Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead

Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

October 7, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

SUBJECT: QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT ON BOARD MOTION REGARDING PROGRESS OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY OAK WOODLANDS CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (October 7, 2008, Item 95-C)

On October 7, 2008 your Board requested appropriate County staff to participate in the California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program and instructed the Director of Planning to facilitate actions to assist the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (Resource Conservation District) in its preparation of the Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan (Oak Woodlands Plan). The Resource Conservation District convened a working group called the Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Strategic Alliance (Strategic Alliance) to assist in the preparation of the plan. The Los Angeles County Fire Department and Department of Regional Planning provide technical advice to the Strategic Alliance. This fourth quarterly status report summarizes the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan.

Since the last quarterly report on the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan was delivered to your Board on July 7, 2009 the Strategic Alliance completed a preliminary draft on August 27, 2009 and held a working meeting to review and edit the plan contents on September 24, 2009. Working exclusively with the $50,000 allocation from your Board, the Strategic Alliance has expended $25,987.81 to date in the preparation of the plan

Central to the preparation of the Oak Woodlands Plan is the mapping effort to establish the historical and existing extent of Los Angeles County oak woodlands. This is a complex effort requiring the collaboration of Regional Planning GIS staff and Strategic Alliance member Dr. Tom Scott of the Integrated Hardwood Range Management

Program and the University of California, Riverside. The Regional Planning GIS staff provided the Strategic Alliance with County proprietary tree canopy data that the Strategic Alliance is using along with other pertinent data to prepare Oak Woodlands Plan maps that will:

- Show a boundary of existing oak woodlands
- Provide precise oak canopy coverage at parcel level
- Prioritize sites for restoration, conservation easements, and purchase
- Prioritize areas to achieve or maintain connectivity and prevent fragmentation

Preparation of the Oak Woodlands Plan has been modeled on the adopted Yolo County Oak Woodland and Conservation Enhancement Plan, which meets the requirements of the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to implement the 2001 California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. The 2001 California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program recognizes the critical role that private landowners have in the conservation of oaks and supports and encourages voluntary, long-term private stewardship and conservation of California oak woodlands by offering landowners financial incentives to protect and promote biologically functional oak woodlands. Specifically, the WCB is authorized to purchase oak woodland conservation easements and provide grants for land improvements and restoration efforts in counties with an adopted Oak Woodlands Management Plan.

To ensure a viable plan that is recognized by the WCB, the Strategic Alliance at its September 24, 2009 working meeting identified issues that need further refinement including:

- Clarify definition of oak woodland
- Specify oak woodland loss mitigation options
- Finalize oak woodland boundary mapping at parcel level

The Strategic Alliance will conduct a comprehensive community outreach effort in fall 2009 following an October 15, 2009 working meeting to follow-up on refinements to the draft Oak Woodlands Plan. Eight community meetings to present the plan to the public are scheduled as follows:

- Placerita Canyon Nature Center, November 10 and December 8
- Eaton Canyon Nature Center, November 11 and December 9
- Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, November 12 and December 10
- Steinmetz Park, November 18 and December 16

The Strategic Alliance has not been deterred by the State budget crisis that has prevented receipt of grant funding from the WBC to match the $50,000 your Board provided to assist in the preparation of the Oak Woodlands Plan. Instead, the Strategic

Alliance has drawn extensively upon the expertise of its membership to augment the funding provided by your Board. The following is a schedule of milestones the Strategic Alliance has established to complete the Oak Woodlands Plan:

- Conclude public comment, February 2010
- Plan revision, March/April 2010

When completed, the Strategic Alliance would like to present the Oak Woodlands Plan to the County in spring 2010 for consideration of its role in the protection and preservation of oak woodlands in Los Angeles County.

The next quarterly report on the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan will be delivered January 7, 2010.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or Mark Herwick of my staff at (213) 974-6423 or by email at mherwick@planning.lacounty.gov. Our office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. We are closed on Fridays.

JS:RCH:MSH

c: Chief Executive Officer, Attn. Lari Sheehan
Acting County Counsel
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief of Forestry, Los Angeles County Fire Department
Rosi Dagit, Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains