



Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan



Los Angeles County
REGIONAL PLANNING



DRAFT

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NORTH AREA PLAN

The *Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan* (North Area Plan and SMMNAP are synonyms used in this document) is a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan. This document serves as an update to the North Area Plan adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in October 2000. The North Area Plan's primary role is to provide more focused policy for the 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 county-wide General Plan as it applies to this planning area.

The North Area Plan identified the concerns and issues of the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains region in 2000.

The North Area Plan serves to:

- Identify the community's environmental, social, and economic goals.
- Provide a summary of the various land uses in the North Area and the County's goals for creating the greatest compatibility where appropriate.
- State the County's policies on existing and future development needed to achieve community goals.
- Establish within local government the ability to respond to problems and opportunities concerning community development in a way consistent with local, regional and state goals and policies.
- Inform citizens about their community and allow for opportunities to participate in the planning and decision-making process of local government.
- Identify the need for and methods of improving the coordination of community development activities among all local units of government.
- Create a basis for subsequent planning efforts, such as the preparation of specific plans and special studies.

B. 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 overall goal of the North Area Plan is to 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, and ensure that new development is compatible with and enhances the quality of existing communities, and provide for a wide range of public and private recreational opportunities.

The area's diverse topography, biotic habitats, and rural/urban interface establish a character, sense of openness, and scenic experience that pervades the entire mountain area. These unique characteristics have intertwined to establish the public heritage of the area for this and future generations. The area's recreational opportunities and its rural and semi-rural lifestyle amenities are highly attractive to those living in nearby metropolitan areas. Natural conditions include an array of significant vegetative and habitat resources, key watersheds that drain into Santa Monica Bay, spectacular views, steep unstable slopes, and a high potential for brush fires. Water quality concerns are also prevalent, as much of the area drains through natural canyons into the Santa Monica Bay. In addition, almost the entire North Area Plan area is part of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, a unit of the National Park System. The national recreation area includes both public and private lands. Successful management of this unique park unit depends on private/public collaboration with a common goal of natural resource preservation. Several federal park sites, Malibu Creek State Park, and open space lands managed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy--over 5,000 acres in total just within the North Plan area--also represent a public heritage and trust requiring appropriate protection.

The scale of development that is possible within the North Area Plan area is constrained by not only natural resources--including the need for habitat linkages, but also by the cumulative limitations of infrastructure and public services in the area, and by public health issues related to the quality of water downstream and in the Santa Monica Bay. No new freeways are planned to serve this area, and the existing roadway network, with identified improvements that can be accommodated in an environmentally sensitive manner, is the only means of vehicular circulation. There will be no areawide flood control system of concrete channels carrying off storm runoff and debris and protecting development. Finally, as noted by the Los Angeles County Wildland Fire Safety Panel, the Santa Monica Mountains are a fire-fed ecosystem in which fires are a natural occurrence, and homes within wildland areas face a potentially substantial risk due to the likelihood and severity of wind-driven wildland fires in the mountains, since it is impossible, once a wildfire has reached a critical size and intensity during Santa Ana wind conditions, to provide enough fire equipment to stop the fire without risk to structures.

Los Angeles County is committed to making consistent development-related decisions within a framework that recognizes the dictates of the land and the problems and risks that are inherent in attempting to overcome those dictates--and that there are circumstances in which those dictates cannot be overcome.

C. SETTING

The Santa Monica Mountains North planning 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 (Map 1). The North Area encompasses 32.2 square miles and consists of a distinctive group of communities surrounded by steep mountains, rolling hills, canyons, streams, and oak woodlands. 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 Local Coastal Program on policy issues that also face the North Area.

Surrounding cities include the City of Los Angeles to the east, Calabasas to the north and northeast, Agoura Hills to the north, Westlake Village to the northwest, and the City of Malibu to the south.

Development throughout the North Area is typically concentrated in subdivisions or dotted along the hillside roads. Many of the subdivisions in the North Area are considered antiquated, or were recorded prior to the 1929 when the Subdivision Map Act was amended to afford local governments more control over development. Areas such as Topanga Canyon and Malibu Lake are antiquated subdivisions that need careful regulation to ensure that there is a balance between new development and the availability of services and amenities.

The North Area is subject to considerable natural hazards that can affect people and property. Much of the terrain in the North Area is sloped, a substantial portion of land with slopes greater than 25 percent. The area is subject to widespread slope instability and is entirely within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the most urgent classification for wildfire safety purposes. These and other factors have resulted in land use patterns remaining stable with limited growth and development throughout the North Area. Park lands cover approximately 34 percent of the planning area, and include parts of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area, Topanga State Park, Malibu Creek State Park, and Charmlee Wilderness Park.

D. ORGANIZATION OF THE NORTH AREA PLAN

The North Area Plan consists of five elements that outline 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 Open Space Element;
- Safety and Noise Element;
- Land Use and Housing Element;
- Circulation Element;

- Public Facilities Element.

Glossary

Key terms used in the North Area Plan are defined, and such definitions are intended to be used in interpretation of goals and policies of the plan.

Appendices

The Appendices contain important background information for use in administration of the North Area Plan. Such material is not an official part of the North Area Plan and may be modified, updated or deleted as deemed appropriate by the Director of Planning.

E. HOW TO USE THE NORTH AREA PLAN

This Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan is a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan. All of its goals, policies, standards, and implementing actions must be consistent with the county-wide chapters and elements of the General Plan. This North Area Plan should be used in conjunction with the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District (CSD), a component of Los Angeles County Title 22, which implements specific development regulations for the various subareas within the North Area boundary.

Users should be guided by the following:

- Should any areas of conflicting interpretation arise, unless specifically noted, the provisions of this area plan 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 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, and the public is strongly encouraged to consult with County planning staff prior to making any substantial investment in reliance on the belief that any specific development is possible, including prior to investing in the preparation of development plans that might later prove to be inconsistent with the North Area Plan.
- Density Transfer: Following the provisions of the Countywide Plan, "a transfer of density within a project is allowed, regardless of the urban/non-urban boundary, where supported by geologic and/or topographic data and the change results in a superior design...etc.,"

subject to consistency findings with policies of the North Area Plan. The North Area Plan does not, however, support the creation of urban densities within rural areas.

- Staff Consultation: While the North Area Plan is meant to be a guide for the public in determining allowable uses of private property, the public is encouraged to consult with members of the County's planning staff prior to investing in the preparation of development plans that might later prove to be inconsistent with the North Area Plan.

- Grandfather Clause: With the exception of uses which this plan establishes a moratorium on, legally established uses in existence at the time of adoption of this North Area Plan are deemed to be consistent with this plan. Existing legal lots are not affected, and may be developed--following current development requirements--regardless of lot size. Applications requesting expansion of such uses, however, which are not consistent with the goals and policies of the North Area Plan--once it is adopted--will be required to file for an amendment to the Plan to proceed. Land division applications must meet the following general plan consistency requirements:

- Applications pending, and deemed complete, as of _____: Must be found consistent with the _____ Plan.

