



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

November 10, 2009

TO: Leslie G. Bellamy, Chair
Wayne Rew, Vice Chair
Esther L. Valadez, Commissioner
Harold V. Helsley, Commissioner
Pat Modugno, Commissioner

FROM: Mitch Glaser, AICP, Supervising Regional Planner
Countywide Studies Section

**SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 23, 2009 -- AGENDA ITEM #8
PROJECT NO. R2007-01226-(5)
PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 2009-00006-(5)
ZONE CHANGE NO. 2009-00009-(5)
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CASE NO. 2009-00080-(5)
SANTA CLARITA VALLEY AREA PLAN UPDATE (ONE VALLEY ONE
VISION)**

BACKGROUND

In 2000, the County of Los Angeles and the City of Santa Clarita initiated "One Valley One Vision," a joint effort to update two separate documents, the County's Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan and the City's General Plan, with consistent goals, objectives, and policies for the entire Santa Clarita Valley. This unique collaborative effort acknowledges the common needs and desires of Valley residents, whether they live in the City or an unincorporated community.

The County's Draft Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan and related Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) are currently being reviewed by your Commission. This staff report is a supplement to the staff report submitted to your Commission on September 17, 2009. Please refer to the previous staff report for more information on the project, including a chronology of public outreach efforts, a description of the proposed Plan Amendment and the proposed Zone Change, and an analysis of consistency with the currently adopted Countywide General Plan.

OCTOBER 5, 2009 PUBLIC HEARING

Your Commission held a duly noticed public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, October 5, 2009, at the Castaic Sports Complex in the unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley. At the beginning of the hearing, staff made a PowerPoint presentation regarding the

project, which was followed by a statement from Paul Brotzman, Director of Community Development for the City of Santa Clarita. Subsequently, 40 individuals testified at the hearing, including two members of the Castaic Area Town Council. These individuals expressed various concerns about the project, but the majority of the concerns were oriented towards the proposed land use and zoning designations for particular parcels in the unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley.

At the conclusion of the testimony, your Commission moved that:

- 1) The formal comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report be extended an additional 30 days, to December 2, 2009; and
- 2) The public hearing be continued to 9 a.m. on Monday, November 23, 2009 at the Hall of Records in Downtown Los Angeles.

A transcript of the public hearing is attached to this supplemental staff report. The transcript has also been posted to the Department of Regional Planning's Web Site at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/ovov>.

COMMENT LETTERS

Prior to the October 5, 2009 public hearing, staff received numerous comment letters regarding the project, which were submitted to your Commission on September 17, October 1, and October 5, 2009. Subsequent to the October 5, 2009 public hearing, staff received additional comment letters regarding the project, which are attached to this supplemental staff report. All comment letters have also been posted to the Department of Regional Planning's Web Site at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/ovov>.

The comment letters have expressed various concerns about the project, but the majority of the concerns have been oriented towards the proposed land use and zoning designations for particular parcels in the unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley.

Staff has received a comment letter from the Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA), dated October 28, 2009, regarding the DEIR, which is included in the attached letters. The CLWA letter states that water supply data in the DEIR "should not be used and conclusions should be drawn from a future estimate of overall water supplies prepared using an updated Reliability Report for the SWP [State Water Project] supply component. The updated Reliability Report is anticipated by yearend 2009. Once it is available, CLWA will need some time to evaluate the changes to supply, and will then submit those adjusted supply figures to the Regional Planning staff." Staff feels that it would be inappropriate for your Commission to take a final action on this project until such time that the water supply issues raised by CLWA have been addressed.

RE-EVALUATION OF PROPOSED LAND USE AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS

As previously mentioned, the majority of the concerns expressed in verbal testimony and comment letters have been oriented towards the proposed land use and zoning designations for various parcels in the unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley. Numerous property owners have requested that your Commission re-evaluate the land use and zoning designations that have been proposed by staff. In most cases, property owners are requesting additional density or higher intensity of use.

At the October 5, 2009 public hearing, your Commission indicated that staff should provide guidance regarding requests for re-evaluation of proposed land use and zoning designations. Although staff is able to do so at this time, staff feels that it would be inappropriate to do so until such time that the water supply issues raised by the Castaic CLWA have been addressed. Staff intends to provide an analysis of each request to your Commission after the water supply issues raised by the CLWA have been addressed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff does not recommend that your Commission take any action at this time. The purpose of the November 23, 2009 continued public hearing is for your Commission to hear additional testimony from the public on the project, to ask questions of staff, and to direct staff to make changes to the draft documents, investigate issues, and/or undertake other activities before returning at the next continued public hearing.

The CLWA anticipates that an updated Reliability Report for the State Water Project will be available by the end of 2009 and that CLWA staff will need some time to review the Reliability Report before advising staff of the adequacy of the water supply data in the DEIR. Therefore staff recommends that your Commission extend the DEIR formal comment period for an additional 60 days (to February 1, 2010) in order to provide CLWA with adequate time. Extending the DEIR formal comment period would also allow additional time for review and comment by other interested parties.

Staff recommends that the public hearing be continued to 9 a.m. on Wednesday, February 24, 2010, at the Hall of Records in Downtown Los Angeles. If the DEIR comment period is extended, staff anticipates that the water supply issues raised by the CLWA will have been addressed by this time, which would allow your Commission to proceed with its review of the project.

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

1) I move that the Regional Planning Commission extend the formal comment period of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Project No. R2007-01226-(5) for an additional 60 days, to February 1, 2010.

2) I move that the Regional Planning Commission continue the hearing on Project No. R2007-01226-(5) to February 24, 2010.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 974-6476 or mglaser@planning.lacounty.gov.

MWG:mwg

Attachments:

1. Transcript of October 5, 2009 Public Hearing
2. Written Correspondence (received between October 5, 2009 and November 10, 2009)