffic efficiency by the use of Roundabouts are extensively documented. They provide, on average, a 70% overall safety improvement over a standard intersection and a 90% reduction in severe right angle accidents. They are highly efficient, provide traffic calming, and improve pedestrian safety. Finally, the introduction of vegetation into the Roundabout provides a separation buffer between pedestrians and motorists, and has the dual feature of acting as a Bio-Infiltration system for stormwater retention and for groundwater recharge.



Adherence to Dark Sky's Standards

The Vineyards will comply with the shielding standards and lumen ceilings as determined by County Code, as determined by the County's (draft) Exterior Lighting Standards. All outdoor lights will be directed toward the ground and will have automatic turn off controls when not in use. Pole lights, when used, will be installed with shielded fixtures or with light bulbs that direct light to where it is needed. Additional restrictions will be placed on residential construction through deed restrictions (CC&R's) to ensure strict compliance with all Dark Sky requirements.



Digital Illustration of an Interior Street in The Vineyards (to scale)





THE VINEYARDS

June 13, 2011

Addressed to All Individuals
Who Have Sent Letters to
The County as of June 14, 2011
See Attached List

Re: Response to Neighbors' Concerns
VTTM 066952

Dear Neighbor,

I am pleased with the number of letters written by my neighbors in Leona Valley. It was gratifying to learn that the majority of those interested enough to write letters were not opposed to what we have planned, but are rather interested in receiving more information or answers to specific questions related to a few aspects of the proposal. It is to those inquiries that I would like to address this open letter.

The information below is only a summary of what has been provided to the County in the form of numerous studies and papers, many of which can be found on the Leona Valley Town Council's website for easy reference. However, should anyone desire additional information of more detailed research to support any of the responses that follow, I would be more than happy to supply it. Just drop me an email at billf@laurendevelopment.com.

- **Density and Leona Valley CSD's:** On the issue of "density," we are asking for no more than any other resident has a legal right to request for the use and enjoyment of his or her property. The number of lots allowed for our property is set by the County General Plan, Zoning laws and our Leona Valley Community Standards District (CSD) regulations. We are not proposing any changes to these existing requirements. Valley Vineyards is a 293 acre project and our CSD's allow for 1 lot per 2.5 acres, therefore, $293 \text{ acres} / 2.5 = 117$ lots, just what we are requesting. Some people have said to me: "117 homes, that's a lot of homes." However that is the exact number that we, you, and any other property owner in Leona Valley is allowed. This project unequivocally abides by all of the Leona Valley CSD's and all other laws.
- **Water:** On the issue of water, any water that is needed for Valley Vineyards needs to come from outside Leona Valley and must not draw on the limited supply found under Leona Valley. We have agreed not to add wells on our property and have worked with Cal Water to ensure that any water needed will not draw on Leona Valley's existing resources. Further, we will be installing more fire hydrants, new distribution lines and a water tank to help increase water pressure, which helps everyone. All new water infrastructure for Valley Vineyards will be added at our expense so that no rate increases will be required of existing ratepayers. In fact, according to a Cal Water statement, the addition of this project may actually *decrease* the cost of water to existing



THE VINEYARDS

customers compared to what it is today. This is how any new development should be planned so as not to impact our resources but at the same time improve what is already here.

- **Septic Systems:** The use of antiquated septic systems is quite prevalent throughout Leona Valley. These systems have been polluting the very water many rely on for personal use. What we are proposing is a very “clean” and very “green” approach for the efficient processing of wastewater. This is not new technology. It has been in use for quite some time in California and across the nation. The advanced systems produce water that is 98% cleaner than the effluent generated by a traditional septic system. Taking this one step further, this highly treated water will then be dispersed throughout the site to irrigate landscaping in specific dispersal areas rather than allow it to just percolate back into the Valley’s ground water. Quite frankly, everyone in the community might want to take a closer look at these advanced treatment systems, and consider installing them on their own lots, in order to ensure the long term quality of our well water.

- **Minimal Grading, Preservation of Open Space, and Agriculture:** The ridgelines on the site are preserved and protected and only a small percentage of the site is being graded. Of the total 295 acres of land, only about 50 acres is devoted to graded home sites. The balance of the land is devoted to permanent open space including about 70 acres of agriculture in the form of vineyards. Leona Valley’s CSDs’ stated purpose is, among other things “to protect the community’s unique appeal, including its rural agricultural character.” More agriculture is needed as this is what keeps Leona Valley rural. We have agreed to set aside up to 2/3rds of our property for permanently preserved natural and open space uses, including the vineyards. This is a precedent we all need and this should be required of all new development in order to keep Leona Valley rural.