- Applications pending, but not deemed complete, as of _____ as well as all applications filed on or after _____: Must be found consistent with the plan in effect at the time of final County approval of tentative map.

Other discretionary applications such as zone changes, conditional use permits, oak tree permits must be found consistent with the plan in effect at the time of final County approval.

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 countywide, development in mountainous areas often require 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 sewage disposal 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 Game, and possibly from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers--in addition to compliance with County site design regulations.

F. AREA DEVELOPMENT

The Santa Monica Mountains are renowned for their stunning beauty and their isolation from the busy Los Angeles metropolitan area. While the North Area had a number of subdivided neighborhoods established throughout it at the beginning of the 20th century, development has since been restricted to preserve the natural 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 thin 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 mountains through limiting development and encouraging recreational uses.

G. PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

A number of comprehensive planning efforts and focused park and resource management plans have guided or influenced the regulation and development of the North Area plan update. These efforts are summarized below.

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Comprehensive Plan (1978): This 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 mountains.

Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Interim Area Plan (1981): The County adopted this plan as a first step in implemented comprehensive planning in the whole of 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 General Management Plan (1982): 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 plan was prepared by the National Park Service. Its overarching goal is for landowners and agencies to work together to create a system of land use, recreational opportunities, and resources conservation.

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 priorities for protection. The plan also proposed a broad range of methods for protecting land such as direct purchase or cooperative programs between landowners and local agencies for management of private open space.

Malibu Land Use Plan (1986): This land use plan was created to regulate development in the Coastal Zone of the Santa Monica Mountains. Accordingly, the plan resulted in the bifurcation of the mountains into two planning areas – the Coastal Zone and the North

Area. Ventura Freeway Corridor Areawide Plan (1993): In 1993, a coalition of four cities, the County, two municipal service agencies, and the National Park Service began preparation of this plan to address issues of growth, environmental management, and inter-jurisdictional coordination.

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. This time the 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. 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 Community Standards District 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 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 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 Plan (LIP). The Land Use Plan is a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan and provides goals and policies. The Local Implementation Plan 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 Zones biological resources.

H. REGION-WIDE PLANNING COORDINATION

The County of Los Angeles recognizes that planning in the Santa Monica Mountains calls for an interagency joint planning and consensus-building process involving negotiations, compromises, and resolutions between individual agencies with differing missions that provide essential services and facilities in the area. An integral part of the North Area Plan

is the recognition that when agencies provide essential services and facilities alongside other agencies, interagency negotiations must occur on how best to fulfill their different mandates.

For example, the Santa Monica Mountains and surrounding region are widely recognized for their natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities. Human activity, such as development, occupation, and use, can and often does impact natural resources. Continued open communication between the County and the National Park Service, as well as other park, land conservation and recreation-related agencies, including the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, should enable planning officials to strike mutually acceptable balances between natural resource preservation and human occupation/use.

I. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

[Reserved]

J. NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

In compliance with State law (Government Code §65352.3), the County contacted the Native American Heritage Commission in order to contact, provide notice to, refer plans to, and consult with tribes that have traditional lands located within the North Area, and to allow those tribes the opportunity to conduct consultations with the County for the purpose of preserving, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places located on land in the unincorporated territory that may be affected by the SMMNAP. The Commission provided the names of several tribes. These tribes were included in the outreach efforts for this SMMNAP.

K. RELATIONSHIP TO THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM

The 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 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 area. Notwithstanding this division by the Coastal Zone boundary, the County of Los Angeles is committed to the concept that planning for the entire Santa Monica Mountains should be governed by the following planning principle:

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.

L. 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 will govern the Santa Monica Mountains Planning Area.

All area plans are extensions of the General Plan and is 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, policies and implementation actions specific to the issues and needs of the Santa Monica Mountains.

II. CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

The recreational aspects of the Santa Monica Mountains establish a strong connection between the natural environmental and human activities within it. With the extensive amount of biological resources in the Santa Monica Mountains, this Plan Update contains a Biological Assessment in Appendix X. This Biological Assessment analyzed special-status riparian and animal species, Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs), habitat linkages and recommended Habitat Categories to be used in the SMMNA. It also details human and wildlife interactions in the Santa Monica Mountains. The goals and policies in this section were driven by this Biological Assessment and recommendations.

B. GUIDING PRINCIPLE

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

Resource protection has priority over development

The North Area Plan's jurisdiction encompasses a complex and naturally dynamic landscape that is dominated by the Santa Monica Mountains. The scenic beauty and environmental diversity of the area, in close proximity to the second largest urban population in the United States, 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 trustee, 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 both the natural and the man-made environmental quality 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. Sensitivity 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 needs to conform to, and become a part of, the natural setting.

The County supports the general goals established by the jurisdictions (including the County) and agencies participating in the areawide planning program. These goals are articulated in the General Goals section. They focus on the maintenance of the unique elements of the area's natural setting and environment that provide a pleasant environment in which to live and recreate as well as protect significant biota or representative natural habitats and linkages.

Thus, the provisions of this element provide detailed guidance designed to locate new development so that it conforms with constraints of the natural environment, contributes to the open space character of the area and protects sensitive watersheds, downstream water quality, coastal resources, Santa Monica Bay and the Los Angeles River. 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 land-forms, and the area's spectacular geologic formations, which provide a substantial recreational resource.

C. OPEN SPACE

Over 7,400 acres of major public open spaces lie within the North Plan area – 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-government organizations such as the Mountains Restoration Trust. Additional committed open space areas include permanent open space lands preserved as the result of various development approvals. Additionally, large blocks of privately-owned undeveloped lands that exist throughout the region function as open space when not fenced.

There are generally three types of open space in the North Area:

- **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
- **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. Many steeply-sloping areas and areas subject to flooding have been committed to long-term open space, primarily as part of past development approvals.
- **Open Space for Public Recreation:** These open space areas include the public and private parks and beaches managed by Los Angeles 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.

Goal CO-1: Preserve open space areas that meet the diverse needs of Los Angeles County.

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: Provide and improve access to dedicated open space and natural areas for all users that considers sensitive biological resources.
- CO-4: Prioritize open space acquisitions for available lands that contain unique ecological features, streams, watersheds, habitat types and/or offer linkages that enhance wildlife movements and genetic diversity.
- CO-5: Collaborate with public, non-profit, and private organizations to acquire and preserve available land for open space.
- CO-6: Require open space easements or deed restrictions as part of development projects on sites containing S1 and S2 habitat in order to ensure that approved building site areas are limited and impacts to sensitive habitat are minimized.
- CO-7: 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-8: Depict as permanent deed-restricted open space on the Land Use Policy Map 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.
- CO-9: 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-10: 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-11: Implement legal protections, such as deed restrictions and dedication of open space easements, to ensure designated open space lands are preserved in perpetuity.

