



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

May 4, 2009

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

HEARING ON AMENDMENT TO COUNTY CODE (TITLE 22 -- PLANNING AND ZONING) TO ESTABLISH THE SAN FRANCISQUITO CANYON COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT (FIFTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT) (3-VOTES)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD, AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Consider the attached Negative Declaration together with any comments received during the public review process, find on the basis of the whole record before the Board that there is no substantial evidence the project will have a significant effect on the environment, find that the Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the Board, and adopt the Negative Declaration.
2. Approve the recommendation of the Regional Planning Commission to amend the County Code to establish the San Francisquito Canyon Community Standards District (CSD), as reflected in the draft ordinance.
3. Instruct County Counsel to prepare an ordinance establishing the San Francisquito Canyon CSD as recommended by the Regional Planning Commission.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Section 22.44.090 of the Los Angeles County Zoning Ordinance provides for the establishment of Community Standards Districts (CSDs) "to provide a means for implementing special development standards contained in adopted neighborhood, community, area, specific and local coastal plans within the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, or to provide a means of addressing special problems which are unique to certain geographic areas within the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County."

The unincorporated community of San Francisquito Canyon is distinguished by its scenic natural setting and quiet rural character. However, rapid growth in the Santa Clarita Valley has increased development pressure on this community.

The San Francisquito Canyon Preservation Association, a local citizen group, recognized the challenge of maintaining the area's unique quality of life while allowing new development that is consistent with the existing character of the community. For a year and a half, the Association worked with local residents, property owners, and staff from the Department of Regional Planning to draft a CSD that reflects the desires of the community.

The proposed CSD will establish new development standards that will only apply to properties within the boundaries of the San Francisquito Canyon area. These standards are intended to maintain the low densities, rural character, and significant natural resources of the community. The CSD includes regulations pertaining to minimum lot size for new subdivisions, residential development standards, street improvements, public trails, and significant ridgeline protection.

Los Angeles County General Plan policies encourage guidelines governing the scale and design of new development on a community-by-community basis. Establishing the San Francisquito Canyon CSD is therefore consistent with the County General Plan.

On April 15, 2009, the Regional Planning Commission considered the CSD in a public hearing and recommended that it be adopted by your Board, provided that minor revisions were made to the portions pertaining to street lighting, trails, and signs. Staff has since completed these minor revisions and incorporated them into the draft ordinance.

IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTYWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed CSD promotes Goal One of the County's Strategic Plan pertaining to "Service Excellence" through the development of clear and reasonable development standards and guidelines demonstrating that the Department of Regional Planning is responsive to citizens' concerns and ready to work with community groups and residents to address such concerns.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of the proposed amendment will not result in any significant new costs to the Department of Regional Planning or other County departments or in any loss of revenue to the County. Adoption of this amendment will not result in the need for additional departmental staffing.

FINANCING

The proposed amendment will not result in additional net County costs and therefore a request for financing is not being made at this time.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposed San Francisquito Canyon CSD includes public input received during community meetings held in the City of Santa Clarita on October 7, 2008 and January 28, 2009. Additionally, staff held several meetings with representatives of the San Francisquito Canyon Preservation Association and community members to receive additional input.

The Regional Planning Commission conducted a public hearing regarding the proposed CSD on April 15, 2009. The Commission heard testimony from six individuals, all of whom supported the proposal. The Commission recommended approval of the CSD by your Board, provided that minor revisions were made to the portions pertaining to street lighting, trails, and signs. Staff has since completed these minor revisions and incorporated them into the draft ordinance.

A public hearing is required pursuant to Section 22.16.200 of the County Code and Section 65856 of the Government Code. Required notice must be given pursuant to the procedures and requirements set forth in Section 22.60.174 of the County Code. These procedures exceed the minimum standards of Sections 6061, 65090, and 6586 of the Government Code relating to notice of public hearing.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Approval of the proposed amendments will not significantly impact County services.

NEGATIVE DECLARATION/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The attached Initial Study shows that there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before your Board, that the adoption of the proposed ordinance may have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore a Negative Declaration was prepared in accordance with Section 15070 of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines.

