September 2020

EXHIBIT B

DRAFT

Santa Monica Mountains

North Area Plan

Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

The following Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan will require approval by both the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors prior to official implementation. Hearing dates to be determined.

Once adopted, the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan will be a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan and provide goals and policies specific to the Santa Monica Mountains North Area.

DRAFT

Santa Monica Mountains

North Area Plan

September 2020

Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

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"To enrich lives through effective and caring service."

"To improve the quality of life through innovative and resourceful physical and environmental planning, balancing individual rights and community needs."

"Let the land disctate the type and intensity of use."

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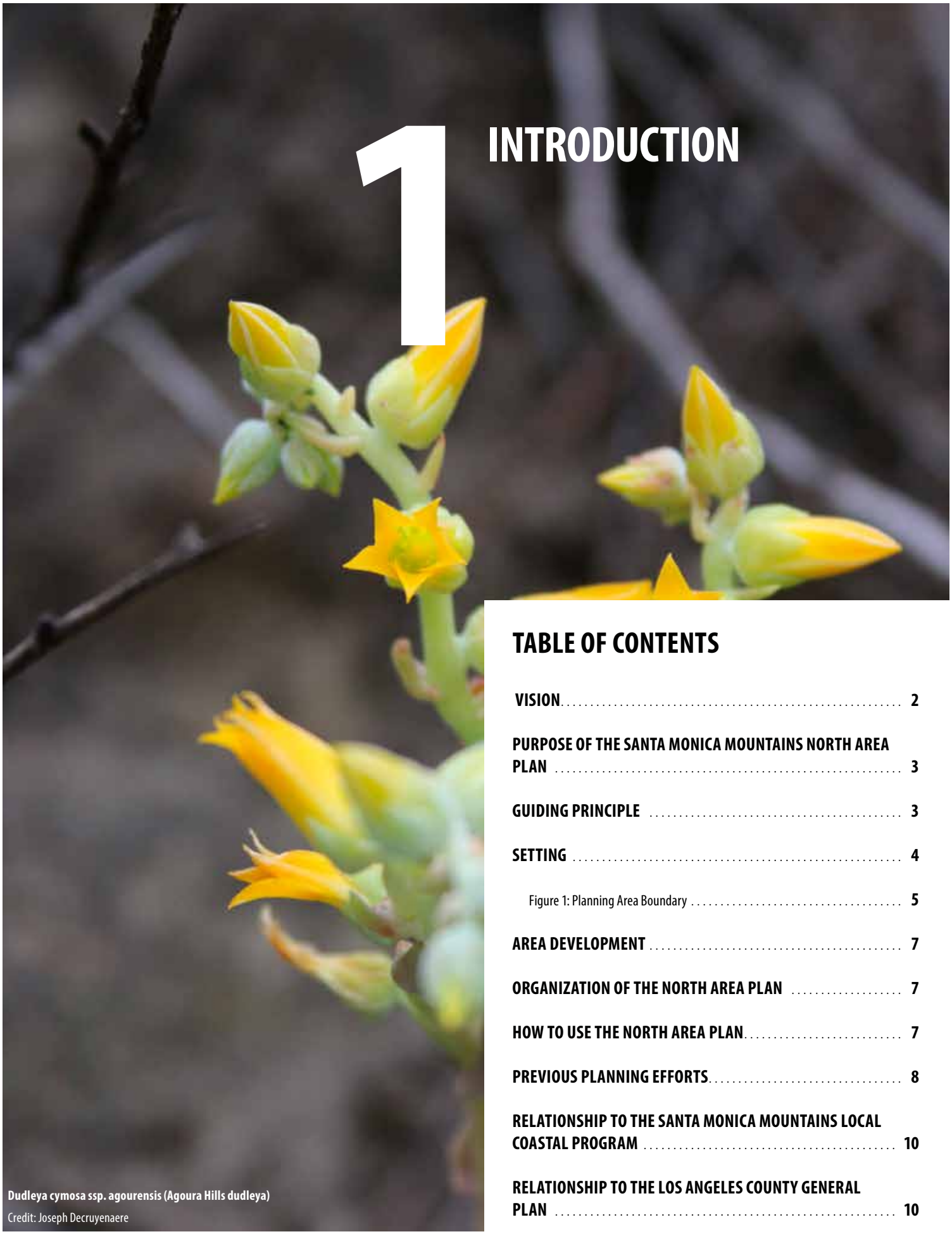

1 INTRODUCTION

Dudleya cymosa ssp. agourensis (Agoura Hills dudleya)
Credit: Joseph Decruyenaere

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

THE VISION FOR THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NORTH AREA PLAN

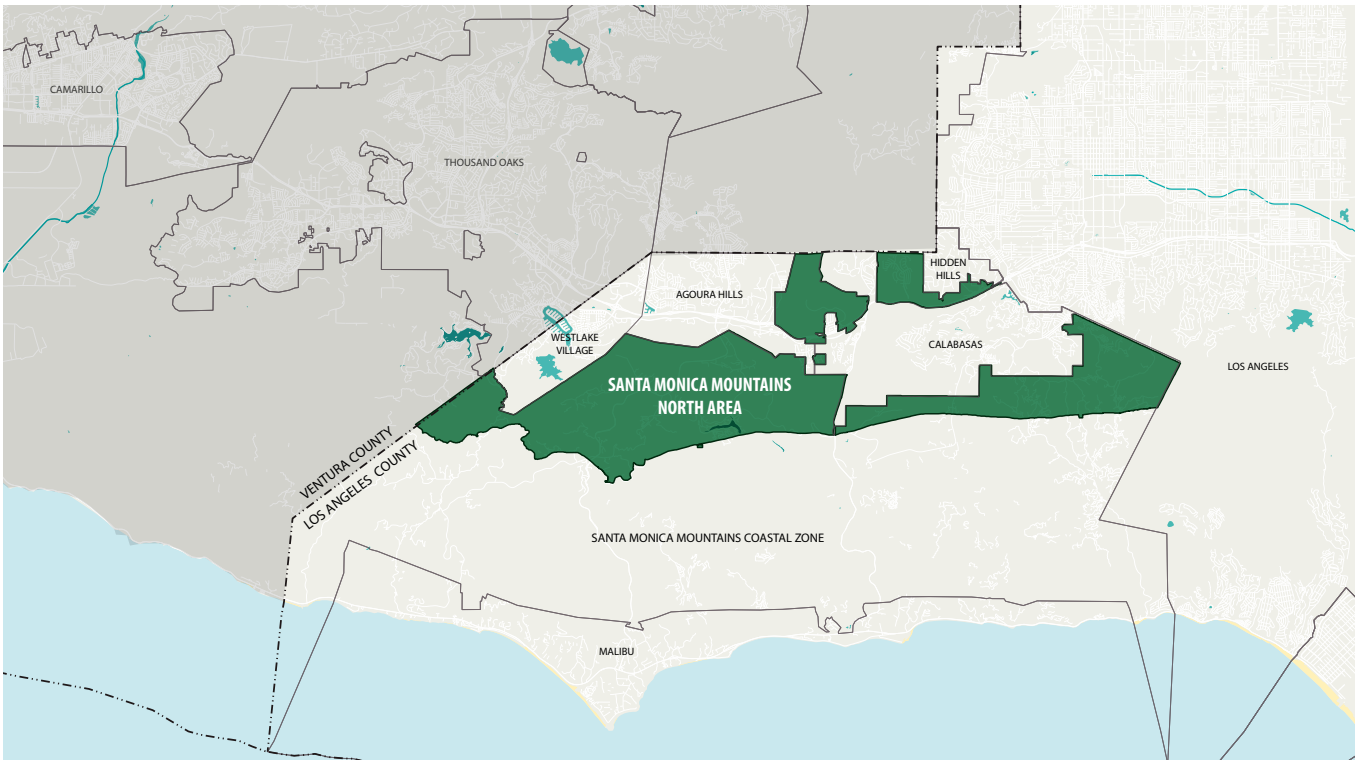
The Santa Monica Mountains are one of Los Angeles County's most significant ecological and scenic resources. The Department of Regional Planning worked with the Third Supervisorial District, community groups, and local residents to shape a cohesive vision for the Santa Monica Mountains North Area (North Area). As a result of the destructive 2018 Woolsey Fire, the importance of responsible development, ecological health, and risk management has become paramount for local communities.

In addition, the North Area is under increasing development pressures due to is desirability as a place to live. Increased human activity associated with development may have negative impacts on the communities and natural environments of the North Area, including greater susceptibility to destructive wildfires, heightened safety risks for residents, diminished water quality, degradation of overall ecological quality, the loss of critical animal and plant habitats, and acceleration of climate change impacts.

Largely located within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the North Area's abundant and diverse ecosystem greatly contributes to and forms the region's outdoor recreational opportunities. Many land uses and activities are dependent on the preservation of natural areas, which provide public enjoyment through its scenery and interaction with the wildlands.

The vision for the North Area is to maintain and strengthen a healthy and comprehensive ecosystem, while accommodating development that meets the highest standards of environmental stewardship. This vision is encapsulated by the guiding principle of the Plan: "Let the land dictate the type and intensity of use."

The Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan is comprised of a comprehensive set of principles and objectives that helps to achieve this vision. The document is intended to be used by residents, communities, and public agencies within the North Area to guide decision-making and development.



Although distinct as a planning area, the Santa Monica Mountains North Area is interconnected jurisdictionally, and environmentally, to many different communities.

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

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PURPOSE OF THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NORTH AREA PLAN

The Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan (North Area Plan), originally adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in October 2000, is a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan. The North Area Plan's primary role is to provide more focused policy for the protection of biological resources and regulation of development within the unincorporated area of the Santa Monica Mountains west of the City of Los Angeles and north of the Coastal Zone. The North Area Plan refines the policies of the countywide General Plan as it applies to this planning area.

The North Area Plan serves to:

- **Identify the community's environmental, social, and economic goals.**
- **Provide a summary of the land uses in the North Area and the County's goals to ensure compatibility.**
- **Define the County's policies on existing and future development needed to achieve community goals.**
- **Respond to problems and opportunities concerning community development in a way that is consistent with local, regional and state goals and policies.**
- **Create a basis for subsequent planning efforts, such as the preparation of specific plans and special studies.**
- **Maximize preservation of the area's natural environment.**
- **Recognize the opportunities and constraints that the land imposes.**
- **Accommodate new uses that minimize impacts on the natural environment.**
- **Ensure that new development is compatible with and enhances the quality of existing communities.**
- **Provide for a wide range of public and private recreational opportunities.**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The guiding principle for the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan is to:

Let the land dictate the type and intensity of use.

The area's diverse topography, biotic habitats, and wildland-urban interface establish a character, sense of openness, and scenic experience that embody the landscape and communities of the Santa Monica Mountains North Area (North Area). A large portion of the North Area is part of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, one of just 18 across the United States in the National Park System. The National Recreation Area includes both public and private lands, and the successful management of this significant regional asset depends on private and public collaboration with a common goal of natural resource preservation. Over 6,100 acres of parks and open space within the North Area—including several federal park sites, Malibu Creek State Park, and open space managed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy—represent a public heritage and trust requiring appropriate protection

The North Area's recreational opportunities and its rural and semi-rural lifestyle amenities create a popular draw for tourists as well as those living in nearby metropolitan areas. But spectacular views and dramatic landscapes have generated development pressures that have had a significant impact on the local environment, such as on native flora and fauna unique to the Santa Monica Mountains, on important habitat resources that support various ecological communities, and on watersheds that drain through canyons into Santa Monica Bay. Natural hazards are also present across the North Area, including steep, unstable slopes, and a high potential for destructive wildfires.

The scale of development within the North Area is constrained not only by the need for environmental protection and habitat conservation, but also by the cumulative limitations of infrastructure and public services in the area, and by natural and human-caused risks to public health and safety. To protect the long-term health of the environment and communities in the North Area, no increase in development intensity will be allowed, particularly in areas underserved by public services and with high fire risk. Existing

infrastructure and roadway networks will be maintained through improvements that can be accommodated in an environmentally sensitive manner. No new freeways are planned to serve this area, and there will be no areawide flood control system of concrete channels conveying storm runoff in order to facilitate future growth. Development within the wildland-urban interface will also be discouraged to reduce wildfire and climate-change related risks to residents, property, and emergency personnel. Classified by the Los Angeles County Fire Department and the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (Cal Fire) as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the Santa Monica Mountains are an ecosystem in which fires are a natural occurrence. As indicated by recent destructive wildfires, homes within wildland areas face a substantial risk due to the likelihood and severity of wind-driven wildland fires in the mountains.

SETTING

The Santa Monica Mountains North Area is comprised of the unincorporated portion of the Santa Monica Mountains west of the City of Los Angeles and north of the Coastal Zone boundary (Figure 1). The North Area is 32.3 square miles and consists of communities that are surrounded by steep mountains, rolling hills, canyons, streams, and oak woodlands. Some of the unincorporated communities within the Planning Area include: Malibou Lake, Monte Nido, Malibu Vista, Old Topanga, and Topanga.

Surrounding cities include the City of Los Angeles to the east, Calabasas to the north and northeast, Agoura Hills to the north, Hidden Hills to the northeast, Westlake Village to the west and northwest, and the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone to the south.

WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas exist throughout Los Angeles County. These areas are critical for habitat conservation, air and water resource management, recreational access, fire safety, and development.

1. Santa Monica Mountains
2. Puente Hills and Chino Hills
3. San Gabriel Mountains
4. Santa Clarita Valley
5. Antelope Valley

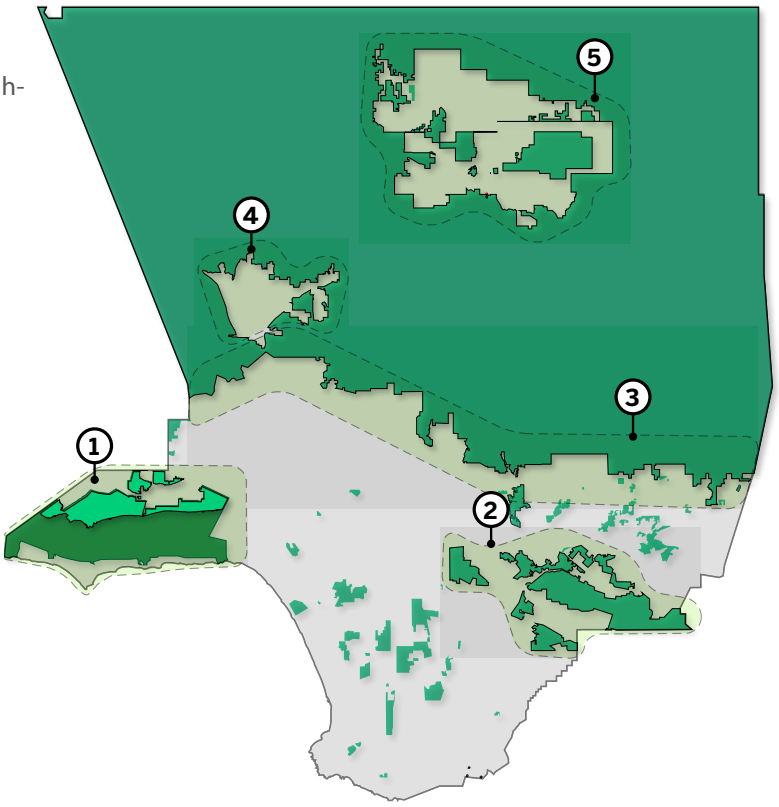
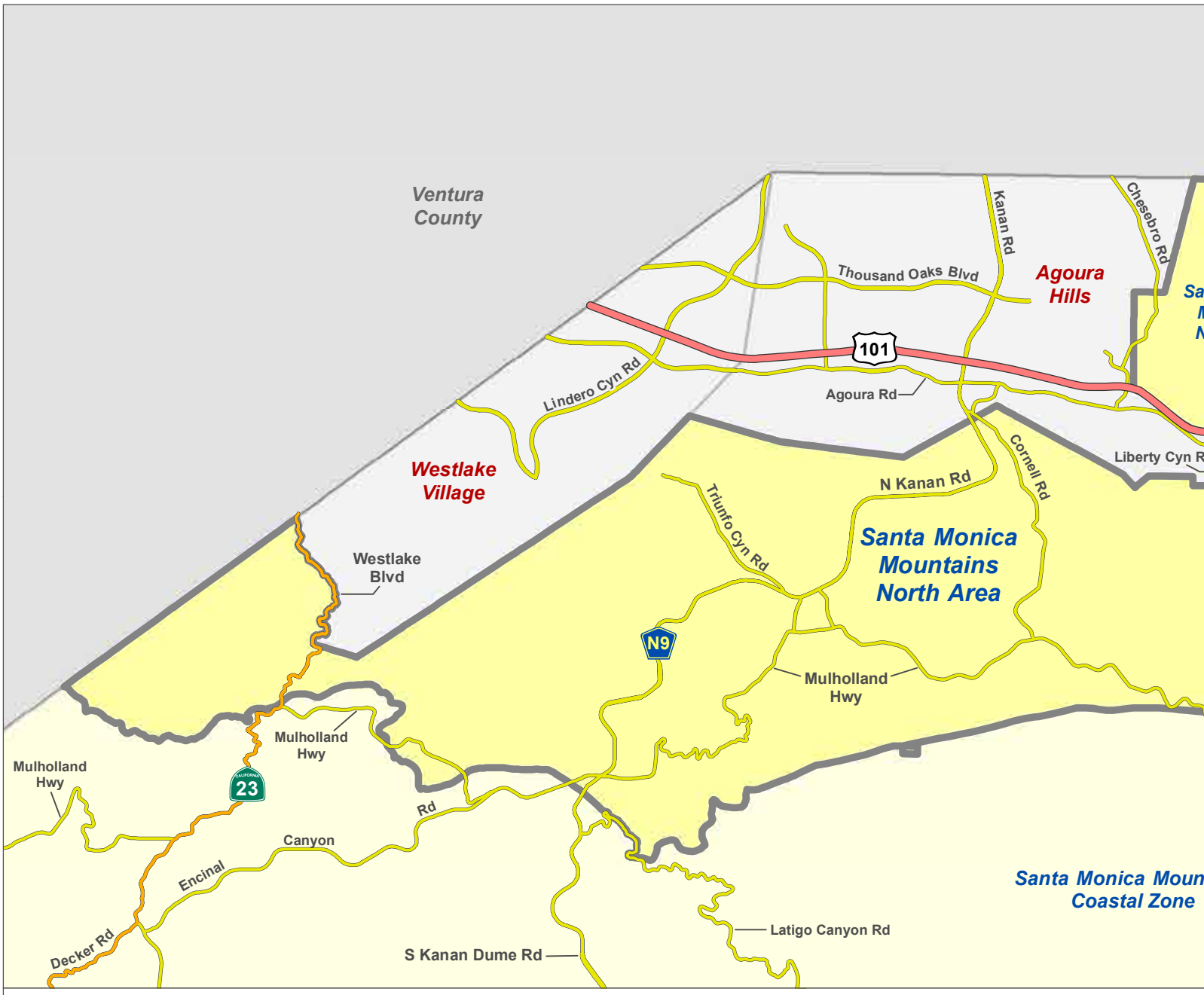


Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Santa Monica Mountains North Area (SMMNA)

Other Unincorporated Area

Incorporated City

Major Road

Highway

Freeway

Figure 1: Planning Area Boundary

Victory Blvd
Platt Ave
Fallbrook Ave
Topanga Cyn Blvd
De Soto Ave
Winnetka Ave
Valley Circle Blvd
Burbank Blvd
Ventura Blvd
101
27
Wells Dr
Las Virgenes Rd
Mountain View Dr
Hidden Hills
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
Mureau Rd
Calabasas Rd
Mulholland Dr
Los Angeles
Pkwy Calabasas
Lost Hills Rd
SMMNA
N1
Calabasas
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
Las Virgenes Rd
N Topanga Canyon Blvd
Mulholland Hwy
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Stunt Rd
Saddle Peak Rd

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Prepared by DRP GIS Section / September 2019

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Development throughout the North Area is typically concentrated in residential subdivisions or sited along the hillside roads. Many of the subdivisions in the North Area are considered antiquated, which were created in the 1920s and often lack basic physical infrastructure required to meet current development standards. These antiquated subdivisions were recorded prior to 1929 when the Subdivision Map Act was amended to give local governments more control over development. Areas such as Topanga Canyon and Malibou Lake contain antiquated subdivisions that need regulations to ensure that there are standards for new development that address issues such as density, infrastructure capacity, and access.

The North Area contains natural hazards that can affect people and property. Much of the terrain in the North Area is sloped, with a substantial portion of land having slopes greater than 25 percent. The area is subject to widespread slope instability and is entirely within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ), the most urgent classification for wildfire safety purposes. Park lands cover approximately 38 percent of the planning area, and include parts of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area, Topanga State Park, and Malibu Creek State Park.

AREA DEVELOPMENT

The Santa Monica Mountains are known for their stunning beauty and their isolation from the busy Los Angeles metropolitan area. While the North Area had a number of established neighborhood subdivisions at the beginning of the 20th century, development has since been restricted to preserve the natural resources and beauty of the area. In 1961, a northeastern portion of the North Area was incorporated to form the City of Hidden Hills. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the incorporation of the cities of Agoura Hills, Westlake Village and Calabasas, leaving a strip of unincorporated land between the new cities and the Coastal Zone. The North Area has maintained the natural beauty and rural character of the Santa Monica Mountains through sensitive development and recreational uses.

ORGANIZATION OF THE NORTH AREA PLAN

The North Area Plan consists of five elements that establish goals and policies for land use throughout the North Area. The following elements provide the basic policy framework for the North Area Plan and are intended for use by the public and governmental decision makers for the regulation of uses and development within the jurisdiction of the North Area Plan:

- **Conservation and Natural Resources Element;**
- **Safety and Noise Element;**
- **Land Use Element;**
- **Mobility Element;**
- **Public Services and Facilities Element.**

Appendices

The Appendices contain background information for the North Area Plan. They may be modified, updated, or deleted as deemed appropriate by the Director of Regional Planning.

HOW TO USE THE NORTH AREA PLAN

This Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan is a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan. The goals, policies, and standards of the North Area Plan are to be used to guide development within the North Area. This North Area Plan should be used in conjunction with Los Angeles County Code Title 22 and the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District (CSD), a component of Title 22, which implements specific development regulations for the various subareas within the North Area boundary. Users should be guided by the following:

- Where there are concurrent policies applicable, the policies that are most protective of environmental, biological, and open space resources shall prevail.

- No policy, whether in written or diagram form, shall be given greater weight than any other policy in evaluating the policy intent of this North Area Plan.

- The Land Use Policy Map is never to be interpreted by itself, but rather must be interpreted in light of applicable written policies.

- The interpretation of policy should be governed by the 'Guiding Principles' of the North Area Plan.

- While this North Area Plan is meant to be a guide for the public in determining allowable uses of private property, nothing in this plan provides an entitlement to any specific form of development.

In addition to the direction provided by this North Area Plan, new development and land use activities are regulated by many agencies other than the Department of Regional Planning. Obtaining approval for certain types of actions may require proof of the availability of public services – including water/sewer, power, police, fire and schools – as well as fair-share provisions for public parks, libraries, streets, etc.

Along with the standard building requirements and zoning regulations that apply county-wide, development in mountainous areas often requires special considerations and permits from local, state, and federal agencies. Such controls are often intended to ensure compatibility with off-site resources – such as downstream water quality and coastal areas – in addition to regulating the onsite impacts. For example, on-site wastewater treatment systems – necessary in the more remote areas not served by public sewers – may require adherence to the requirements of several agencies due to grading, soil conditions, water table, etc.. These agencies include the County Departments of Public Works and Health Services, as well as the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Also, any alteration of a streambed will likely require permits from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and possibly from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – in addition to compliance with County site design regulations.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

A number of comprehensive planning efforts and park and resource management plans have informed the development of the North Area Plan and this update. These efforts are summarized below.

Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan (1978)

This federal plan was created by the state-formed Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Planning Commission. It proposed a regulatory approach toward preserving open space lands, and promoted low-density, large-lot rural residential development in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Interim Area Plan (1981)

The County adopted this plan as a first step in comprehensively planning for the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains. Although it was intended as an interim plan, the Board of Supervisors chose to extend it indefinitely.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Land Protection Plan (1984)

This plan identified which land was needed to protect significant natural, cultural, and scenic resources, as well as to set priorities for protection. The plan also proposed a broad range of methods for protecting land, ranging from direct acquisition to cooperative planning areas within which local agencies and landowners would achieve compatible private development in the park setting. The National Park Service continues to acquire lands prioritized in the land protection plan.

Malibu Land Use Plan (1986)

This County land use plan was created to regulate development in the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone. Accordingly, the plan resulted in the bifurcation of the Santa Monica Mountains into two planning areas – the Coastal Zone and the North Area.

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Ventura Freeway Corridor Areawide Plan (Joint, 1996)

When Calabasas incorporated in 1991, the County initiated a new planning process to update the Interim Area Plan north of the Coastal Zone. Emphasis was placed on a coordinated and joint planning process among all principal governmental agencies in the Ventura Freeway Corridor planning area. In 1993, the County, the cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, and Westlake Village, two municipal service agencies, and the National Park Service formed a coalition to fund the preparation of comprehensive revisions to the region's land use plans. The intent of the Areawide Plan was to provide coordinated direction for the update of each jurisdiction's general plan to address issues of growth, environmental management, and interjurisdictional coordination. A draft of the Areawide Plan was completed in 1996. The Areawide Plan was superseded by the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan in 2000.

Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan (2000)

This plan replaced the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Interim Area Plan. The principles of the Ventura Freeway Corridor Areawide Plan were incorporated into this plan. It provided focused policy for the regulation of development within the North Area.

Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District (CSD) (2002)

The CSD, which is a zoning overlay, was established to implement the goals and policies of the North Area Plan in a manner that protects the health, safety, and welfare of the community and natural environment. Since its adoption, it has been amended four times to add: the Grading and Significant Ridgeline Ordinance in 2005; the Commercial Zoning Ordinance in 2007; the Fences, Walls, and Landscaping Ordinance in 2010; and the Vineyard Ordinance in 2015

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area General Management Plan (2003) and Foundation Document (2015)

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area was established by Congress in 1978 to protect and enhance the area's resources, air quality, and recreational and educational value. The 2003 General Management Plan (GMP) was prepared by the National Park Service in cooperation with California State Parks and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The more current Foundation Document builds on the GMP by summarizing park significance and fundamental resources and values. Overarching goals are to protect and enhance species, habitat diversity, and natural processes; provide a diversity of resource-based recreational opportunities; and concerning land use, work with local agencies and private landowners to promote and protect biological diversity through compatible development strategies.

Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program (2014)

The California Coastal Commission certified the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program (LCP) in October 2014. The LCP consists of a land use plan (LUP) and a local implementation program (LIP). The LUP is a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan and provides goals and policies. The LIP is the primary implementation mechanism for the LUP and establishes district-wide, zone-specific, and area-specific regulations for new development and the protection and management of the Coastal Zone's biological and scenic resources.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM

The California Coastal Act, in designating the coastal zone, divided the Santa Monica Mountains planning area into two geographic components: one part within the Coastal Zone, and the other part north of the Coastal Zone. By necessity, because the Coastal Act requires a State-certified land use regulation program for the Coastal Zone and the Coastal Act does not apply in the North Area, two separate plans must be prepared for the Santa Monica Mountains. Although the North Area is considered a separate planning area from the Coastal Zone, both regions share similar characteristics in terms of habitat, topography, and environmental issues. Accordingly, the North Area Plan seeks to maintain reasonable consistency with the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program on policy issues that also face the North Area. Notwithstanding this division by the Coastal Zone boundary, the County is committed to the concept that planning for the entire Santa Monica Mountains should be integrated, comprehensive, regional in concern and in approach, consistent and fair in application of policies and regulations, and open to public participation from all parts of the region.

The North Area Plan and LCP together will serve as a comprehensive statement of regional policy for the regulation of uses within the Santa Monica Mountains, thereby creating continuity for planning within the greater Santa Monica Mountains region.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is a countywide land use policy document that guides the long-term physical development and conservation of the unincorporated areas. The unincorporated area of Los Angeles County is comprised of approximately 2,650 square miles of land that is not within any of the County's 88 cities. Approximately one million people live throughout the County's unincorporated areas. The General Plan organizes this dispersed area into eleven planning areas to provide for the development of local plans that respond to the needs of communities through the Planning Areas Framework. The Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan and the LCP govern the Santa Monica Mountains Planning Area.

All area plans are extensions of the General Plan and are based on the framework established by the General Plan. As such, the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan is part of the General Plan and is consistent with the General Plan's guiding principles, goals and policies. The North Area Plan contains goals and policies specific to the issues and needs of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Dudleya cymosa ssp. cymosa (canyon liveforever)
Credit: Joseph Decruyenaere

2 CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

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CHAPTER 2: CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This element establishes a framework for both the preservation and management of open space, scenic, and natural resources of the Santa Monica Mountains, and the use and enjoyment of the area's wide range of recreational opportunities by local residents and area visitors.

Efforts to manage and conserve the environment in the Santa Monica Mountains North Area focus on the relationship between the natural environment and human activities. The North Area is largely covered by the County's Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) designation. SEAs are officially designated areas within Los Angeles County that contain irreplaceable biological resources and ability to support sustainable populations of its component species and include habitat that promote species movement. The designation represents places where the County deems it important to facilitate a balance between development and biological resource conservation. Where occurring within SEAs, development activities are carefully guided and reviewed with a key focus on site design as a means for conserving fragile resources such as streams, woodlands, and threatened or endangered species and their habitats. A biological resource assessment was conducted to assess the extent of biological resources within the Santa Monica Mountains, and to determine the relative sensitivity of these resources to human impacts (see Appendix A). This biological assessment analyzed special-status riparian and animal species, Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs), and habitat linkages, and recommended habitat categories to be used in the North Area. These habitat categories are S1, S2, S3, and S4; the most rare and sensitive habitat with the most restrictive development standards being S1; and the least sensitive, disturbed habitats with the least restrictive development standards being S4. This biological assessment serves as the basis for the goals and policies in this element.

To minimize the impacts that future development may have on both the environment of the region and the opportunities for recreation within the Santa Monica Mountains, the following sections address the area's natural resources:

- **Open Space**
- **Biological Resources**
- **Water Quality and Availability**
- **Tree Protections**
- **Hillside Management**
- **Scenic Resources**
- **Trails and Recreation**
- **Cultural Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Paleontological Resources**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The guiding principle for managing development and protecting the natural environment is:

Resource protection has priority over development.

