



NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP)
County of Los Angeles, Department of Regional Planning

Project Title: Los Angeles County Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan Update

Introduction: The County of Los Angeles will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the comprehensive update of the Los Angeles County Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan, which is part of the Los Angeles County General Plan. The project area is the unincorporated area of the Antelope Valley in Los Angeles County. The Plan will protect important ecological and agricultural resources and preserve rural character in the Antelope Valley communities, while accommodating new housing and employment opportunities in appropriate, clearly defined, specific areas of the Antelope Valley. The project will replace portions of the existing Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan adopted in 1986.

1. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

1.1 Project Location

Los Angeles County encompasses approximately 4,083 square miles. The County has 75 miles of coastline along the Pacific coast. It is bordered to the east by Orange County and San Bernardino County, to the north by Kern County, and to the west by Ventura County. The County also includes two offshore islands, Santa Catalina Island and San Clemente Island. The unincorporated areas account for approximately 65 percent of the total land area of the County.

The unincorporated areas in the northern portion of the County are covered by large amounts of sparsely populated land and include the Angeles National Forest, part of the Los Padres National Forest, and the Mojave Desert. The unincorporated areas in the southern portion of the County consist of 58 noncontiguous land areas, which are often referred to as the County's unincorporated urban islands. The County's governmental structure comprises five Supervisorial Districts with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors as the governing body responsible for making all legislative land use decisions for the unincorporated areas.

The Antelope Valley Planning Area is located in the northern part of Los Angeles County, stretching from the Ventura County, Kern County, and San Bernardino County border lines and the Angeles National Forest (inclusive). It excludes the Cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. This area covers approximately 1,800 square miles and includes over two dozen communities. The area lies completely within the Fifth Supervisorial District of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. An interactive map of the Antelope Valley and the rest of Los Angeles County is available online at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/gisnet3>.

1.2 Adopted Antelope Valley Area Plan

The adopted Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan, which is a component of and works in conjunction with the current General Plan, was adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on December 4, 1986. The proposed Area Plan replaces relevant portions of the previous Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is a comprehensive update of the Antelope Valley Area Plan. The project includes goals, policies, implementing programs and ordinances.

The project covers the unincorporated areas of the Antelope Valley in Los Angeles County and identifies 1) Rural Preserve Areas, where residential densities will be reduced in order to protect important ecological and agricultural resources as well as minimize development in very high hazard areas; 2) Rural Town Areas, where

maximum residential densities and minimum lot sizes will be established to preserve rural character; 3) Rural Town Centers, where urban commercial uses will be discouraged but rural commercial uses will be incentivized; and 4) Economic Opportunity Areas, where plans for major infrastructure development are underway that may create the need for more detailed planning activities for these areas in the future. The Area Plan anticipates that future planning may be needed in these areas to determine any appropriate land use and zoning changes needed when these infrastructure projects are completed.

These policies protect important ecological and agricultural resources and preserve rural character, while accommodating new housing and employment opportunities in appropriate areas of the Antelope Valley. The project will replace relevant portions of the adopted Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan.

2.1 Draft Antelope Valley Area Plan

The proposed project (“Area Plan”) will replace the existing Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan. As a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan, the Area Plan refines the countywide goals and policies in the General Plan by addressing specific issues relevant to the Antelope Valley, such as community maintenance and appearance, preservation of rural character, open space, and agricultural lands, and provides more specific guidance on elements already found in the General Plan. All issues not covered in the Area Plan are addressed by the General Plan. The draft Area Plan replaces all elements and portions of the Land Use Policy Map of the Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan. The draft Area Plan is organized into chapters, including the following:

- The Introduction chapter presents the draft Area Plan’s purpose and values, the geographic area, and the communities’ vision statement;
- The Land Use Element chapter discusses how the communities’ vision translates into a development pattern through the concept of land use;
- The Mobility Element chapter describes the multimodal approach to moving around the Antelope Valley;
- The Economic Development Element chapter discusses the ways that economic activities can be promoted in the Antelope Valley in a sustainable and ecologically sensitive manner;
- The Conservation and Open Space Element chapter describes conservation efforts to address potential threats to natural resources;
- The Public Safety, Services, & Facilities Element chapter provides measures to ensure services are in place to maintain the safety and welfare of residents. The element chapters contain goals and policies specific to each chapter’s respective topic but all work jointly to comprehensively implement the overall vision; and
- The Community-Specific Land Use Concepts chapter highlights each established town and describes its land use form in more detail.

The draft Area Plan is the result of a highly inclusive and extensive community participation program launched in the fall of 2007. Through many years of community meetings, residents and other stakeholders worked alongside planners to develop a shared vision of the future, identify community issues, draft proposals for the future, and prioritize their recommendations. This vision of the Antelope Valley’s future serves as a touchstone through the planning process, and it is reflected in the land use map, goals, and policies that comprise the draft Area Plan. Collectively, these environments preserve the rural character of the region, conserve environmental resources, and protect residents from potential hazards while allowing for additional growth and development. Maps of the proposed land use designations are attached (Attachment A) and are available online at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/tnc>. Table 1 (Draft Antelope Valley Area Plan) provides a description of the land uses designations proposed in the Land Use Plan and their resulting population and number of jobs at projected build-out.