- **Gates and New Traffic:** There has been a lot said about the proposed gates for the project as well as the increased number of vehicles this project could bring to Leona Valley along 87th Street. When designing this project, we learned from our traffic engineers that without the gates to control the flow of vehicles, there would be a negative impact on the people living on 87th Street. We have attempted to stop that from occurring. The project’s traffic studies confirm, and the County concurs, that the street layout of this project will keep 90% of the small amount of vehicle trips *away* from 87th Street and direct it instead to Bouquet Canyon Road. It is true that a few of the residents from the Valley Vineyards project will take 87th Street, but that insignificant impact will only be about 56 cars using this route to leave and enter the community in any 24 hour period or about one car every 15 minutes. That’s it. And, Valley Vineyards will build an alternate emergency route into Leona Valley proper – something badly needed in case of fire, mandatory evacuations or other emergencies when quick access into or out of our community is required. Did you know that over 280 homes have only 90th Street as the access point into and out of their neighborhood and current County Fire Department requirements would allow no more than 75 homes to have only one access point. This presents a significant existing safety hazard to a number of residents in Leona valley a bad situation that Valley Vineyards is hoping to rectify.



THE VINEYARDS

- **Traffic Light at Elizabeth Lake and Bouquet Canyon Roads:** We don't want it. By the County's own admission, Valley Vineyards will generate only a tiny fraction of the projected future traffic that may eventually necessitate a signal at this location. Please join us in petitioning the County to remove this requirement from our project.

- **Contributions to our Neighborhood:** This project will pay \$1,400,000 plus an additional \$90,000 per year from property taxes to our schools; \$400,000 to our fire department; \$90,000 to libraries. What we need to do as a community is make sure the County directs this money into Leona Valley and does not divert it to some other place.

We, the owners of Valley Vineyards, have owned this property since 1990. We are taxpayers and members of this community just like everyone else. We pay for the schools, support the fire department and sheriff's deputies and are law abiding citizens, just like everyone else. Like most everyone else in Leona Valley, we also believe in basic property rights – a basic fundamental right afforded to us all. But more than just abiding by the laws that govern our property – requirements within the CSDs, the Zoning Code, State Law, etc. – we have worked hard to propose a project that is environmentally sensitive, exceptionally “green,” and creates a positive precedent to all those that follow.

Valley Vineyards preserves the rural nature of Leona Valley. There will be no cookie-cutter, or “tract” homes in Valley Vineyards – this won't be Ritter Ranch or Santa Clarita or Agoura Hills. Valley Vineyards will be comprised of unique, custom-built homes. No two homes will look alike. But more than that, Valley Vineyards will be primarily a working, producing vineyard – the property is devoted more to agriculture and open space than homes. I am of the firm belief that Valley Vineyards will be a positive enhancement to this great community without changing the character, spirit, or sense of community.

