Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*

Richard J. Bruckner
Director

November 12, 2014

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 THE ANTELOPE VALLEY AREA PLAN UPDATE**
**PROJECT NO. R2007-02733-(5)**
**ADVANCE PLANNING NO. 2007-00019-(5)**
**ZONE CHANGE NO. 2014-00009-(5)**
**ADVANCE PLANNING NO. 2014-00009-(5)**
**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. 2014-00021-(5)**
**(FIFTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT) (3-VOTES)**

**SUBJECT**

This action is to adopt the Los Angeles County Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan (existing Area Plan) Update. The existing Area Plan, which was adopted by the Board in 1986, would be replaced by this proposed Area Plan (Area Plan). All elements would be replaced as well as maps and figures. The Update program includes zone changes and amendments to Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the Los Angeles County (County) Code to maintain consistency between the Area Plan and its implementing documents. The Area Plan Update also includes minor amendments to the adopted Los Angeles Countywide General Plan to reflect updated text and maps related to highways, agricultural areas, trails, and Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) within the Antelope Valley.

**IT IS RECOMMEDED THAT THE BOARD, AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING:**

1. Consider the attached Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), find on the basis of the whole record before the Board that the significant adverse effects of the project, as described in the Final EIR, have either been reduced to an acceptable level or are outweighed by specific social, economic, legal, technological or other considerations of the project as stated in required CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations for the project; find that the Final EIR reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the Board; and certify the Final EIR, and adopt the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program;

2. Indicate the intent to approve the proposed Area Plan (Advance Planning No. 2007-00019), associated Zone Changes (Zone Change No. 2014-00009) and Zoning Code Amendments (Advance Planning No. 2014-00009), as recommended by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC); and

3. Instruct County Counsel to prepare the final documents and ordinance for the Area Plan Update and bring them back to the Board for your consideration.

**PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The existing Area Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 4, 1986. The Area Plan had a "horizon year" of 2000. Thus, there was a need to update the Area Plan to reflect various changes in demographics, developmental patterns, environmental preservation, projected growth and other such factors in the Antelope Valley.

**Area Plan**

In 2007, the County initiated a comprehensive update of the 1986 Area Plan. The project is also known as "Town and Country" (T&C). It was guided by the T&C Vision Statement, which was developed by the communities and stakeholders of the Antelope Valley through a series of visioning workshops conducted in 2008. It reads:

> The Antelope Valley region is a wonderful place to live, work, play, and raise a family. The Valley is a mosaic of unique small towns in which rural lifestyles are cherished. These diverse towns are unified by an extraordinary environmental setting that includes agricultural lands, natural open spaces, expansive mountain views, diverse ecological habitats, and dark night skies. The Valley's network of trails, roads, and transit link these dispersed towns to each other and to a wide offering of local-serving businesses and quality social, educational, cultural, and recreational services and facilities.
>
> Residents, business owners, and property owners collaborate with a responsive local government to ensure that life in the Antelope Valley region will continue to be exciting, enjoyable, and rewarding. The growing population's need for additional housing and employment opportunities is balanced against the need to respect historical heritage and preserve the natural environment. Public improvements and private developments are sustainable, conserving available resources and relying on alternative energy sources, and complement the small scale of existing rural towns. A wide array of activities and opportunities for youth ensure that the Valley's high quality of life will be sustained for future generations.

This Area Plan Update achieves an appropriate balance between economic growth and development, and the preservation of important environmental resources and the unique

rural character of the Antelope Valley. The Area Plan also emphasizes respecting the physical characteristic of the unique geographic and environmental features in the Antelope Valley, including major safety hazards such as fault traces, seismic zones, fire hazard zones, flood plains and the like. Finally, this Area Plan Update also incorporated extensive community participation in its development through a comprehensive, broad-based and far-reaching outreach strategy to develop the maps, goals, and policies. During the project's seven years in development, more than 200 meetings were conducted with various stakeholders for their important local knowledge and input.

This Area Plan Update preserves the rural character of the Antelope Valley by guiding growth to appropriate areas, and balancing this economic development with protection from potential safety hazards and the preservation of those natural resources that define the Antelope Valley. The overarching framework of the Area Plan, the Rural Preservation Strategy, is based on four types of environments – rural town centers, rural town areas, rural preserve areas, and economic opportunity areas – that serve different purposes. Collectively, these environments preserve the rural character of the region, conserve environmental resources, and protect residents from potential hazards while directing future growth to appropriate areas.