CO-12: When accepting open space dedications, prioritize acquisitions to those lands 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.

D. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The 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 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 plant 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 very large blocks of undisturbed open space separating urban development along U.S. 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 over the next several decades leaving them relatively undisturbed and their resources left intact, while still allowing for responsible development.

As outlined in the Biological Resources Assessment prepared by Aspen Environmental Group, all land throughout the North Area has been mapped and assigned a habitat sensitivity ranking. The rankings are based on the distribution, rarity, and habitat function of the habitat found in each category. The habitat categories are outlined as follows:

S1 Habitat: habit of limited distribution, particular rarity or important habitat function

- Lands that support the rarest and most sensitive resources or has important ecosystem function
- Development is highly restricted in areas with S1 habitat

S2 Habitat: intact, but broadly distributed habitat

- Lands that support intact native vegetation communities, and which may include some species that are rare, but widespread in the North Area
- Development may occur in areas with S2 habitat provided measures are implemented to avoid, minimize, and mitigate habitat impacts

S3 Habitat: disturbed, non-native, and cleared habitat

- Lands that support non-native and ruderal vegetation and disturbed or cleared habitat that are expected to have lower habitat function than other natural lands
 - Development is less restricted in areas with S3 habitat
- S4 Habitat: developed and agricultural lands
- Lands that support existing residential or commercial development, other facilities, or agricultural practices
 - Development is least restricted in areas with S4 habitat

Goal CO-2: An environment that retains significant animal and plant communities in an undisturbed condition and provides the highest possible protection for the North Area

Policies:

CO-13: Protect sensitive habitat by collaborating with entities such as County departments, homeowner associations and other groups. Place an emphasis on a balance between land use, sensitive ecological areas (SEAs), wildlife connectivity and emergency responses.

CO-14: Allow for maximum wildlife connectivity and habitat linkages in important corridors in 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, requiring the dedication of open space conservation easements, and minimizing removal of native vegetation.

CO-15: A portion of the land in the North Area contain habitats of the highest biological significance, rarity, and sensitivity. The most biologically significant areas are designated S1 habitat and S2 habitat and are subject to strict land use protections and regulations.

- 1) S1 habitat consists of areas of highest biological significance, rarity, and sensitivity—alluvial scrub, coastal bluff scrub, dune, 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, 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 animals 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) CNPS-listed 1B and 2 plant species³, normally associated with S1 habitats, where they are found within S2 or S3 habitat areas.

- 2) S2 habitat consists of areas of high biological significance, rarity, and sensitivity that are important for 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) CNDDDB-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 species⁴, normally associated with S2 habitats.

CO-16: 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.

CO-17: S4 habitat is 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.

CO-18: The areas occupied by existing, legally-established structures, agricultural uses (including equestrian uses), access roads and driveways and animal containment facilities do not constitute S1 or S2 habitat areas. Additionally, the fuel modification area and brush clearance areas required by the Los Angeles County Fire Department for existing, lawfully-established structures do not meet the criteria of the S1 or S2 habitat categories, with the exception of the areas subject to the minimal fuel modification measures that are required in riparian or woodland habitats (e.g., removal of deadwood). In areas subject to the minimal fuel modification measures that are required in riparian or woodland habitats, the

habitat maintains its biological significance, rarity, and sensitivity and shall be accorded all the protection provided for the S1 habitat category the SMMNAP.

- CO-19: S1, S2, S3, and S4 habitat categories are mapped on a biological resources map to be maintained by the Department of Regional Planning. While the map provides guidance, the precise boundaries of these habitat categories shall be determined on a site-specific basis, based on substantial evidence and a site-specific biological surveys inventory and/or assessment required by the SMMNAP when a development proposal is submitted. This SMMNAP contains a procedure, as enunciated in Policy CO-20, to both confirm the habitat types and locations depicted on the map and establish on the basis of substantial evidence 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 accorded all the protection provided for that habitat category in the SMMNAP.
- CO-20: The habitat categories as depicted on the Department's Biological Resources Map may be adjusted based upon substantial biological evidence and independent review by the County 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. Where the County finds that the physical extent of habitats on a project site are 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 are different than those indicated on the Biological Resources Map, the Biological Resources Map shall be modified accordingly, as part of a map update indicated below.
- CO-21: Land uses are only allowed in S1 and S2 habitats where sited and designed to avoid significant disruption of habitat values, consistent with the policies of the SMMNAP. All development shall be sited to avoid or minimize impacts to S1 and S2 habitat to the maximum extent feasible. 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-22: New development shall be sited in a manner that avoids the most biologically-sensitive habitat onsite where feasible, while not conflicting with other SMMNAP policies, in the following order of priority: S1, S2, S3, S4. Priority shall be given to siting development in S4 habitat. If infeasible, priority shall be given to siting new development in such 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 SMMNAP. If it is infeasible to site development in S4, S3, and S2 habitat areas, development may be sited in S1 habitat if it is consistent with the specific limitations and standards for development in S1 habitat and all other provisions of the SMMNAP.

CO-23: Emphasize the protection of habitat:

- 1) Preserve, protect, and enhance habitat linkages through limitations in the type and intensity of development and preservation of riparian corridors.
- 2) Place primary emphasis on preserving large, unbroken blocks of undisturbed natural open space and wildlife habitat areas. 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, 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-24: 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-25: Encourage the permanent preservation of lands with greater than 50 percent slope as open space, preferably through open space dedications to a public agency or a public land conservation agency which has the authority to manage, preserve, or enhance park and open space lands, or, secondarily, through effective easements.

CO-26: Where new development is permitted in S1 or S2 habitat, the maximum allowable building site area on parcels shall be 10,000 square feet, or 25 percent of the parcel size, whichever is less. Where new residential development is permitted in S3 or S4 habitat, the maximum allowable residential building site area shall be 10,000 square feet, or 25 percent of the parcel size, whichever is less. The restriction of the building site area to less than the maximum may be required if it is determined that a smaller building site area would serve to avoid impacts to S1 habitat areas, substantially minimize grading associated with the project,

reduce the need for manufactured slopes, or reduce the need for retaining features visible from scenic areas, public trails, and public lands.

- CO-27: 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 development and/or for compliance with fuel modification requirements for approved or lawfully-existing development. Los Angeles 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-28: 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-29: 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-30: 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-31: 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 state or federal conservation agency, conservation easement, restrictive covenant or conservation in-lieu fees.
- CO-32: Where multiple habitat protection policies and permitted uses are applicable, the policy that is most restrictive and protective of the habitat resource shall regulate development.