The North Area Plan encompasses a complex and naturally dynamic landscape that is dominated by the Santa Monica Mountains. It requires effective policy and action programs to manage and protect these environmental resources

This principle recognizes that the Santa Monica Mountains possess irreplaceable resources, and that every user of the land is a steward, shaping the area's heritage for future generations. Given this perspective, sensible resource management avoids degradation of the environment. The challenge of managing the natural environment is to ensure that the use of natural resources protects and enhances the quality of both the natural and built environments of the area.

Development on any scale can enhance or disrupt the character of its natural setting – both those in the immediate area as well as those offsite, such as downstream impacts to coastal resources. Attention to a full range of environmental factors is needed to ensure compatibility between the natural and built environments. In scenic and environmentally sensitive areas, development must conform to, and become a part of, the natural setting.

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This element provides detailed guidance for new development to ensure that it conforms with the natural environment, conserves open space, and protects sensitive watersheds and downstream water quality that flow into the Pacific Ocean and directly affects coastal resources. The area's positive influence on the Los Angeles region, including scenic, recreational, and educational attributes, relies heavily upon sustaining the area's natural setting, the scenic beauty of varied landforms, and the area's spectacular geologic formations, which provide a substantial recreational resource.

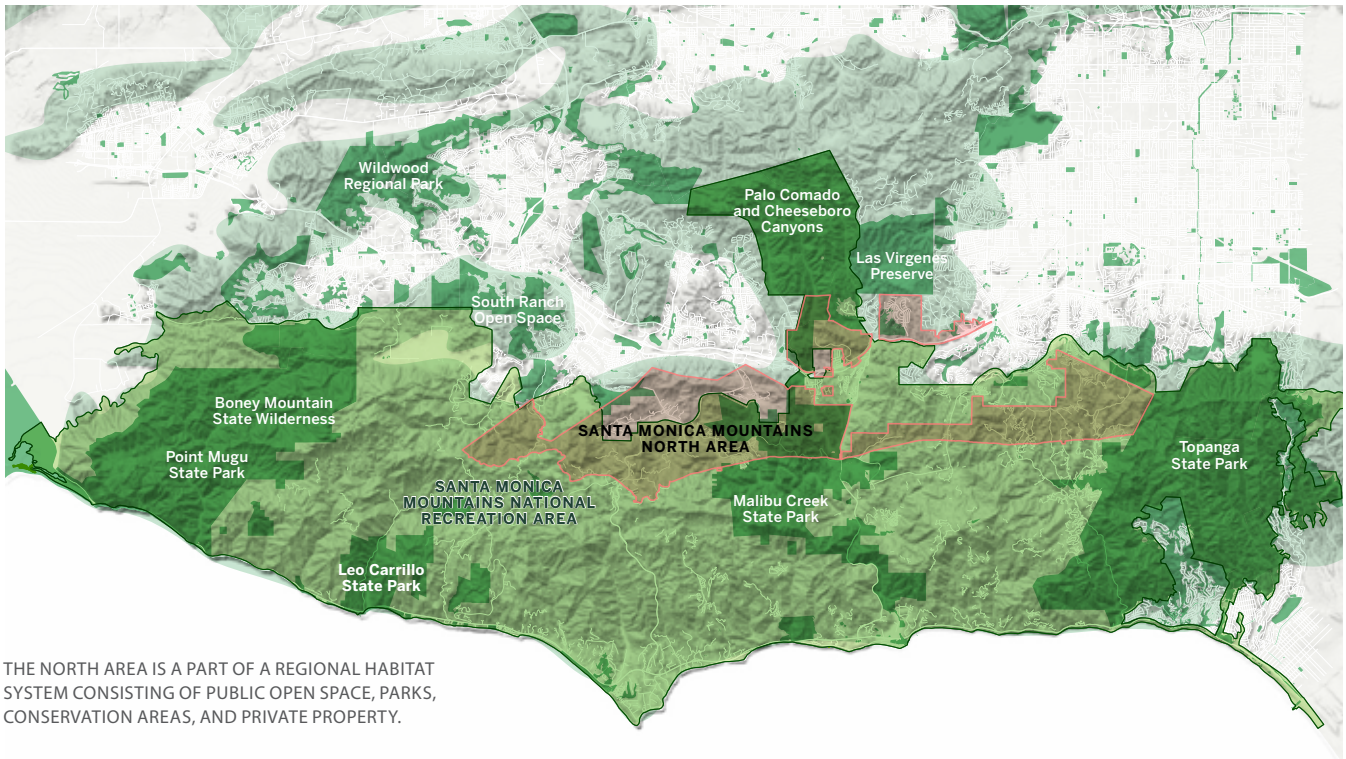
OPEN SPACE

Over 6,100 acres of major public open spaces lie within the North Area Plan boundary –approximately 35 percent of the planning area. These lands are under the management of government agencies such as the National Park Service, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and non-governmental organizations such as the Mountains Restoration Trust. Additional dedicated open space areas include permanent open space lands preserved as the result of development approvals. Additionally, large areas of privately-owned undeveloped lands that exist throughout the region function as contiguous wildlife habitat areas when not fenced.

There are generally three types of open space, though not mutually exclusive, in the North Area:

1. **Open Space for the Protection of Natural Resources:** Most of the land acquired by the National Park Service, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy falls into this category, as these lands contain significant biological resources. Much of the remaining open space within the region contains a variety of important locally indigenous plant and wildlife habitats and habitat linkages. These habitats also represent a scenic resource of great value.

2. **Open Space for the Protection of Public Health and Safety:** Many hillside areas have proven to be unstable. They are unsuitable for development and are more appropriately left as open space. In addition, the fires that periodically burn through the Santa Monica Mountains are a reminder of the inherent difficulties with development in mountainous areas. Because fire is a natural and increasingly common occurrence, certain areas within the mountains are best left in their natural condition and protected from development. Many steeply sloping areas and areas subject to flooding have been dedicated as permanent open space, primarily as part of development approvals.



THE NORTH AREA IS A PART OF A REGIONAL HABITAT SYSTEM CONSISTING OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, PARKS, CONSERVATION AREAS, AND PRIVATE PROPERTY.

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

3. **Open Space for Public Recreation:** These open space areas include the public and private parks managed by the County and property owners' associations, dedicated trail easements, and recreation areas owned and managed by agencies such as the National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Also included are areas of outstanding scenic beauty and historically or culturally significant sites.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Open Space

Goal CO-1:

Preserve open space areas for the benefit of human and natural communities across the region.

Policies:

- **CO-1:** Implement programs and policies that enforce the responsible stewardship and preservation of dedicated open space areas.
- **CO-2:** Protect and conserve natural resources, natural areas, and available open spaces.
- **CO-3:** Prioritize open space acquisitions for available lands that contain unique ecological features, streams, watersheds, scenic features, habitat types and/or offer linkages that enhance wildlife movements and genetic diversity.
- **CO-4:** Collaborate with public, non-profit, and private organizations to acquire and preserve available land for open space.
- **CO-5:** Require open space easements or deed restrictions as part of development projects on sites containing S1 and S2 habitats to ensure that approved building site areas are limited and impacts to sensitive habitat are minimized.
- **CO-6:** When development conditions of approval set aside lands for open space, clearly define the land's intended open space functions and ensure that the management and use of such lands are consistent with those intended open space functions.
- **CO-7:** Depict all public or private parcels set aside as open space through the recordation on title of conservation easements, open space easements and open space deed restrictions as Open Space on the Land Use Policy Map.
- **CO-8:** Require that any new development or improvement is sited and designed so required fuel modification or brush clearance does not encroach into dedicated open space or parkland.
- **CO-9:** Pursue a variety of methods to preserve open space, including fee-simple acquisition, purchase of development rights, land swaps, regulations, or development density and lot retirement incentives. For county, state, and federal funds that may be earmarked for open space, assign high priority to acquiring properties designated on the National Park Service's Land Protection Plan, and to parcels within S1 and S2 habitat areas.CO-10: Implement legal protections, such as deed restrictions and dedication of open space easements, to ensure designated open space lands are preserved in perpetuity.
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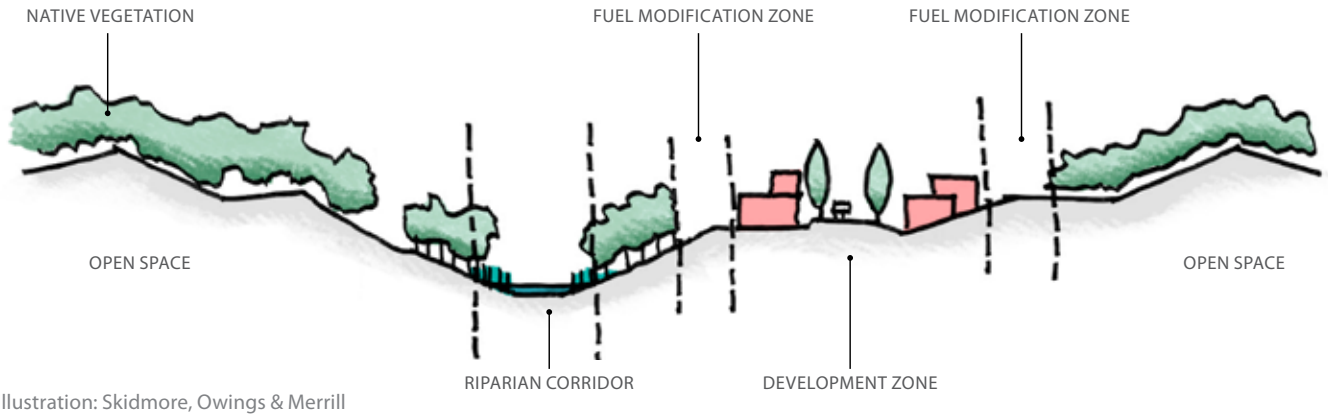

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

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- **CO-11:** Preserve open spaces that contain unique ecological features; protect undeveloped streams, watersheds, woodlands, and grasslands; prevent vegetation clearance or grading of steep areas; help reduce development-induced runoff; and protect existing and approved recreation areas.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

TThe Santa Monica Mountains are home to a variety of sensitive plants and wildlife, unique geologic features, important wildlife linkages, and aquatic features. Several state and federally listed threatened and endangered species, as well as numerous California Species of Special Concern and rare plants, are known from the North Area, such as Lyon's pentachaeta and the California red-legged frog. There are over 400 species of birds, 23 species of reptiles, 10 species of amphibians, 41 species of mammals, and over 900 species of vascular plants found in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Iconic Southern California landscapes, such as valley oak savannah, sycamore-lined canyons, volcanic rock outcrops, and wildflower-rich meadows are found in the North Area, both on and off protected lands. The North Area supports large areas of undisturbed open space separating urban development along U.S. Highway 101 from protected open space in the main body of the Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills. The North Area Plan seeks to protect these habitats, leaving them relatively undisturbed and their resources intact, while still allowing for responsible development.

TABLE 1: HABITAT CATEGORIES

CATEGORY	SIGNIFICANCE	DESCRIPTION
S1	**Distribution** Limited, particular rarity, or important function.	S1 habitat consists of areas of the highest biological significance, rarity, or sensitivity. S1 habitat includes alluvial scrub, native grassland and scrub with a strong component of native grasses or forbs, riparian, native oak, sycamore, walnut and bay woodlands, and rock outcrop habitat types. Wetlands[1], including creeks, streams, marshes, seeps and springs, are also S1 habitat. Coast live and valley oak, sycamore, walnut, and bay woodlands are all included in S1 habitat. S1 habitat also includes populations of plant and animal species (1) listed by the State or Federal government as rare, threatened or endangered, listed by NatureServe as State or Global-ranked 1, 2, or 3, and identified as California Species of Special Concern, and/or (2) California Native Plant Society (CNPS)-listed 1B and 2 plant species[2], normally associated with S1 habitats, where they are found within S2 or S3 habitat areas.
	Function Lands that support the rarest and most sensitive resources or have important ecosystem function and is worthy of the highest-level conservation.	
	Development Highly restricted.	
S2	**Distribution** Intact but broadly distributed.	S2 habitat consists of areas of high biological significance, rarity, and sensitivity that are important to the ecological vitality and diversity of the Santa Monica Mountains Mediterranean ecosystem. S2 habitat includes large, contiguous areas of coastal sage scrub and chaparral-dominated habitats. This habitat contains (1) CNDDB-identified rare natural communities; (2) plant and animal species listed by the State or Federal government as rare, threatened, or endangered; listed by NatureServe as State or Global-ranked 1, 2, or 3, and identified as California Species of Special Concern; and/or (3) CNPS-listed 1B and 2 plant species[3], normally associated with S2 habitats.
	Function Lands that support intact native vegetation communities, and which may include some rare species but is otherwise adequately conserved in the North Area.	
	Development May occur in areas with S2 habitat provided measures are implemented to avoid, minimize, and mitigate habitat impacts.	

1 Lands may be covered periodically or permanently with shallow water and include saltwater marshes, freshwater marshes, open or closed brackish water marshes, swamps, mudflats, and fens. Land where the water table is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to promote the formation of hydric soils or to support the growth of hydrophytes, and shall also include those types of wetlands where vegetation is lacking and soil is poorly developed or absent as a result of frequent and drastic fluctuations of surface water levels, water flow, turbidity or high concentrations of salts or other substances in the substrate. Such wetlands can be recognized by the presence of surface water or saturated substrate at some time during each year and their location within, or adjacent to vegetated wetlands or deep-water habitats.

2 All of these particular categories of listed species are maintained in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) / California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), which is an information clearinghouse for lists of rare plant and animal species and rate natural communities.

3 Ibid

All land throughout the North Area has been mapped and assigned a habitat sensitivity ranking. Four habitat categories S1, S2, S3, and S4, categorize and prioritize the habitat with the North Area. The rankings are based on the distribution, rarity, and habitat function of the habitat found in each category. The habitat categories are described in Table 1.

The habitat categories are mapped on the Biological Resources Map (Figure 2) and is to be used as a reference to depict the general distribution of habitat categories; however, the precise boundaries and existence of the various habitat categories shall be determined on a site-specific basis based on substantial evidence and a site-specific biological inventory and/or assessment.

This North Area Plan provides policies, such as Policies CO-16 and CO-17, to confirm the habitat types and locations depicted on the map and on the basis of substantial evidence establish the appropriate habitat category. Any area not designated as a habitat category on the Biological Resources Map that meets the criteria of a habitat category shall be protected under that habitat category in the North Area Plan.

The habitat categories as depicted on the Biological Resources Map may be adjusted based upon substantial biological evidence and independent review by the Department Biologist as set forth in this element. Based on substantial evidence, a resource on any site may be classified or reclassified from one category to a higher or lower category.

TABLE 1: HABITAT CATEGORIES *(continued from previous page)*

CATEGORY	SIGNIFICANCE	DESCRIPTION
S3	**Distribution** Disturbed, non-native, and cleared.	S3 habitat consists of areas that would otherwise be designated as S2 habitat, but the native vegetation communities have been significantly disturbed or removed as part of lawfully established development. This category also includes areas of native vegetation that are not significantly disturbed and would otherwise be categorized as S2 habitat, but have been substantially fragmented or isolated by existing, legal development and are no longer connected to large, contiguous areas of coastal sage scrub and/or chaparral-dominated habitats. This category includes lawfully developed areas and lawfully disturbed areas dominated by non-native plants such as disturbed roadside slopes, stands of non-native trees and grasses, and fuel modification areas around existing development (unless established illegally in an S2 or S1 area). This category further includes isolated and/or disturbed stands of native tree species (oak, sycamore, walnut, and bay) that do not form a larger woodland or savannah habitat. While S3 habitat does not constitute a biological resource area, these habitats provide important biological functions that warrant specific development standards for the siting and design of new development.
	Function Lands that support non-native and ruderal vegetation and have disturbed or cleared habitat that are expected to have lower habitat function than other natural lands.	
	Development Less restricted	
S4	**Distribution** Developed and agricultural lands	S4 habitat consists of developed or paved land that was permitted as part of a lawfully established development. While S4 habitat does not constitute a biological resource area, these habitats may provide important biological functions that warrant specific development standards for the siting and design of new development.
	Function Lands that support existing residential or commercial development, other facilities, or agricultural practices.	
	Development Least restricted	

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Where the County finds that the physical extent of habitats on a project site is different than those indicated on the Biological Resources Map, the County shall maintain documentation with detailed justification for any classification or reclassification of habitat categories at the project site based on substantial evidence. Where the County finds that the physical extent of habitats on a project site is different than that indicated on the Biological Resources Map, the Biological Resources Map shall be updated administratively.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Biological Resources

Goal CO-2:

An environment that supports significant animal and plant communities in an undisturbed condition and retains the greatest possible protection in the North Area.

Policies:

- **CO-12:** Protect sensitive habitats by collaborating with entities such as County departments, homeowner associations and other groups to balance land use, biological resources and habitats, wildlife connectivity, and emergency responses.

- **CO-13:** Allow for maximum wildlife connectivity and habitat linkages throughout the North Area. All feasible strategies shall be explored to protect these areas from disturbance, including purchasing open space lands, retiring development rights, clustering development to increase the amount of preserved open space, restricting the design and location of fencing, requiring the dedication of open space conservation easements, and minimizing removal of native vegetation.

- **CO-14:** The most biologically significant areas are designated S1 habitat and S2 habitat and shall be subject to strict land use protections and regulations.

- **CO-15:** All development shall be sited to avoid or minimize impacts to S1 and S2 habitat. Measures, including but not limited to signage, placement of boardwalks, utilizing established trail corridors, following natural contours to minimize grading, and limited fencing shall be implemented as necessary to protect S1 and S2 habitat.

- **CO-16:** New development shall be sited in a manner that avoids the most biologically sensitive habitat onsite where feasible, while not conflicting with other North Area Plan policies. Priority shall be given to siting development in S4 habitat. If infeasible, priority shall be given to siting new development in S3 habitat. If it is infeasible to site development in S4 or S3 habitat areas, development may be sited in S2 habitat if it is consistent with the specific limitations and standards for development in S2 habitat and all other provisions of the North Area Plan. If it is infeasible to site development in S4, S3, and S2 habitat areas, development may be sited, as a last option, in S1 habitat if

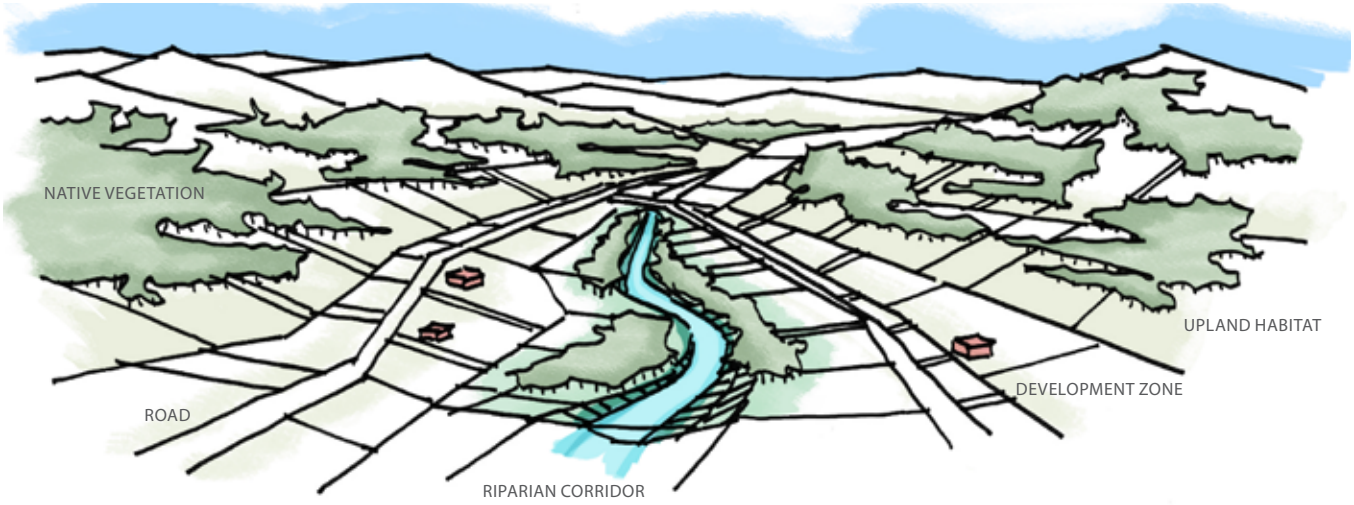


Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

it is consistent with the specific limitations and standards for development in S1 habitat and all other provisions of the North Area Plan.

- **CO-17:** Emphasize the protection of habitat:

  a. Preserve, protect, and enhance habitat linkages through limitations in the type and intensity of development and preservation of riparian corridors.

  b. Place primary emphasis on preserving large, unbroken areas of undisturbed natural open space and wildlife habitats. As part of this emphasis, all feasible strategies shall be explored to protect these areas from disturbance. Such strategies include, but are not limited to, purchasing open space lands, retiring development rights, clustering development to increase the amount of preserved open space, siting development near existing roads and structures, requiring the dedication of open space conservation easements in all permits that include approval of structures within S1 or S2 habitat, and minimizing grading and the removal of native vegetation.

- **CO-18:** Open space conservation easements and dedications shall be utilized, where required or offered, to ensure the preservation of habitats and habitat linkages. The receiving agency shall be a qualified public agency or land conservation agency with the ability to manage, preserve, or enhance park and open space lands. Financing for the long-term maintenance of such areas should be considered through endowments, assessments, or other public funding mechanisms.

- **CO-19:** Encourage the permanent preservation of lands with greater than 50 percent slope as open space.

- **CO-20:** Use primarily locally indigenous plant species in landscape areas within Fuel Modification Zones A and B of structure(s) requiring fuel modification. Non-locally indigenous plants and gardens that are not invasive may be allowed within the building site area and in Fuel Modification Zones A and B, with associated irrigation, provided that the species are consistent with Fire Department requirements and all efforts are made to conserve water. Invasive plants are strictly prohibited. The removal or trimming, thinning or other reduction of natural vegetation, including locally indigenous vegetation, is prohibited except when required for construction of an approved

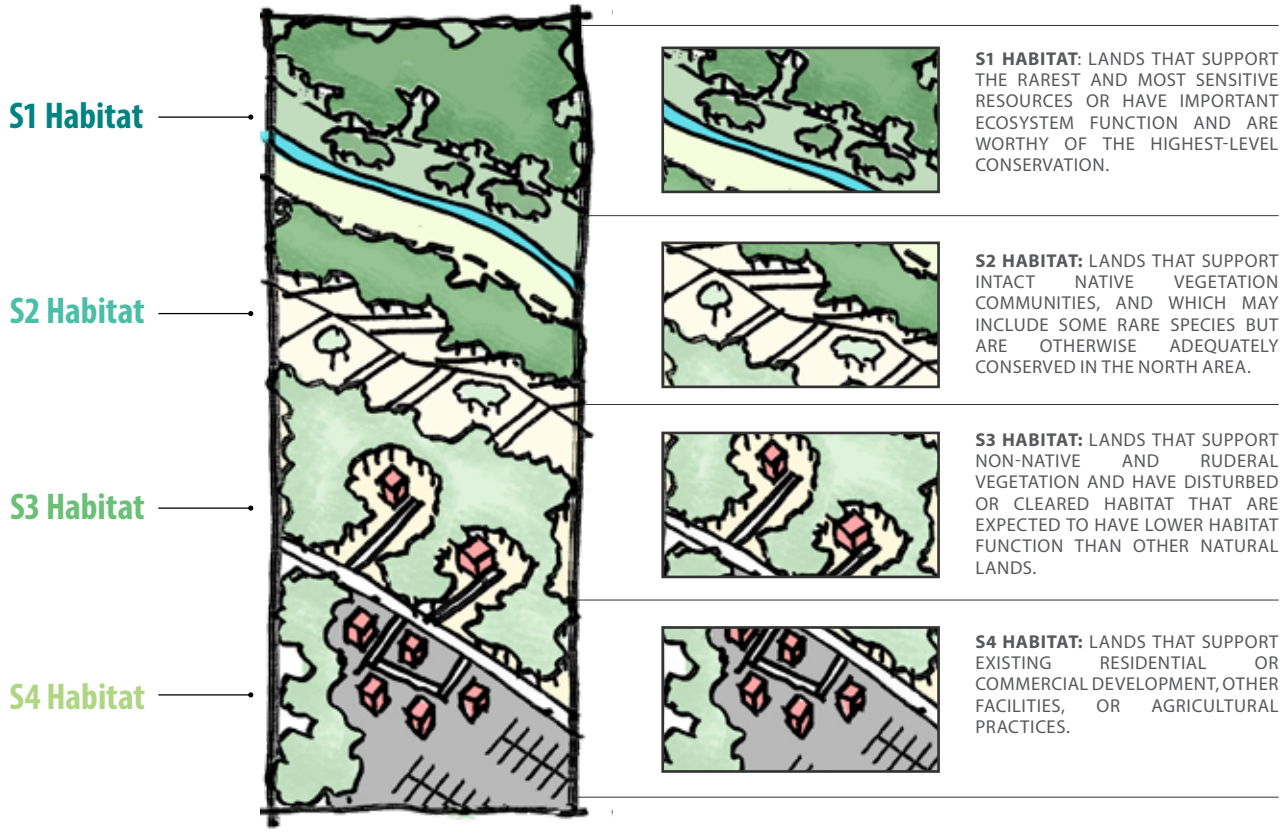
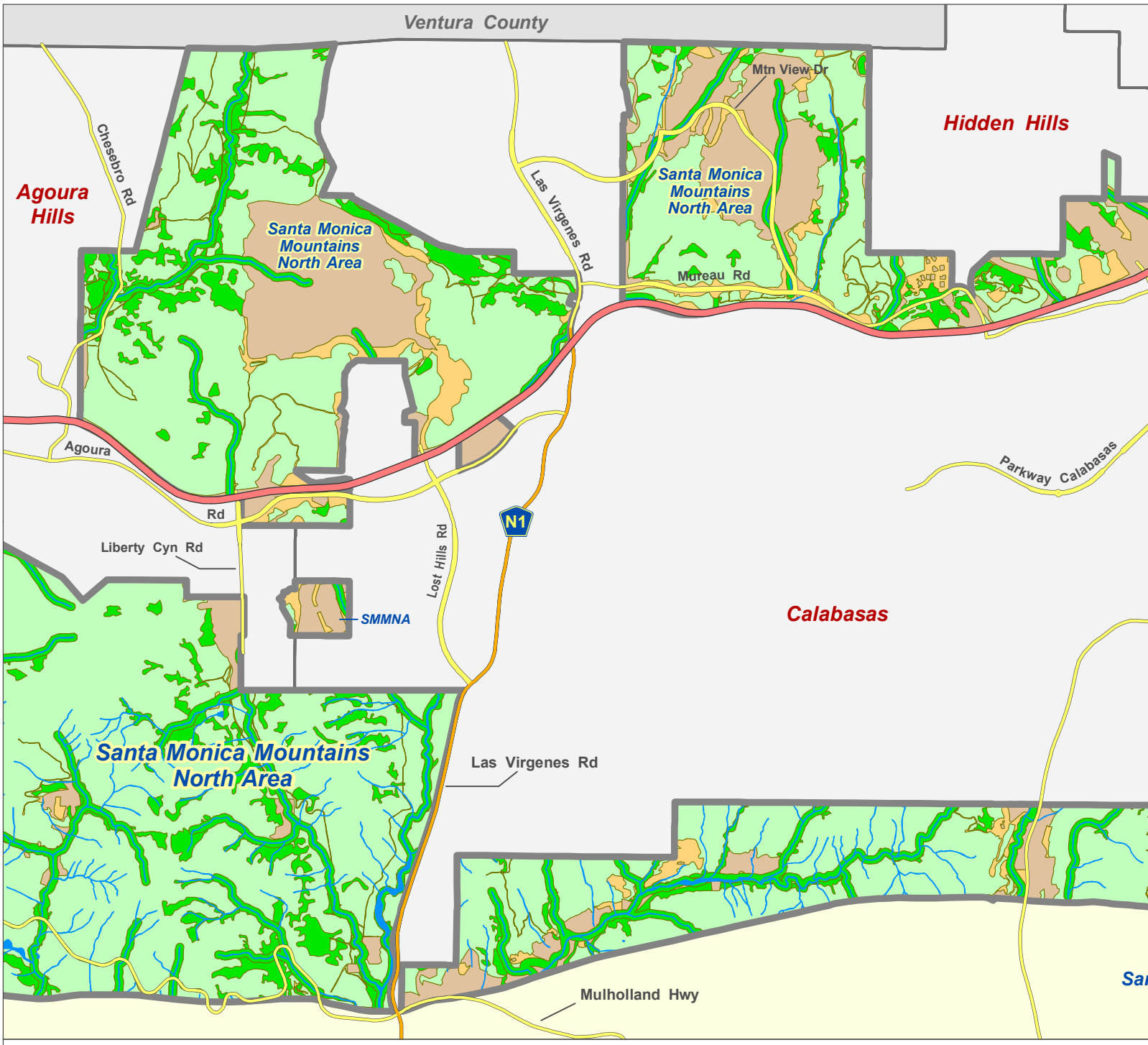


Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Biological Resources

- Water Body (from National Wetlands Inventory)
- Vegetation Sensitivity - S1
- Vegetation Sensitivity - S2
- Vegetation Sensitivity - S3
- Vegetation Sensitivity - S4

Base Layers

- Major Road
- Highway
- Freeway
- Other Unincorporated Area
- Incorporated City

Figure 2:
Biological Resources (Eastern Portion)

Valley Circle Blvd
Ventura Blvd
101
N Topanga Canyon Blvd
Wells Dr
Calabasas Rd
Mulholland Dr
Los Angeles
27
Mulholland Hwy
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Santa Monica Mountains
North Area
nta Monica Mountains
Coastal Zone
N Topanga Canyon Blvd

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Dept. of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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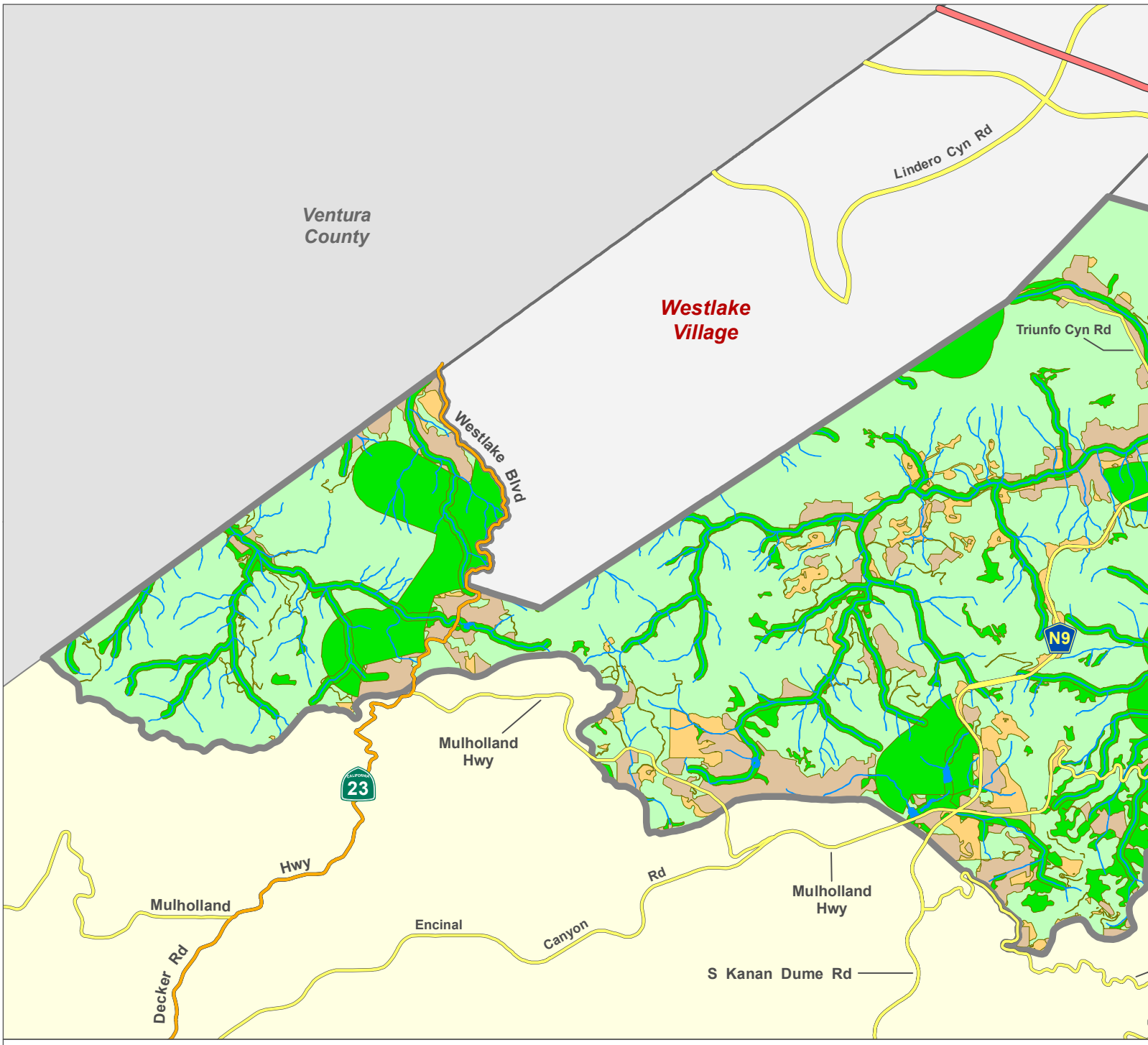
Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Biological Resources

- Water Body (from National Wetlands Inventory)
- Vegetation Sensitivity - S1
- Vegetation Sensitivity - S2
- Vegetation Sensitivity - S3
- Vegetation Sensitivity - S4

Base Layers

- Major Road
- Highway
- Freeway
- Other Unincorporated Area
- Incorporated City

Figure 2:
Biological Resources (Western Portion)

Agoura Hills
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
101
Agoura Rd
Cornell Rd
Liberty Cyn Rd
Calabasas
Lost Hills Rd
N1
SMMNA
N Kanan Rd
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
Mulholland Hwy
Las Virgenes Rd
Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone
Latigo Canyon Rd

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Dept. of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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development and/or for compliance with fuel modification requirements for approved or lawfully existing development. The County will work with organizations, homeowners, and park agencies on educational programs to reduce the spread of invasive plant species within the Santa Monica Mountains.