1. **Rural Town Centers**: Rural town centers are the focal points of rural communities and provide services to residents as well as local employment opportunities. The majority of existing commercial uses in the Antelope Valley is located in such areas, and where similar locally-serving public and commercial uses be directed in the future. Future development in these areas must be consistent with the existing community character.

2. **Rural Town Areas**: Rural town areas provide a transition between rural town centers and rural preserve areas with a mix of residential and a widely varied agricultural uses. The majority of the community residents are located here, and where new residential development in the community be directed in the future. Future development in these areas must be consistent with the existing community character.

3. **Rural Preserve Areas**: Rural preserve areas surround the rural town centers and rural town areas, are largely undeveloped, and generally not served by existing infrastructure and public facilities. Many of these areas contain environmental resources, such as SEAs, Scenic Resource Areas, and Agricultural Resource Areas as well as safety hazards, such as Seismic Zones, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and Flood Zones. Future development in these areas should include single family homes at very low densities; various agricultural uses, including equestrian and animal-keeping uses; and other uses where appropriate.

4. **Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs)**: EOAs are defined clusters along the proposed routes of the High Desert Corridor on the east side of the Antelope Valley, and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project on the west side. With these two major infrastructure projects, which are being undertaken by California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority (Metro), future growth and development should be directed to these EOAs.

This Area Plan Update includes the following elements, which are compatible with the corresponding elements in the existing 1980 General Plan, as well as the proposed 2035 General Plan Update:

1. **Land Use**: The Land Use Element directs future growth through goals and polices, including the Land Use Policy Map and legend, to appropriate areas within the Antelope Valley. For future growth, the Area Plan uses higher residential densities, and commercial and industrial land use designations primarily in existing town centers and within EOAs. The Area Plan also relies on lower residential densities and SEAs to guide sensitive development in areas with important resources and/or natural hazards.

2. **Mobility:** The Mobility Element calls for a balanced, multi-modal transportation system across the Antelope Valley through goals and policies that address regional movement of services and goods, local transportation meeting the needs of residents, and the balance required to meet the demands of both.

3. **Conservation and Open Space:** The Conservation and Open Space Element sets out goals and policies to protect the Antelope Valley's environmentally significant and/or undisturbed natural spaces, make use of certain natural resources, and provide open space areas for recreation and enjoyment. This Element identifies the resources and open spaces which may be developed, and gives guidance as to how sustainable development can be conducted in the future. In addition, this Element identifies areas which should be preserved from development, or are unsuitable for development due to hazards.

4. **Public Safety, Services and Facilities:** The Public Safety, Services and Facilities Element identifies local hazards (including fire, geology, and floods) and specific goals and policies for enhanced and efficient local services including law enforcement, parks, schools, libraries, health facilities, and economic development.

5. **Economic Development:** The Economic Development Element sets forth goals and policies for sustainable economic development throughout the Antelope Valley. The Plan balances economic growth with the preservation of the unique rural character and rich environmental resources of the Antelope Valley. Policies address major industries for economic development, such as High-tech Manufacturing,

Transportation and Logistics; Agriculture; Renewable Energy; Construction and Housing; and Recreation, Tourism and Filmmaking.

6. **Community-Specific Land Use Concepts:** As each community varies in its nature, form, and character, the Community-Specific Land Use Concepts describe in greater detail how the Plan is to be implemented in each community within the Area Plan area. The Community-Specific Land Use Concepts provide expectations for how each rural community may change and grow throughout the life of the Area Plan. This chapter also specifies the desired land uses for each area and identifies potentially incompatible land uses undesirable to the respective community.

This Area Plan Update also includes the adoption of revised boundaries of the Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) within the Area Plan area. These include all or portions of the following:

- Altadena Foothills and Arroyos SEA
- Antelope Valley SEA
- Joshua Tree Woodlands SEA
- San Andreas SEA
- San Dimas Canyon and San Antonio Wash SEA
- San Gabriel Canyon SEA
- Santa Clara River SEA

The Area Plan also includes implementation programs to further the goals and policies of the Plan. These include:

1. **SEA Program:** This program includes biennial monitoring and reporting, which may include minor amendments to the SEAs, and future conservation and mitigation incentive programs for SEA lands. These implementation components may be subsumed by a more comprehensive, countywide implementation program for SEAs.