A copy of the proposed Negative Declaration was transmitted to the County Clerk and the County Library in Valencia for public review. In addition, public notice was published in *The Signal*, a newspaper of general circulation, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21092. During the public comment period staff received one comment in support, a community petition consisting of 23 signatures in support, and four comments expressing concerns about various regulations within the CSD.

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Based on the attached Negative Declaration, adoption of the proposed Community Standards District will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Respectfully submitted,

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING



Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

JS:RCH:MWG:RK

Attachments:

1. Project Summary
2. Summary of Regional Planning Commission Proceedings
3. Resolution of the Regional Planning Commission
4. Recommended Ordinance for Board Adoption
5. Environmental Document
6. Legal Notice of Board Hearing
7. List of Persons to be Notified

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller
Director, Department of Public Works
Assessor

Attachment 1: Project Summary

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING**

PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposed amendment to Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) to establish the San Francisquito Canyon Community Standards District, which institutes development standards that are intended to maintain the low density, rural character, and significant natural resources of the San Francisquito Canyon community.

REQUEST: Adoption of the proposed amendments to Title 22; Advance Planning Case No. 200800007.

LOCATION: San Francisquito Canyon

APPLICANT OR SOURCE: Regional Planning Commission directive

STAFF CONTACT: Mr. Rick Kuo at (213) 974-6476

RPC HEARING DATE: April 15, 2009

RPC RECOMMENDATION: Board public hearing to consider adoption of the proposed amendment.

MEMBERS VOTING AYE: Commissioners Bellamy, Rew, Valadez, Helsley, and Modugno

MEMBERS VOTING NAY: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

MEMBERS ABSTAINING: None

KEY ISSUES: Rapid growth in the Santa Clarita Valley has increased development pressure on the San Francisquito Canyon. The proposed CSD aims to maintain the area's unique quality of life while allowing new development that is consistent with the existing character of the community.

Specific issues identified by the community and addressed by the CSD include minimum lot size for new subdivisions, residential development standards,

street improvements, public trails, and significant ridgeline protection.

MAJOR POINTS FOR:

The proposed CSD provides community-specific development standards for issues where current Countywide policies do not address the needs of the San Francisquito Canyon area.

MAJOR POINTS AGAINST:

Some property owners felt that the imposition of such standards could unreasonably restrict building on properties near designated significant ridgelines.

Attachment 2: Summary of Regional Planning Commission Proceedings

**REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING PROCEEDINGS**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO COUNTY CODE TITLE 22 (PLANNING AND
ZONING) TO ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT (CSD)
FOR THE UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITY OF
SAN FRANCISQUITO CANYON**

April 15, 2009

The Commission conducted a public hearing to consider the proposed amendment to Title 22 to establish a Community Standards District (CSD) for the unincorporated San Francisquito Canyon area. The proposed CSD would institute specific development standards that are intended to maintain the low densities, rural character, and significant natural resources of the community.

During the hearing, staff asked the Commission to consider the proposed San Francisquito Canyon CSD in response to a Commission directive issued on November 24, 2008. The staff presentation elaborated on the collaborative process undertaken with the San Francisquito Canyon Preservation Association (SFCPA), property owners, residents, and other stakeholders, the justifications for the recommended development standards contained in the CSD, and the unique circumstances in the area that are not addressed by Countywide policy.

The Commission recognized the low density and rural character of the San Francisquito Canyon area and the fact that rapid growth in neighboring jurisdictions has increased development pressure on the area.

There were six members of the public who spoke in support of the proposed CSD. All six speakers belonged to the SFCPA. There were no other members speaking in opposition or with concerns.

The Commission closed the public hearing and approved the CSD, provided that minor revisions were made to the portions pertaining to street lighting, trails, and signs. All commissioners voted aye. Staff was then instructed to transmit the item to the Board of Supervisors for consideration.