- **CO-21:** New development adjoining parklands shall be sited and designed to minimize impacts to habitat and recreational opportunities to the maximum extent feasible. Natural vegetation buffer areas shall be provided around parklands.

- **CO-22:** New development in wetlands shall be restricted to the following three uses: (1) wetlands-related scientific research and educational uses; (2) incidental public service purposes, including burying cables and pipes or inspection of piers and maintenance of existing intake and outfall lines; and (3) wetland restoration projects. These uses are only permitted where it has been demonstrated that there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative and adverse environmental effects are mitigated.

- **CO-23:** All new development shall be sited and designed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate required fuel modification and brush removal's habitat disturbance or destruction, removal or modification of natural vegetation, and irrigation of natural areas.

- **CO-24:** When impacts to S1 and S2 habitat are unavoidable, mitigate habitat impacts through preservation mechanisms including permanent on-site deed restriction, dedication of land to a state or federal conservation agency, conservation easement, restrictive covenant, or Habitat Mitigation fees.

- **CO-25:** Where multiple habitat protection policies are applicable, the policy that is most restrictive and protective of the habitat resource shall regulate development.

- **CO-26:** Cluster new development to the maximum extent feasible and locate as close as possible to existing roadways, services and other developments to minimize impacts to biological resources and removal of native vegetation.

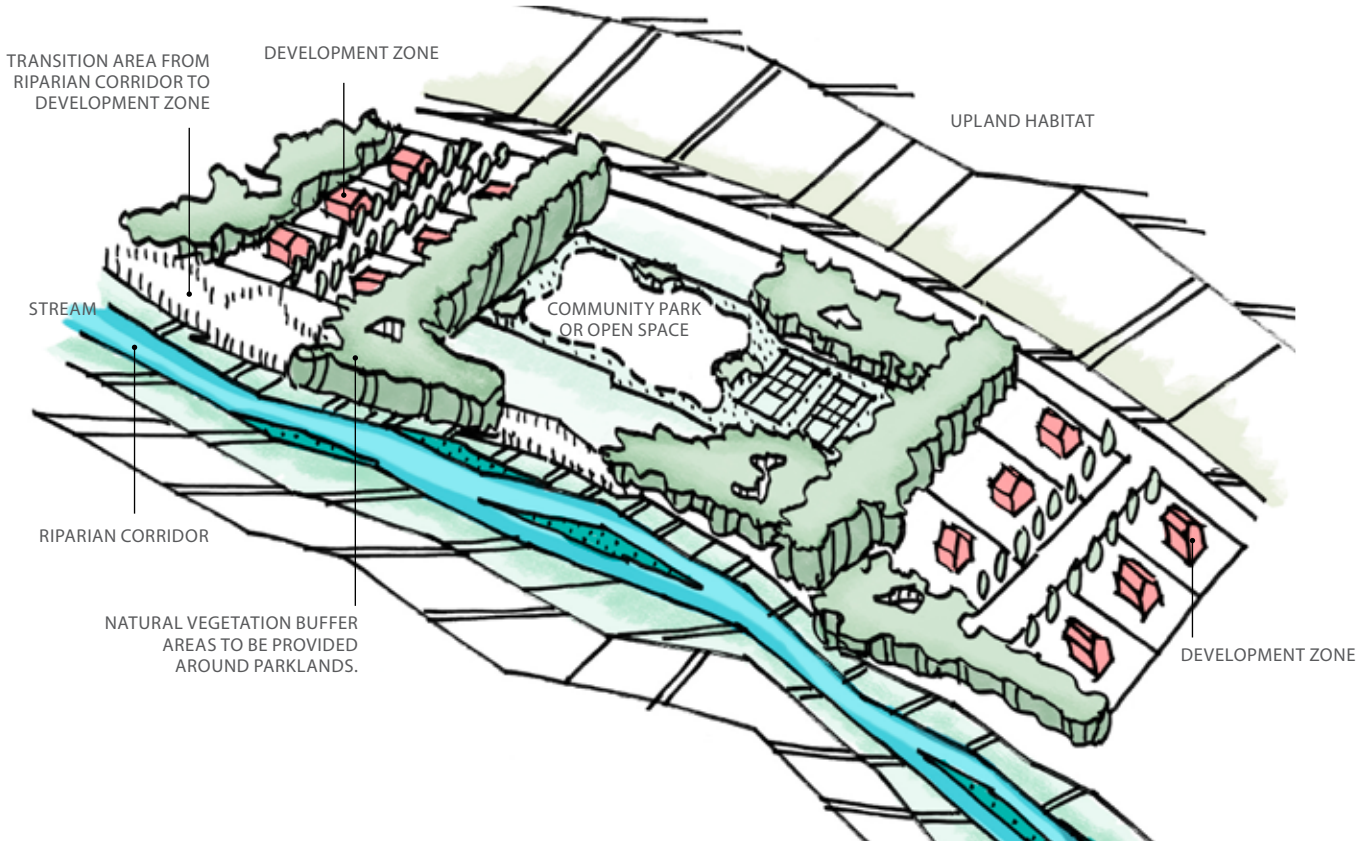

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

- **CO-27:** Minimize the increase in run-off and erosion from properties into the watershed that results in downstream pollution and increased size of flood plains in coastal lagoons.

- **CO-28:** Promote infiltration of stormwater – onsite wherever possible and through the incorporation of best management practices (BMPs) – where infiltration will not exacerbate geologic hazards.

- **CO-29:** Outdoor lighting shall be fully shielded and directed away from biological resources, open space, and other sensitive receptors.

- **CO-30:** Light pollution such as glare and excessive nighttime lighting shall be minimized to protect nearby communities, wildlife, natural habitats, and to preserve dark skies.

- **CO-31:** Limit exterior lighting, except when needed for safety. Require that new exterior lighting installations use best available dark skies technology to minimize sky glow and light trespass, thereby preserving the visibility of a natural night sky and stars and minimizing disruption of wild animal behavior, to the extent consistent with public safety.

WATER QUALITY

Public health and biological resources rely heavily on the quality of water that flows from the watersheds within the Santa Monica Mountains. The healthy functioning of these watersheds is in turn dependent upon the development patterns and types of uses occurring within them. The major watersheds within the North Area are:

- Malibu Creek (including Las Virgenes Creek and Medea Creek)
- Arroyo Calabasas
- Topanga Canyon
- Las Trancas Creek
- Zuma Creek
- Los Alisos Creek

These major watersheds feed both the Pacific Ocean (via Santa Monica Bay) and the Los Angeles River as well as the numerous riparian corridors which are such significant features in the area. The largest watershed in the area is the Malibu Creek Watershed, which has an area of 105 square miles and contains a total of 225 stream segments. Malibu Creek drains the north slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains, the south slopes of the Simi Hills, the interior valleys between the two ranges, and Malibu Canyon.

Given their distinctive location adjacent to the dense urban areas of Los Angeles County, the Santa Monica Mountains offer a variety of resources to the region. They provide scenic vistas and rural experiences to hikers, equestrians, and motorists; they are also considered by some to be a desirable place to build homes and ranches. However, human activities may have deleterious effects on water quality. A recent report by the California Water Resources Control Board finds that beneficial uses of water in various locations and at different times of the year in the Santa Monica Mountains are impacted by nutrients, pathogens, toxics, trash, and sediment. Beaches, which are popular for recreation, are similarly impaired.

Much of the Santa Monica Mountains is served by onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS). Some developments are served by approved small package treatment plants. Many of the private systems employ state-of-the-art technology, but some failures have been reported in older systems. Failures of OWTS can adversely impair water quality, human health, and biological communities in the surrounding watershed.

The majority of new development is expected to either occur in concentrated locations or in very low-density settings. The Los Angeles Region Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) recognizes the potentially serious impacts of development on water quality. Mitigation requirements in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Discharge permit provide measures for reducing polluted runoff. These regulations regarding stormwater mitigation adopted by RWQCB for the coastal watersheds of Los Angeles County establish rigorous requirements, implemented and enforced, with oversight from the RWQCB, by each city or by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District for the unincorporated areas

The RWQCB requirements apply to much of the Santa Monica Mountains and provide water quality protections that address grading activities, use of locally indigenous vegetation, clustering development, preventing erosion, and constructing retention basins. These regulations require

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that stormwater runoff mitigation measures, known as "Best Management Practices" (BMPs), be employed to the maximum extent practicable to minimize water quality impacts.

Because the Santa Monica Mountains are an especially sensitive resource, impairment of water quality may have serious consequences and should be properly managed. The following policies are intended to provide area-sensitive measures that supplement the waste discharge requirements established by the Los Angeles Region RWQCB.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Water Quality

Goal CO-3:

Maintain and restore biological productivity and water quality appropriate to maintain optimum populations of aquatic organisms and to protect human health.

Goal CO-4:

Protect watersheds from impacts due to development, recreational, or agricultural uses.

Policies:

- **CO-32:** Support and participate in watershed-based planning efforts with the Los Angeles Region RWQCB and upstream and downstream cities.

- **CO-33:** Site, design, and manage new development and improvements, including landscaping, to protect waters from non-point source pollution by minimizing the introduction of pollutants in runoff and minimizing increases in runoff rate and volume. Review new development and improvements for potential degradation of water quality, and ensure that they meet the requirements of the NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit's Low Impact Development (LID) Requirement.

- **CO-34:** To reduce runoff and erosion and provide long-term, post-construction water quality protection in all physical development, prioritize the use of BMPs in the following order: 1) Site design BMPs; 2) Source control BMPs; and 3) Treatment control BMPs. When the combination of site design and source control BMPs is not sufficient to protect water quality, require treatment control BMPs, in addition to site design and source control measures. Design, construct, and maintain any required treatment control BMPs (or suites of BMPs) so that they treat, infiltrate, or filter the amount of stormwater runoff produced by all storms up to and including the 85th percentile, 24-hour storm event for volume-based BMPs, and/or the 85th percentile, one-hour storm event (with an appropriate safety factor of two or greater) for flow-based BMPs.

- **CO-35:** Prioritize the use of LID in project design to preserve the natural hydrologic cycle and minimize increases in stormwater or dry weather flows.

- **CO-36:** Minimize impervious surfaces in new development, especially directly connected impervious areas. Require redevelopment projects to increase the area of pervious surfaces, where feasible.

- **CO-37:** Infiltrate development runoff on-site, where feasible, to preserve or restore the natural hydrologic cycle and minimize increases in stormwater or dry weather flows.

- **CO-38:** Require development to protect the absorption, purification, and retention functions of natural drainage systems that exist on the site. Where feasible, site and design development, including drainage, to complement and utilize existing drainage patterns and systems, conveying drainage from the developed area of the site in a non-erosive manner. Disturbed or degraded natural drainage systems should be restored where feasible.

- **CO-39:** Protect water quality by limiting maximum potential buildout in sensitive watersheds, including adjacent to the following waterways:

  - Medea Creek
  - Palo Comado Canyon
  - Lindero Creek
  - Stokes Creek
  - Triunfo Creek
  - Cold Creek
  - Malibu Creek
  - Las Virgenes Creek
  - Potrero Valley
  - Topanga Creek

- **CO-40:** Cooperate with local and state transportation agencies to implement BMPs that promote infiltration of runoff from roads and highways and minimize urban runoff flows into streams and creeks.

- **CO-41:** Manage the temporary storage of construction materials for public projects or landslide material on road shoulders using the most current BMPs to eliminate erosion into adjacent drainage courses, to protect air and water quality, and to minimize the spread of invasive plant species. Ensure that landslide material is deposited in permitted landfills or sites with valid permits to accept fill.

- **CO-42:** Limit grading, soil compaction and removal of locally indigenous vegetation to the minimum footprint needed to create a building site, allow access, and provide fire protection for the proposed development. Monitor grading projects to ensure that grading conforms to approved plans.

- **CO-43:** Require all cut and fill slopes and other disturbed areas to be landscaped and revegetated prior to the beginning of the rainy season utilize native, drought-tolerant plant species that blend with existing natural vegetation and natural habitats of the surrounding area.

- **CO-44:** Prevent the disposal of animal waste, wastewater, and any other byproducts of human, crop-based agricultural or equestrian activities in or near any drainage course or S1 habitat area.

- **CO-45:** Require confined animal facilities and agricultural activities to utilize BMPs to minimize erosion, manage animal waste, and avoid sediment and pollutant impacts. For all development, require the ongoing maintenance of all design features used to mitigate stormwater runoff.

- **CO-46:** Use reclaimed water for any approved agricultural use where feasible.

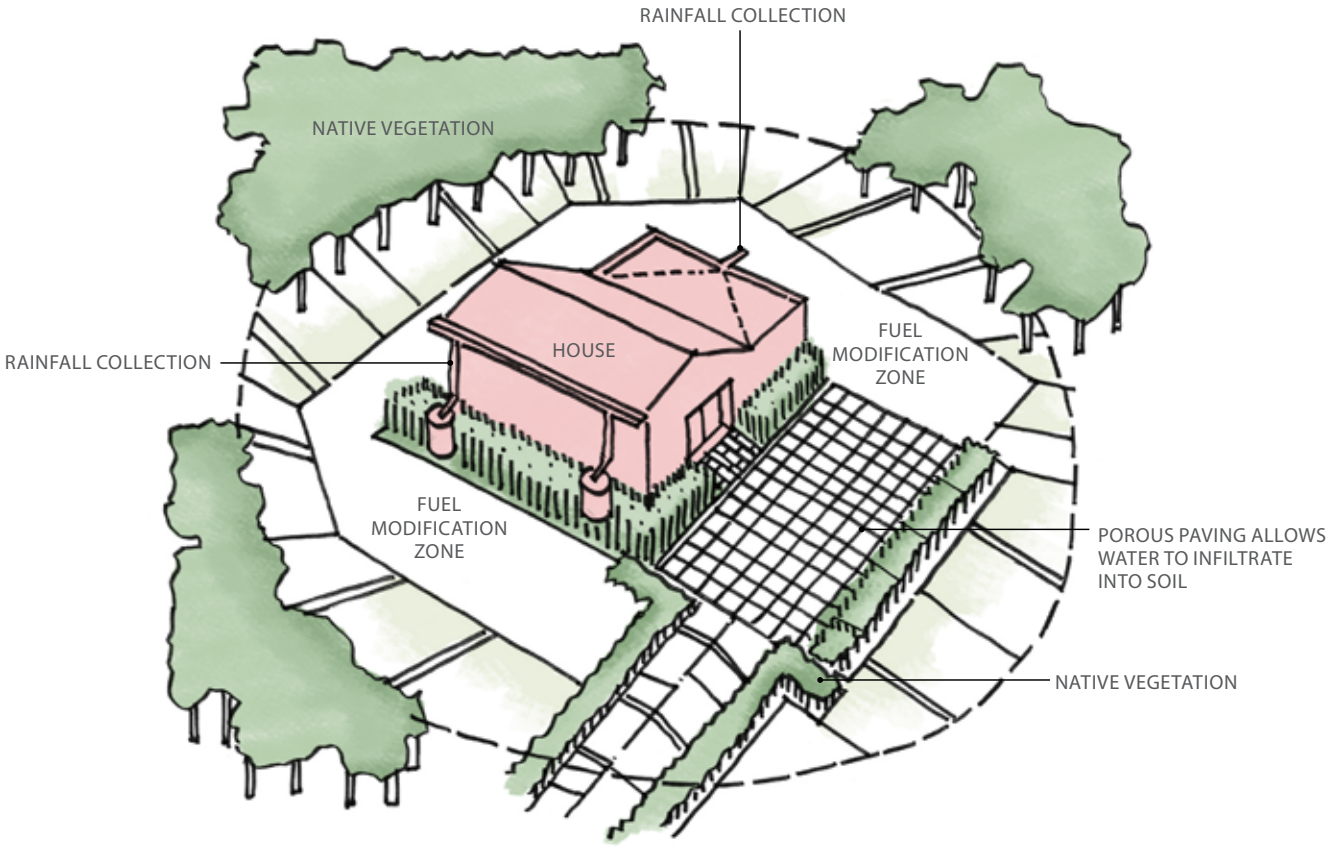

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

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- **CO-47:** Prohibit non-emergency earthmoving operations during the rainy season (extending from October 15 to April 15). Approved grading shall not commence unless there is sufficient time to complete grading operations before the rainy season. If grading operations are not completed before the rainy season begins, grading shall be halted and temporary erosion control measures shall be put into place to minimize erosion until grading resumes after April 15, unless the County determines that completion of grading would be more protective of sensitive environmental resources and would minimize erosion and sedimentation. Erosion control measures shall be required for any ongoing grading project or any completed grading project that is still undeveloped.

- **CO-48:** Grading during the rainy season may be permitted to remediate hazardous geologic conditions that endanger public health and safety.

- **CO-49:** Minimize the land disturbance activities of construction (e.g., clearing and grading), especially in erosive areas (including steep slopes, unstable areas, and erosive soils), to avoid detrimental water quality impacts caused by increased erosion or sedimentation. Use soil stabilization BMPs on disturbed areas.

- **CO-50:** Natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats shall be maintained. Buffers shall function as transitional habitat and provide a separation from developed areas to minimize adverse impacts. Buffers shall be of a sufficient size to ensure the biological integrity and preservation of the riparian habitat.

- **CO-51:** Permit the construction of new water wells only where they will not have significant adverse individual or cumulative impacts on groundwater, streams, or natural resources. For a well location in close proximity of a stream, drainage courses, and similar surface water conveyance, a groundwater assessment shall be performed by a qualified professional to ensure surface water will not adversely impact groundwater quality.

- **CO-52:** Access for geologic testing (or percolation or well testing) shall use existing roads or truck-mounted drill rigs where feasible. Where there is no feasible access, a temporary access road may be permitted when it is designed to minimize length, width and total grading to only that necessary to accommodate required equipment. All such temporary roads shall be restored to the maximum extent feasible, through grading to original contours,

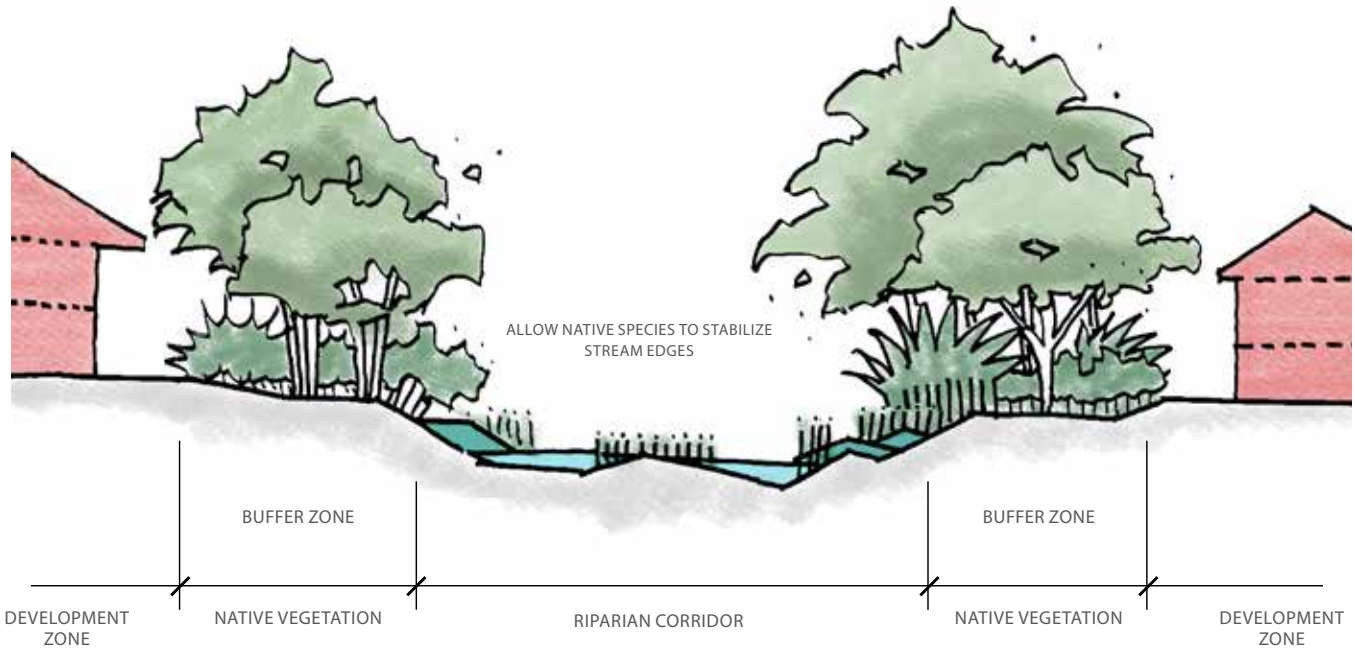

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

revegetating with native plant species indigenous to the project site, and monitoring to ensure successful restoration. All percolation testing shall take place out of any future planned road access.

- **CO-53:** Use LID approaches in project design to preserve the natural hydrologic cycle, minimize stormwater runoff impacts to S1 and S2 habitats, reduce erosion on steep slopes, and minimize dry weather runoff from irrigation.

- **CO-54:** Participate in the development and implementation of solutions to problems associated with onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) and their impact on water quality.

- **CO-55:** Prohibit development of rural areas where established standards by the County and RWQCB cannot be met, such that the cumulative effect of OWTS will negatively impact the environment, either by stream pollution or by contributing to the potential failure of unstable soils.

- **CO-56:** In areas with constraints to OWTS, including but not limited to, substandard, antiquated subdivisions, and geologic hazard areas, the County Departments of Public Health and Public Works may permit innovative and alternative methods of wastewater treatment and disposal provided that installation, operation, and maintenance of such systems minimize impacts to public health, water quality, and natural resources, and are acceptable to the County and to the RQWCB.

- **CO-57:** Site new OWTS and require them to be designed so that impacts to sensitive environmental resources are minimized, including grading, site disturbance, and the introduction of increased amounts of water. Adequate setbacks and/or buffers shall be required to protect S1 habitat area, native trees, and surface waters from lateral seepage from the sewage effluent dispersal systems and to protect the OWTS from flooding and inundation.

- **CO-58:** Channelizations or other substantial alterations of streams shall be prohibited except for: (1) necessary water supply projects where no feasible alternative exists; (2) flood protection for existing development where there is no other feasible alternative, as approved by the Director of Public Works or Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control Districts or his/her designee; or (3) the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat. Any channelization or stream alteration permitted for one of these three purposes shall minimize the depletion of groundwater, and shall include maximum feasible mitigation measures to mitigate unavoidable impacts. Bioengineering alternatives shall be preferred for flood protection over "hard" solutions such as concrete or riprap channels.

- **CO-59:** Alteration of natural streams for the purpose of creating stream road crossings shall be prohibited unless there is no other feasible alternative to provide access to public recreation areas or lawfully established development on legal parcels, and the stream crossing is accomplished by bridging. Bridge columns shall be located outside streambeds and banks. Wherever possible, shared bridges shall be used for providing access to multiple home sites. Culverts may be utilized for the crossing of minor drainages lacking beds and banks and riparian vegetation and where the culvert is sized and designed to not restrict movement of fish or other aquatic wildlife. An in-stream road crossing, such as an "Arizona crossing," shall be modified to a soft-bottom crossing or replaced by a bridge, consistent with Fire Department requirements, when major maintenance or repair activities on the crossing are undertaken.

TREE PROTECTIONS

Trees are an integral part of the ecosystem throughout the Santa Monica Mountains. The North Area is home to oak woodlands and riparian woodlands that provide valuable habitat for various plant and animal species. Riparian woodlands that line streams and other water sources contain trees such as sycamores, cottonwoods, bigleaf maple, white alder, and bay trees. Coast live oak woodlands have a protective canopy that allows ferns and shrubs to thrive underneath.

In addition to the ecosystem services that trees provide in wildlands, they are also valuable resources in developed areas. Animals such as birds and small mammals rely on trees in both wild and developed areas for habitat. Trees in developed areas also help mitigate the urban heat island effect that is produced from an overconcentration of developed and paved surfaces. In addition, tree roots help prevent erosion and therefore the removal of trees can leave areas more vulnerable to landslides and other hazards.

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GOALS AND POLICIES

Tree Protections

Goal CO-5:

Preserve tree populations throughout the North Area, including native trees and trees of historic value.

Policies:

- **CO-60:** Provide protections for trees that are native to the Santa Monica Mountains, including limiting removal of native trees when feasible. A person shall not cut, destroy, remove, relocate, inflict damage, or encroach into the protected zone of any tree species specified in a protected native tree list titled, "Protected Trees in the Santa Monica Mountains," maintained by the Department of Regional Planning.
- **CO-61:** When native trees must be removed, require the planting of new native trees as a condition of approval.
- **CO-62:** Ensure that new development is sited and designed so that brush clearance and fuel modification required by the Fire Department does not result in impacts to protected native trees, or minimizes impacts when unavoidable.
- **CO-63:** Monitor the spread of infectious diseases and pests to native and non-native trees in the Santa Monica Mountains to protect and preserve tree populations that could be affected.
- **CO-64:** Emergency tree removals and brush clearance should be performed only when necessary for the health of woodlands and to prevent immediate hazards to human health or personal property.
- **CO-65:** Preserve mature native trees by siting and designing development in a manner that prevents removals or encroachment into the protected zone of native trees.
- **CO-66:** Protect non-native trees that have high habitat or historic value.

HILLSIDE MANAGEMENT

Along with their supporting vegetation, the bold open ridges, deep canyons, rolling hills, and interior valleys of the area provide the basis for the natural beauty of the Santa Monica Mountains and the communities along the Ventura Freeway. A large portion of the area, and nearly all of the land that has not been committed to either development or long-term open space, consists of steep slopes in excess of 25 percent grade. Level topographic areas comprise of only a small portion of the total land area. The natural hillsides remaining within the area are a significant biological and visual resource, and a key factor in the character of the area's communities.

Several significant topographical features are present within the region. To the south of Agoura Road at Kanan Road is Ladyface Mountain, identified as one of the most prominent landforms in the area. The portion of the Simi Hills immediately west of Las Virgenes Road is among the most visually prominent features visible from the freeway, providing the first visual impression of the area to drivers traveling from the San Fernando Valley. Just north of Malibou Lake, in the southcentral region of the study area, is Sugar Loaf, a landmark peak that is partially within the Paramount Ranch portion of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Turtle Rock is a prominent rock formation, located near the National Park Service's Rocky Oaks site. In addition, a large section (mostly the northern section) of the Mulholland Highway Scenic Corridor is located in the southern portion of the study area; buffers needed to protect this area extend north along Las Virgenes Creek to the Ventura Freeway.