2. **Agricultural Resources Program:** This program will encourage the continued operation of local farms in the Antelope Valley with greater flexibility to establish and operate additional compatible uses as incidental or accessory to their primary farming operation. This program may include more flexible zoning regulations; allow the transfer of development rights from agricultural lands with option of retaining agricultural easements; create a more streamlined process for permits on identified farmlands; and other such incentives.

3. **EOAs:** This program recognizes that based on final designs of the High Desert Corridor and Northwest Corridor 138 Improvement Projects, a Community Plan may need to be prepared to further refine EOAs, with land use and zoning changes as well as more specific goals, policies and implementing strategies. These efforts, which would include more focused community outreach with affected stakeholders,

could include, for example, adjustments to land use designations reflecting final alignments of the freeway as well as on-ramp and off-ramp locations. While these subsequent planning efforts are not required to start development in the East and Central EOA, a Specific Plan or similar planning activity is required for any master-planned development in the West EOA. This ensures that infrastructure and improvements are planned at a more comprehensive scale than individual subdivision maps, given the level of the new development that may occur in this area.

4. **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program:** This program seeks to encourage more development in EOAs, and preservation of SEA lands through the development of a TDR program.

5. **Scenic Drives Program:** This program intends to develop and implement a program for review of proposed developments within Scenic Drives viewsheds identified in the Antelope Valley.

6. **Community Standards Districts (CSDs):** This program sets out to conduct a comprehensive review of all existing CSDs in the Antelope Valley. This review may also include a program to prepare and adopt any proposed new CSDs or amendments to existing CSDs.

In addition the following is an additional implementation program recommended for the Board's consideration:

7. **Antelope Valley Community Climate Action Plan**: To ensure progress toward meeting the long-term greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals of Executive Order S-03-05:

    a. The County shall further research to determine the feasibility, and as appropriate propose amendments to the County Code, for the following:

        - Require new residential and now residential buildings within the Antelope Valley Area Plan to achieve the Tier 1 energy standards within California Green Building Standards Code (Title 24, Part 11). The voluntary Tier 1 CALGreen requires a 15 percent increase in energy efficiency compared to the Building and Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6). Architectural building plans shall be submitted to the County that identify features that achieve the Tier 1 energy standards (corresponding CCAP Measure BE-1).

        - Require that new residential and non-residential building be constructed to accommodate roof-top solar installation. Architectural

building plans shall be submitted to the County shall identify this requirement (corresponding CCAP Measure BE-3).

- Prior to issuance of building permits for new construction of non-residential development of 100,000 building square feet or more within the Antelope Valley Area Plan, the applicant shall identify bicycle end-trip facilities, including bike parking and lockers. The location of the bicycle storage shall be specified on site plans and verified by Department of Regional Planning prior to building permit issuance (corresponding CCAP Measure LUT-1).
- Require installation of Level 2 (240 volt) electric vehicle (EV) charging facilities at County-owned public venues (e.g., hospitals, beaches, stand-alone parking facilities, cultural institutions, and other facilities) within the Antelope Valley Area Plan and ensure that at least one-third of these charging stations will be available for visitor use (corresponding CCAP Measure LUT-8).

b. The County shall further research to determine the feasibility, and as appropriate propose amendments to the County Code, for the following:

- Prior to issuance of building permits for new construction of residential development, the property owner/developer shall indicate on plans that garage and/or car port parking are electrically wired to accommodate a Level 2 (240 volt) EV charging. The location of the electrical outlets shall be specified on building plans, and proper installation shall be verified by Department of Public Works prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

- Prior to issuance of building permits for new construction of non-residential development of 100,000 building square feet or more within the Antelope Valley Area Plan, the applicant shall indicate on plans that at minimum, 10 Level 2 EV vehicle charging stations will be provided for public use. The location of the EV station(s) shall be specified on building plans, and proper installation shall be verified by the Department of Public Works prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

- The County of Los Angeles shall require applicants of new residential developments to consider installation of gray water systems for resident use.

- The County of Los Angeles shall require applicants of non-residential developments of 100,000 building square feet or more, to coordinate with the Antelope Valley Transit Authority for the installation of additional bus shelters and transit stops as feasible.

**Zoning Consistency**

The Area Plan includes associated zone changes to ensure that the resulting zoning is consistent with the proposed land use designations of the Area Plan. In general, Agricultural zones (A-1 and A-2) were designated for Rural land use designations, Residential zones (R-A, R-1, R-2 and R-3) were used for Residential land use designations, and Manufacturing zones (M-1, M-1.5 and M-2) were used for Industrial land use designations.