Attachment 3: Resolution of the Regional Planning Commission

**RESOLUTION
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

WHEREAS, the Regional Planning Commission of the County of Los Angeles has reviewed the matter of an amendment to Title 22 (Zoning Ordinance) of the Los Angeles County Code relating to the San Francisquito Canyon Community Standards District (CSD); and

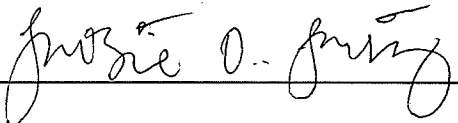
WHEREAS, the Regional Planning Commission finds as follows:

1. The unincorporated community of San Francisquito Canyon is part of the Fifth Supervisorial District. The area is located in the Santa Clarita Valley, bounded on the north and east by the Angeles National Forest, on the west by the community of Castaic, and on the south by the City of Santa Clarita.
2. The subject community is predominantly rural, and comprised of low-density agricultural zones.
3. In December 2007 staff from the Department of Regional Planning was contacted by representatives of the San Francisquito Canyon Preservation Association (SFCPA), who expressed the desire to create a new CSD in order to preserve the rural and scenic character of the area. Staff worked closely with the community and the SFCPA for over a year to achieve consensus on community standards.
4. Following numerous meetings with the SFCPA, DRP staff held two public meetings on October 7, 2008 and January 28, 2009, where community members overwhelmingly demonstrated their support for the proposed CSD.
5. The proposed CSD will help preserve the community character by limiting street improvements and establishing additional development standards pertaining to lot size and setbacks, public trails, and significant ridgeline protection.
6. In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, an Initial Study was prepared for the project, which demonstrates that this regulatory action will not have a significant effect on the environment. Based on the Initial Study, staff has prepared a related Negative Declaration for this project.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Regional Planning Commission recommends that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors:

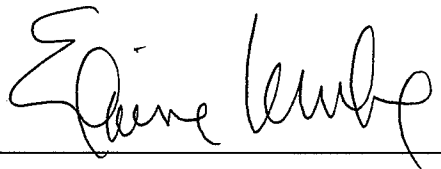
1. Hold a public hearing to consider the proposed amendment to Title 22 (Zoning Ordinance) of the Los Angeles County Code relating to establishing the San Francisquito Canyon Community Standards District (CSD);
2. Certify completion of and adopt the attached Negative Declaration and find that the establishment of the San Francisquito Canyon CSD will not have a significant effect on the environment; and
3. Adopt the attached ordinance establishing the San Francisquito Canyon CSD, and determine that it is compatible with and supportive of the goals and policies of the Los Angeles County General Plan.

I hereby certify that the foregoing was adopted by a majority of the voting members of the Regional Planning Commission of the County of Los Angeles on April 15, 2009.

By 
Rosie O. Ruiz, Secretary
Regional Planning Commission
County of Los Angeles

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL

By 

Elaine Lemke, Principal Deputy County Counsel
Property Division

Attachment 4: Recommended Ordinance for Board Adoption

ORDINANCE NO. _____

An ordinance amending Title 22 - Planning and Zoning of the Los Angeles County Code, relating to establishing the San Francisquito Canyon Community Standards District.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 22.44.110 is hereby amended to read as follows:

22.44.110 List of districts.

The following community standards districts are added by reference, together with all maps and provisions pertaining thereto:

District Number	District Name	Ordinance of Adoption	Date of Adoption
...
<u>35</u>	<u>San Francisquito Canyon</u>	<u>2009-XXXX</u>	<u>X-X-2009</u>

SECTION 2. Section 22.44.144 is hereby added to read as follows:

22.44.144 San Francisquito Canyon Community Standards District.

A. Intent and Purpose. The San Francisquito Canyon Community Standards District ("CSD") is established to protect and enhance the community's secluded rural, equestrian, and agricultural character as well as its natural features, including ridgelines, significant ecological areas, and flood plains. The standards contained in this CSD are intended to ensure reasonable access to public riding and hiking trails, encourage the keeping of animals, minimize the need for urban infrastructure, and preserve the beauty of this natural gateway into the Angeles National Forest.