While hillside areas are a notable asset of the region and worthy of sensitive treatment for their scenic and biotic values, they also require careful management to protect the quality of stream, ground and coastal waters – both within the planning area as well as downstream, all the way to the ocean waters along the Malibu coast. Grading, development, revegetation and equestrian and other specific use activities may result in changes to the amount and quality of water runoff in these areas. Actions that may directly or indirectly impact natural drainages and alter stormwater runoff should be considered when evaluating the impacts of human intrusion into hillside areas.

GOALS AND POLICIES

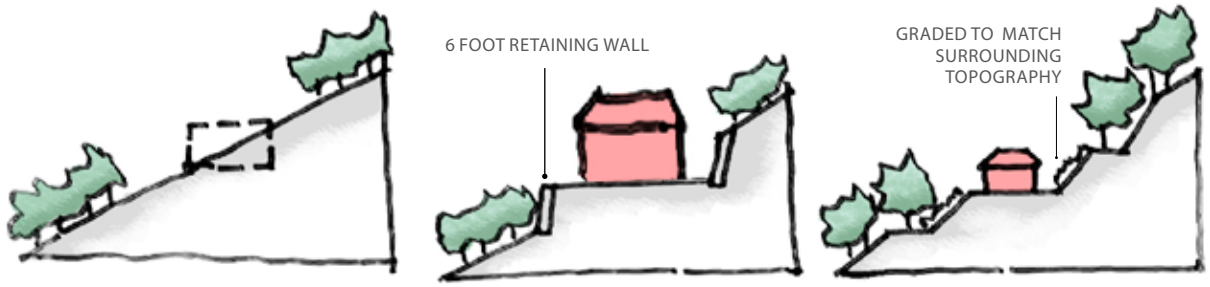
Hillside Management

Goal CO-6:

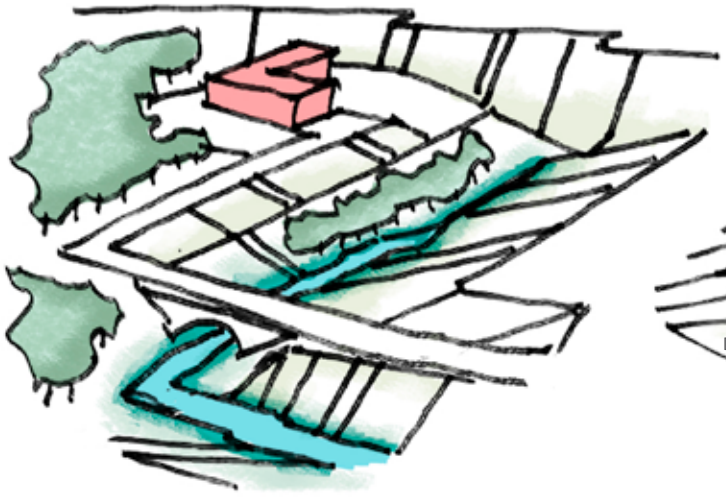
Retain the natural topographic character and vegetation of hillsides to the maximum extent possible and ensure that all development in such areas is sited and designed to provide maximum protection to public health and safety, surface and subsurface waters, public scenic views, and sensitive habitats.

Policies:

- **CO-67:** Site and design new development to minimize the amount of grading and the alteration of natural landforms.
- **CO-68:** Site and design new development to protect natural features and minimize removal of natural vegetation.
- **CO-69:** Cut and fill grading may be balanced on-site where the grading does not substantially alter the existing topography and blends with the surrounding area. Export of excess soil may be required to preserve biotic, scenic, or other significant resources. Topsoil from graded areas shall be utilized for site landscaping where it does not substantially alter the existing topography and blends with the surrounding area.
- **CO-70:** Ensure that development conforms to the natural landform and blends with the natural landscape in size, design, shape, materials, and colors. Building pads on sloping sites shall utilize split-level or stepped-pad designs that minimize impacts to scenic resources.
- **CO-71:** Restrict development on slopes greater than 25 percent unless the placement is biologically superior than alternative site.

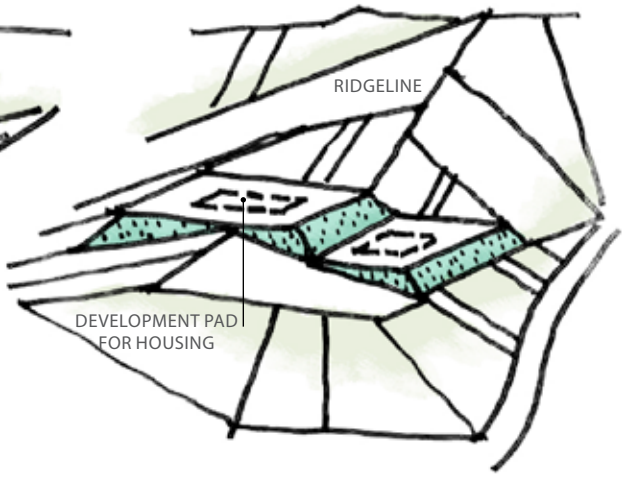


SLOPE PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT | 6 FOOT MAX RETAINING WALL HEIGHT | TERRACE THE LAND TO MINIMIZE GRADING



SITE GRADING INCLUDING ROADS SHOULD BE SENSITIVE TO EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY.

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill



GRADING SHOULD NOT OCCUR ON HILLTOPS AND RIDGELINES. GRADING AND DEVELOPMENT SITING SHOULD BE SENSITIVE TO TOPOGRAPHY, VIEWSHEDS, NATIVE VEGETATION, AND SCENIC RESOURCES.

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- **CO-72:** Site and design new development to minimize the height and length of manufactured cut and fill slopes, and minimize the height and length of retaining walls.

- **CO-73:** Blend graded slopes with the natural contours of the land and utilize landform grading.

- **CO-74:** Cluster structures on lots in hillside areas, including clustering with structures on adjoining lots, if clustering is shown to minimize site disturbance and grading. Development within a subdivision shall be clustered and utilize shared driveways.

- **CO-75:** Revegetate all areas disturbed by development activity. Use locally indigenous plant species outside of Fuel Modification Zone A and prohibit non-native invasive species, balancing long-term slope stability and habitat restoration with reduced fuel loads for fire protection..

- **CO-76:** Grading that is associated with roads, bridges, retaining walls, and other necessary access ways should follow the natural terrain and contours.

SCENIC RESOURCES

The natural beauty of the Santa Monica Mountains is widely recognized as one of its most distinctive and valuable attributes, making it a primary attraction to residents and visitors. The environment is characterized by vast rolling hills, canyons, oak woodlands, and dramatic geologic features coexisting with distinctive communities, such as Malibou Lake and Lobo Canyon. There are also a number of local and regional recreation trails and scenic driving routes that meander through the Santa Monica Mountains, including two state-designated County Scenic Highways (Mulholland Highway and Malibu Canyon-Las Virgenes Road) and one State Scenic Highway (Topanga Canyon Boulevard).

Given the proximity of development to such scenery, any form of physical alteration has immediate and noticeable effects. Activity in the area, whether it is residential development, recreation facilities, or agriculture, has greater visual impacts on the land than in many other parts of Los Angeles County. In some parts of the Santa Monica Mountains, natural features have been graded away or built upon, effectively obliterating any scenic qualities.

Dramatic topographic features and rural conditions make the area's scenic resources highly visible to residents and visitors. Views of natural features are the focus of scenic preservation and enhancement. The following policies are not intended to completely preclude development from scenic areas, but are a means to protect scenic qualities. Their intent is to achieve a sensitive balance between development and the protection the visual qualities of the Santa Monica Mountains.

While the Ventura Freeway is the main access route to the area's cities, Mulholland Highway is the main route to the area's recreational resources. Built in the 1920s to 'take Angelenos from the city to the ocean,' Mulholland Highway follows the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains for approximately 55 miles, beginning in the City of Los Angeles at the Hollywood Freeway, running through the region, and ending at Leo Carrillo State Beach on the Malibu coast. While the Ventura Freeway area has many scenic roadways, Mulholland Highway's history, its proximity to local, state, and federal recreation areas, and the amount of resources already put into it by federal, state, and local jurisdictions make it a unique resource for the Los Angeles region.

The following significant scenic resource features are designated on the Scenic Resources Map (Figure 3):

- **Scenic Elements;**
- **Significant Ridgelines; and**
- **Scenic Routes.**

Scenic Elements:

Scenic Elements are designated areas that contain exceptionally scenic features unique not only to the Santa Monica Mountains, but to the Los Angeles County region. These areas are characterized by rare or unique geologic formations such as large rock outcroppings and sheer canyon walls, as well as undisturbed hillsides and/or riparian or woodland habitat with intact locally indigenous vegetation and plant communities.

The following areas contain designated scenic elements:

1. **West Mulholland Highway Sandstone:** cluster of rugged sandstone peaks.

2. **Turtle Rock:** a prominent sandstone landform.

3. **Upper La Sierra Canyon:** a prominent sandstone ridge.

4. **Ladyface Mountain:** One of the most prominent landforms in the area and the highest mountain in the Ventura Freeway corridor. This volcanic ridge with steep slopes is an important feature of the area.

5. **Cornell Sandstone Peaks:** rugged sandstone peaks.

6. **Sugar Loaf:** Landmark peak with extreme slopes at the higher elevations.

7. **Palo Comado:** scenic rolling hills with an oak woodland savannah which is highly visible from the Ventura Freeway.

8. **Old Topanga Sandstone:** an expansive sandstone rock outcropping.

Significant Ridgelines:

Ridgelines are defined as the line formed by the meeting of the tops of sloping surfaces of land. In general, Significant Ridgelines are highly visible and dominate the landscape, and are important environmental sites for natural ecosystems, parks, and trail systems Significant Ridgelines were selected based on one or more of the following criteria:

1. **Topographic complexity:** Ridges that have a significant difference in elevation from the valley or canyon floor;

2. **Near/far contrast:** Ridges that are a part of a scene that includes a prominent landform in the foreground and a major backdrop ridge with an unbroken skyline;

3. **Cultural landmarks:** Ridges that frame views of well-known locations, structures or other places which are considered points of interest in the North Area;

4. **Uniqueness and character of a specific location:** Peaks and their adjoining ridges;

5. **Existing community boundaries and gateways:** Ridges and surrounding terrain that separate communities and provide the first view of predominantly natural, undeveloped land; and

6. **Overall integrity:** Ridges that comprise a significant component of a pristine, undeveloped mountain system and are viewable from a public place.

Scenic Routes:

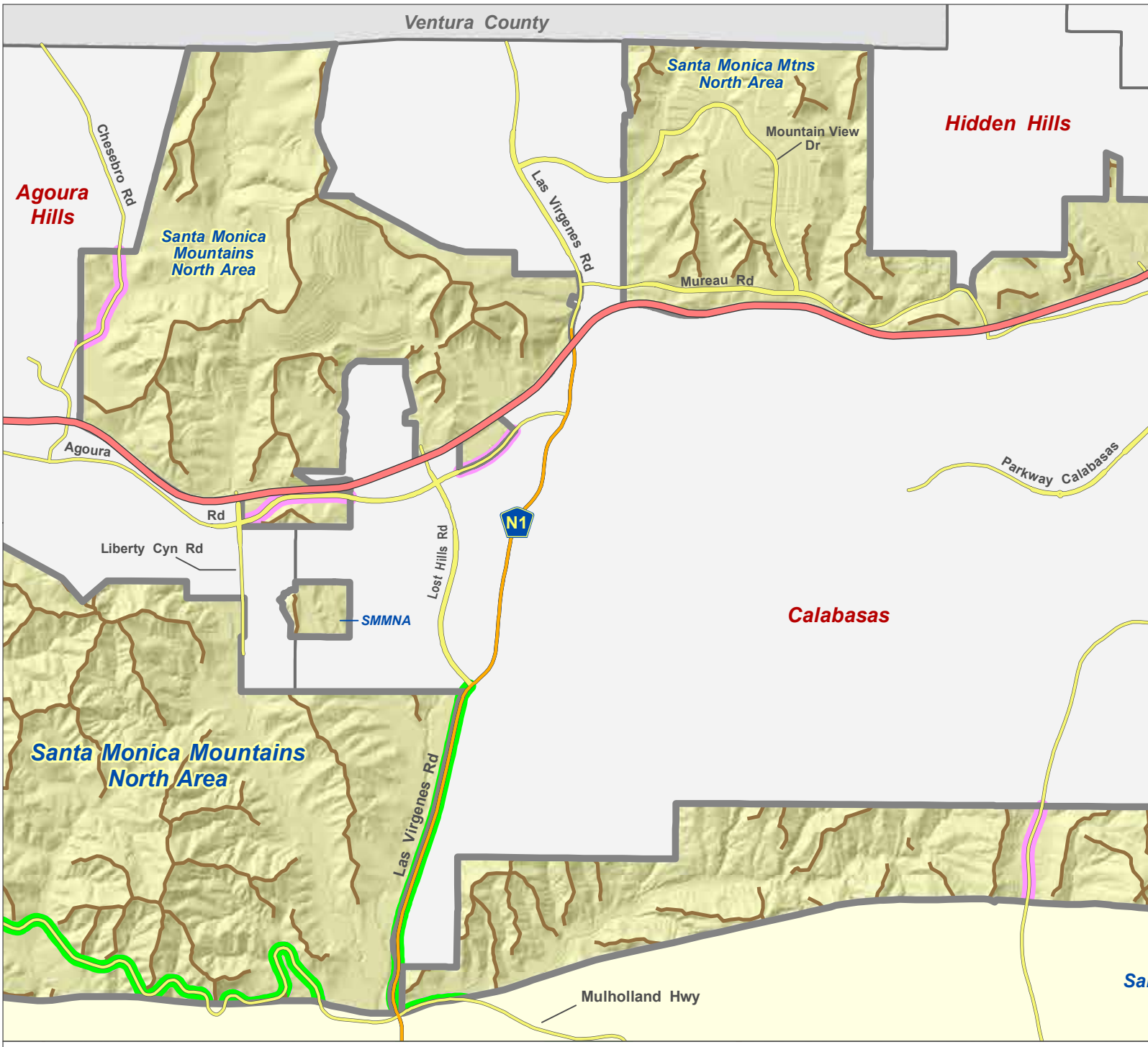
Scenic Routes are selected for the unique natural aesthetic qualities that can be experienced as one drives along them. Scenic routes also include State-designated County Scenic Highways. The selected routes pass along wide swaths of undisturbed habitat, offer views of dramatic geologic or coastal formations, pass by rolling hills studded with oaks, and wind past areas rich with riparian vegetation. County Scenic Highways are recognized by the state as possessing aesthetic qualities of Statewide importance, and are marked with the familiar poppy signs.

The following are identified scenic routes and routes with scenic qualities:

1. **Mulholland Highway**
2. **Las Virgenes Road**
3. **Kanan Road**
4. **Kanan-Dume Road**
5. **Agoura Road**
6. **Chesebro Road**
7. **Cornell Road**
8. **Old Topanga Canyon Road**
9. **Topanga Canyon Boulevard**

While only significant scenic resource features are identified on the Scenic Resources map, there are other scenic resources in the Santa Monica Mountains of regional and national importance that are to be protected. These include places on, along, within, or visible from scenic routes, public parklands, trails, and state waters that offer scenic vistas of the mountains, canyons, and other unique natural features. The purpose of the following policies is to protect the scenic and visual qualities of all scenic resources in the North Area.

Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Scenic Resources

- State-Designated County Scenic Highway
- Scenic Route
- Significant Ridgelines (Adopted)
- Scenic Element (Feature 7)*
- Scenic Element Extent Outside of Planning Area

Base Layers

- Major Road
- Highway
- Freeway
- Other Unincorporated Area
- Incorporated City

***Numbered Scenic E**

7 - Old Topanga Sa

Figure 3:
Scenic Resources (Eastern Portion)

Valley Circle Blvd
Ventura Blvd
101
N Topanga Canyon Blvd
Wells Dr
Calabasas Rd
Mulholland Dr
Los Angeles
27
Mulholland Hwy
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Santa Monica Mountains
North Area
7
nta Monica Mountains
Coastal Zone
N Topanga Canyon Blvd

Element Feature

ndstone

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Dept. of Regional Planning
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Los Angeles, CA 90012

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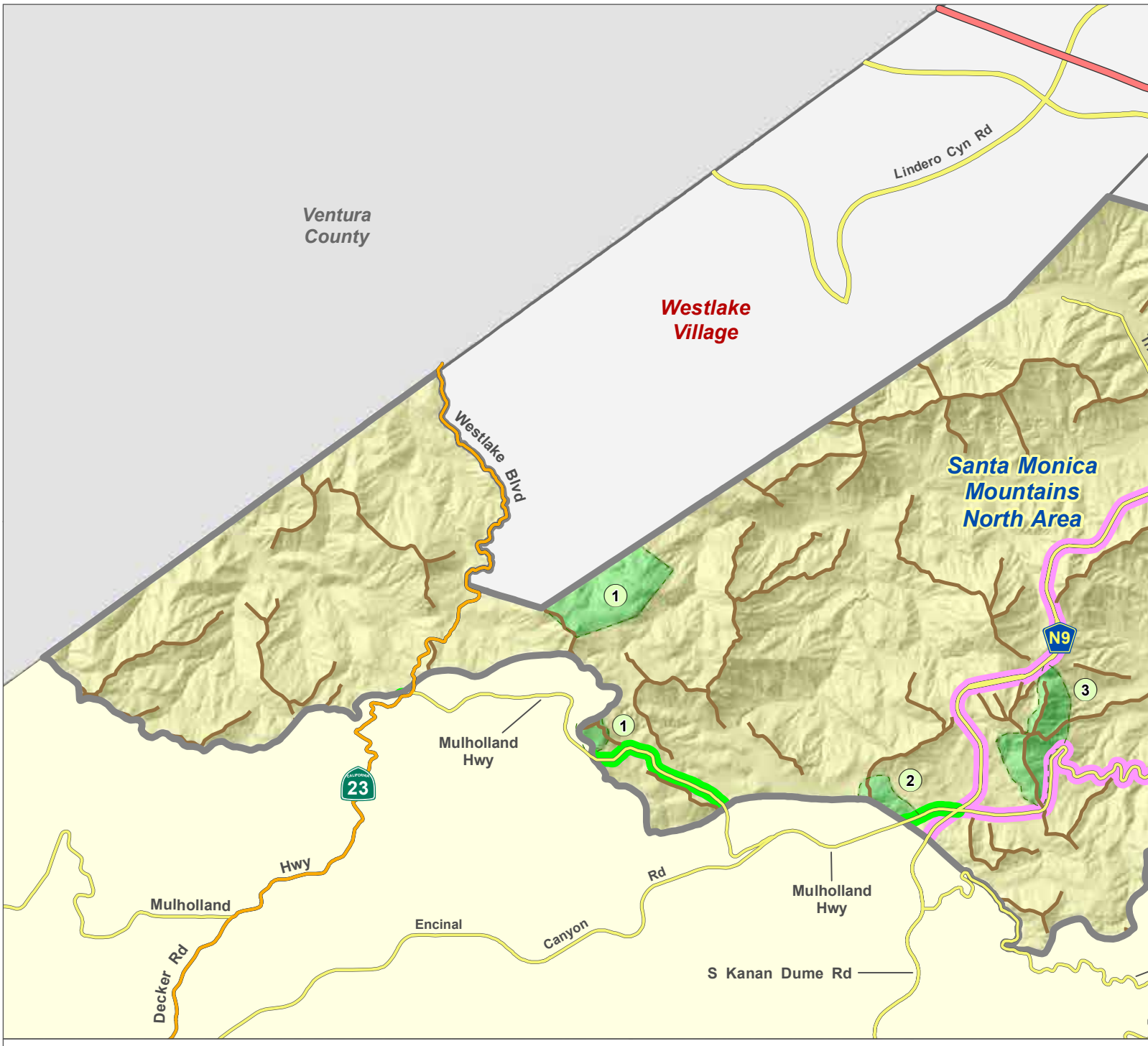
Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Scenic Resources

- State-Designated County Scenic Highway
- Scenic Route
- Significant Ridgelines (Adopted)
- Scenic Element (Features 1 through 6)*
- Scenic Element Extent Outside of Planning Area

Base Layers

- Major Road
- Highway
- Freeway
- Other Unincorporated Area
- Incorporated City

***Numbered Scenic E**

1 - West Mulholland
2 - Turtle Rock
3 - Upper La Sierra
4 - Cornell Sandsto
5 - Sugar Loaf
6 - Ladyface Ridge

Figure 3:
Scenic Resources (Western Portion)

Agoura Hills

Santa Monica Mountains North Area

101

Agoura Rd

Cornell Rd

6

N Kanan Rd

Liberty Cyn Rd

Calabasas

Lost Hills Rd

N1

SMMNA

Triunfo Cyn Rd

5

Mulholland Hwy

Las Virgenes Rd

4

Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone

Latigo Canyon Rd

Element Features

d Highway Sandstone

Canyon

ne Peaks

Area Mapped

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Dept. of Regional Planning
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Los Angeles, CA 90012

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GOALS AND POLICIES

Scenic Resources

Goal CO-7:

Retain the scenic beauty of the plan area by considering and protecting its scenic and visual qualities as a resource of public importance.

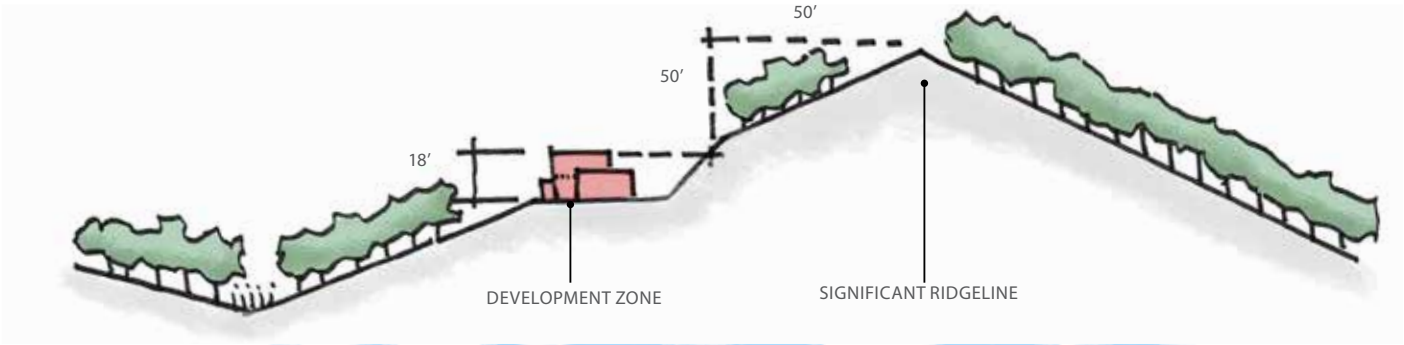
Policies:

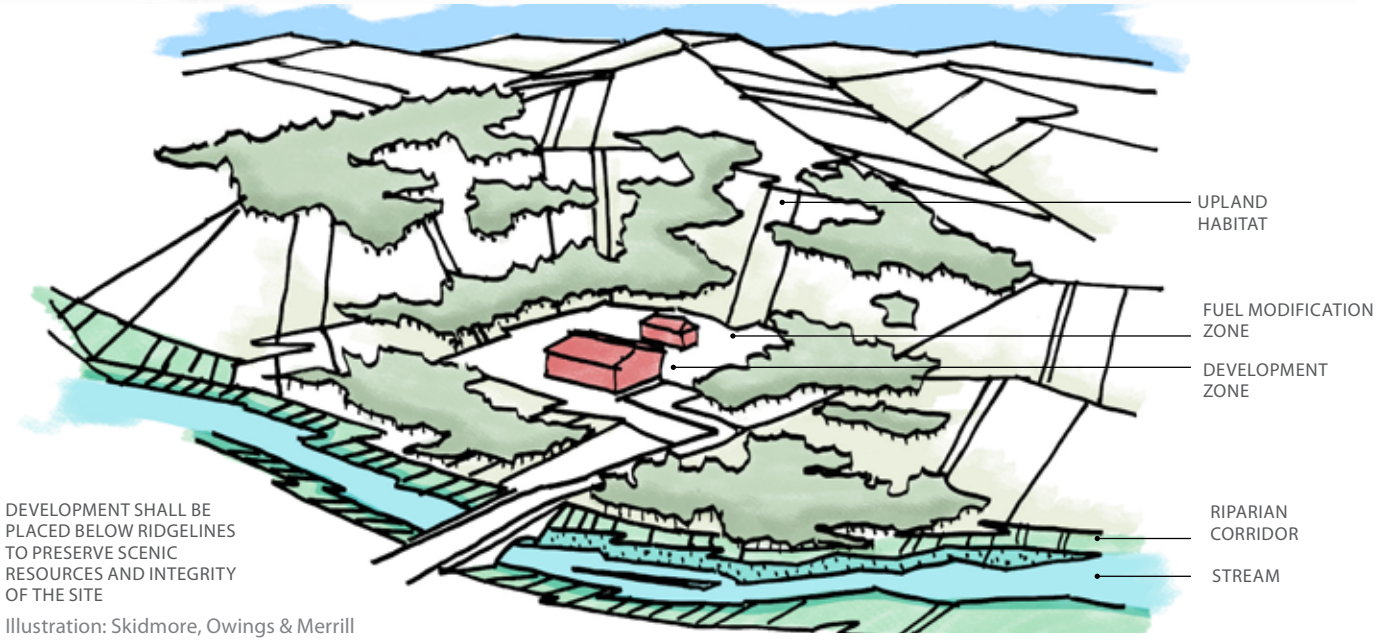
- **CO-77:** Protect public views within Scenic Areas and throughout the North Area. Places on, along, within, or visible from Scenic Routes, public parklands, public trails, and state waters that offer scenic vistas of the mountains, canyons, and other unique natural features are considered Scenic Resource Areas. Scenic Resource Areas do not include areas that are largely developed such as existing, predominantly built-out residential subdivisions.

- **CO-78:** Require that new development preserve views from public parks, trails, and designated Scenic Routes. This includes preserving and enhancing views from public roadways that are oriented toward existing or proposed natural community amenities such as parks, open space, or natural features.

- **CO-79:** Require that new development preserve views of the ocean, Significant Ridgelines, and Scenic Elements from public parkland, trails, Scenic Routes, and the principal permitted use on adjoining parcels. If there is a conflict between protecting views from public view areas and from private view areas, the protection of public views shall take precedence.

- **CO-80:** Prohibit development on Significant Ridgelines.





DEVELOPMENT SHALL BE PLACED BELOW RIDGELINES TO PRESERVE SCENIC RESOURCES AND INTEGRITY OF THE SITE

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

- **CO-81:** Preserve in their natural state, topographic features of high scenic value. Preserve the area's hillside backdrop in its present state to the extent feasible and control the design of development on ridgelines so that it will not interfere with significant scenic views.

- **CO-82:** Maintain and enhance the visual quality of vistas along the unincorporated portions of identified scenic routes and routes with scenic qualities.

- **CO-83:** Regulate the alteration of the natural landscape and terrain to ensure minimal visual disruption of existing settings.

- **CO-84:** Preserve Scenic Elements in their natural state, including canyon walls, geological formations, creeks, ridgelines, and waterfalls.

- **CO-85:** Limit structure height to minimize impacts to scenic resources.

- **CO-86:** Prioritize avoidance of impacts to scenic resources through site selection and design alternatives over use of landscaping or building material screening.

- **CO-87:** Limit vegetation clearance that is required for fire safety, and where possible, site structures so that no vegetation clearance encroaches on adjacent properties; consider the size and siting of development to reduce the level of vegetation clearance needed.

- **CO-88:** Limit and design interior and exterior lighting to preserve the visibility of the natural night sky and stars to the extent feasible and consistent with public safety.

- **CO-89:** Limit the height of retaining walls by using stepped or terraced retaining walls, with plantings in-between. Where feasible, long continuous walls shall be broken into sections or shall include undulations to provide visual relief.

- **CO-90:** Require wireless communication facilities to be designed and sited in such a manner that they minimize impacts to visual resources and blend into the landscape. Such facilities shall be collocated where feasible. This may include requiring one taller pole rather than allowing multiple shorter poles. New wireless communication facilities may be disguised as trees of a species that would likely be found in the surrounding area and that blend with the natural landscape when it is not feasible to co-locate on an existing pole.

- **CO-91:** Transition all overhead transmission lines and utility infrastructure underground to eliminate visual impacts along scenic routes and in scenic resource areas, while limiting impacts to sensitive habitat.

- **CO-92:** Prohibit the placement of new, and phase out any existing off-site advertising signs and onsite pole signs along designated scenic routes and the Ventura Freeway.

- **CO-93:** Public works projects along scenic routes that include hardscape elements such as retaining walls, cut-off walls, abutments, bridges, and culverts shall incorporate veneers, texturing, and colors that blend with the surrounding landscape.