The Area Plan Update also includes the creation of two rural commercial zones designed specifically for the Antelope Valley: the Rural Commercial Zone (C-RU) and the Rural Mixed Use Zone (MXD-RU). These zones allow more rural, and less urban, uses and development standards; allow more flexible parking regulations for large vehicles, Recreational Vehicles, and semi-trucks; include provisions for cargo storage containers; and add more flexibility for accessory residential uses. These new zones, as well as the Commercial-Recreation (C-R) zone, were designated in the Commercial land use designations of the Area Plan.

In addition, the Area Plan Update amends the existing SEA Ordinance regarding applicability, and adds relevant uses to the definitions and the C-R (Commercial-Recreation) Zone. The SEA ordinance amendment will also affect SEAs adopted as part of the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan/One Valley One Vision.

**Consistency with the Countywide General Plan**

As a component of the Countywide General Plan, the Area Plan must be consistent with the currently adopted General Plan. To this end, this Area Plan Update further defines and implements the following General Plan policies in terms of its applicability in the Antelope Valley:

- **General Plan Policy 23**: Ensure that development in non-urban areas is compatible with rural lifestyles, does not necessitate the expansion of urban service systems, and does not cause significant negative environmental impacts or subject people and property to serious hazards.
- **General Plan Policy 27**: Maintain and reinforce the multi-focused pattern of regional linear activity areas and centers.
- **General Plan Policy 44**: Preserve sound residential areas and protect them from intrusion of incompatible uses.

- **General Plan Policy 60**: Encourage a strong, diversified economy that will provide business opportunities, an adequate number of jobs for this county's labor force and an improved standard of living.
- **General Plan Policy 65**: Improve communication between government and citizens by soliciting greater citizen involvement in public affairs, and by increasing the sensitivity and responsiveness of government to citizen needs and values.
- **Area-Specific Policy 56 (Antelope Valley)**: Promote the development of an autonomous urban area with an expanded and diversified economic base that will minimize the need for long distance commuting to southern Los Angeles County.
- **Area-Specific Policy 59 (Antelope Valley)**: Encourage the concentration of population growth within rural communities while maintaining the non-urban character of those communities.
- **Area-Specific Policy 60 (Antelope Valley)**: Encourage the continuation of agriculture in the Antelope Valley.
- **Area-Specific Policy 61 (Antelope Valley)**: Maintain the open and rural character of the non-urban areas of the Antelope Valley.

In addition, this Area Plan Update is also consistent with other policies of the currently adopted Countywide General Plan, including but not limited to:

- **General Policy 6**: Accept and plan for a level and rate of population and economic growth consistent with improved environmental quality and the availability of air, water and energy resources.
- **General Policy 12**: Conserve energy to ensure adequate supplies for future use.
- **General Policy 13**: Conserve the available supply of water and protect water quality.
- **General Policy 14**: Restore and protect air quality through the control of industrial and vehicular emissions, improved land use management, energy conservation and transportation planning.
- **General Policy 17**: Promote the efficient use of land through a more concentrated pattern of urban development, including the focusing of new urban growth into areas of suitable land.
- **General Policy 22**: Ensure that new development in urban expansion areas will occur in a manner consistent with stated plan policies and will pay for the marginal public costs (economic, social and environmental) that it generates.
- **General Policy 66**. Promote and equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of governmental actions.
- **General Policy 67**: Improve the effectiveness of intergovernmental coordination.

This Area Plan Update has also been developed to be consistent with the proposed Countywide General Plan Update. The proposed Land Use Policy Map of this Area Plan includes a new land use legend that is compatible with the new land use legend in the proposed Countywide General Plan Update. This Area Plan also expands the SEAs within the Antelope Valley, based on studies conducted for the proposed Countywide General

Plan Update as well as updates General Plan policy maps related to highways, trails, and agricultural resources within the Antelope Valley area.

**Consistency with Airport Land Use Plans (ALUP) or Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCP)**

This Area Plan is also required to be consistent with any relevant ALUP/ALUCP located within its area. In the Antelope Valley, these include the 1991 ALUP for the USAF Plant 42/Palmdale Regional Airport and the 2007 ALUCP for the General William J, Fox Airfield. On October 8, 2014, the County Airport Land Use Commission found that the proposed Area Plan was consistent with these two adopted plans.

**Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals**

This Area Plan Update promotes Goal 1 of the County's Strategic Plan (Operational Effectiveness/Fiscal Sustainability) by providing greater certainty for property owners and eliminating potential regulatory burdens associated with inconsistent zoning and land use. It also promotes Goal 2 (Community Support and Responsiveness) by employing a comprehensive participatory approach in the development in this Area Plan, thus ensuring that the Plan's Goals and Policies accurately reflect the views and interests of the various stakeholders in the Antelope Valley. This includes striking a balance between meeting the needs of the business community as growth and development is encouraged in the Antelope Valley while protecting the unique characteristics of its communities and valuable resources of its environment. This also supports emergency preparedness with focusing more intense development away from seismic hazards, floodplains, and very high fire hazard severity zones. Finally, this Area Plan also promotes Goal 3 (Integrated Service Delivery) by establishing an integrated framework of goals, policies, implementing strategies and land uses appropriate for the unique conditions of the Antelope Valley, including delivery of services such as police, fire, schools, and parks, in order to achieve the long-term vision and needs of all stakeholders in the area.

**FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING**

Implementation of the proposed Area Plan Update, including the updated Area Plan, related Zone Changes, and Zoning Code amendments, will not result in significant new costs to the County Department of Regional Planning or other County departments. Adoption of this Area Plan Update will not result in the need for additional departmental staffing. Therefore, a request for financing is not being made at this time.

**FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

On September 27, 2014, the RPC held a public hearing regarding the Draft Area Plan Update at the Antelope Valley College Performing Arts Theater. Prior to the hearing, a Notice of Public Hearing were mailed to approximately 65,000 property owners as well as

approximately 700 other interested parties including adjacent jurisdictions, stakeholders, organizations, and individuals. A Notice of Public Hearing was also published in the Antelope Valley Press on August 27, 2014, and in the Mountain Enterprise on August 29, 2014.

Approximately 70 people testified at the public hearing. On September 27, 2014, the RPC closed the public hearing and adopted a resolution recommending approval of the project, and for your Board to conduct a public hearing regarding the Area Plan Update and approve Advance Planning No. 2007-00019 (Plan Amendment), Zone Change No. 2014-00009 (Zone Change), and Advance Planning No. 2014-00009 (Zoning Consistency).

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

Additional correspondence received after the close of the RPC public hearing on September 27, 2014, is also provided for the Board's consideration.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

Staff has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the appropriate environmental document for this project.

On June 12, 2014, the County released a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR in relation to the Area Plan Update. Two scoping meetings were held, one on June 26, 2014, in the Antelope Valley and another on July 7, 2014, in Downtown Los Angeles, to provide a brief presentation on the project and to solicit comments regarding the scope of the EIR.

A Draft EIR was then subsequently released on August 22, 2014. A Notice of Completion and Availability of an EIR was mailed to approximately 65,000 property owners; and approximately 700 other interested parties including responsible and trustee agencies, the State Clearinghouse, adjacent jurisdictions, stakeholders, organizations and individuals. The Notice of Completion and Availability was also published in the Antelope Valley Press, a newspaper of general circulation, on August 22, 2014, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21092. To facilitate public review, copies of the Draft EIR were also made available on the Department of Regional Planning website and were provide to all County libraries in the Antelope Valley as well as the City of Palmdale Library.
The formal comment period for the Draft EIR was from August 22, 2014, to October 6, 2014. A complete set of the comments received and response to comments are included in the EIR that is before the Board for certification. The Significant Unavoidable Impacts identified in the EIR include, but are not limited to, impacts on Agriculture and Forestry Services, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Greenhouse Gas

Emissions, Mineral Resources, Noise, Transportation and Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems (including water Supply and delivery systems). Also included are the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations for these environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated to less than significant, are included.

**IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)**

Approval of the proposed Area Plan Update and the appurtenant Zone Changes and Zoning Code Amendments will not significantly impact County Services.

Should you have any questions, please contact Mr. Carl Nadela at (213) 974-6476 or by e-mail at cnadela@planning.lacounty.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard J. Bruckner
Director

for RJB

RJB:MC:SMT:CN:lm

Attachments:

1. Regional Planning Commission Project Summary
2. Summary of Regional Planning Commission Proceedings
3. Regional Planning Commission Hearing Packages
4. Regional Planning Commission Resolution
5. Additional correspondence received after close of Regional Planning Commission Public Hearing
6. Draft 2014 Antelope Valley Area Plan (October 2014 BOS)
7. Draft Zone Change Maps
8. Draft Ordinance Amendments for Zoning Consistency
9. Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations
10. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
11. Environmental Impact Report (CD)

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel

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