- CO-33: A site-specific Biological Inventory shall accompany each application for all new development. A detailed Biological Assessment report shall be required in applications for new development located in, or within 200 feet of S1 or S2 habitat, as mapped on the Biological Resources Map, or where an initial Biological Inventory indicates the presence or potential for sensitive species or habitat. The County Biologist shall conduct preliminary review of all development, regardless of whether the proposal must be considered by the Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC).
- CO-34: The SEATAC shall review and analyze all proposals for development that are within S1 or S2 habitat.
- CO-35: New development shall be clustered to the maximum extent feasible and located as close as possible to existing roadways, services and other developments to minimize impacts to biological resources. New development shall be sited and designed to minimize impacts to S1 and S2 habitat by: Limiting the maximum number of structures to one main residence, one second residential structure, and accessory structures such as stable, corral, pasture, workshop, gym, studio, pool cabana, office, or tennis court.
- CO-36: New development in S1, S2, and S3 habitat areas shall be sited and designed to minimize removal of native vegetation and required fuel modification and brush clearance to the maximum extent feasible to minimize habitat disturbance or destruction, removal or modification of natural vegetation, and irrigation of natural areas, while providing for fire safety. Where clearance to mineral soil is not required by the Fire Department, fuel load shall be reduced through thinning or mowing, rather than complete removal of vegetation. All vegetation removal, thinning and mowing required for new development must avoid disturbance of wildlife and special-status species, including nesting birds.
- CO-37: Outdoor Lighting shall be fully shielded and directed away from biological resources and other sensitive receptors.

E. WATER QUALITY & AVAILABILITY

Public health and the quality of coastal resources rely heavily upon 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 Plan 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, anthropogenic activity may have deleterious effects on water quality. A recent report by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) finds that beneficial uses of water in various locations and at different times of 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, biological communities in the surrounding watershed, and other coastal resources.

The majority of new development is expected to either occur in concentrated locations or in very low-density settings. The Los Angeles Region 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 provides 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 in 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 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.

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-38: Support and participate in watershed-based planning efforts with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and upstream and downstream cities.

CO-39: Site, design, and manage new development and improvements, including – but not limited to – 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, included as part of the Local Implementation Program.

CO-40: To reduce runoff and erosion and provide long-term, post-construction water quality protection in all physical development, prioritize the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the following order: 1) Site design BMPs, 2) Source control BMPs, 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 storm water 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, 1- hour storm event (with an appropriate safety factor of 2 or greater) for flow-based BMPs.

CO-41: Prioritize the use of Low Impact Development (LID) in project design to preserve the natural hydrologic cycle and minimize increases in storm water or dry weather flows.

CO-42: Minimize impervious surfaces in new development, especially directly-connected impervious areas. Require redevelopment projects to increase the area of pervious surfaces, where feasible.

- CO-43: 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-44: 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-45: Protect water quality by limiting maximum potential build out 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 Canyon
 - Potrero Valley
 - Lower Topanga Canyon
- CO-46: 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-47: Manage the temporary storage of construction materials for public projects or landslide material on road shoulders using the most current Best Management Practices 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-48: 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-49: Revegetate prior to the rainy season areas disturbed by development activity. Use locally indigenous plant species outside of Fuel Modification Zone A and

avoid non-native invasive species, balancing long-term slope stability and habitat restoration with reduced fuel loads for fire protection.

- CO-50: 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-51: Require confined animal facilities and agricultural activities to utilize BMPs to minimize erosion and avoid sediment and pollutant impacts. For all development, require the ongoing maintenance of all design features used to mitigate stormwater runoff.
- CO-52: The use of reclaimed water for any approved agricultural use is required where feasible.
- CO-53: Ensure that animal containment facilities are sited and designed to manage, contain, and dispose of animal waste using the most effective BMPs to minimize waste introduced to surface runoff or groundwater.
- CO-54: Prohibit non-emergency earthmoving operations during the rainy season (extending from October 15 to April 15). Approved grading shall not be commenced 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-55: Grading during the rainy season may be permitted to remediate hazardous geologic conditions that endanger public health and safety.
- CO-56: Minimize the land disturbance activities of construction (e.g., clearing, grading, and cut and- fill), 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-57: 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-58: Permit 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 must be performed by a qualified professional to ensure surface water will not adversely impact groundwater quality.
- CO-59: 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, 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-60: Use Low Impact Development in project design to preserve the natural hydrologic cycle and minimize increases in storm water of dry weather flows.
- CO-61: Prohibit the use of hauled water as a source of potable water for new development
- CO-62: Participate in the development and implementation of solutions to problems associated with OWTS and their impact on water quality.
- CO-63: 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-64: 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 Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- CO-65: 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 and surface waters from lateral seepage from the sewage effluent dispersal systems and to protect the OWTS from flooding and inundation.

CO-66: 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, 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-67: 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.

F. 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. Coastal 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 area 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.

Goal CO-5: Preserve tree populations through the North Area, including native trees and trees of historic value.

Policies:

- CO-68: Provide protections for trees that are native to the Santa Monica Mountains, including limiting removal of native trees when feasible.
- CO-69: When native trees must be removed, the planting of new trees should be required as mitigation as a condition of approval.
- CO-70: Work with agencies including County Fire and County Agricultural Commissioner to ensure proper fire buffers through brush clearance and fuel modification in new and infill development.
- CO-71: Monitor the spread of infectious diseases and pests to native and non-native trees in the Santa Monica Mountains
- CO-72: 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-73: New development shall be sited and designed to preserve mature native trees. Development shall be sited to prevent encroachment into the protected zone of native trees.
- CO-74: Protect non-native trees that have high habitat or historic value.

G. 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 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 Lady Face Ridge, identified as 'one of the most prominent land-forms 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 south central 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. Saddle Rock and Turtle Rock are prominent rock formations, located near the National Park Service's Rocky Oaks site. In addition, a large section (mostly the northern section) of the scenic Mulholland Highway 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 all result in changes to the amount and quality of water runoff in these areas. Actions that may either directly or indirectly impact natural drainages and alter stormwater runoff are factors to be considered when evaluating the impacts of human intrusion into hillside areas.

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, coastal waters, public scenic views, and sensitive habitats.

Policies:

CO-75: The maximum residential density allowed by the applicable land use category shall be restricted for land divisions within hillside management areas.

CO-76: Site and design new development to minimize the amount of grading and the alteration of natural landforms.

CO-77: Site and design new development to protect natural features, and minimize removal of natural vegetation.

CO-78: The height of structures shall be limited to minimize impacts to scenic resources.

CO-79: 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. Exporting 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-80: Ensure that development conforms to the natural landform and blends with the natural landscape in site, design, shape, materials, and colors. Building pads on sloping sites shall utilize split-level or stepped-pad designs.