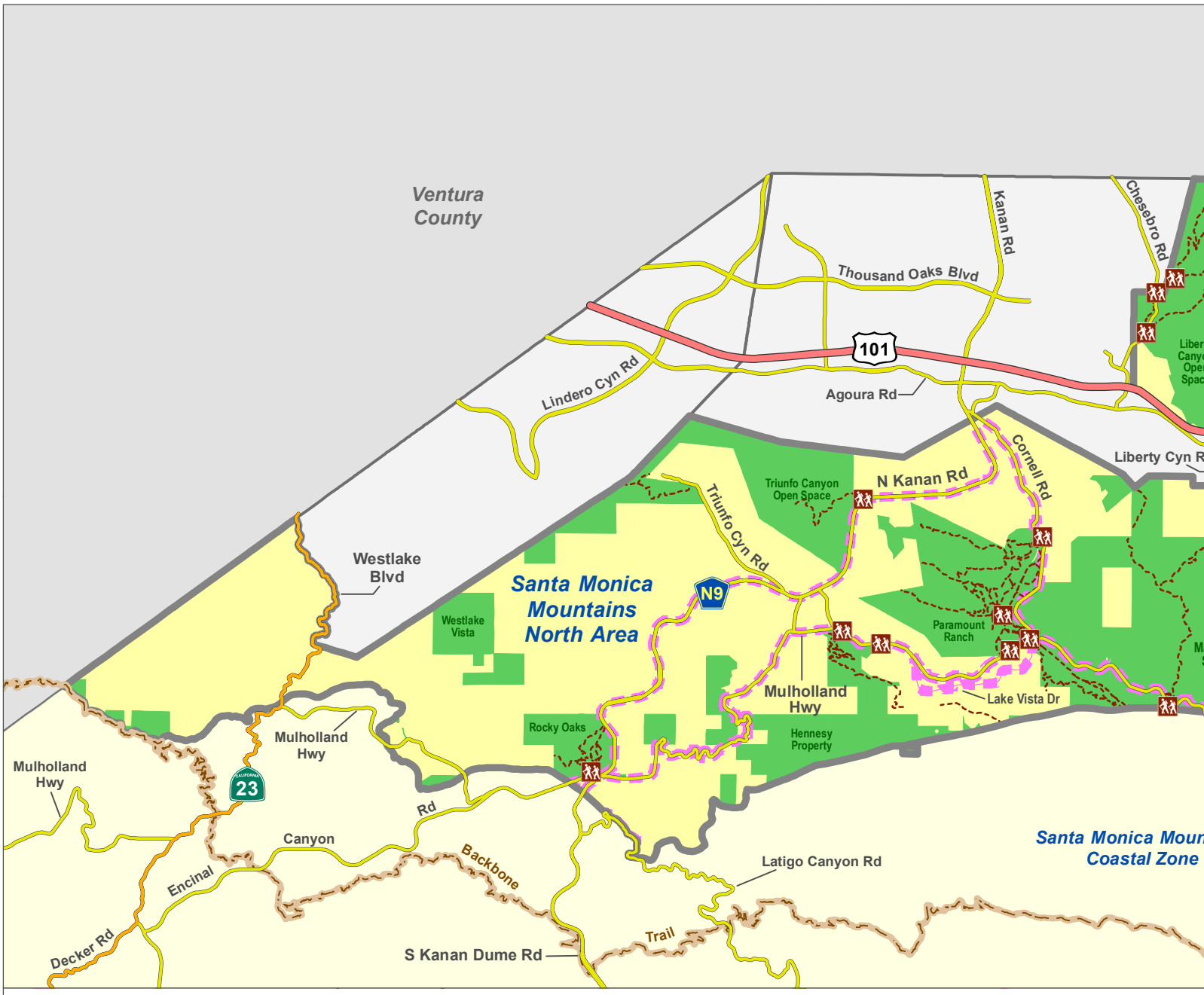
- **CO-94:** Minimize impacts to visual resources from land divisions and lot line adjustments, through design techniques such as but not limited to clustering

TRAILS AND RECREATION

The Santa Monica Mountains offer the Los Angeles metropolitan area a wide range of public and private recreational opportunities. The Santa Monica Mountains are particularly well-suited for passive outdoor recreational experiences in a natural setting. The Santa Monica Mountains area provides an opportunity to experience a recreation-oriented, outdoor lifestyle within the Los Angeles region. Several entities provide parks and recreational opportunities within the planning region, including the National Park Service, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, and area cities. Local organizations are also actively involved in the provision of regional recreation.

The cornerstones of the area's recreation opportunities are the existing federal and state parks, beaches, and trails. These areas and agencies' proposed acquisitions, linked by the scenic routes identified in this North Area Plan and a network of trails used for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback-riding should be integrated and connect

Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Recreational Elements

- Trail Head*
- Trail*
- Backbone Trail*
- Class II - Bike Path (Existing)**
- Class II - Bike Path (Proposed)**
- Class III - Bike Path (Proposed)**
- Parkland and Open Space***

Base Layers

- Major Road
- Highway
- Freeway
- Santa Monica Mountains North Area (SMMNA)
- Other Unincorporated Area
- Incorporated City

Sources:

* Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Trail Inventory.

** Los Angeles County Department of Public Works Bicycle Master Plan, adopted 2012.

*** Los Angeles County (various departments) - derived and updated from former Thomas Bro
Land Types data.

Figure 4: Recreation

Victory Blvd
Platt Ave
Fallbrook Ave
Topanga Cyn Blvd
De Soto Ave
Winnetka Ave
Valley Circle Blvd
Burbank Blvd
Ventura Blvd
101
27
Wells Dr
Cheeseboro & Palo Comado Canyons
Upper Las Virgenes Open Space Preserve
Las Virgenes Rd
Mountain View Dr
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
Mureau Rd
Zev Yaroslavsky Las Virgenes Highland Park
Calabasas Rd
Mulholland Dr
Pkwy Calabasas
Lost Hills Rd
SMMNA
N1
Topanga Canyon - Canyon Oaks Open Space
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Summit Valley Edmund D. Edelman Park
Las Virgenes Rd
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
Upper Stokes
Fritz & Alma Meier Natural use Area
alibu Creek State Park
N Topanga Canyon Blvd
Mulholland Hwy
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Backbone Trail
tains
Stunt Rd
Saddle Peak Rd

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throughout the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Public recreation areas may be supplemented by compatible commercial recreation uses such as lodging, camps, and equestrian facilities, maximizing the resource-based recreational opportunities available

Public agencies are working to expand these facilities to accommodate future needs. Many trails, established through years of use, traverse public and private property, and include designated bikeways along public roads. As of summer 2020, a comprehensive trail management plan is being formulated by NPS, State Parks, and SMMC/MRCA to provide a long-term vision for the public trail system in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The trail management plan will propose new trails and recommend adding selected non-system routes to the public trail system to address needed trail connections. The current public trail system (Figure 4) and bikeways in the Santa Monica Mountains provide usable, safe access within and between park sites.

Expanding recreational amenities will increase the need for coordinated resource management necessary to protect sensitive habitats from overuse or degradation. Habitat protection in the Santa Monica Mountains should be ensured through an integrated recreation plan coordinated among responsible agencies and local organizations.

Existing Public Parklands and Trail Facilities

Parks

There are approximately 6,100 acres of public parkland within the North Area. Several entities provide parkland within the planning area, including the National Park Service, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and area cities. The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation does not currently operate any local or regional park facilities within the North Area.

Trails

The existing Santa Monica Mountains public trail system is composed of agency-managed regional and local trails and unpaved fire and utility roads authorized for public trail use. Trails that are not a part of the public trail system exist on both public lands and private lands.. Maintenance and often basic construction of trails protected through public ownership, prescriptive use, or easements are primarily carried out by volunteers.

The Santa Monica Mountains Area Recreational Trails (SMMART) Coordination Project, which is a consortium of public agencies and private concerns which includes the National Park Service (NPS), California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR), the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), and the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council (SMMTC), has proposed additions to the County's trails plan as well as new trail amenities such as trail camps to be considered by the park agencies.

In response to the information developed by the SMMART Project and additional public comment during public scoping, the NPS, CDPR, and the SMMC are preparing the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Interagency Trail Management Plan, which is an integrated trail system plan that aims to balance recreational access with resource protection. The planned trail system is intended to link area recreation facilities, to connect other local and regional trail networks, and to provide trail access between the mountains, the c…oast, and other open space and parklands. The system will include trails of varying lengths and degrees of difficulty to accommodate people with a range of skills and abilities. The 67-mile, long envisioned Backbone Trail crosses the Santa Monica Mountains from Ventura County to the City of Los Angeles. This popular trail was completed in 2016, and in the same year, was designated a National Recreation Trail. A series of loop trails is planned for bicyclists, equestrians, and hikers. Overnight camps will be established along longer trails to allow uninterrupted backpacking trips of several days' duration. The trail system will eventually connect with other major trails in the greater region, such as the Rim of the Valley Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail.

The Rim of the Valley Trail is within the state-designated Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor, stretching from Sierra Madre to Moorpark, and will link parklands and mountain open spaces encircling the San Fernando, La Crescenta, western San Gabriel, Simi, and Conejo Valleys. The Rim of the Valley Trail will link to two national designated trails: the Pacific Crest Trail and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.

The 2,550-mile-long Pacific Crest Trail - a National Scenic Trail - passes through northern Los Angeles County mostly in the San Gabriel Mountains, Sierra Pelona Range, and mountains northeast of Pyramid Lake in the Angeles National Forest. The trail passes through intervening private lands before it crosses the western Antelope Valley into Kern County. Trails within the North Area should provide links to this major trail.

The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail commemorates the 1,800- mile journey from Nogales, Mexico, to the San Francisco Bay Area led by Juan Bautista de Anza. Approximately 14 miles of the trail cross through the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, including segments across Calabasas, the Simi Hills, and parks in eastern Ventura County.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Trails

Goal CO-8:

Provide maximum public access and recreational opportunities for all people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resources from overuse.

Policies:

- **CO-95:** Protect the public parkland and trail system, and where feasible, expand or enhance as a resource of regional, state, and national importance.
- **CO-96:** Provide and improve access to dedicated open space and natural areas for all users, especially those in disadvantaged communities that have historically had less access to open space.
- **CO-97:** Encourage outdoor recreational experiences that serve local, regional, and national visitors with diverse backgrounds, interests, ages, and abilities, including those who are transit-dependent and people who experience physical challenges. Wherever appropriate and feasible, public facilities, including parking areas or facilities, shall be distributed throughout an area to mitigate the impacts of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area.
- **CO-98:** Coordinate with federal, state, and County park agencies, and other qualified public and private land conservation agencies to ensure that private land donations and/or public access dedications are accepted, developed, and managed for their intended use.
- **CO-99:** Support a diverse range of resource dependent passive and active recreational uses that are compatible with the rural and semi-rural character of the North Area such as horse rentals and boarding, horse riding staging areas, low-intensity campgrounds, birdwatching, and stargazing.

CULTURAL RESOURCES, TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Indigenous people have lived in the Santa Monica Mountains and surrounding area for over 9,000 years. Local tribes included the Chumash in the western portions of the Santa Monica Mountains, the Fernandeno Tataviam in the northern portions, and the Kizh Gabrieleño in the eastern portions toward the Los Angeles basin. Over time, these Native cultures, with distinct languages and histories, developed large villages in the Santa Monica Mountains with extensive maritime practices and inland trade routes that extended up and down the coast, West to the Channel Islands, and inland to Arizona.

Their legacies are visible in multiple historic sites in the North Area. There are more than 1000 archaeological sites within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Malibu Creek was a significant interface site between the Chumash and the Kizh Gabrieleño. Inside the park there is a Chumash village site, Humaliwo, as well as several historic structures. There is also a former Chumash village and cultural/historical center, Satwiwa, located about 5 miles away from the North Area in Ventura County.

The Santa Monica Mountains are rich in paleontological resources, tribal cultural resources, and cultural resources, including resources important to Native Americans and cultural resources of early settlers. Many of these resources are found on lands under the management of the National Park Service, the California Department of Parks and Recreation,

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and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The stewardship and preservation of these resources in the Santa Monica Mountains are important for three main reasons:

- Increasing public use, growing pressures for development, and deterioration through age and exposure continue to place the Santa Monica Mountains' cultural resources, tribal cultural resources, and paleontological resources at risk.

- It is critical to preserve cultural resources because they are a unique and irreplaceable cultural, educational, and historical record of people in this region.

- The stewardship of cultural resources, tribal cultural resources, and paleontological resources is necessary to deepen cultural awareness as well as to increase the public's understanding of the existing environment.

County development review procedures include consideration and protection of cultural resources, tribal cultural resources, and paleontological resources. Mitigation measures are required where it is determined development may adversely impact any such resource. Other groups are also concerned with the preservation of these resources. The National Park Service, for example, conducts ongoing research on the history and cultural heritage of the Santa Monica Mountains. While many of these resources are historic, they are also a part of an active cultural landscape and represent the histories and identities of local cultures, groups, and people.

Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources, or fossils, are the remains of ancient animals and plants, as well as trace fossils such as burrows, which can provide scientifically significant information on the history of life on Earth. Paleontological resources in the Santa Monica Mountains include isolated fossil specimens, fossil sites, and fossil-bearing rock units. The oldest paleontological resources in the Santa Monica Mountains come from the Late Cretaceous Period and are found in the Chatsworth Formation. Ammonites, extinct mollusks related to the chambered nautilus, have been collected from this formation, as well as marine foraminifera, clams, snails, bryozoans, and shark teeth.

The Santa Monica Mountains have been the site of marine deposition for much of the Cenozoic Period (the last 65 million years). There are a number of Tertiary rock units in the Santa Monicas known to yield scientifically significant paleontological resources, including the Modelo, Pico, and Topanga Formations. Unlike marine sediments, terrestrial sediments often do not contain fossils. This is because they are normally deposited immediately adjacent to the surface of the earth, which is an environment that is not conducive to fossil preservation.

Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources

Archaeological resources refer to any material remains of past human life or activities that are of archaeological interest, including, but not be limited to: pottery, basketry, bottles, weapons, weapon projectiles, tools, structures or portions of structures, pit houses, rock paintings, rock carvings, intaglios, graves, and human skeletal materials.

An estimated 40 percent of the land throughout the Santa Monica Mountains (including areas outside of the County's jurisdiction) has been surveyed for archaeological sites. The area contains many geologic elements and major plant communities that indicate the presence of archaeological resources. According to the National Park Service, there are thousands of known archaeological sites in the Santa Monica Mountains, one of the highest densities of any mountain range in the world. Collectively, these sites represent roughly 9,000 years of human use by native peoples.

The indigenous Chumash and Kizh Gabrieleño peoples, two of the most populous local native cultures, have occupied land within the Santa Monica Mountains since prehistoric times. The Chumash people have inhabited the region for nearly 9,000 years, while the Kizh Gabrieleño people moved into the eastern Santa Monica Mountains approximately 2,000 years ago.

The area also contains many recent historical artifacts dating back to the 1500s. From the 1500s to the late 1700s, exploration of California was initiated by explorers from Spain, Portugal and Mexico. During the Spanish Colonial period from 1769 to 1822, Spain established a chain of Franciscan missions in California, including missions in San Gabriel, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Fernando. Around 1800, the Spanish Crown began granting land, including land in the Santa Monica Mountains, to retiring Spanish soldiers.

Much of the land, known as a rancho, was used for cattle ranching and farming and was often worked by the Native Americans.

During the mid- to late-19th century, the area was homesteaded by Americans looking for land, and large ranches were divided into smaller farms to open up opportunity for more families. With nearly 1,300 homestead claims in the Santa Monica Mountains, in addition to hundreds of structures in the mountains and in the adjacent foothills, there are numerous features that are considered to be of local historical significance, including houses, ranches, and barns. Some are significant for events that have occurred, while others are significant for the individuals who lived there or are important in terms of architectural history. Throughout the 20th century, significant areas of the Santa Monica Mountains were developed for recreational and commercial uses.

Unfortunately, many of the known archaeological, paleontological, and historic cultural sites in the region have been disturbed to some extent by human activity, such as development, occupation, and use, and natural occurrences, such as erosion that results from earthquakes, fire, and flood. In some instances, historic and prehistoric artifacts such as stone tools, antique nails, and equipment parts have been picked up or even destroyed by visitors or residents.

GOALS AND POLICIES

CULTURAL RESOURCES, TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Goal CO-9:

Preservation of the area's rich and diverse cultural resources, tribal cultural resources and paleontological resources.

Policies:

- **CO-100:** Regulate landform alteration to ensure minimal disturbance of known cultural resources and tribal cultural resources. New development on sites identified as archaeologically sensitive shall include onsite monitoring by a Secretary of Interior-qualified archaeologist(s) and appropriate Native American consultant(s) of all grading, excavation, and site preparation that involve earthmoving operations.
- **CO-101:** Coordinate with appropriate agencies, South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC), Native American Heritage Commission, and local Native American tribes, to identify archaeologically sensitive areas. Such information should be kept confidential to protect cultural and tribal cultural resources.
- **CO-102:** Implement appropriate mitigation measures for development within archaeologically sensitive areas, designed in accord with guidelines established by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, or those agreed to as part of the AB 52 tribal consultation process.
- **CO-103:** Preserve and protect cultural resources and traditions that are of importance to Native Americans, including the Chumash and Kizh Gabrieleño peoples.

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3 SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT

Lotus corniculatus (bird's-foot trefoil)
Credit: Joseph Decruyenaere

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CHAPTER 3: SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Santa Monica Mountains are home to serious hazards that require special attention in order to protect public health and safety. Wildfires, earthquakes, mass wasting events, flooding, and washed-out roads that often follow heavy winter rains have demonstrated how vulnerable the region is to natural and human-made hazards. Wildfires are a natural phenomenon in the Santa Monica Mountains and on nature's timetable are an essential process of the regional ecosystem. In addition, the region's natural drainage systems are subject to very high volumes of stormwater runoff. The Safety and Noise Element addresses the following issues:

- **Seismic and Non-Seismic Geologic Hazards;**
- **Noise Hazards**
- **Fire Hazards**
- **Flood Hazards**
- **Hazardous and Toxic Materials**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The guiding principle for protecting the public health and safety is:

The potential risk of death, injuries, property damage, and social and economic dislocation resulting from earthquakes, mass wasting events, floods, fires, and other hazards must be minimized. Development should avoid environmental hazards rather than attempt to overcome them.

A great deal of individual and public effort is directed toward minimizing or eliminating perceived risks, yet a completely risk-free environment cannot be achieved. All aspects of life involve a degree of risk, and some risk from environmental hazards must be tolerated. Development in the planning area must reflect the natural conditions in the Santa Monica Mountains, which include environmental hazards.

SEISMIC AND NON-SEISMIC GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Natural seismic and non-seismic events (Figure 5) in the Santa Monica Mountains present significant hazards to public health, safety, and welfare, and also to development. Earthquakes and slope movement events can be particularly devastating in an area like the Santa Monica Mountains, with its many narrow, winding, and difficult to access roads.

The effect of both seismic and non-seismic events in the Santa Monica Mountains is magnified by the region's geology and topography. The common rock types underlying the surface soil are poorly-cemented sedimentary rock and fine-grained or indurated (cemented) soil and bedrock formations. These common rock units are unstable, particularly in earthquakes and under wet conditions. Clay-rich soils found throughout the Santa Monica Mountains are subject to shrink-swell behavior, which has implications for the structural integrity of slopes, buildings, and foundations. In addition, a vast majority of the Santa Monica Mountains has slopes exceeding 25 percent. This steep topography exacerbates the instability of the underlying geology.

Seismic Geologic Hazards

Earthquakes pose a significant risk within the Santa Monica Mountains. Several fault systems border the North Area, including the Malibu-Santa Monica-Hollywood-Raymond Hill fault system to the south and the Simi-Northridge-Verdugo fault system to the north. The San Andreas Fault, though over 40 miles northeast of the North Area, has the potential to cause significant damage in the Santa Monica Mountains. Primary hazards in the North Area associated with earthquakes are surface ruptures along fault lines and damage to structures due to seismically induced ground shaking.

Even with the moderately low development densities throughout much of the area and the requirement that new development comply with current building and safety codes, seismic hazards related to ground shaking are potentially significant because of their pervasive consequences. Ground shaking resulting from an earthquake, besides directly damaging structures, roadways, and utilities, could trigger landslides in unstable areas, endangering lives and property. However, even in the absence of an earthquake, potentially significant hazards exist due to unstable slopes. Because of

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local groundwater and soil conditions, liquefaction is also a latent hazard in localized areas with high groundwater and sandy soils. Maps released by the California Geological Survey (CGS) depict areas with a potential for liquefaction and earthquake-induced landslides.

Non-Seismic Geologic Hazards

The major non-seismic geologic hazards in the Santa Monica Mountains are slope movement events (including rockfalls, landslides, slumps, debris flows, and mudflows) and liquefaction. The Santa Monica Mountains are naturally prone to slope movement due to a combination of steep slopes and unstable geology. Human activities can contribute directly to slope instability, such as grading, vegetation removal, increased soil saturation, and increased amounts of runoff from developed areas. Unusually high levels of water in the soil can trigger liquefaction and slumping. Human activities can increase the risk and severity of liquefaction and slumping through actions such as improper grading (e.g., cutting off the supporting toe of a slope or improperly compacting fill material), and by landscaping with vegetation not appropriate for the soils and slopes of the mountains (e.g., iceplant).

GOALS AND POLICIES

Seismic and Non-Seismic Geologic Hazards

Goal SN-1:

A built environment designed and engineered to minimize the potential for loss of life, physical injury, environmental disruption, property damage, economic loss and social dislocation due to seismic- and non-seismic-induced geologic activities.

Policies:

- **SN-1:** Ensure stability, structural integrity, and conservation of natural landforms along ridgelines, bluffs, and cliffs.
- **SN-2:** Prohibit development that creates or contributes significantly to erosion, geologic instability, destruction, or substantial alteration of natural landforms along ridgelines, bluffs or cliffs.
- **SN-3:** Size, design, and site new development to minimize risks to life and property from geologic hazard.
- **SN-4:** Prohibit new development on former landslide sites, unstable slopes, and other geologic hazard areas unless there is substantial evidence, provided by the applicant and confirmed by the Public Works, that the project is safe.
- **SN-5:** Prohibit new development in areas where an existing or demonstrated potential public health and safety hazard presents a risk to life and property, such as naturally unstable geologic area or areas prone to wildfire.
- **SN-6:** Avoid areas susceptible to seismic and non-seismic geologic hazards, even when engineering solutions are available.
- **SN-7:** Prohibit grading and brushing in areas that have a slope of 50 percent or greater and limit grading in areas with a slope of over 25 percent.
- **SN-8:** Prohibit the construction of new structures for human occupation in unstable geologic areas.
- **SN-9:** Allow the remediation or stabilization of landslides or other slope instability that affect existing structures or that threaten public health or safety. Analyze alternative remediation or stabilization techniques to determine the least-environmentally-damaging alternative. Maximum feasible mitigation shall be incorporated into the project to minimize adverse impacts to natural resources.
- **SN-10:** Prohibit land divisions and lot line adjustments, unless all proposed parcels can be demonstrated to be safe from flooding, erosion, and geologic hazards and will provide a safe, legal, all-weather access road(s), which can be constructed consistent with all policies of this North Area Plan.

NOISE HAZARDS

Noise is often defined as unwanted or undesired sound. The human environment contains a variety of noise sources that can affect the way people live and work and, generally, negatively impact the quality of life. Excessive noise levels are not only a potential annoyance but may cause disruption to physical health, psychological well-being, social cohesion, and property values. Excessive noise levels can also negatively impact wildlife. Studies have shown that interference caused by noise can be injurious to an animal's energy budget, reproductive success, and long-term survival.

Because noise travels farther in areas of vast open space, special considerations must be taken in order to adequately address noise in the North Area. While allowing for commercial uses and acknowledging existing noise contributors such as the Ventura Freeway and major circulation routes, the County aims to also protect the quiet, rural setting of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Standardized noise limits are determined and monitored by the Los Angeles Department of Public Health (DPH). Title 12 of the County Code contains the County Noise Control Ordinance, which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors to control unnecessary, excessive and annoying noise. It declared that County policy was to "maintain quiet in those areas which exhibit low noise levels." The Ordinance divides receptor properties into the categories shown in Table 2. The Ordinance permits consideration of different levels of ambient or background noise within the categories, or zones. The County Health Officer is authorized to issue abatement notices and citations for a misdemeanor when these regulations are violated.

The County commissioned a noise study of the North Area in September 2018. The Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan and Community Standards District Update Noise Technical Report was prepared by Aspen Environmental Group and issued in October 2018. This noise study provides a baseline for ambient noise standards and the results determined that an L90 exterior noise level requirement would be the appropriate baseline metric for the North Area.

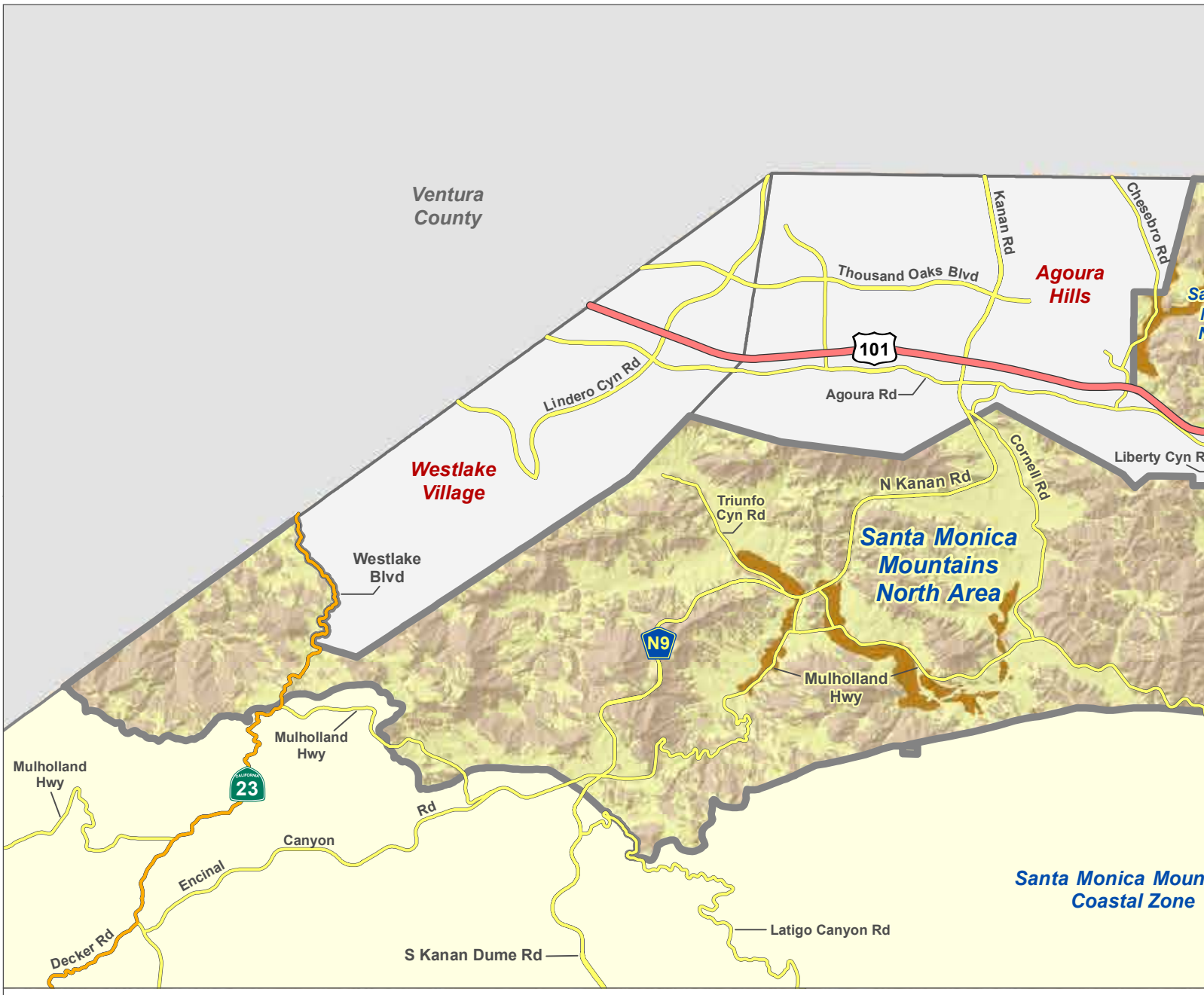
An L90 requirement measures the average ambient noise level that persists over 90 percent of a one-hour period as opposed to the existing L50 which measures the persistent noise level over 50 percent of a one-hour period. The L90 level gives a more holistic measurement of the noise that occurs throughout the duration of an event and the prolonged noise levels that may be disturbing surrounding residents and wildlife. In addition to the L50 level of 50 dBA for residential receptors, event facilities must also not exceed an L90 threshold of 45 dBA. Due to the existing above-average ambient noise conditions in the Topanga Canyon area, the L90 threshold shall be 50 dBA for the Topanga Canyon subarea.

TABLE 2: LOS ANGELES COUNTY EXTERIOR NOISE STANDARDS

Noise Zone	Designate Noise Zone Land Use (Receptor Property)	Time Interval	Exterior Noise Level L50 (dB)
I	Noise sensitive area, designated by Health Officer to ensure exceptional quiet	Anytime	45
II	Properties zoned for Residential uses	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (nighttime)	45
		7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (daytime)	50
III	Properties zoned for Commercial uses	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (nighttime)	55
		7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (daytime)	60
IV	Properties zoned for Industrial uses	Anytime	70

Source: Section 12.08.390 of Los Angeles County Code (a portion of the Noise Control Ordinance)

Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Geotechnical Hazards

*Areas of Earthquake-Induced Landslide Potential **

*Areas of Earthquake-Induced Liquefaction Potential **

*** There are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones or Fault Traces located within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area per the Official Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones Map. Fault traces are defined as "areas where surface fault rupture previously has occurred, or where local topographic, geological, and geotechnical conditions indicate a potential for permanent ground displacements such that mitigation by avoidance as stated in Public Resources Code Section 2621.5 would be required." Source: California Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey*

Base Layers

Freeway

Highway

Major Road

Santa Monica Mountains North Area

Other Unincorporated Area

Incorporated City

Figure 5:
Seismic and Geotechnical Hazards

Victory Blvd
Platt Ave
Fallbrook Ave
Topanga Cyn Blvd
De Soto Ave
Winnetka Ave
Valley Circle Blvd
Burbank Blvd
Ventura Blvd
101
27
Wells Dr
Las Virgenes Rd
Mountain View Dr
Hidden Hills
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
Mureau Rd
Calabasas Rd
Mulholland Dr
Los Angeles
Pkwy Calabasas
Lost Hills Rd
SMMNA
N1
Calabasas
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Las Virgenes Rd
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
N Topanga Canyon Blvd
Mulholland Hwy
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Stunt Rd
Saddle Peak Rd

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Dept. of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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Prepared by DRP GIS Section / October 2019

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GOALS AND POLICIES

Noise

Goal SN-2:

Noise-sensitive lands, land uses, wildlife habitats, and public lands are shielded from excessive mobile and stationary noise.

Policies:

- **SN-11:** Require projects to demonstrate that: 1) no adverse noise effects on adjacent uses will occur from the project; 2) no adverse effects on the project will occur from adjacent influences; and 3) where differing land uses are adjacent to each other, applicable noise standards can be met by the project.

- **SN-12:** Promote interior noise reduction of residential structures, including those within 600 feet of major and secondary highways.

- **SN-13:** Establish zones in which minimum noise coinciding with resort, recreation and special activities is allowed during specific times.

- **SN-14:** Require noise-emitting land uses to develop a plan for monitoring and enforcing noise compliance.

- **SN-15:** Restrict the development and use of private helicopter pads. Publicly owned and operated helicopter pads and stops may be allowed on public or private land where needed for emergency services, and consistent with all applicable policies of the North Area Plan. Locate new public helicopter pads to limit noise impacts on residential areas and public parklands.