Table 1: Draft Antelope Valley Area Plan

| Proposed Land Use | Acres | Dwelling Units | Population | Building Floor Area (sq ft) | Jobs |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| CR - Rural Commercial | 1,793 | 0 | 0 | 19,508,183 | 38,376 |
| MU-R - Rural Commercial / Mixed Use | 693 | 1,386 | 5,337 | 3,773,743 | 7,385 |
| H2 - Residential 2 | 4,562 | 7,299 | 28,101 | 0 | 300 |
| H5 - Residential 5 | 6,687 | 26,748 | 102,978 | 0 | 0 |
| H9 - Residential 9 | 453 | 3,264 | 11,752 | 0 | 0 |
| H18 - Residential 18 | 121 | 1,737 | 6,253 | 0 | 0 |
| H30 - Residential 30 | 84 | 2,013 | 5,615 | 0 | 0 |
| IH - Heavy Industrial | 1,980 | 0 | 0 | 16,060,113 | 14,575 |
| IL - Light Industrial | 4,173 | 0 | 0 | 90,884,331 | 69,590 |
| OS-BLM - Bureau of Land Management | 9,002 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OS-C - Conservation | 19,670 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ML - Military Land | 41,779 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OS-NF - Open Space National Forest | 499,734 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| OS-PR - Parks and Recreation | 19,315 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 346 |
| W - Water | 11,038 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P - Public and Semi-Public | 19,870 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,175 |
| RL1 - Rural Land 1 | 10,242 | 10,242 | 39,431 | 0 | 2 |
| RL2 - Rural Land 2 | 30,833 | 15,417 | 59,354 | 0 | 400 |
| RL5 - Rural Land 5 | 36,329 | 7,266 | 27,973 | 0 | 0 |
| RL10 - Rural Land 10 | 204,000 | 20,400 | 78,540 | 0 | 100 |
| RL20 - Rural Land 20 | 208,187 | 10,409 | 40,076 | 0 | 50 |
| Total | 1,130,544 | 106,180 | 405,410 | 130,226,370 | 134,351 |

Notes:

- Historically, jurisdiction-wide build-out levels do not achieve the maximum allowable density/intensity on every parcel and are, on average, lower than allowed by the Area Plan. Accordingly, the build-out projections in this Area Plan do not assume build-out at the maximum density or intensity and instead are adjusted downward to account for variations in build-out intensity.
- Acres are given as adjusted gross acreages, which do not include the right-of-way for roadways, flood control facilities, or railroads.
- Projections of population by residential designation are based on a persons-per-household factor that varies by housing type. Additionally, the projections of jobs by designation are based on an employment generation factor that varies by employment category, or actual number of jobs.

The following describes the major land use policies in the draft Area Plan, which are supported by goals, policies, programs and strategic changes to the land use policy maps:

Rural Preservation Strategy: The draft Area Plan includes a Rural Preservation Strategy addressing issues of Valley-wide significance in a manner that builds upon the communities' vision statement and is based on three types of environments—rural town center areas, rural town areas, and rural preserve areas—that serve different purposes.

- **Rural town center areas** are the focal points of rural communities, accessible by a range of transportation options to reduce vehicle trips, serving the daily needs of residents, and providing local employment opportunities. These areas will be designated for commercial and/or industrial use as they

are in the adopted Area Plan, but some of these areas will also allow a mix of commercial and residential uses.

- **Rural town areas** provide a transition between rural town center areas and rural preserve areas. They are occupied by a mix of residential and light agricultural uses. The majority of new residential development should be directed to these areas, provided that such development is consistent with the existing community character and allows for light agricultural, equestrian, and animal-keeping uses where appropriate. Accordingly, allowable residential densities in these areas will generally be equal to, or greater than, allowable residential densities in the adopted Area Plan. These areas will provide transportation linkages to rural town center areas and other nearby destination points.
- **Rural preserve areas** are the portions of the unincorporated Antelope Valley, which are largely undeveloped and are generally not served by existing infrastructure and public facilities. Many of these areas contain Special Management Areas, such as Significant Ecological Areas, Agricultural Resource Areas, and Seismic Hazard Zones. Therefore, residential development in these areas should be limited to single-family homes at very low densities. Accordingly, allowable residential densities in these areas will generally be far less than allowable residential densities in the adopted Area Plan. These areas are less likely to benefit from increased property tax revenues and developer fees, which may make it difficult to fund additional infrastructure, such as major roadways, water lines, and sewer lines. The Rural Preservation Strategy acknowledges this by directing additional infrastructure to rural town center areas and rural town areas, where the placement of additional infrastructure will be more cost-effective and will generally have fewer effects on the environment. Residents of these areas must be willing to forego additional infrastructure in order to live in a very remote rural environment and to enjoy the benefits offered by such an environment.