- CO-81: Restrict development on slopes greater than 25 percent unless placement is biologically superior than alternative site.
- CO-82: New development shall be sited and designed to minimize the height and length of manufactured cut and fill slopes, and minimize the height and length of retaining walls. Graded slopes shall blend with the natural contours of the land and shall utilize landform grading.
- CO-83: Graded slopes shall blend with the natural contours of the land and shall utilize landform grading.
- CO-84: All structures on lots in hillside areas shall be clustered if clustering is shown to minimize site disturbance and grading. Development within a subdivision shall be clustered and utilize shared driveways.
- CO-85: Require all cut and fill slopes and other disturbed areas to be landscaped and revegetated prior to the beginning of the rainy season utilizing native, drought-tolerant plant species that blend with existing natural vegetation and natural habitats of the surrounding area.
- CO-86: Grading that is associated with roads, bridges, retaining walls, and other necessary access ways should follow the natural terrain and contours and avoid creating a significant visual scar.

H. 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 occasional morning fog draping over vast rolling hills, canyons, oak woodlands, and dramatic geologic features coexisting with distinctive communities, such as Malibu Lake and Lobo Canyon. There are also a number of local and regional recreation trails and scenic driving routes that meander through the Mountains, including three State-designated County Scenic Highways: Mulholland Highway, Malibu Canyon-Las Virgenes Road and Topanga Canyon Blvd.

Given the proximity of development to such abundant 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. The visual impact of building, grading, or even vegetation removal can be just as dramatic as the natural features themselves. 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 require and achieve a sensitive balance between development and protecting 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 the 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 Mulholland Highway a unique resource for the Los Angeles region.

The following significant scenic resource features are designated on the Scenic Resources map of this SMMNAP:

- 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 coastline viewsheds, undisturbed hillsides and/or riparian or woodland habitat with intact locally-indigenous vegetation and plant communities.

The following areas contains designated scenic elements:

1. *West Mullholand Highway Sandstone*: cluster of rugged sandstone peaks
2. *Saddle Rock*: a prominent sandstone landform.
3. *Turtle Rock*: a prominent sandstone landform.
4. *Upper La Sierra Canyon*: a prominent sandstone ridge.
5. *Lady Face Ridge*: 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.
6. *Cornell Sandstone Peaks*: rugged sandstone peaks.

7. *Sugar Loaf*: Land Mark peak with extreme slopes at the higher elevations.
8. *Palo Comado*: scenic rolling hills with an oak woodland savannah which is highly visible from the Ventura Freeway.
9. *Old Topanga Sandstone*: an expansive sandstone 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. 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 as a traveler emerges from the urban landscape; 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 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.

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, beaches, and state waters that offer scenic vistas of the mountains, canyons, coastline, beach, and other unique natural features. The purpose of the following policies is to protect the scenic and visual qualities of all scenic resources.

Scenic routes:

- Mulholland Highway
- Las Virgenes Road

- Kanan-Dume Road
- Chesebro Road
- Cornell Road
- Old Topanga Canyon Road
- Topanga Canyon Boulevard

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-87: The Santa Monica Mountains contain scenic resources of regional and national importance. The scenic and visual qualities of these resources shall be protected and, where feasible, enhanced.

CO-88: Protect public views within Scenic Areas and throughout the North Area. Places on, along, within, or visible from Scenic Routes, public parklands, public trails, beaches, and state waters that offer scenic vistas of the mountains, canyons, coastline, beaches, 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. Scenic Resource Areas also include the scenic resources identified on Map X and consist of Scenic Elements, Significant Ridgelines, and Scenic Routes.

CO-89: Maintain and enhance the visual quality of vistas along the unincorporated portions of identified scenic routes and routes with scenic qualities, including:

CO-90: Protect public views of designated Scenic Elements and Significant Ridgelines, the ocean, beaches, canyon walls, geological formations, creeks, ridgelines, and waterfalls. The viewshed and line-of-sight to these scenic resources shall also be preserved and protected.

CO-91: Avoidance of impacts to scenic resources through site selection and design alternatives is the preferred method over landscape or building material screening. Landscape or building material screening shall not substitute for project alternatives including re-siting or reducing the height or bulk of structures.

CO-92: The length of roads or driveways shall be minimized, except where a longer road or driveway would allow for an alternative building site location that would be more protective of scenic resources. Driveway slopes shall be designed to follow the natural topography, unless otherwise required by the Fire

Department. Driveways that are within or visible from a scenic resource shall be a neutral color that blends with the surrounding landforms and vegetation.

- CO-93: Cut and fill slopes and other areas disturbed by construction activities shall be landscaped or revegetated prior to the beginning of the rainy season, unless the County Biologist determines that another time would be more advantageous for the long-term success of the vegetation included in the landscaping/revegetation project. All such landscaping/vegetation shall include only native, drought-tolerant plant species that blend with the existing natural vegetation.
- CO-94: Limit and design exterior lighting to preserve the visibility of the natural night sky and stars, to the extent feasible and consistent with public safety.
- CO-95: New development shall incorporate colors and exterior materials that are compatible with the surrounding landscape. The use of highly-reflective materials shall be prohibited, with the exception of solar panels.
- CO-96: Solar energy devices/panels shall be sited on the rooftops of permitted structures, where feasible to minimize site disturbance and the removal of native vegetation. If roof-mounted systems are infeasible, ground-mounted systems may be allowed only if sited within the building site area of permitted development. Wind energy systems are prohibited.
- CO-97: Limit the height of structures above existing grade to minimize impacts to visual resources. Within scenic areas, the maximum allowable height shall be 18 feet above existing or finished grade, whichever is lower. Chimneys, rooftop solar equipment and non-visually-obstructing rooftop antennas may be permitted to extend above the allowable height of the structure, but shall not extend more than six feet above the maximum allowable height.
- CO-98: Limit 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-99: Require wireless telecommunication 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 co-located where feasible. This may include requiring one taller pole rather than allow multiple shorter poles. New wireless telecommunication 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-100: 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. The design of new bridges on scenic routes shall be compatible with the rural character of the Santa Monica Mountains and designed to protect scenic views.

CO-101: Land divisions, including lot line adjustments, shall be designed to minimize impacts to visual resources by:

- a. Clustering the building sites to minimize site disturbance and maximize open space.
- b. Prohibiting building sites on ridgelines.
- c. Minimizing the length of access roads and driveways.
- d. Using shared driveways to access development on adjacent lots where feasible.
- e. Reducing the maximum allowable density in steeply sloping and visually sensitive areas.
- f. Minimizing grading and alteration of natural landforms.