FIRE HAZARDS

The Santa Monica Mountains are characterized by a Mediterranean biome where native vegetation is composed primarily of chaparral and coastal sage scrub plant communities that are both drought- and fire-adapted. In combination with extended drought periods, the density, structural arrangement, and chemical composition of chaparral make it one of the most volatile fuel types in the world. In fact, the Santa Monica Mountains and surrounding communities are considered to be one of the most fire-prone landscapes in North America. Dense contiguous fuels, steep topography, dry climatic conditions, drought, the autumn Santa Ana winds, and an extensive wildland-urban interface combine to exacerbate the high-fire conditions in the North Area leading to the designation of the North Area as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) (Figure 6), the most dangerous classification. Furthermore, development is typically scattered and access is often via narrow winding roadways, with structures that lack defensible space. This is particularly a problem where homes have a single means of access. Fire Department communications reaffirm that ridgeline development is a particular concern, as the heat of wildfires actually pulls the fire uphill, consuming ridgeline structures while often sparing homes in the valley bottoms.

In its 1994 report to the Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles County Wildfire Safety Panel stated that scattered rural development, heavy brush and trees, and steep inaccessible slopes combine with Santa Ana winds to make the Santa Monica Mountains "a true design for disaster." It is in the Santa Monica Mountains, the Panel reported, that fires "have crisscrossed the terrain [so] that some residents have not only lost one home, but some sadly have lost three after rebuilding on the same site." Indeed, the increase in property losses over the years due to wildfires in the Santa Monica Mountains is directly related to the increase in development.

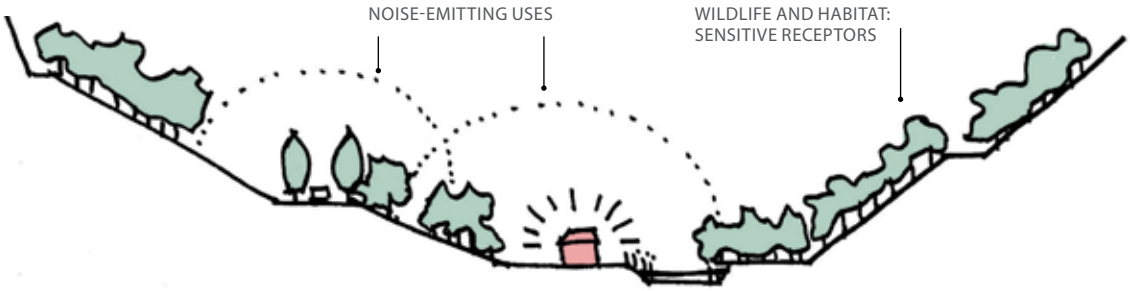

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

GOALS AND POLICIES

Fire Hazards

Goal SN-3:

A built environment designed to avoid or minimize the potential for loss of life, physical injury, environmental disruption, property damage, economic loss, and social disruption due to wildland fires.

Policies:

- **SN-16:** Work with agencies including Fire Department and Agricultural Commissioner to ensure effective fire buffers through brush clearance and fuel modification in new development.
- **SN-17:** Require fuel management plans with appropriate defensible space for new development to be submitted during the planning application stage.
- **SN-18:** Minimize vegetation removal for fuel management in the Significant Ecological Area (s) and high-sensitivity habitats.

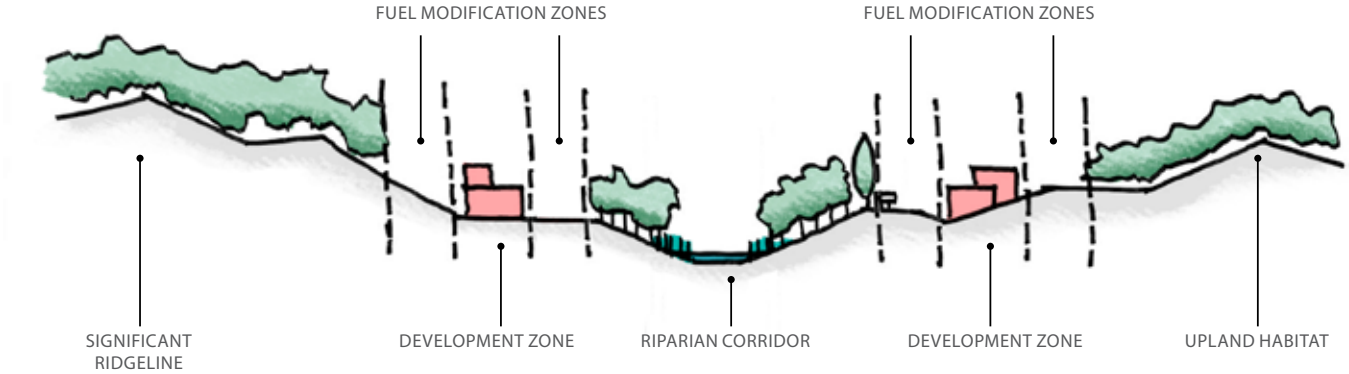

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

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- **SN-19:** Design and site new development in a manner that minimizes the threat of loss from wildland fires while avoiding the need for excessive vegetation removal.

- **SN-20:** Landscaping shall not extend into utility lines or block access to roads, water supplies or other emergency facilities.

- **SN-21:** Transition all overhead electrical transmission lines and supporting infrastructure underground to reduce fire risk.

- **SN-22:** Require that development sites and structures: be located off ridgelines and other dangerous topographic features such as chimneys, steep draws, and saddles; be adjacent to existing development perimeters; be located close to public roads; and, avoid over-long driveways.

- **SN-23:** Promote construction of new structures with appropriate fire-resistant features and building materials, including but not limited to: fire-resistant exterior materials, windows and roofing; and eaves and vents that resist the intrusion of flames and burning embers.

- **SN-24:** Limit fuel modification to the minimum area necessary and utilize strategies appropriate for the site such as thinning, selective removal, and spacing, to create effective defensible space that preserves native vegetation instead of complete removal of native vegetation.

- **SN-25:** Prohibit development in areas with insufficient access, water pressure, fire flow rates, or other accepted means for adequate fire protection.

- **SN-26:** High density residential land uses should be discouraged in areas within the VHFHSZ and that lack sufficient emergency evacuation access routes.

- **SN-27:** Locate structures along a certified all-weather accessible road, which in some cases may consist of permeable surfaces, in a manner that provides firefighters adequate vehicle turnaround space on private properties. Where feasible, require that new development be accessed from existing roads.

- **SN-28:** Require that property owners adhere to the approved fuel modification plan for their property, and ensure that Fire Department personnel adhere to the approved fuel modification plan during annual field inspections for fuel modification or brush clearance.

- **SN-29:** Allow wildfire burn areas to revegetate naturally, except where re-seeding is necessary to minimize risks to public health or safety. Where necessary, utilize a mix of locally-indigenous native plant seeds collected in a similar habitat within the Santa Monica Mountains.

- **SN-30:** Discourage high density and intensity development within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ). Direct development to areas less at-risk for fire and climate change-related hazards.

FLOOD HAZARDS

Natural drainage patterns include high water levels during storm conditions – a feature that should be given serious consideration in the use of, and improvements designed within, the Santa Monica Mountains and surrounding areas. Policies throughout the North Area Plan in conjunction with other agency standards and regulations help minimize exposure to flood hazards. These are related to slope modification, setbacks, on-site water retention and percolation, and runoff controls, as well as the amount and type of paving, grading, and fire clearance requirements. Potential flood hazards (Figure 6) within the North Area Plan are generally limited to canyon and valley bottoms.

In addition, although existing storm drain and flood control facilities generally have sufficient capacity to provide developed areas with adequate protection from flooding, localized areas within adjacent cities are in need of additional drainage improvements—primarily in areas between improved concrete channels and natural drainages. Such deficiencies can have impacts beyond jurisdictional boundaries. Future development will be required to not create flooding problems and to provide adequate protection from flooding, while protecting stream courses and natural drainages; strategies employed shall be accomplished in a manner consistent with the environmental protection policies of this North Area Plan—typically without damage to the natural environment.

Generally, there is not a great need for new storm drain facilities to serve rural development within unincorporated areas - although they must be provided where necessary. The low densities that have been planned and are recommended for the Santa Monica Mountains will generally not induce significant flooding impacts. Existing County building and safety codes are designed to be effective mitigation for potential flood hazards.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Flood Hazards

Goal SN-4:

A built environment and flood management system that respects natural hydrological processes to minimize the potential for loss of life, physical injury, environmental disruption, property damage, economic loss, and social disruption.

Policies:

- **SN-31:** Prohibit construction that could impede storm flows within floodways, and avoid development within potential flood hazard areas and the County's Flood Hazard Zones.
- **SN-32:** Require protection of stream courses in their natural state, along with development designs that respect natural flows.
- **SN-33:** Require that adequate mitigation of flooding hazards is incorporated into proposed development projects in order to minimize levels of risk; such mitigation should also be consistent with the North Area Plan's environmental protection policies.
- **SN-34:** Provide adequate drainage and erosion control facilities from new development that convey site drainage in a non-erosive manner in order to minimize hazards resulting from increased runoff, erosion, and other hydrologic impacts to streams.
- **SN-35:** Site, design, and size all new development to minimize risks to life and property from flood hazard.
- **SN-36:** Coordinate inter-jurisdictional planning of storm drain improvements where these facilities cross municipal boundaries.
- **SN-37:** Develop master flood control and drainage plans on a watershed-by-watershed basis, develop comprehensive funding mechanisms that include contributions from both existing and future development on a fair share basis, and construct only those flood control and drainage facilities that are necessary after all on site measures have been implemented and that are consistent with the North Area Plan's environmental protection policies.
- **SN-38:** Manage flood waters on a watershed basis consistent with the best management practices (BMPs) designed by Public Works.
- **SN-39:** Promote use of the natural environment and restoration of soil and vegetation cover to mitigate flood hazards.

HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS

The creation, use, storage, and transport of hazardous materials and waste is widespread in business, industrial, and residential settings. Improperly managed hazardous materials and waste can pose a serious threat to community safety and are regulated through a combination of federal, state, and county laws. The transport of hazardous materials along the Ventura Freeway is of special concern. In the event of a freeway closure, alternative routes may require vehicles to traverse mountain roads through environmentally sensitive areas.

Hazardous material leaks or explosions have the potential to affect large areas of the community. The Los Angeles County Fire Department responds quickly to accidents involving hazardous materials and wastes. First-response firefighters typically secure, evacuate, and confine hazardous materials and hazardous waste spills until the arrival of the Newhall-based County Hazardous Materials Division.

Hazardous materials and wastes are present in the uses throughout the Santa Monica Mountains, but vary widely in terms of both quantity and type. Light industrial uses, dry cleaners, and automotive service shops routinely utilize solvents and other toxic substances, and generate hazardous wastes that must be properly disposed of in compliance with strict federal and state regulations. Households also use and store hazardous materials and wastes, including pressurized propane tanks. Homeowners need to be informed about the proper use, storage, and disposal of consumer goods

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containing hazardous substances. Development brings the unregulated use of materials such as pesticides, fertilizers, and household cleaners, increasing the amount of toxic materials in the ground and in water systems.

There are no active landfills operating in Los Angeles County that accept hazardous wastes. Hazardous wastes generated within Los Angeles County are disposed of by transporting them to a Class I landfill (such as the Kettleman Hills facility) capable of handling all types of urban waste, including toxic and hazardous materials. The County-owned Calabasas Landfill located in the upper tributary canyons to Las Virgenes Creek, north of the Ventura Freeway, operated as a Class I facility prior to 1980, but now operates as a Class III facility, accepting only municipal solid waste and inert waste. All active areas of the landfill are now lined with plastic liners and gas collection systems to minimize the landfill's potential to contaminate downstream groundwater. Older areas of the landfill are unlined or lined with compacted clay.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Hazardous and Toxic Materials

Goal SN-5:

Conduct the transport, distribution, sale, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous material and hazardous waste in a manner that protects the health and safety of residents, workers, area visitors, and the natural environment.

Policies:

- **SN-40:** Prohibit new facilities that handle large amounts of hazardous and toxic materials.
- **SN-41:** Monitor through conditional approvals businesses handling, using, or storing more than threshold amounts of hazardous or toxic materials. Hazardous or toxic wastes may only be stored on a commercial site temporarily and must be disposed of as soon as possible.
- **SN-42:** Prohibit hazardous waste disposal facilities within the Santa Monica Mountains, due to the area's sensitive seismic and geologic characteristics.

Goal SN-6:

A land, air, and water environment with minimal cumulative impacts from the use of toxic and hazardous materials.

Policies:

- **SN-43:** Protect the area's residents, workers, and visitors from the risks inherent in the transport, distribution, use, and storage of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes.
- **SN-44:** Encourage community-level hazardous waste drop-off events and community recycling centers.
- **SN-45:** Avoid pesticide, rodenticide, and herbicide use on county-owned or managed land in the management of invasive species or other pests due to their impact on vulnerable residents, on predators through bioaccumulation, and on water quality.
- **SN-46:** Encourage the management of invasive species with the safest, least toxic method, to both the environment and humans, available.

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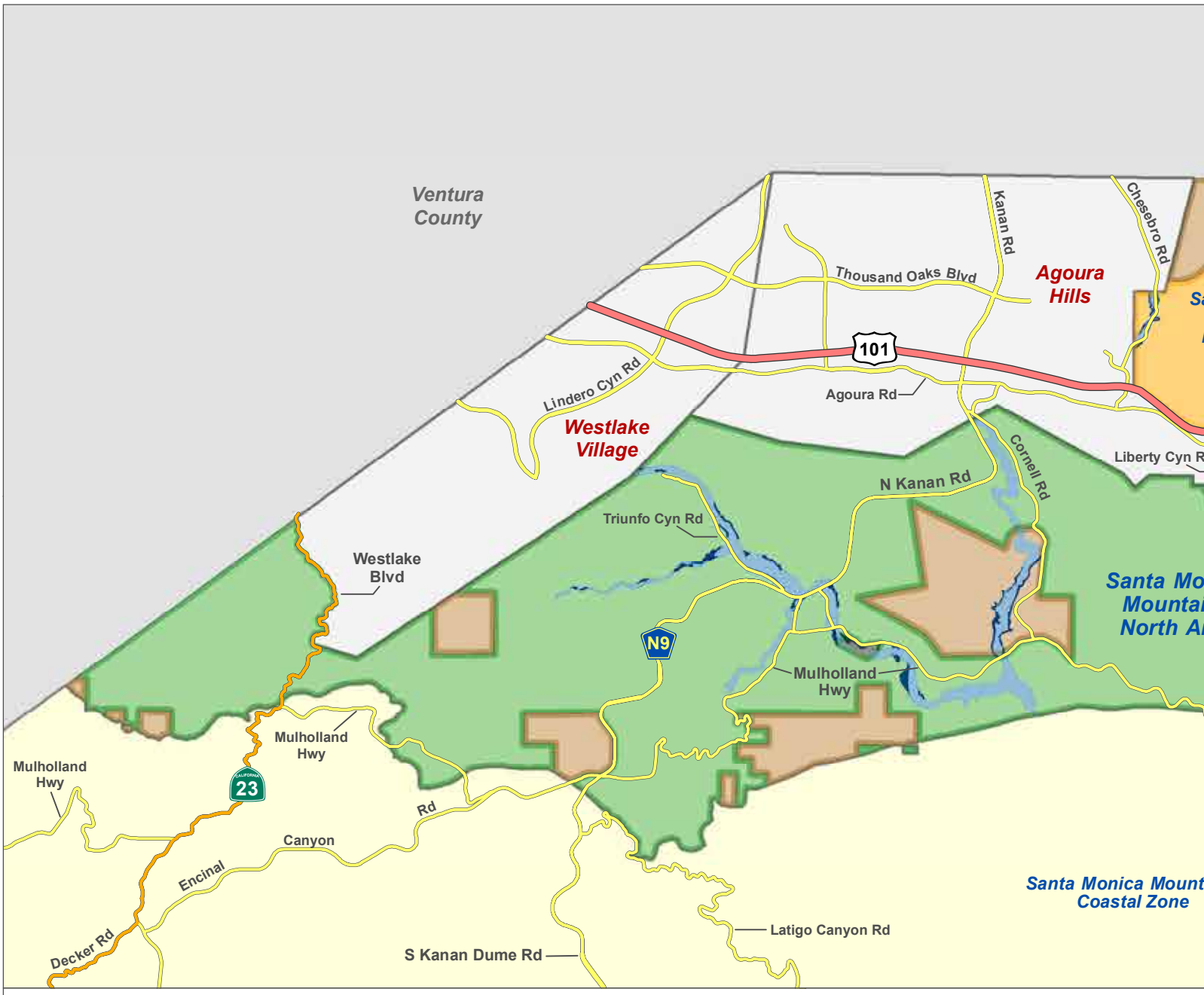
Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Hazards Layers

- FEMA 100-Year Flood Plain
- FEMA 500-Year Flood Plain
- Federal Fire Hazard Responsibility Area
- State Fire Hazard Responsibility Area
- Local Fire Hazard Responsibility Area

Base Layers

- Freeway
- Highway
- Major
- Other Unincorporated Community
- Incorporated City

Note: The entire extent of Santa Monica Mou North Area is classified as a Very High Fire H Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

Figure 6: Hazards - Fire and Flood

Victory Blvd
Platt Ave
Fallbrook Ave
Topanga Cyn Blvd
De Soto Ave
Winnetka Ave
Valley Circle Blvd
Burbank Blvd
Ventura Blvd
101
27
Las Virgenes Rd
Mtn View Dr
SMMNA
Hidden Hills
Los Angeles
Wells Dr
Mureau Rd
Calabasas Rd
Mulholland Dr
Pkwy Calabasas
Lost Hills Rd
N1
Calabasas
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Las Virgenes Rd
Santa Monica Mountains North Area
N Topanga Canyon Blvd
Mulholland Hwy
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Stunt Rd
Saddle Peak Rd

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Dept. of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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Prepared by DRP GIS Section / October 2019

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4 LAND USE ELEMENT

Dudleya pulverulenta (chalk lettuce)
Credit: Joseph Decruyenaere

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CHAPTER 4: LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Santa Monica Mountains have a long history as a rural setting. Past uses include cattle ranching in the early 1800s, raising of livestock and crops, recreational equestrian uses, plant nurseries, and most recently, "hobby" vineyards. Although certain agricultural uses have been part of the community for about 200 years, some agricultural uses are not appropriate for the mountain environment of the Santa Monica Mountains. Much of the remaining undeveloped land is on steep slopes stabilized with abundant native vegetation. Clearing this steep land to plant crops not only entails extensive habitat destruction and soil disturbance, but also compromises the stability of the slopes, thereby increasing risks to life, water quality and property. While the Plan supports rural agricultural uses and does not eliminate existing, legally-established activities, the policies of this Plan limit the type and intensity of land use practices allowed in the future to ensure maximum protection of natural resources.

New development in the North Area is constrained by topography, lack of and difficulty in providing infrastructure, and the presence of sensitive environmental resources, scenic resources, and natural hazards. This Plan provides a framework for new development taking into consideration the protection of sensitive environmental, scenic, and other resources, public access, and the avoidance or mitigation of hazards.

The Land Use Element directs the general location, type, character, and degree of future development within the North Area by integrating environmental resource management, public health and safety goals, and quality-of-life issues. Specific development policies are primarily founded on the environmental opportunities and constraints that influence the availability of public services and accessible transportation routes, on the maintenance of the unique character of the area, and the understanding that activities within the area often have off-site impacts.

The following sections address land use:

- **Development and Environmental Resources**
- **Pattern and Character of Development**
- **Wireless Communications Facilities**
- **Animals as Pets and Livestock**
- **Agricultural Land Use**
- **Event Facilities**
- **Equestrian Uses**
- **Land Use Policy Map**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The guiding principle for managing land use and development is:

The pattern of land use within the North Area should:

- ***Preserve public health, safety, and welfare;***
- ***Preserve and protect significant environmental resources – including wildlife habitats and corridors, watersheds, drainages, and water quality;***
- ***Recognize and avoid natural hazards;***
- ***Protect distinct mountainous features including habitat, and scenic and visual qualities;***
- ***Enhance recreational opportunities;***
- ***Protect the integrity of existing rural communities; and***
- ***Protect the unique cultural and social characteristics of the region's rural residential communities.***

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DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

The North Area Plan establishes a balance between the natural and manufactured environments. This balance is achieved through directing development into the most appropriate locations under conditions that protect the area's natural environment.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Open Space

Goal LU-1:

Land uses that reflect and are compatible with existing environmental resources and community character.

Policies:

- **LU-1:** Direct and site new residential, commercial, or industrial projects to existing developed areas able to accommodate it, or if not then in other areas with adequate public services and where they will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on natural resources.

- **LU-2:** Retain the area's natural setting, rural and semi-rural character, and scenic features.

- **LU-3:** Maintain areas of diverse natural topography, which provide, through the preservation of large undeveloped areas, long-range vistas of open ridgelines and mountain slopes.

- **LU-4:** Preserve the physical connections between open space areas, natural habitats, public parklands, and activity centers.

- **LU-5:** Preserve ridgelines and open space areas that define and maintain the rural character of developed areas.

- **LU-6:** Prohibit new industrial uses except on lots designated for such uses. Lawfully existing nonconforming industrial uses shall not be expanded.

- **LU-7:** Require that the extension of water, sewer, or utility infrastructure to serve development be located within legally existing roadways and road rights-of-way in a manner that avoids adverse impacts to natural resources to the maximum extent feasible. Such infrastructure shall be sized and otherwise designed to provide only for the approved development to avoid growth-inducing impacts.

- **LU-8:** Permit land divisions outside existing developed areas only in areas with adequate public services, where they will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on natural resources, and will not create parcels that would be smaller than the average size of surrounding parcels.

- **LU-9:** Cluster development in land divisions, including building pads, if any, in order to minimize site disturbance, landform alteration, and removal of native vegetation, to minimize required fuel modification, and to maximize open space.

- **LU-10:** Subsequent development on a parcel created through a land division shall conform to all provisions of the approved land division permit, including, but not limited to, the building site location, access road/driveway design, and grading design and volumes.

- **LU-11:** Implement a transfer of development credits (TDC) program that ensures that the individual and cumulative impacts of creating new lots within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area are minimized and mitigated through the retirement of an equivalent number of development credits from existing lots that meet the qualification criteria of the program.

- **LU-12:** Identify Transfer of Development Credits sending areas within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area that contain high-priority biological resources, rural, scenic and agricultural resource areas, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ). Identify potential transfer of development credits receiving areas county-wide, such as transit oriented developments, infill sites, vacant parcels, and underutilized sites in urban areas that promote sustainable development and climate change-related risk reduction.

PATTERN AND CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT

While the previous section deals with directing development into the most appropriate locations under conditions that protect the area's natural environment, this section deals with the distribution of the various types of uses that make up the individual communities within the planning area, and the expected character of development. This section draws a distinction between areas that are suitable for urban/suburban development or expansion and those that are to be maintained as rural. Suburban development is limited by the Land Use Policy Map to locations within and surrounded by the region's cities, in areas which are proximate to other urban/suburban land uses, where essential services are available and few natural constraints are present. The character of rural communities is recognized and protected through control of development intensity and site design. In specific communities and settings, design review and standards are applied to one or more components of development projects. Areas classified by the North Area Plan as Rural are not to be encroached upon by suburban development.

Despite significant physical constraints, the Santa Monica Mountains will continue to attract new residents and development will continue to occur. This section addresses the distribution of existing and future land uses that comprise the individual communities within the area, and the expected character of development.

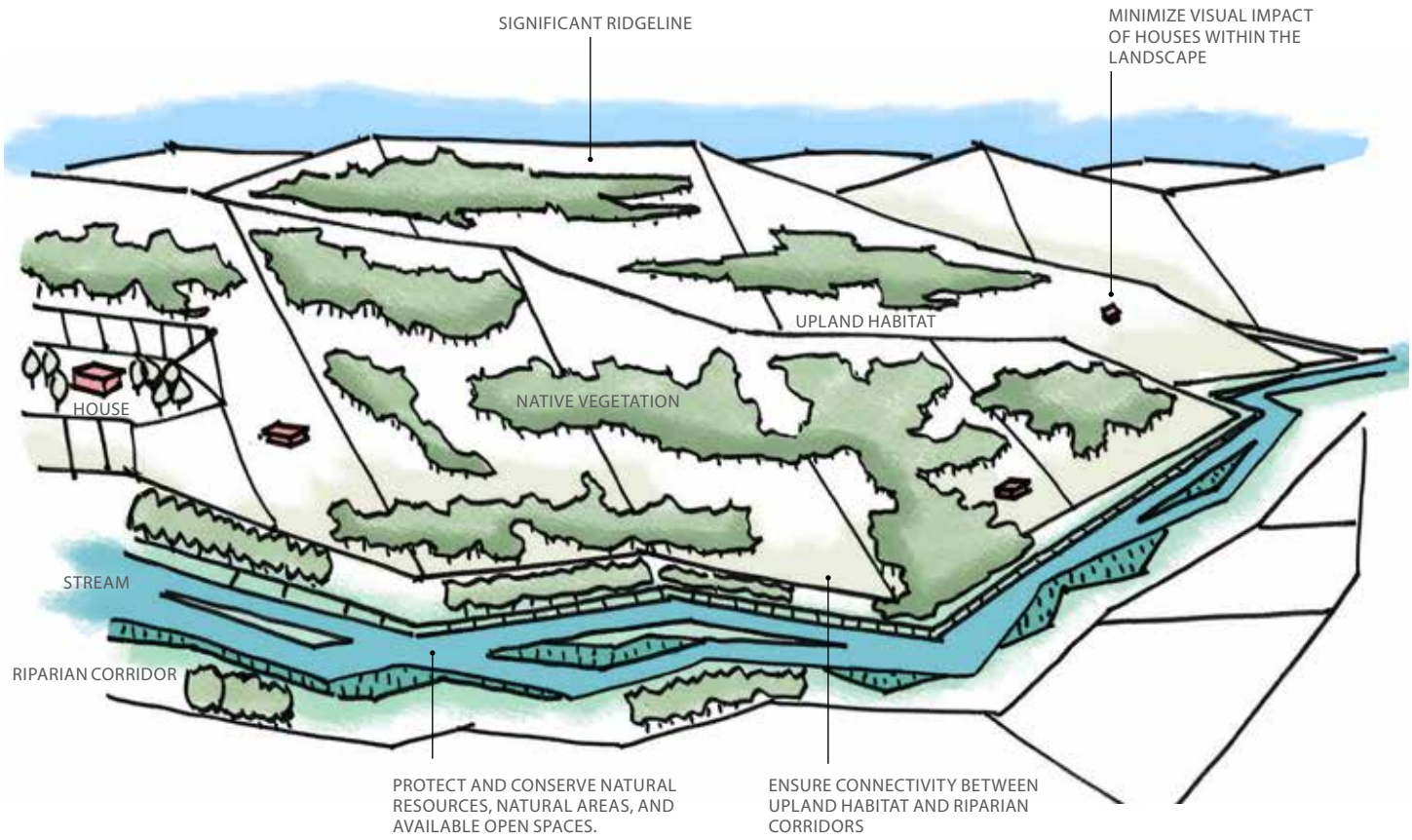

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

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GOALS AND POLICIES

Pattern and Character of Development

Goal LU-2:

A pattern of rural land use that promotes social, environmental, and economic well-being while preserving the environmental resources and unique character of the land within the Santa Monica Mountains.

Policies:

- **LU-13:** Maintain distinctions between suburban and rural lands identified on the Land Use Policy Map, and provide appropriate buffer areas and transition zones between suburban and rural areas.

- **LU-14:** Provide separate "suburban" and "rural" standards for infrastructure and public services.

- **LU-15:** In addition to maintaining low densities within rural areas, require the provision/protection of features that contribute to rural character and rural lifestyles.

- **LU-16:** Restrict the total square footage of and grading for rural structures to a size that maintains the area's open character, and is compatible with the open space characteristics of the surrounding hillsides. Within antiquated subdivisions, limit the mass, scale, and total square footage of structures and grading to a size that is compatible with the size of the parcel to avoid a crowded appearance in the built environment.

- **LU-17:** Require that new developments use architectural and siting features that are compatible with adjacent existing and planned developments, and include the following:

    - compatibility with prominent design features existing in the immediate area (i.e., trees, landforms, historic landmarks);

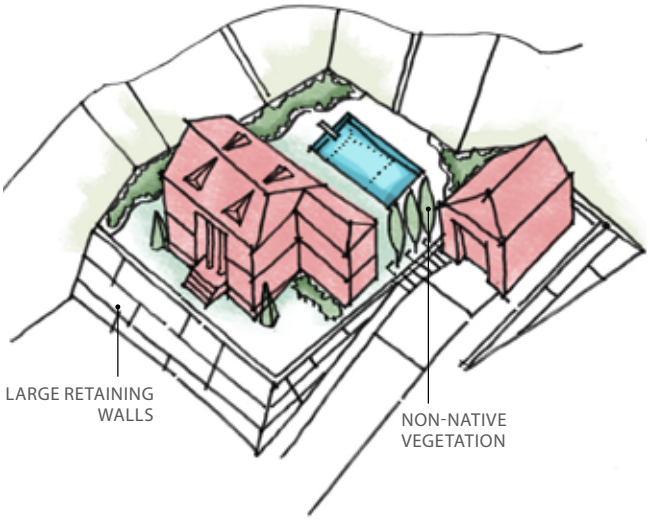
    - compatibility with existing structures; and

    - compatibility with the natural environment (i.e. hillsides, washes, native vegetation).

- **LU-18:** Cluster and concentrate development in one building site area on parcels to facilitate fire protection and to preserve and minimize impacts to natural resources and the area of disturbance.

- **LU-19:** Limit structure heights to ensure protection of scenic resources and compatibility with surrounding settings.

- **LU-20:** Limit the length of private access roads to the minimum necessary to provide access to the approved building site of a legal parcel. Temporary roads approved for



NOT RECOMMENDED: HIGH-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

MASSING NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING HILLSIDES.

RECOMMENDED: LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

STEPPED MASSING COMPATIBLE WITH THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING HILLSIDES.

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

preliminary hydrologic or geologic testing shall have their pre-construction vegetation and grading restored and not be considered an existing access road for subsequent development proposals.

- **LU-21:** Site and design development so as to: protect life and property; protect public lands, S1 and S2 habitat areas, dedicated open space, streams, scenic resources, public views, and other natural features and resources; maximize open space areas; and, minimize the overall vegetation clearance needed for fire protection.

- **LU-22:** Provide that residential and non-residential uses are buffered from each other through siting and design techniques and materials that are compatible with the existing community and surrounding natural environment.

