Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead

Richard J. Bruckner
Director

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

FROM: Richard J. Bruckner
Director

QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT ON BOARD MOTION REGARDING RURAL ISSUES AND THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE (DECEMBER 9, 2008, ITEM 39-B)

On December 9, 2008, your Board instructed the Director of Planning to take the following actions:

1. Formulate draft standards for development of rural communities within the General Plan Update;
2. Identify provisions that relate to development of rural communities in future outreach efforts concerning the General Plan Update;
3. Make a presentation to the Association of Rural Town Councils (ARTC) no later than April of 2009, concerning rural issues and the General Plan Update; and
4. Report back to your Board every 90 days identifying how the Department is addressing rural issues in the General Plan Update.

This quarterly report, as directed by your Board Motion, summarizes the progress of the Department of Regional Planning (Department) in addressing the actions outlined above.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, your Board Motion was made after the Department's release of the Draft General Plan and subsequent outreach meetings in the Antelope Valley and other rural areas. In the motion, Supervisor Micheal D. Antonovich stated: "As a result of this outreach, residents have contacted my office concerned that the latest draft Update is not adequately addressing issues unique to rural communities...Although encouraging infill development may be sound policy in the San Gabriel and San Fernando Valleys, it is entirely out of character for communities like Acton and Lake Los Angeles...To the extent that the General Plan Update is addressing critical issues like infill development,

global warming, and infrastructure planning, it is equally important that staff address the unique set of issues affecting quality of life in our rural communities."

Since the motion, the Department has taken many steps to address rural issues in the General Plan Update through the inclusion of goals, policies, and programs. In addition, the concurrent development of "Town and Country," which is an effort that the Department initiated in 2007 to update the Land Use Policy Map for the unincorporated Antelope Valley and the 1986 Antelope Valley Area Plan, has served to address the needs and desires of unincorporated Antelope Valley communities in a more focused and detailed manner than can be accomplished with the broader scope of the General Plan Update program. The Preliminary Draft Antelope Valley Area Plan is based on a "Rural Preservation Strategy," which protects the character of existing rural communities, such as Acton and Lake Los Angeles, and also provides detailed standards for future development through a Land Use Policy Map and policies. In addition, the Rural Preservation Strategy promotes the efficient use of existing infrastructure and facilities, minimizes threats from hazards, such as the San Andreas Fault, and protects environmental resources, such as Significant Ecological Areas. Furthermore, it expands land uses that support jobs and promotes economic development efforts, such as the High Desert Corridor and the creation of an "inland port."

As these efforts converged to address the needs of rural communities in the Antelope Valley, both locally and regionally, in November 2010 your Board authorized the Department to amend the contract for the General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to include an environmental analysis of the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update. Your Board's action resulted in a cost savings of approximately $300,000 when compared to a separate contract to prepare a stand-alone Area Plan Update EIR. The environmental analysis serves the same purpose as a stand-alone Area Plan Update EIR and acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between the two projects. Although both projects will be analyzed in a single EIR, the Department will ask that the Regional Planning Commission and your Board conduct separate hearings, and separate votes, for the General Plan Update and Area Plan Update.

UPDATES

During the last quarter, the Department continued to develop the Draft EIR, which will be available for public review later on this year. The Department also continued to develop the Draft Housing Element, including the adequate sites inventory, goals and policies, and programs. Staff retooled the methodology for the adequate sites inventory, which delayed the release of the Draft Housing Element in the last quarter. The Department anticipates releasing the Draft for public review in mid-April 2013 and initiating the preliminary review with the State Department of Housing and Community Development in June 2013.

The Department also continued to meet with major stakeholders to discuss the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update. The Department has conducted extensive outreach within the Antelope Valley and is currently working on revisions that will be incorporated into a Draft Area Plan that will be released later on this year.

Furthermore, during the last quarter, the Department conducted outreach to the Juniper Hills Town Council and Kagel Canyon Civic Association regarding the Draft Hillside Management Area Ordinance, and to the Leona Valley Town Council regarding the Draft Hillside Management Area Ordinance and the Draft Significant Ecological Area Ordinance. The Department is continuing to refine the draft ordinances pursuant to feedback from rural communities and other stakeholders.

The next quarterly report on rural issues and the General Plan Update will be delivered no later than July 3, 2013. Should you have any questions regarding the General Plan Update or the Housing Element Update, please contact Connie Chung at (213) 974-6417 or cchung@planning.lacounty.gov. For questions related to the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update, Draft Hillside Management Area Ordinance, or Draft Significant Ecological Area Ordinance, please contact Mitch Glaser at (213) 974-6476 or mglaser@planning.lacounty.gov.

RJB:JS:CC:MG:ems

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office (Rita Robinson, Anthony Baker)
County Counsel
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