I. TRAILS

The Santa Monica Mountains offer the Los Angeles metropolitan area a wide range of public and private recreational opportunities. The Mountains are particularly well-suited for passive outdoor recreational experiences in a natural setting. The value of recreation close to the urban complex is immense. 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 SMMNAP and a network of multi-use trails (hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian) should be integrated and connect 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 currently working to expand these facilities to accommodate these needs in the future. Many trails, established through years of use, traverse public and private property, and include designated bikeways along public roads. A formal, comprehensive public trail system for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians is being

designed and managed by public agencies to address and incorporate these trails and roads and to link them to various recreational facilities. A recognized system of trails and bikeways in the Santa Monica Mountains will provide usable, safe access within and between recreation areas and parklands.

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 is vast 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 trail system is comprised primarily of regional and local trails operated by public and private agencies, as well as trails that extend onto 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, 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, 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, the NPS, CDPR, and the SMMC have composed the Interagency Trail Management Plan, an integrated trail system for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area that aims to balance recreational access with resource protection. This 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 coast, and other open space and parklands. The system will include trails of varying lengths and degrees of difficulty to accommodate people with a variety of skills and abilities, including the physically challenged, senior citizens, and families. The Backbone Trail, which crosses the Santa Monica Mountains from Ventura County to the City of Los Angeles has recently been completed. A series of loop trails is planned for bicyclists, equestrians, and hikers. Overnight camps will be encouraged and established along longer trails to allow uninterrupted backpacking trips of several days' duration. The trail system should 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, Crescenta, western San Gabriel, Simi, and Conejo Valleys. The Rim of the Valley Trail will link to the Pacific Crest Trail and the Santa Monica Mountains Backbone 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.

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-102: The parklands and trails located within the North Area provide a wide range of recreational opportunities in natural settings which include hiking, equestrian activities, bicycling, camping, educational study, and picnicking. These recreational opportunities shall be protected, and where feasible, expanded or enhanced as a resource of regional, State and national importance.

CO-103: Encourage a full range of recreational experiences to serve local, regional and national visitors with diverse backgrounds, interests, ages, and abilities, including the transit-dependent and the physically challenged. Wherever appropriate and feasible, public facilities, including parking areas or facilities, shall be distributed throughout an area so as to mitigate against the impacts, social and otherwise, of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area.

CO-104: Provide safe and accessible bikeways on existing roadways (see Map 4 Recreation) and support related facilities, where feasible, through the implementation of the adopted Bikeways Plan in the County General Plan.

CO-105: 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.

J. ARCHAEOLOGICAL, PALEONTOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Santa Monica Mountains are rich in paleontological and historic cultural resources, including archaeological resources of 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, 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 Mountains' archaeological paleontological and historic cultural resources at risk.
- It is in the public interest to preserve historic cultural resources because they are irreplaceable and offer cultural, educational, aesthetic, and inspirational benefits.
- The stewardship of paleontological and historic cultural 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 archaeological, paleontological and historic cultural resources. Mitigation measures are required where development is determined to adversely impact any such resource. Other groups are also concerned with the preservation of these resources. The National Park Service conducts ongoing research on the history and cultural heritage of the Santa Monica Mountains.

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 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 paleontologic 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, an environment not conducive to fossil preservation.

Archaeological 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 30 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 over 1,500 known archaeological sites in the 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 Gabrieliño/Tongva peoples, two of the most populous and sophisticated native cultures, have occupied land within the Mountains since prehistoric times. The Chumash people have inhabited the region for nearly 9,000 years, while the Gabrieliño/Tongva people moved into the eastern Santa Monicas approximately 2,000 years ago.

Cultural Resources of Early Settlers

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 occurred there, 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 both 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.

Goal CO-9: Preservation of the area's rich and diverse archaeological, paleontological and historic cultural resources.

Policies:

CO-106: Protect and preserve archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources from destruction, and avoid impacts to such resources where feasible. Where avoidance is not feasible, minimize impacts to resources to the maximum extent feasible.

CO-107: Where development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required. Mitigation shall be designed to accord with guidelines of the State Office of Historic Preservation and the State of California Native American Heritage Commission.

CO-108: Regulate landform alteration to ensure minimal disturbance of known archaeological and historic cultural sites. New development on sites identified as archaeologically sensitive shall include onsite monitoring of all grading, excavation, and site preparation that involve earthmoving operations by a qualified archaeologist(s) and appropriate Native American consultant(s).

CO-109: The County should coordinate with appropriate agencies, such as the Southern California Indian Center (SCIC) and the UCLA Archaeological Center, to identify archaeologically-sensitive areas. Such information should be kept confidential to protect archaeological resources.

CO-110: New development within archaeologically-sensitive areas shall implement appropriate mitigation measures, designed in accord with guidelines of the State Office of Historic Preservation and the State of California Native American Heritage Commission.

CO-111: Preserve and protect cultural resources and traditions that are of importance to Native Americans, including the Chumash and Gabrieliño/Tongva peoples.

III. SAFETY & NOISE ELEMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

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

- Noise Hazards
- Lighting Hazards
- Fire Hazards
- Flood Hazards
- Seismic and Non-seismic Geologic Hazards;
- Hazardous Materials

B. 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 that include environmental hazards.

C. SEISMIC & NON-SEISMIC GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Natural seismic and non-seismic events in the Santa Monica Mountains present significant hazards to public health, safety, and welfare, and also to development. Earthquakes and slope movement events (commonly referred to as landslides) can be particularly devastating in an area like the Santa Monica Mountains, with its many narrow winding roads and often-difficult access at the best of times.

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 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 - as it does in any part of the region - 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 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 slope movement events (including rockfalls, landslides, slumps, debris flows, and mudflows), and liquefaction. The Mountains are naturally prone to slope movement due to a combination of steep slopes and unstable geology. Human action can contribute directly to slope instability through such activities 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 activity 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).

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: New development shall assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.
- SN-2: All new development shall be sized, designed and sited to minimize risks to life and property from geologic hazard.
- SN-3: On former landslide sites, unstable slopes and other geologic hazard areas, new development shall only be permitted where there is substantial evidence, provided by the applicant and confirmed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, that the project provides an adequate factor of safety.
- SN-4: Prohibit new development in areas where it presents an extraordinary risk to life and property due to an existing or demonstrated potential public health and safety hazard.
- SN-5: In the placement of new development, emphasize avoiding areas susceptible to seismic and non-seismic geologic hazards, even when engineering solutions are available.
- SN-6: 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-7: Prohibit the construction of new structures for human occupation in unstable geologic areas.
- SN-8: 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-9: Prohibit land divisions, including 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 SMMNAP.

SN-10: New development shall assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.