- **LU-23:** Require open space areas in individual developments to connect trails, other open space, and wildlife corridors wherever possible.

- **LU-24:** Require the use of low-volume irrigation and locally-indigenous and drought-tolerant plant species in all development projects. Require the use of smart irrigation systems, and require the rapid repair of broken sprinkler systems. Prohibit the use of invasive species in all landscaping projects.

- **LU-25:** Concentrate commercial, office, and other higher-intensity uses and ensure that each project has adequate access, can accommodate the traffic, is accessible to essential services, and contains appropriate site design features to enhance community character.

- **LU-26:** Require that commercial uses be designed to be compatible in scale and appearance with the existing community and surrounding natural environment. Require all new commercial and institutional development to be compatible with the rural character of the area and the surrounding natural environment to the maximum extent feasible.

- **LU-27:** Require all new commercial and institutional development to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties though the arrangement of buildings, architectural design, and types of uses proposed. These impacts include, but are not limited to: noise, odors, fuel modification, maintenance of community character, and views.

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

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WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES

Goal LU-3:

A well-regulated communications network that serves the needs of the general public, limits negative impacts to the environment, and avoids contributing to visual blight.

Policies:

- **LU-28:** Limit the visual and safety impacts of wireless communications facilities to preserve the character and aesthetics of surrounding areas, through careful design, screening, and mitigation requirements. Encourage undergrounding of accessory equipment, co-locating, and clustering wireless communication facilities and structures, wherever possible, to help avert unnecessary proliferation of such facilities.

- **LU-29:** Site, design, and operate facilities and related support structures to avoid, when possible, the visibility of the facility from public viewing areas, and to preserve the character of surrounding areas by protecting ridgelines by setting facilities below the ridge, and co-locating facilities, where feasible, to avoid proliferation of facilities.

- **LU-30:** Place support facilities underground, where feasible and would result in a lesser impact on scenic resources and public views, except where it would present or contribute to geologic hazards or if it would be more damaging to biological resources. Existing communication transmission lines should be relocated underground when they are replaced or when funding for undergrounding is available.

ANIMALS AS PETS AND LIVESTOCK

Goal LU-4:

Allow the North Area community to retain its rural character by keeping animals and livestock on a small scale, while recognizing the necessity for wildlife movement and natural resource protection in the area.

Policies:

- **LU-31:** Work with North Area residents, local public agencies, and stakeholder groups to protect livestock while allowing opportunities for wildlife movement.

- **LU-32:** Continue collaboration with other County, state and federal agencies to develop the best practices for sheltering livestock and pets, and protecting native predators such as mountain lions.

- **LU-33:** Manage the location of livestock and horses, and the collection/disposal of animal wastes in a manner that is protective of streams and natural drainages and the quality of water runoff and groundwater.

- **LU-34:** Require animal containment facilities and animal living quarters to utilize BMPs to minimize erosion and avoid sediment and pollutant impacts.

- **LU-35:** Limit the siting of confined animal facilities and the maximum number of livestock permitted on a site to that appropriate to parcel size, slope, proximity to sensitive habitat areas, and other unique site characteristics and constraints. Facilities should be constructed of non-flammable materials and be clustered to the maximum extent feasible to minimize area disturbed and fuel modification.

- **LU-36:** The lighting of facilities at night should be limited to necessary security lighting that is controlled by motion detectors and the luminosity should be compatible with dark skies standards.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

Goal LU-5:

To create a balance between agricultural uses and conserving the County's natural resources in a changing climate.

Policies:

- **LU-37:** Strictly review the installation of new wells to protect potential groundwater overdraft and watershed impacts.
- **LU-38:** New agricultural crop uses shall be sited only in S3 or S4 habitats, in already disturbed areas, in the approved building site area, and/or in Fuel Modification Zones A or B, and are not permitted on slopes greater than 3:1.
- **LU-39:** Require, where feasible, the use of reclaimed water for any approved agricultural use.
- **LU-40:** Require the use of integrated pest management and use of least toxic methods of pest control.
- **LU-41:** Encourage organic or biodynamic farming practices.
- **LU-42:** Employ measures to minimize impacts to water quality for crop uses..

EVENT FACILITIES

The Santa Monica Mountains have become a popular backdrop for special events such as weddings, conferences, and retreats that seek a natural setting within the Los Angeles area. However, concerns such as limited road capacity, nuisance noise, wildfire preparedness, and habitat protection make it necessary to ensure that event facilities do not cause adverse impacts to the surrounding community.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Event Facilities

Goal LU-6:

Allow the use of event facilities for enjoyment and recreation in the Santa Monica Mountains in limited areas, while adhering to policies regarding public safety, dark skies, noise and surrounding land uses.

Policies:

- **LU-43:** Event facility uses shall be regulated and monitored for potential impacts such as noise, traffic, parking, and public safety issues associated with special events.
- **LU-44:** Promote the collaboration of stakeholders in the area to address noise, traffic safety, and the cumulative impacts of operations.
- **LU-45:** Allow for special event uses while minimizing disruptions to neighboring properties and maintaining maximum accessibility and safety for residents of the North Area.
- **LU-46:** Ensure the necessary evacuation routes are accessible at all times, and that special events do not block or impair evacuation routes or access for residents and visitors..

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EQUESTRIAN USES

The Santa Monica Mountains have historically been home to various equestrian uses. The area is unique in that it contains a horse-friendly trail system and provides zones allowing horse keeping. The Santa Monica Mountains is one of a small number of areas in the Los Angeles basin that maintain a rural setting sought by equestrian community members.

Some equestrian activities in the North Area include riding, riding lessons, training, boarding, as well as others. While the planning area has many distinct features that equestrian enthusiasts enjoy, there can be environmental issues. Improper management of horse waste may result in polluted runoff finding its way into streams and drainages in the Santa Monica Mountains. The goals and policies of this section promote the equestrian culture in the Santa Monica Mountains while minimizing the environmental impacts these activities may have on the region.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Equestrian Uses

Goal LU-7:

Create a balance between land use, equestrian activities, and environmental protection.

Policies:

- **LU-47:** Consistent with all resource protection policies of this North Area Plan, preserve the opportunity for horse keeping in support of the equestrian-oriented tradition of the Santa Monica Mountains. Encourage the establishment of equestrian-friendly trailhead parking and staging areas to promote low-cost public access to trails.

- **LU-48:** Protect the rural character of the North Area and allow for keeping of horses in support of the equestrian-oriented tradition of the Santa Monica Mountains.

- **LU-49:** Allow for the limited boarding of horses by private individuals if it complies with all policies and provisions of the North Area Plan.

- **LU-50:** Manage the location of animal containment facilities, animal living quarters and associated equestrian structures in relation to sensitive biological habitats, including S1 and S2.

- **LU-51:** Manage the collection and disposal of animal wastes to protect streams, natural drainages, water runoff, and groundwater.

- **LU-52:** Allow the development of new, and the retention of existing, private recreational facilities, including equestrian rental and boarding facilities, in areas where the character of such facilities dictates the need for such a setting and is compatible with surrounding land uses.

- **LU-53:** Provide sufficient staging and parking areas at trail access points, including space to accommodate horse trailers where needed and appropriate: to ensure adequate access to the trails system, campgrounds, roadside rest, and picnic areas where suitable; to provide visitor information; and, to establish day-use facilities, where the facilities are developed and operated in a manner consistent with the policies of this plan and compatible with surrounding land uses.

LAND USE POLICY MAP

The Land Use Policy Map (Figure 7) for the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan graphically depicts the general location, character, and intensity of development throughout the jurisdiction of the North Area Plan. The pattern and distribution of land uses are derived primarily from the consideration of environmental opportunities and constraints, the availability of public services and highway access, the maintenance of local community character, and development necessary to serve local and regional needs, including business, housing, and recreational opportunities..

Open Space

The primary purpose of lands designated as Open Space is to provide areas for the preservation of environmental, historical, or cultural resources, recreation, and protection of the public health and safety. Uses consistent with the preservation of environmental, cultural, or historical

resources, and the protection of the public health and safety may be considered appropriate subject to applicable North Area Plan policies and ordinance provisions. Typical uses include equestrian activities, parks, nature preserves and sanctuaries, deed restricted private open space, streams, rivers and open drainage easements, trails, rural campgrounds and historical building sites. Open Space categories designated in the North Area include OS-C (Open Space – Conservation), which indicates open space and scenic resource areas preserved in perpetuity and OS-PR (Open Space – Parks and Recreation), which indicates open space recreational uses including passive and resource-dependent uses such as regional and local parks, hiking, bike and equestrian trails, campgrounds, and community gardens. Also, included in this category are active uses such as athletic fields and golf courses.

The Open Space category may also include the following:

- Lands acquired and managed by private, non-profit organizations for habitat preservation and recreation uses. Includes private conservancy lands, private parks, nature preserves, wildlife habitats, and drainage easements. The principal permitted uses is passive, resource-dependent recreation.

- Public parks, including federal, state, and County parks, and beaches acquired by public agencies for habitat preservation and public recreation. The principal permitted use is passive, resource-dependent recreation.

- Lands subject to recorded easements or deed restrictions for open space purposes, including, but not limited to, habitat preservation, scenic protection, trails and walkways, or flood hazard protection. Private lands deed restricted for habitat preservation and scenic protection generally do not allow public use. The principal permitted use is habitat preservation or passive, resource-dependent recreation consistent with the limitations established for the site by the terms of the applicable easement or deed restriction.

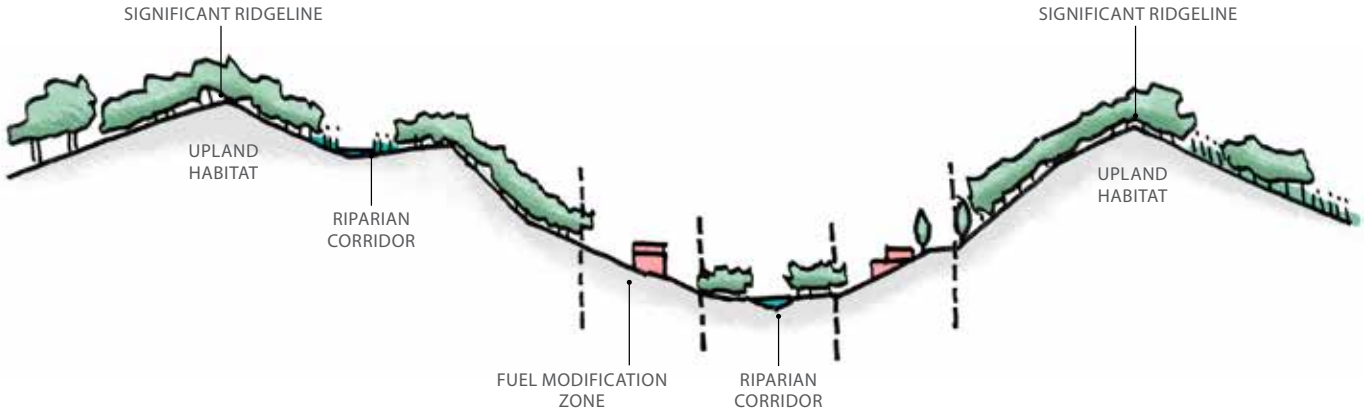

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

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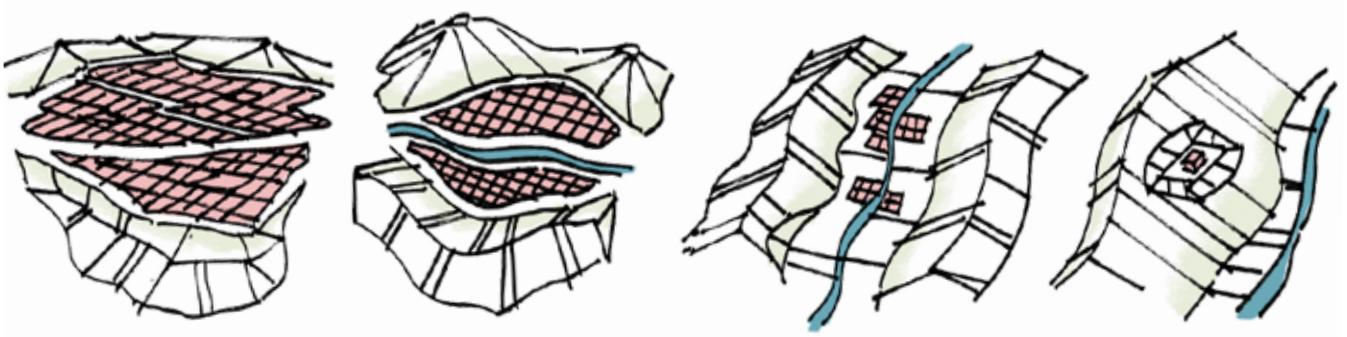
Rural Land

Lands designated Rural Land within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan consist of those rolling hillside areas, steep slopes, and isolated remote mountain lands with difficult or no access. Rural Lands also include areas served by winding mountain roads which cannot accommodate substantial increases in traffic from new development. Permitted uses include low-density single-family housing, agriculture, equestrian uses, retreats, monasteries, private campgrounds, bed-and-breakfast lodging, low-intensity conference centers, public and private schools, water tanks, wireless communications facilities and other local-serving commercial and public facilities. Clustering of uses may be beneficial in helping to reduce disturbances to the topographic, vegetative and biological settings.

Rural Land categories designated in the North Area include RL1 (Rural Land 1 - not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 1 acre), RL2 (Rural Land 2 - not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 2 acres), RL5 (Rural Land 5 - not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 5 acres), RL10 (Rural Land 10 - not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 10 acres), and RL20 (Rural Land 20 - not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 20 acres). Clustering may be useful in providing community open space and protecting resources. Uses that may be appropriate include: single-family residences, agriculture, equestrian uses, retreats, monasteries, private campgrounds, bed-and breakfast lodging, public and private schools, telecommunications facilities, and other local-serving public facilities, including uses permitted by the underlying zone. Existing permitted mobile home parks are deemed consistent with the category in which they are located and, in the event destroyed, may be rebuilt to existing densities, providing all other current policies—such as environmental protection – are incorporated into the rebuilt project; redevelopment of such sites to other uses including permanent housing must be consistent with the underlying land use category.

Residential

TThe Residential land use categories are intended to provide for single-family detached and attached dwelling units, including large-lot estates, typical suburban tracts, small-lot single-family residences, and townhouses, as appropriate to the designated maximum density of land. Existing mobile home parks are deemed consistent with all Residential categories in which they are located and, in the event destroyed, may be rebuilt to existing densities-providing they incorporate all other current North Area Plan requirements; redevelopment of such sites to other uses including permanent housing must be consistent with the density specified by the underlying land use category. Public and private schools may be found compatible with this category. Residential land use categories designated in the North Area include H2 (Residential 2 – not to exceed a maximum residential density of two dwelling units per acre) and H5 (Residential 5 – not to exceed a maximum residential density of five dwelling units per acre).



SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT SEMI-RURAL DEVELOPMENT RURAL DEVELOPMENT ISOLATED DEVELOPMENT

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

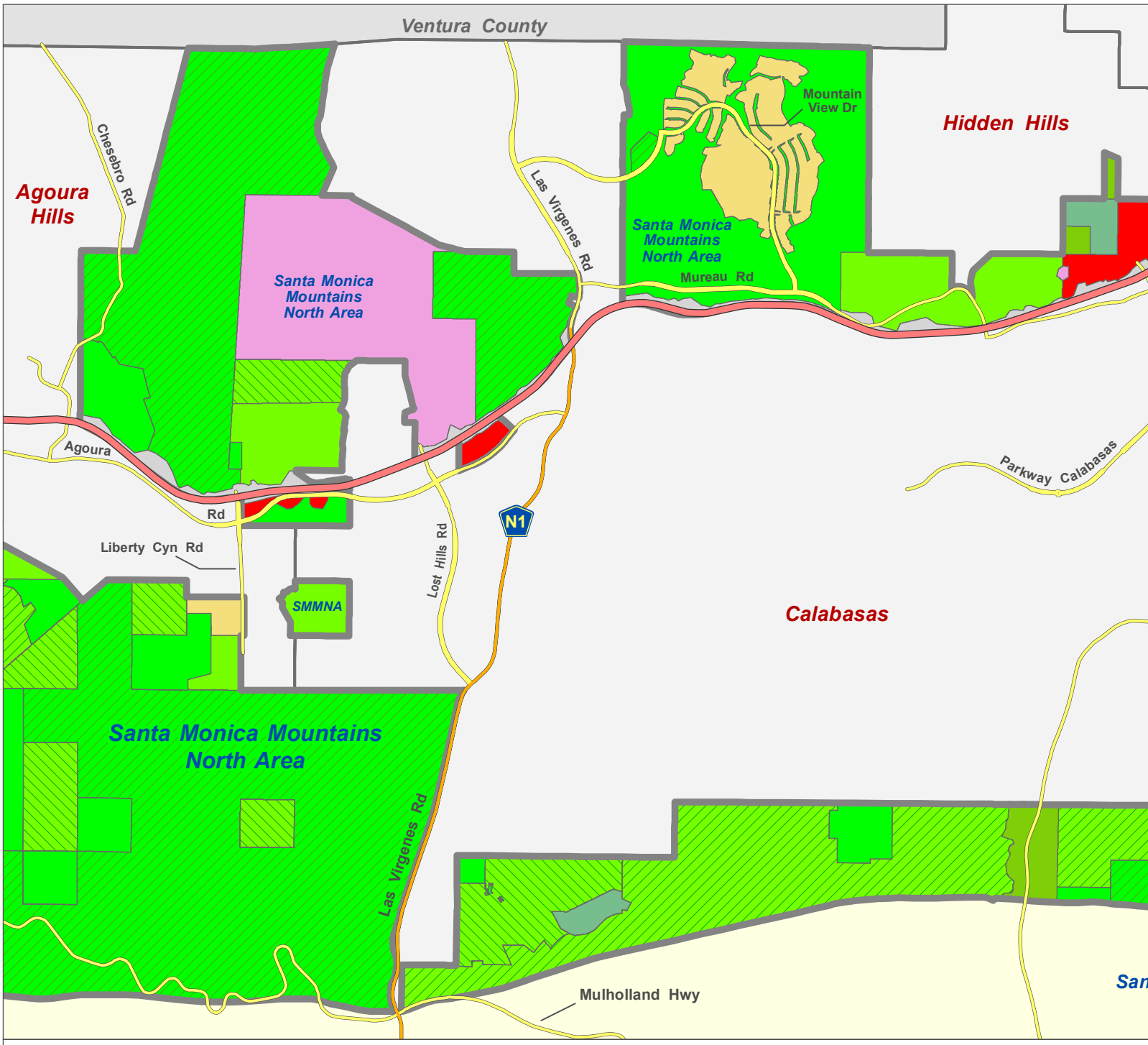
Rural Commercial

The Rural Commercial category provides areas for residents and visitors to obtain goods and services. This category is generally located where such uses have existed historically or where they would be positioned to meet the needs of residents and visitors. Additionally, it is intended to guide future commercial development to be supportive and compatible with maintaining the rural and semi-rural character of the North. The primary purpose of areas designated as Commercial is to provide appropriately located areas for the general shopping and commercial service needs of area residents and workers, as well as the needs of highway users and tourists. Additionally, where areas are designated as Rural Commercial adjacent to Open Space or Rural Land, appropriate uses may include restaurants, general stores, bed-and-breakfast lodging, private recreation of a commercial nature including fish ponds, equestrian facilities, club houses connected to a private recreation use, and visitor-serving uses for visitors to the recreation areas of the Santa Monica Mountains. The maximum land use intensity is 0.5 floor area ratio (FAR).

Public and Semi-Public Facilities

The Public and Semi-Public Facilities category identifies lands that are used for various types of public and community-serving facilities owned and operated by public agencies, special districts, non-profit organizations, and other entities. The primary purpose of areas designated as Public and Semi-Public Facilities is to provide appropriately located areas for the conduct of activities by public and quasi-public agencies, including landfills, probation camps, educational facilities, and public service facilities.

Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Land Use Policy - Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan

- CR - Rural Commercial
- H2 - Residential 2 (2 du/ac max)
- H5 - Residential 5 (5 du/ac max)
- OS-C - Open Space Conservation
- OS-PR - Open Space Parks
- P - Public and Semi-Public Facilities
- RL1 - Rural Land 1 (1 du/ac max)
- RL2 - Rural Land 2 (1 du/2 ac max)
- RL5 - Rural Land 5 (1 du/5 ac max)
- RL10 - Rural Land 10 (1 du/10 ac max)
- RL20 - Rural Land 20 (1 du/20 ac max)
- TC - Transportation Corridor

Base Layers

- Major Road
- Highway
- Freeway
- Other Uninco
- Incorporated

Figure 7:
Land Use Policy (Eastern Portion)

Valley Circle Blvd
Ventura Blvd
101
N Topanga Canyon Blvd
Wells Dr
Calabasas Rd
Mulholland Dr
Los Angeles
27
Mulholland Hwy
Old Topanga Canyon Rd
Santa Monica Mountains
North Area
ta Monica Mountains
Coastal Zone
N Topanga Canyon Blvd

orporated Area

City

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Dept. of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Miles

0 1 2

N

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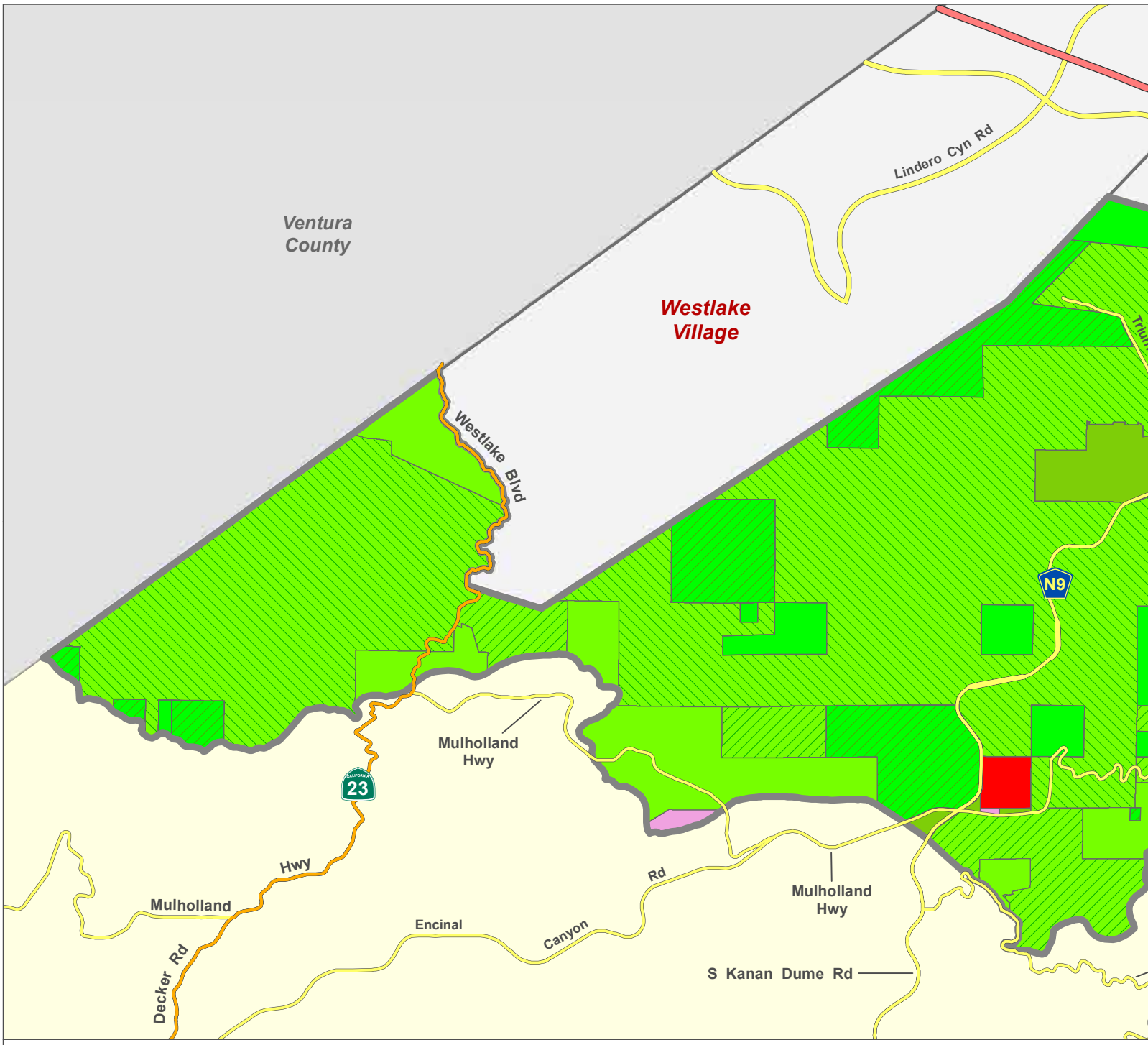
Santa Monica Mountains North Area



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- RL20 - Rural Land 20 (1 du/20 ac max)
- TC - Transportation Corridor
- W - Water

Base Layers

- Major Road
- Highway
- Freeway
- Other Uninco
- Incorporated

Figure 7:
Land Use Policy (Western Portion)

Agoura Hills

Santa Monica Mountains North Area

101

Agoura Rd

Cornell Rd

Liberty Cyn Rd

Calabasas

SMMNA

Lost Hills Rd

N1

N Kanan Rd

Santa Monica Mountains North Area

Mulholland Hwy

Las Virgenes Rd

Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone

Latigo Canyon Rd

orporated Area

City

Area Mapped

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Dept. of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Miles

0 1 2

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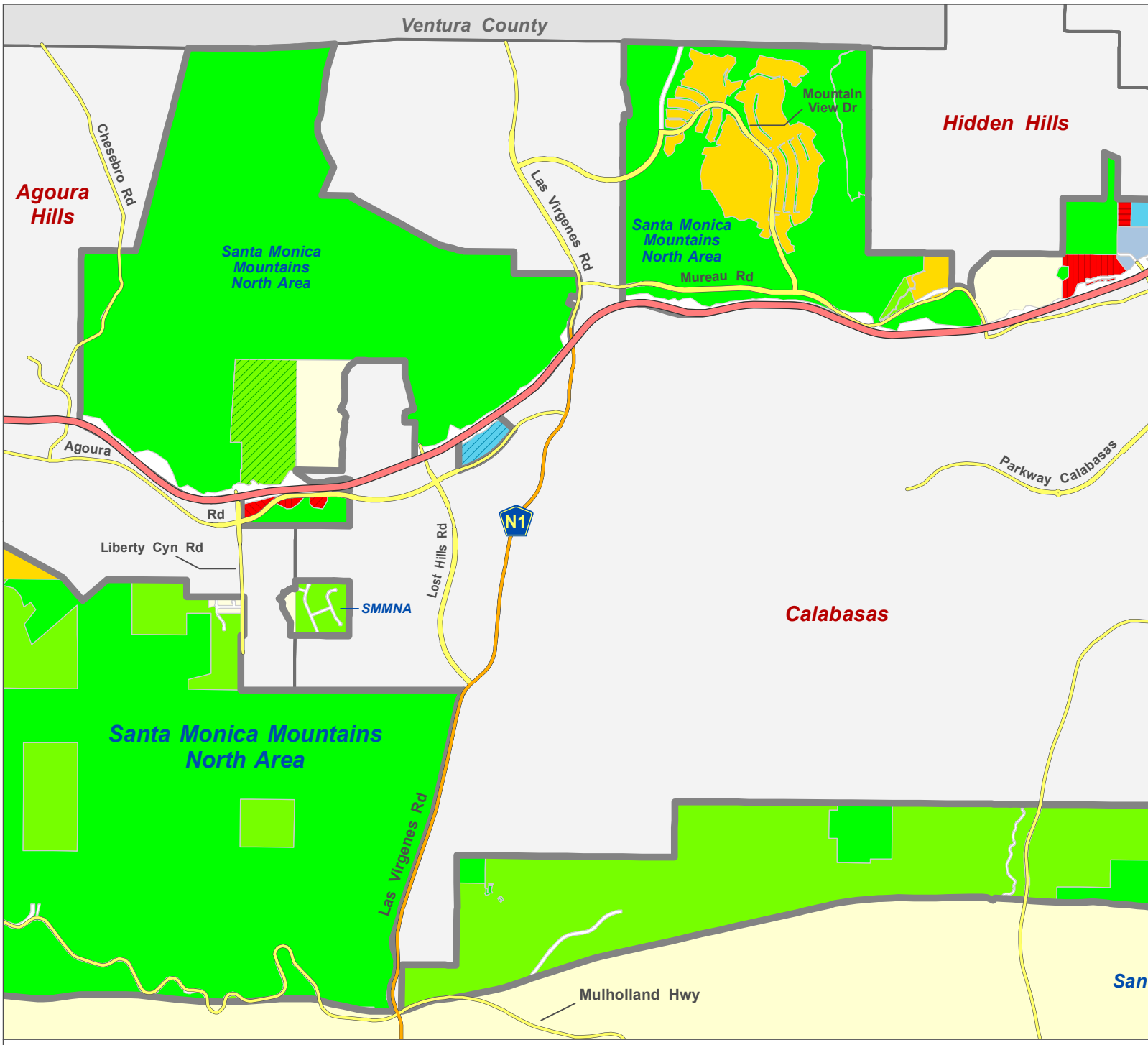
Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Zoning Categories - Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan

- R-1 - Single-Family Residence
- RPD - Residential Planned Development
- A-1 - Light Agricultural
- A-2 - Heavy Agricultural
- C-2 - Neighborhood Business
- C-3 - General Commercial
- C-M - Commercial Manufacturing
- C-R - Commercial Recreation
- CPD - Commercial Planned Development
- M-1 - Light Manufacturing
- M-2 - Heavy Manufacturing
- MPD - Manufacturing--Industrial Planned
- O-S - Open Space
- R-R - Resort And Recreation

Base Layers

- Major Road
- Highway
- Freeway
- Other Unin
- Incorporate

Figure 8: Zoning (Eastern Portion)

Valley Circle Blvd
Ventura Blvd
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N Topanga Canyon Blvd
Wells Dr
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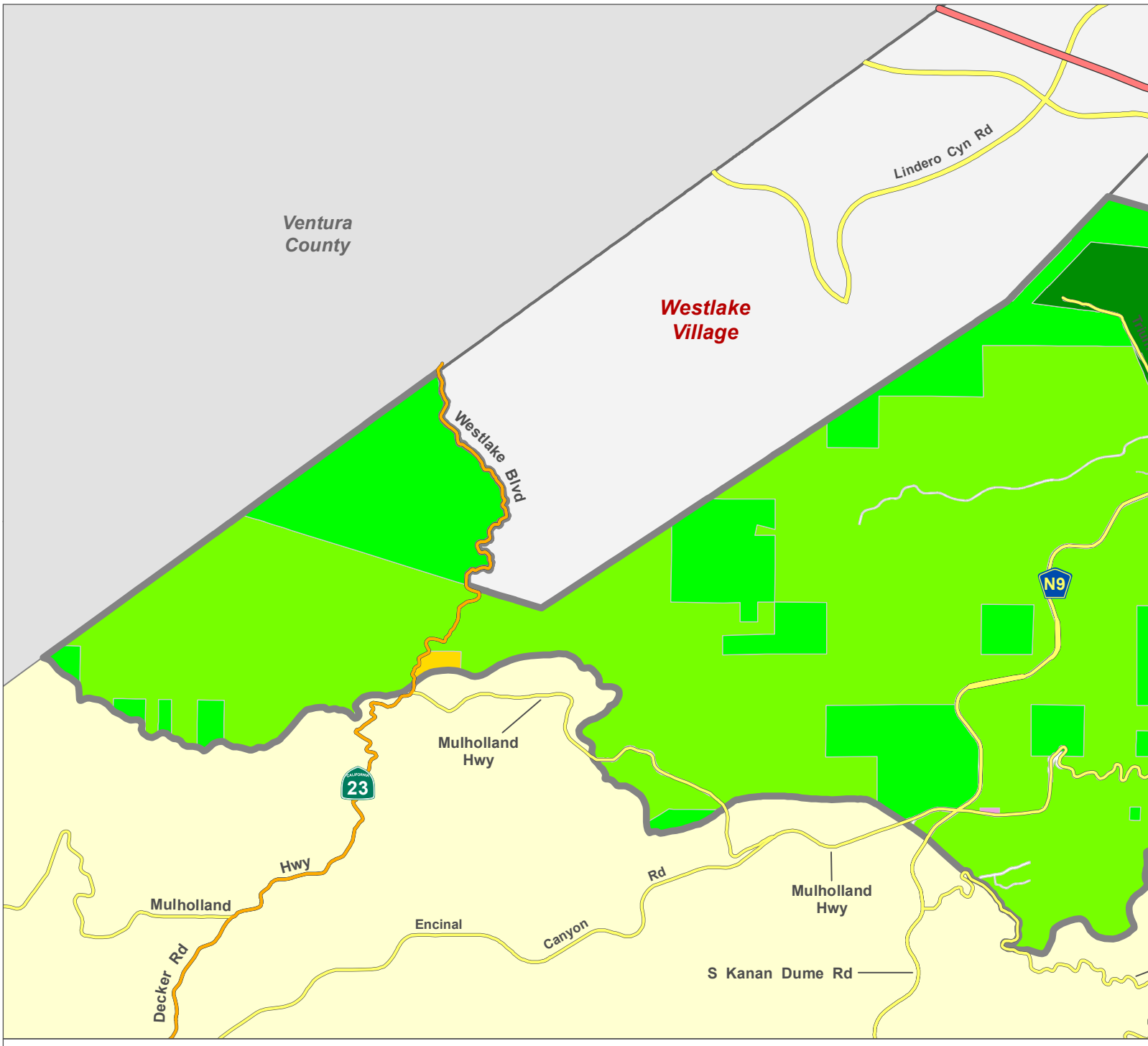
Santa Monica Mountains North Area



Zoning Categories - Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan

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- RPD - Residential Planned Development
- A-1 - Light Agricultural
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- C-2 - Neighborhood Business
- C-3 - General Commercial
- C-M - Commercial Manufacturing
- CPD - Commercial Planned Development
- IT - Institutional
- MPD - Manufacturing--Industrial Planned
- O-S - Open Space
- R-R - Resort And Recreation

Base Layers

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- Freeway
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Figure 8: Zoning (Western Portion)

Agoura Hills

Santa Monica Mountains North Area

Agoura Rd

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5 MOBILITY ELEMENT

Platanus racemosa (western Sycamore)
Credit: Joseph Decruyenaere

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CHAPTER 5: MOBILITY ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The ability to move people and goods within an area is necessary if a community is to be a desirable place in which to live, work, shop, and recreate. This mobility, or the lack thereof, is both a result and a determinant of the location and intensity of development.