For more information on the Rural Preservation Strategy and its three types of environments please see Preliminary Draft Antelope Valley Area Plan Chapter 1: *Introduction* and Chapter 2: *Land Use Element*.

Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs): The draft Area Plan also identifies three Economic Opportunity Areas (“EOAs”). These are areas where plans for major infrastructure projects are underway that would create conditions for development vastly different than currently existing on the ground. Because of ongoing plans by Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to build the High Desert Corridor Project in the eastern Antelope Valley, and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project in the western Antelope Valley, the draft Area Plan identifies three EOAs: the East EOA, encompassing the communities of Lake Los Angeles, Sun Village, Littlerock, Pearblossom, Llano and Crystallaire; the Central EOA, located along Avenue D, just north of Fox Field Airport and west of the CA-14 Freeway, and the West EOA, located along Highway 138 east and west of the California Aqueduct and including portions of Neenach. The draft Area Plan includes an implementation program to prepare community plans to implement each of these EOAs in order to further analyze the effects of planned infrastructure projects in these areas, and recommend land use and zoning changes and revised policies as necessary.

Other components of the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update include, but are not limited to, update to the special management areas, such as agricultural resource areas, significant ecological areas, hillside management areas and the like; amendments to existing County ordinances and/or adoption of new County ordinances as necessary to implement the update Antelope Valley Area Plan; and rezoning as necessary to implement and/or maintain consistency with the updated Antelope Valley Area Plan.

3. PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Environmental Issues:

The County has determined that a Program EIR will be prepared for the proposed Antelope Valley Area Plan Update. Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines states that a Program EIR may be prepared on a series of

actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either: 1) geographically; 2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; 3) in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or 4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways. The Program EIR will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA Statutes and Guidelines, as amended. Pursuant to Section 15146 of the CEQA Guidelines the degree of specificity in the Program EIR will correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the proposed Antelope Valley Area Plan Update. The EIR will focus on the primary effects that can be expected to follow from adoption of the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update and will not be as detailed as an EIR on the specific development or construction projects that may follow. Based on the County's preliminary analysis of the project, the following environmental issues will be examined in the Program EIR:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural and Forest Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic/Jobs Hazards & Hazardous | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Materials | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation / Traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

The Draft EIR will address the short- and long-term effects of the Los Angeles County Antelope Valley Area Plan Update on the environment. Mitigation measures will be proposed for those impacts that are determined to be significant. A mitigation monitoring program will also be developed as required by Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines.

REVIEW PERIOD: This NOP will be available for review from **June 12, 2014** to **July 11, 2014** on the Department of Regional Planning (Department) website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/tnc/ceqa>. Hardcopies will be available at the Department's main office and field office locations listed at the following link: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/locations>; all County libraries in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys, namely the Action Agua Dulce Library located at 33792 Crown Valley Road, Acton, CA 93510; the Quartz Hill Library located at 42018 N. 50th St. West, Quartz Hill, CA 93536; the Lancaster Regional Library located at 601 West Lancaster Boulevard, Lancaster CA 93534; the Littlerock Library located at 35119 80th Street East, Littlerock, CA 93543; the Lake Los Angeles Library located at 16921 E. Ave. O, # A Palmdale, CA 93591; the Castaic Library located at 27971 Sloan Canyon Road, Castaic, CA 91384; the Stevenson Ranch Library located at Dr. Richard H. Rioux Memorial Park, 26233 W. Faulkner Drive, Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381 as well as the Palmdale City Library located at 700 East Palmdale Boulevard, Palmdale, CA 93550.

The Department is seeking input from both agencies and members of the public on the scope and content of the environmental information and analysis to be contained in the EIR. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, written comments must be sent via mail, e-mail, or fax no later than 5:00 PM on **Friday, July 11, 2014**. Please send your comments at the earliest possible date to:

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PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS: Pursuant to the California Public Resources Code Section 21803.9, Los Angeles County will conduct one public scoping meeting in the Antelope Valley and one in downtown Los Angeles. This meeting will provide a public forum for information dissemination and dialogue regarding the components of the proposed project, the overall process, and the draft EIR. While staff will summarize the issues raised at these meetings, anyone wishing to make formal comments on the NOP must do so in writing. The public scoping meeting will be held at the dates, times and locations listed below:

Date: June 26, 2014 (Thursday)
Time: 3:00 - 5:00 pm
Location: Antelope Valley Transit Authority Community Room
42210 6th Street West
Lancaster, CA 93534

Date: July 7, 2014 (Monday)
Time: 10:00 am – 12 noon
Location: Regional Planning Commission Hearing Room
Room 150, 320 W Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The July 7, 2014 scoping meeting will also be streamed live at the following link: <http://streaming.planning.lacounty.gov/meeting>. Afterward, the recorded presentation and meeting will also be posted at the following link: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/tnc/ceqa>.