D. NOISE

The characteristic beauty of the area’s natural setting is widely recognized as one of its most distinctive and valuable attributes. As 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, the County aims to also protect the quiet, rural setting of the Santa Monica Mountains. The Ventura freeway and major routes that span the North Area can attribute to traffic noise in the North Area. Previously, noise limits in this area were provided 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 3. The Noise Ordinance permits consideration of different levels of ambient 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.

Table: 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	Residential properties (zoned as such in the SMMNAP)	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (nighttime)	50
		7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (daytime)	55
III	Commercial properties (zoned as such in the SMMNAP)	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (nighttime)	60

		7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (daytime)	
IV	Industrial properties (zoned as such in the SMMNAP)	Anytime	70

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

Due to the increased number of complaints about noise from special event venues, the County commissioned a noise study from Aspen Environmental in September 2018. The noise study specifically compared existing ambient noise levels around the North Area in areas adjacent to special event venues while no events were happening. This noise study provides a baseline for ambient noise standards and recommends that an L90 exterior noise level requirement also be adopted.

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 never 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 the event and the prolonged noise levels that may be disturbing surrounding residents. In addition to the L50 level of 50 dBA for residential receptors, special event facilities must also not exceed five decibels above an L90 threshold of 40 dBA. In addition, due to the existing above-average ambient noise conditions in the Topanga Canyon area, the L90 threshold shall be 45 dBA for the Topanga Canyon subarea.

Goal SN-2: Noise sensitive lands and land uses, wildlife habitats, and public lands that are shielded from excessive mobile and stationary noise.

Policies:

- SN-11: Require development 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) that provisions of the County Noise Ordinance can be met by the project
- SN-12: All residential structures, including those within 600 feet of major and secondary highways, must be constructed so as to comply with the Universal Building Code limit for interior noise of 45 dB CNEL.
- SN-13: Special events facilities throughout the North Area may not exceed an L90 threshold of 40 dBA at any time, with the exception of the Topanga Canyon subarea which shall be limited to an L90 threshold of 45 dBA.
- SN-14: Establish zones in which minimum noise coinciding with resort, recreation and special activities is allowed during specific times

SN-15: Develop a plan for monitoring and enforcing noise where “Special Event” areas are located near sensitive receptors

SN-16: Private helicopter pads are prohibited. 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 SMMNAP. Locate new public helicopter pads to limit noise impacts on residential areas and public parklands.

E. FIRE HAZARDS

The Santa Monica Mountains are characterized by a Mediterranean climate 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 climactic conditions, drought, the autumn Santa Ana winds, and an extensive urban-wildland interface combine to exacerbate the high-fire conditions, causing the Fire Department to designate the area as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the most dangerous classification. Furthermore, development is typically scattered and access is often via narrow winding roadways, with structures that lack a defensible space. This is particularly a problem in Rural Villages, where there are numerous homes on 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 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.

Goal SN-4: 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-17: Work with agencies including L.A County Fire and L.A. County Agricultural Commissioner to ensure proper fire buffers through brush clearance and fuel modification in new and infill development.

- SN-18: Require Fuel Management plans to be submitted during application stages.
- SN-19: Minimize vegetation removal for fuel management places in the Sensitive Environmental Area(s) and high-sensitivity habitats.
- SN-20: Design and site new development in a manner that minimizes the threat of loss from wildland fires while avoiding the need for excessive vegetation clearance.
- SN-21: Landscaping shall not extend into utility lines or block access to roads, water supplies or other emergency facilities.
- 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: Structures shall be constructed with appropriate 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 flame and burning embers.
- SN-24: Limit fuel modification to the minimum area necessary and utilize those programs that are most appropriate to the development site, including such strategies as preserving fire resistant locally-indigenous species instead of completely removing vegetation.
- SN-25: Prohibit development in areas with insufficient access, water pressure, fire flows, or other accepted means for adequate fire protection.
- SN-26: 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-27: 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-28: Wildfire burn areas shall be allowed to revegetate naturally, except where re-seeding is necessary to minimize risks to public health or safety. Where necessary, re-seeding shall utilize a mix of locally-indigenous native plant seeds collected in a similar habitat within the Santa Monica Mountains. Wildfire

burn areas that were previously subject to fuel modification or brush clearance for existing structures pursuant to the requirements of the Los Angeles County Fire Department may be revegetated to pre-fire conditions.

F. 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 mountains and surrounding areas. Policies throughout the North Area Plan as well as standards and regulations of other agencies that will help minimize exposure to flood hazards are those related to slope modification, setbacks, on-site water retention and percolation, and runoff controls, as well as the amount and type of paving and grading and fire clearance requirements. Potential flood hazards within the jurisdiction of 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 those areas between improved concrete channels and natural drainages. Such deficiencies can, of course, have impacts beyond jurisdictional boundaries. Future development will be required to be designed so as not to 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, the need for new storm drain facilities to serve rural development within unincorporated areas is not great- although they must be provided where necessary. The low densities that have been planned and are recommended for the mountain areas will generally not induce significant flooding impacts. Existing County building and safety codes are designed to be effective mitigation for potential flood hazards

Goal SN-5: 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-29: Prohibit construction which could impede storm flows within floodways, and avoid development within potential flood hazard areas.

SN-30: Require protection of soils stream courses in their natural state, along with development designs that respect natural flows.

- SN-31: Require that adequate mitigation of flooding hazards is incorporated into proposed development projects so as to minimize levels of risk; such mitigation should also be consistent with the North Area Plan's environmental protection policies.
- SN-32: New development shall provide adequate drainage and erosion control facilities 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-33: New development shall not increase peak of storm runoffs.
- SN-34: Site, design and size all new development to minimize risks to life and property from flood hazard.
- SN-35: Coordinate inter-jurisdictional planning of storm drain improvements where these facilities cross municipal boundaries.
- SN-36: 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 which are necessary after all on site measures have been implemented and which are consistent with the North Area Plan's environmental protection policies.
- SN-37: Manage flood waters on a watershed basis consistent with the best management practices (BMPs) designed by the Department of Public Works.
- SN-38: Promote natural environment and restoration of soil and vegetation cover to mitigate flood hazards.

G. HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS

The creation, use, storage, and transport of hazardous materials and waste is widespread in business, industrial, and residential settings. With the historic use of land in the Santa Monica Mountains as agriculture, residents may occasionally use pesticides, herbicides or rodenticides to protect crops and manage pests. Additionally, removal of non-native vegetation may use various types of herbicides. Improperly managed hazardous materials and waste can pose such a serious threat to community safety that they are regulated through a combination of federal, State, and County laws. The transport of hazardous products 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 fire fighters typically will secure, evacuate, and confine hazardous materials and hazardous waste spills until the arrival of Newhall-based County Hazardous Materials Division.

Hazardous materials and wastes are present throughout the Santa Monica Mountains, but vary widely in terms of both quantity and type. Light industry, 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 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.