Roads remain the primary determinant of access within the North Area, and represent a major dilemma for the North Area Plan. Traffic congestion from both periodic recreational visitors and weekday commuters often overloads sections of the Ventura Freeway and the area's roadway network, and creates potentially serious safety problems. Much of this congestion is due to through-traffic beginning and ending outside of the planning area. To address some of these issues, the North Area Plan focuses on mitigating the traffic and access impacts from existing uses within the North Area, and limiting development that would necessitate increasing the capacity of roadways or generate a significant increase in vehicle miles traveled.

Several significant circulation and capacity problems currently constrain the Ventura Freeway and other regionally significant highways such as Malibu Canyon Road, Las Virgenes Road, Agoura Road, and Kanan-Dume Road. Many commuters traverse the Ventura Freeway through the corridor traveling to metropolitan Los Angeles. Because of serious traffic congestion problems in the San Fernando Valley and the Sepulveda Pass, a number of these commuters take a "Z" pattern route through the Santa Monica Mountains to use Pacific Coast Highway. Rural roads through the Santa Monica Mountains area are, therefore, also commuter routes to West Los Angeles and the South Bay. Recognizing this pattern of travel is central to developing effective circulation and transportation alternatives policies for the Santa Monica Mountains.

Physical and environmental constraints are significant deterrents to highway expansion throughout much of the planning area. Because of the mountainous topography within the boundary of – as well as surrounding – the North Area Plan, and the existence of unstable hillsides and sensitive environmental resources, costs (both in dollars, and in the destruction of habitat) for extending or constructing major new roadways are exorbitantly high, even if physical and environmental mitigation could be provided. Further, widening roadways is proven to lead to "induced congestion" in which added capacity only encourages more vehicle travel, begetting yet more congestion. In recognition of the problems inherent in constructing, widening, or extending roadways through the area's natural terrain, policies have existed for the past 40 years limiting expansion of the area's existing roadway system. This Plan supports continuing such limits.

Furthermore, the ability of local municipalities to influence the ultimate configuration of the interchanges and freeway ramps within the area is limited since modifications to these interchanges and ramps are primarily under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Furthermore, funds for improvements to freeway bridges and interchanges are extremely limited.

To facilitate physical mobility in a manner consistent with the overall circulation needs of the region, this element of the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan addresses the following issues:

- **Balancing and Managing Roadways with Environmental Protection**
- **Transportation Alternatives**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The guiding principle for facilitating mobility is:

The area's roadway and transportation system is an integral part of community character. Facilities and programs to reduce vehicle miles traveled must be implemented within a framework of preserving the natural environment and protecting the unique character of the individual communities within the North Area.

The transportation system in the Santa Monica Mountains needs improvement, but past experience has shown that road construction and maintenance have adversely impacted the area's natural beauty and environmental resources. Thus, the County, in cooperation with the Caltrans and the adjacent cities, will approach future transportation improvements based on the guiding principle.

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BALANCING AND MANAGING ROADWAYS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Road construction and maintenance can significantly impact the environment. The development and improvement of roads often involve major landform modifications, which in the rugged terrain of the Santa Monica Mountains can result in erosion, siltation, and rockfall, impacting downstream waters and degrading scenic and other sensitive resources.

The physical and environmental characteristics of the Santa Monica Mountains have largely precluded major improvements to the road network and the construction of additional roads. The North Area Plan seeks to improve mobility in and through the planning area, while protecting the environment, primarily through transportation system management tools, as well as through supporting methods to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips and total vehicle miles traveled. Transportation system management tools focus on improvements within the existing right-of-way to make links and intersections operate more efficiently. Computerized signalization at intersections and synchronization of signals along a link can result in more efficient traffic movement. The flow of traffic can be improved by reducing interruptions to flow, such as controlling access to links from private driveways. Turn-out pockets and special purpose lane additions are other options available to make the existing system work more efficiently. Promoting carpooling and transit access and guiding cut-through commuter traffic onto major highways rather than local roads further reduce the volume of traffic on the North Area road network. The application of these techniques in lieu of road construction has the added value of assisting in implementing the protection of sensitive biological resources.

Mulholland Highway had been the Santa Monica Mountains' primary east-west regional traffic artery, with the cross-mountain roads serving as connecting links to Pacific Coast Highway. Completion of the Ventura Freeway in the 1970s served to connect large undeveloped blocks of land in Ventura County to employment centers in the San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles. However, construction of the freeway also eliminated alternatives to the congested US 101. As a result, there has been an increase in traffic along the cross-mountain roads and Mulholland Highway, and there is no convenient alternate route for local traffic and recreational users. Periodic highway tie-ups cause traffic to spill out onto the local roadway system, which is not designed to accommodate peak-hour through-traffic.

The County can work to improve the efficiency of the roadways through transportation system management tools. However, the North Area Plan must address the other side of the equation – system demand. Through the use of transportation demand management, the County must ensure that additional development will not significantly impact, and may improve, the existing circulation system in the plan area.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Balancing Roadways and Environmental Protection

Goal MO-1:

A transportation system consistent with the area's rural and scenic quality, and biological resources.

Policies:

- **MO-1:** Maximize the efficiency of highways consistent with environmental protection and neighborhood preservation, without widening roadways to increase capacity.

- **MO-2:** Require all roadway maintenance and improvements to be accomplished in a manner protective of adjacent, streams, drainage courses, wildlife corridors, and other sensitive areas that may be impacted by such activity. Where feasible, roadway improvement projects should include drainage improvements to reduce erosion and polluted runoff.

- **MO-3:** Expand roadway system capacity only where environmental resources (habitats, habitat linkages, viewsheds, trails, etc.), residential neighborhoods, and rural communities are adequately protected. Roadway widening to increase capacity shall be prohibited.

- **MO-4:** Prohibit the practice of side casting surplus fill material from road construction, maintenance, or repair. In emergencies, public agencies may temporarily store excess cut material on graded surfaces within rights-of-way using the most current BMPs to eliminate erosion into

adjacent drainage courses. Ensure that landslide material is deposited in permitted landfills or sites with valid permits to accept fill.

- **MO-5:** Where appropriate, increase the capacity of existing major and secondary highways through the application of transportation system management tools within established rights-of-way and roadway widths by:
    - Minimizing the number of driveway access points by consolidating driveways and exploring other options to reduce uncontrolled access;
    - Minimizing or eliminating conflicting turning movements on links or at intersections;
    - Restricting on-street parking during peak travel periods where such restrictions will not adversely impact public access to parks; and
    - Employing traffic signal synchronization technology.
- **MO-6:** Improve roadway efficiency and highway access through redesign of road intersections and establishment of periodic passing, turnout, and acceleration/deceleration lanes, where appropriate.
- **MO-7:** Ensure that all recreational easements and other recreational resources are protected during and after roadway construction, maintenance, and repair.
- **MO-8:** Maintain appropriate rural and mountain road standards, consistent with public safety requirements, for the rural portions of the Santa Monica Mountains. Require the use of the rural road cross section as the default standard in the North Area.
- **MO-9:** Encourage the routing of through-traffic onto highways and designated arterial streets, while discouraging through-traffic in residential neighborhoods.
- **MO-10:** Analyze and require mitigation of the traffic impacts from projects that generate substantial amounts of vehicle miles traveled.
- **MO-11:** Limit the requirement for curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and streetlights to non rural areas, unless required by public safety considerations.
- **MO-12:** Allow road and driveway improvements only where they provide legal access to: 1) existing, lawfully-developed parcels; or 2) legal parcels with all required permits.
- **MO-13:** Support Caltrans' efforts to improve roadway efficiency and safety on Pacific Coast Highway, the 101 Freeway, the 405 Freeway, and on other State routes.

Goal MO-2:

A safe and efficient roadway network that protects environmental resources and existing neighborhoods.

Policies:

- **MO-14:** Encourage community service uses that reduce the length and number of vehicle trips.
- **MO-15:** Provide opportunities, such as park-and-ride lots, for local residents to car- or bus-pool to work, thereby reducing the number of single-occupant vehicle trips.
- **MO-16:** Improve roadways as appropriate to accommodate any new development and anticipated increases in recreational activities. Curbs, gutters, and sidewalks should only be used where deemed necessary for the safety of pedestrian and vehicular traffic by Public Works.
- **MO-17:** Limit the density and intensity of development in rural and mountainous areas to a level that can be accommodated by existing road capacity and without creating significant adverse impacts.
- **MO-18:** Analyze the traffic impacts of a proposed development by considering the project's system-wide effects, including effects on transportation alternatives and the potential for bottlenecks in the area's roadway system.
- **MO-19:** Require each new development causing cumulative circulation impacts to construct or fund its fair share of any necessary circulation system improvements or additions.
- **MO-20:** Where funding sources prove inadequate, establish assessment districts, impact fees and/or other equitable funding mechanisms to augment roadway funds.

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TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives to the private automobile - including public transit, bicycles, and walking - are opportunities to lessen traffic impacts on the region's roadways, and are a higher priority than expanding the existing roadway system. The provision of transit alternatives by the various public and private transportation agencies in the region will also help to improve accessibility to recreational opportunities and resources in the Santa Monica Mountains. Frequent and convenient transit service would make it easier for people to leave automobiles at home or at staging areas when visiting recreation areas and would reduce the impact of the automobile on the area's tranquil setting. Transit may also help to increase usage of lesser-known recreational facilities.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Transportation Alternatives

Goal MO-3:

Alternative travel modes to the single-occupant automobile for local, commuter, and recreational trips.

Policies:

- **MO-21:** Encourage transportation alternatives, including public transit service, staging areas, and park-and-ride lots, both within the region and from metropolitan Los Angeles to the area's major parks and recreation areas.

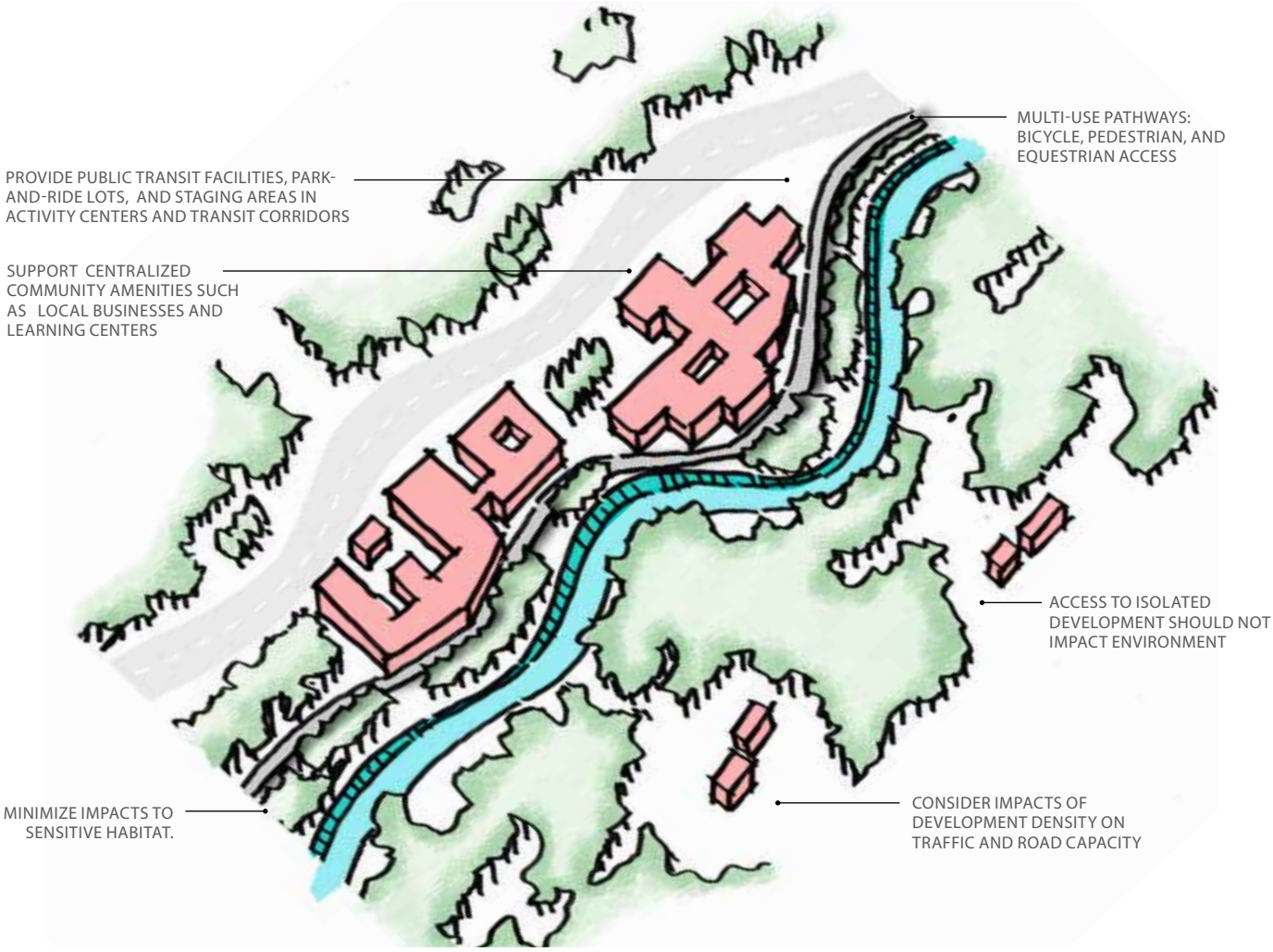

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

- **M0-22:** Encourage the extension of public transit facilities and services, including shuttle programs, to maximize public access and recreation opportunities.

- **M0-23:** Provide safe and accessible bikeways on existing roadways and support related facilities in the North Area..

- **M0-24:** Encourage local employers to implement van-pools and carpools from homes and worksites in the Santa Monica Mountains.

- **M0-25:** Work with surrounding cities and transit service providers to offer commuter bus services between inland communities and coastal cities.

- **M0-26:** Require new development to provide for alternative transportation needs on existing roadways, such as bike or transit facilities, where appropriate, when acquisition and improvement activities occur. Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions to develop and incorporate public transit-friendly design features into new projects and other discretionary project applications.

- **M0-27:** Incorporate bike lanes and/or bike use signage into local road designs wherever feasible and safe.

- **M0-28:** Ensure that improvements to any roadway or trail containing a bikeway and/or trail do not adversely affect the provision of bicycle or trail use.

6 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

Juglans californica (California black walnut)
Credit: Joseph Decruyenaere

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CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The location and amount of new development are determined in part by the availability of public services and facilities, including water and sewer, public schools, fire and police services, and solid waste services. Supplying these services in the North Area is very costly and challenging due to the area's physical size, topography, and development patterns. Unlike urbanized areas where a higher density population can share costs, providing infrastructure and public services in rural areas can be more expensive per household because costs must be distributed among fewer residents.

This element addresses the following public services:

- **Water and sewer services;**
- **Public schools;**
- **Fire and paramedic services;**
- **Law enforcement services; and**
- **Solid waste services.**

Additional services and facilities include parks and recreation (Conservation and Natural Resources Element) and transportation (Mobility Element). Furthermore, private onsite wastewater treatment systems are addressed in the Water Quality section of the Conservation and Natural Resources Element.

The Public Services and Facilities Element establishes policies that support existing and new housing and other development in areas with adequate public services and facilities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The guiding principle to ensure the provision of adequate services and facilities is:

Public facilities should support existing and approved land uses, and are not intended to induce further development, consistent with environmental carrying capacities, and the need to protect the unique character of existing communities.

Until the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, most public facilities were constructed by public agencies as part of their capital improvement programs. These programs were instrumental in directing the location and timing of development. With the passage of Proposition 13, responsibility for constructing capital facilities has primarily been passed to individual development projects. Because public facilities are now largely constructed on a project-by-project basis, predicting the timing and location of new development is more difficult.

The presence of existing infrastructure, however, does not justify developing land in a manner that is inconsistent with preserving significant environmental features, the unique character of existing communities, or public health and safety. New development must allow for environmental preservation; the provision of new infrastructure and services must be considered within this context.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) supplies all potable and reclaimed water to the general region, with the exception of the area east of Old Topanga Canyon Road, which is served by Los Angeles County Waterworks District 29. Water, both potable and reclaimed, is distributed throughout the District by a network of underground water mains of varying sizes, with the central spine of the system generally paralleling the Ventura Freeway.

Although development in the area can be found in varied topography, such as valleys and steep hillsides, the LVMWD has few problems and constraints in delivering adequate water supply and water pressure to these areas. In more remote areas and areas with high elevations, the extension of water facilities is possible, but is extremely costly and could result in significant environmental impacts.

Water supply allocations to the LVMWD are received from the water wholesaler, the Metropolitan Water District. Supplies may vary, due largely to cyclical drought conditions. In approving new development, consideration should be given to the long-term availability of water supply.

The LVMWD is also responsible for wastewater treatment and disposal services within the North Area Plan's boundaries. Local feeders are maintained by the LA Consolidated

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Sewer Maintenance District , and are connected to the LVMWD's main trunk lines. Wastewater is conveyed through LVMWD trunk lines to the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility where the sewage receives tertiary treatment.

With the location of the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility near the base of the Malibu Creek Watershed, most wastewater from the study area reaches the facility by means of natural gravity flow. According to the LVMWD, no foreseeable system constraints or deficiencies should occur.

Although a majority of the study area is connected to sewers, onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS)serve most of the rural hillside areas. Previous development within the hillside areas have been largely scattered, requiring the use of OWTS. Although many OWTS employ state-of-the-art technologies, numerous septic tank failures have been reported in older systems within the mountain areas, which have caused environmental damage to surrounding and downstream riparian areas.

As new development occurs within these hillside areas, development may be clustered in order to preserve hillsides and open spaces. This clustering of new units will promote the preservation of hillside and open space areas, but may require the extension of sewer lines because of the size of clustered lots. Because individual clusters will be widely separated, the per unit cost for providing local sewage collection facilities may increase for these developments due to the relatively long distances that sewer lines will need to be run to connect to the LVMWD's trunk sewer system.

NOT RECOMMENDED: SPRAWLED DEVELOPMENT

SPRAWLED DEVELOPMENT OVER-EXTENDS INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES, AND SEVERS HABITAT CONNECTIVITY.

RECOMMENDED: CLUSTERED DEVELOPMENT

CLUSTERED DEVELOPMENT UTLITIZES SHARED INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC SERVICES, AND FIRE PROTECTION, WHILE PRESERVING HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

GOALS AND POLICIES

Water and Sewer Services

Goal PF-1:

Adequate water supplies and water and sewage disposal systems to support existing and future planned land uses.

Policies:

- **PF-1:** Coordinate the land development review process with the LVMWD or Los Angeles County Water Works District 29 to ensure that adequate water supplies and adequate water and sewer infrastructure are available to support existing and planned development.
- **PF-2:** If new development cannot be connected to municipal services, ensure and identify the source of water supply, availability, and delivery for new development.
- **PF-3:** Minimize the need for the consumption of new water supplies through active water conservation programs and the use of reclaimed water – on site, wherever possible.
- **PF-4:** Encourage tertiary treatment of wastewater, which will help to improve effluent quality, while expanding the potential uses for reclaimed water.
- **PF-5:** Reduce the need for exploiting domestic water supplies for purposes where potable water is not required.
- **PF-6:** Require the use of reclaimed wastewater for golf courses, landscape irrigation, and other purposes, including the maintenance of public lands and fire breaks, where reclaimed water can be feasibly provided.
- **PF-7:** Provide for the expansion of existing community sewer systems in areas of demonstrated need.
- **PF-8:** Prohibit the construction of small "package" wastewater treatment plants, except in areas where this is the desired long-term wastewater management solution to the satisfaction of Public Works and Public Health.
- **PF-9:** Avoid the build-out of clustered subdivisions where the cumulative effect of OWTS will negatively impact the environment, either by stream pollution or by contributing to the potential failure of unstable soils.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The North Area is served by the Las Virgenes Unified School District (LVUSD), the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD). The LVUSD encompasses the central portion of the North Area Plan area, as well as much of the unincorporated Coastal Zone. A small area in the eastern portion of the North Area is within LAUSD boundaries. The SMMUSD includes a small area of the western portion of the North Area.

Schools make the North Area a desirable place to live. Not only is the quality of schools high in the area, but their location, nestled in the Santa Monica Mountains, provides an opportunity to incorporate outdoor environmental education into the school curriculum.

As the area population grows or demographics change, school facilities may need to expand or change. Coordination between the County and the school districts is important in order to protect the quality of life for both existing and future area residents.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Public Schools

Goal PF-2:

Adequate public school facilities to meet the needs of communities in the North Area.

Policies:

- **PF-10:** Cooperate with school districts to identify the impacts of population and demographic changes, which may affect the need for new schools, may lead to school closures, may require the re-opening of closed schools, or may lead to the decision that existing school sites be preserved for meeting future needs.

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FIRE AND PARAMEDIC SERVICES

The Santa Monica Mountains have been designated by the Los Angeles County Fire Department and the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (Cal Fire) as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the most dangerous classification. Created by the County Fire Department, the Consolidated Fire Protection District (CFPD) is the primary provider of fire, paramedic, lifeguard, and fire inspection services in the area. American Medical Response is the primary provider of ambulance services. The Ventura County Fire Department and the City of Los Angeles provide mutual aid within the area. In addition, the California Department of Forestry provides fire crews for severe and widespread fire emergencies.

Specialized services like hazardous materials, air rescue helicopter, air ambulance helicopter, and fire suppression helicopter are provided by the CFPD centrally. A helicopter responds to heavy trauma incidents when street congestion and/or other factors preclude timely response by ground-based units.

There are numerous challenges to providing adequate fire and paramedic services in the Santa Monica Mountains due to the large size of the service area, the relatively small number of streets, and traffic congestion. In some areas, emergency response takes longer due to greater travel times and congestion. Because the Ventura Freeway and Mulholland Highway are the only major east-west corridors in the area, these streets become congested, which impacts response time.

It is also difficult to access certain communities. Many of the streets are narrow and are often lined with parked vehicles. The most challenging response involves isolated locations where streets are unpaved and gates are locked. In remote areas, it may take as long as 30 minutes for the Fire Department to reach a victim and more time for a victim to be evacuated to a hospital.

Topanga Canyon is an especially challenging area to serve, because it takes 15 to 20 minutes for any back-up crews to reach an incident. The CFPD addresses this problem by staffing Station 69 in Topanga with personnel trained both as firefighters and paramedics, and by relying on on-call firefighters to respond to structure fires with a reserve engine. In addition, Malibou Lake and Old Topanga do not have fire stations within their communities.

Another challenge is providing service in the Topanga and Malibu Creek State Parks to emergency medical services (EMS) incidents on remote hiking and mountain biking trails. In many instances, CFPD supplements service with helicopter crews to reach remote emergency incidents.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Fire and Paramedic Services

Goal PF-3:

Adequate fire and paramedic services to meet existing and future demand.

Policies:

- **PF-11:** Continue to consult and coordinate with the Fire Department as part of the project and environmental (CEQA) review process.
- **PF-12:** Review new development for adequate water supply and pressure, fire hydrants, and access to structures.
- **PF-13:** Require, where appropriate, on-site fire suppression systems for all new development to reduce the dependence on Fire Department equipment and personnel.
- **PF-14:** Limit the length of private access roads to reduce the amount of time necessary for the Fire Department to reach residences and to minimize risks to firefighters.
- **PF-15:** Require clearly visible address signs during the day and night for easy identification during emergencies.
- **PF-16:** Facilitate the formation of volunteer fire departments and EMS providers.
- **PF-17:** Encourage clustering of development to provide for more localized and effective fire protection measures such as consolidated fuel modification and brush clearance, fire break maintenance, firefighting equipment access, and water service.
- **PF-18:** Limit the exposure of first responders, residents, and structures to fire risk within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) and in the Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs) of the wildland-urban interface.

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is the main provider of law enforcement services in the Santa Monica Mountains area. Specifically, the Sheriff's Lost Hills Station is the primary facility serving the unincorporated communities as well as the cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Malibu, and Westlake Village. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is responsible for providing traffic safety and service to users of highways in the unincorporated areas and freeways. The CHP also provides law enforcement assistance to the Sheriff's Department when situations exceed the limits of local resources.

The Sheriff's average response time to emergency incidents in the area ranges from five to seven minutes. Response times to certain parklands could be longer given their remoteness. A challenge in providing effective law enforcement service in the area relates to the street layouts and the lack of accessibility by patrol car over narrow, unimproved roads.

Future development would be required to examine the potential increase in demand for police services, in conjunction with subsequent environmental review. There is potential to aggravate the existing emergency access constraints should roadway conditions (e.g., traffic congestion) deteriorate.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Law Enforcement Services

Goal PF-4:

Adequate law enforcement services to meet local needs and provide a safe and secure environment for people and property.

Policies:

- **PF-19:** Consult and coordinate with the Sheriff's Department and CHP as part of the environmental review process (CEQA) for projects.
- **PF-20:** Support existing programs such as Neighborhood Watch and encourage expanded or new programs that focus on the elimination of crime, such as anti-graffiti programs.
- **PF-21:** Support efforts to eliminate street racing activities, including the seizure and forfeiture of vehicles used in speed contests or in exhibitions of speed, to address the nuisance and unsafe conditions created by the use of vehicles in such activities.

SOLID WASTE SERVICES

Solid waste collection and hauling services are provided by private operators in the North Area. All non-hazardous waste collected is disposed in the Calabasas Landfill. The landfill, which began operating in 1961, is owned by the County and operated by the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County under a joint powers agreement. The landfill accepts waste from the Santa Monica Mountains, Thousand Oaks, and western portions of the City of Los Angeles including Brentwood, Encino, and Granada Hills.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Solid Waste Services

Goal PF-5:

Adequate solid waste services to meet existing and future demands without degrading the quality of the natural environment.

Policies:

- **PF-22:** Design all new buildings with proper facilities for solid waste storage, handling, and collection pickup to control direct impacts of solid waste pollution as well as indirect impacts through wildlife scavenging.
- **PF-23:** Prohibit commercial and industrial land uses which generate large volumes of solid waste.
- **PF-24:** Require commercial and industrial uses that use hazardous materials to demonstrate proper transport, storage, and disposal of such materials in accordance with all local, State, and federal regulations.

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