Most Sincerely,

Bill Ford
Manager

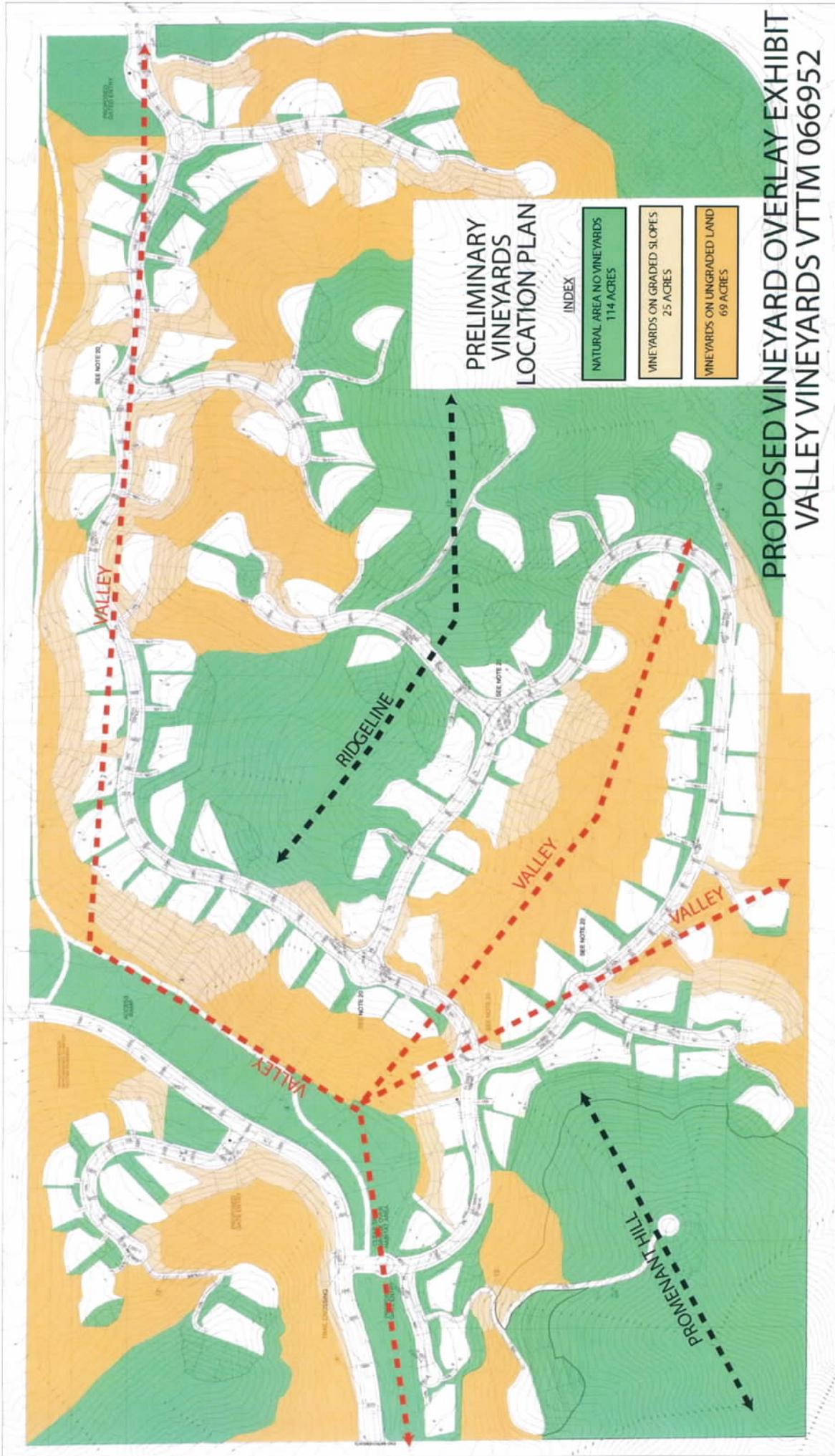
cc: Supervisor 5th District Michael Antonovich
Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission
Department of Regional Planning
Leona Valley Town Council



THE VINEYARDS

List of Addresses Letters were sent to:

First Name	Last Name	Address
Stephen	Ordway	39670 87th St, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Robert/Valerie	Harpham	39933 87th St, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Julie	Marshall	8769 Vientos Dr, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Elaine/Karlo	Johnson	9149 Elizabeth Lake Rd, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Ron	Howell	36917 Bouquet Canyon Rd, Santa Clarita CA 91390
Karl	Pearcy	9710 North Side Dr, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Nancy	Smith	8844 Leona Ave, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Marcy	Watton	PO Box 816, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Phil	Spangenberg	PO Box 753, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Sherrie	Stolarik	25241 Carson Way, Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381
Theodora	Gable	10650 Leona Ave, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Elaine	Macdonald	43031 40th St, Lancaster CA 93535
Donna	Evens	8845 Penhaven Lane, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Richard	Thomas	9250 Elizabeth Lake Rd, Leona Valley, CA 93551
John/Deanna	Cosola	7817 Elizabeth Lake Rd, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Emilie	Martins	40239 98Th St W, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Marcella	Mahan	8728 Leona Ave, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Lisa	Collinson	9211 Elizabeth Lake Rd, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Larry	Tyler	40255 98th St, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Steven/Anne	Breight	40047 97th St, Leona Valley, CA 93551
John	Sevmour	39909 86Th St W, Leona Valley, CA 93551
Christine	Stoddard	40155 95Th St W, Leona Valley, CA 93551



**PRELIMINARY
VINEYARDS
LOCATION PLAN**

INDEX

NATURAL AREA NO VINEYARDS	114 ACRES
VINEYARDS ON GRADED SLOPES	25 ACRES
VINEYARDS ON UNGRADED LAND	69 ACRES

**PROPOSED VINEYARD OVERLAY EXHIBIT
VALLEY VINEYARDS VTTM 066952**