Currently, there are no active landfills operating in Los Angeles County which accept hazardous wastes. Hazardous wastes generated within the 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.

Goal SN-6: 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-39: Prohibit new facilities that handle large amounts of hazardous and toxic materials.

SN-40: 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-41: Prohibit hazardous waste disposal facilities within the Santa Monica Mountains, due to the area's sensitive seismic and geologic characteristics.

Goal SN-7: A land, air, and water environment with minimal cumulative impacts from the use of toxic and hazardous materials.

Policies:

SN-42: 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, recognizing that the use of these materials is necessary in many parts of society.

SN-43: Undertake more community-level hazardous waste drop-off events in the Santa Monica Mountains, and sponsor more community recycling centers.

IV. LAND USE & HOUSING ELEMENT

A. 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 requires extensive habitat destruction and soil disturbance, but compromises the stability of the slopes, thereby increasing risks to life, water quality and property. While the Plan supports rural 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 presence of sensitive environmental resources, scenic resources, and natural hazards. This Plan provides a framework within which new development may be undertaken, taking into consideration the protection of sensitive environmental, scenic, and other resources, public access, and the avoidance or mitigation of hazards.

The Land Use and Housing 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 often have off-site impacts.

Additional land use-related issues addressed by this Plan include biological resources, water quality, scenic resources, parks, open space and recreation (Conservation and Open Space Element), environmental hazards (Safety and Noise Element), water and sewer services (Public Facilities), and transportation (Circulation Element), Special Event Facilities, and Bed & Breakfast establishments.

B. 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*

If there is a conflict between a provision of this SMMNAP Update and a provision of any other County-adopted plan, resolution, or ordinance not included in this SMMNAP Update, and it is not possible for the development to comply with both the SMMNAP and such other plan, resolution or ordinance, the SMMNAP shall take precedence and the development shall not be approved unless it complies with the SMMNAP provision.

C. 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.

Goal LU-1: Land uses that reflect and are compatible with existing environmental resources and community character.

Policies:

- LU-1: New residential, commercial, or industrial development shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it, or where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it 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: Prohibit development on Significant Ridgelines, following the CSD policies and standards designed to protect ridgeline resources.
- LU-5: Preserve the physical connections between open space areas, natural habitats, public parklands, and activity centers.
- LU-6: Preserve ridgelines and open space areas that define and maintain the rural character of developed areas.

- LU-7: Mitigate the impacts of permitted development on neighboring jurisdictions; impacts shall not be exported to other jurisdictions.
- LU-8: Prohibit new industrial uses except on lots designated for such uses. Lawfully existing nonconforming industrial uses shall not be expanded.
- LU-9: 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-10: Land divisions outside existing developed areas shall be permitted 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. Land divisions shall not be considered the principal permitted use in any land use category.
- LU-11: Land divisions shall be designed to cluster development, 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-12: 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-13: Notwithstanding any inconsistencies of existing development with the SMMNAP, lawfully established uses or structures established prior to the effective date of this North Area Plan update, or pursuant to a validly issued conditional use permit that conform to the conditions on which they were legally established are considered by the County to be legal conforming uses or structures that may be maintained and/or repaired. Additions and improvements to such structures, including reconstruction, may be permitted provided that (1) the additions and improvements comply with current North Area policies and standards and do not increase any existing inconsistencies; and (2) any inconsistencies of the existing legal structure with the SMMNAP are rectified when (a) additions increase the square footage of the existing structure by 50 percent or more, or (b) any demolition, removal, replacement and/or reconstruction results in the demolition of more than 50 percent of either the total existing exterior wall area or the existing foundation system, or where the sum of the percentages of each that is demolished exceeds 50 percent. Reconstruction of existing lawfully-established

structures following a natural disaster is exempt from this policy and may be permitted.

D. PATTERN AND CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT

While the previous section deals with directing development into the most appropriate locations under conditions which 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 which 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 inappropriate 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.

Goal VI-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.

LU-14: 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-15: Provide separate "suburban" and "rural" standards for infrastructure and public services.

LU-16: In addition to maintaining low densities within rural areas, require the provision/protection of the features that contribute to rural character and rural lifestyles, including, but not limited to:

- Retaining the natural terrain and vegetation in hillside areas, rather than creating large, flat pads;
- Protecting natural vegetation, natural environmental features, and streams;

Landscaping with locally-indigenous species outside of Fuel Modification Zone A;

- Maintaining rural road sections without curbs, gutters, streetlights, or sidewalks;
- Providing opportunities for keeping equines where adequate space and suitable topography are available, and where consistent with all other policies of the North Area Plan;
- Limiting the types and locations of commercial development;
- Maintaining a natural physical setting comprised of large areas of undisturbed hillsides, oak woodlands, canyons, and riparian areas, and a visual character dominated by natural environmental features;
- Preserving the openness and scenic beauty of the area's natural environment;
- Preserving significant environmental features and requiring the dedication of open spaces in new development;
- Requiring hillside residential development designs that feature natural rather than manufactured forms and emphasize using custom foundations;
- Sizing houses and flat pad areas to be consistent with the natural setting; limiting features such as tennis courts and paved areas;
- Protecting hilltops and ridgelines by prohibiting structures in those areas where feasible;
- Minimizing disturbance of landforms and biological resources by requiring buildings on hillsides to be constructed on multilevel pads where appropriate; and
- Providing greater protection to resources than the minimum required by this Plan by offering incentives for limited types of proposed development. In order to encourage the concentration of development and the retirement of buildable parcels for the permanent protection of their habitat and open space values, the maximum approvable building site for development permitted in S2, S3 and S4 habitat areas may be increased from 10,000-square feet to 15,000-square-feet if an applicant voluntarily proposes and implements the retirement of all development rights on one or more lawfully-created, buildable parcel(s) located in the Santa Monica Mountains (North Area or Coastal Zone) that is at least five acres in size and is comprised of habitat designated as S1 or S2.

- LU-17: In addition to considering the mass and scale of the entire development or structure, 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 which is compatible with the size of the parcel upon which the structure is placed to avoid a crowded appearance in the built environment.
- LU-18: Require that new developments use architectural and siting features which 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, land-forms, historic landmarks);
 - compatibility with existing structures; and
 - the natural environment (i.e., hillsides, washes, native vegetation, community landscaping).
- LU-19: Require that new development preserve views from public parks, trails, and designated Scenic Routes. This includes preserving and enhancing views from public roadways which are oriented toward existing or proposed natural community amenities such as parks, open space, or natural features;
- LU-20: Require that new development preserve views of the ocean or 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.
- LU-21: Development on parcels must be clustered and concentrated in one building site area, particularly within lands designated either Rural Lands or Rural Residential, to facilitate fire protection and to preserve and minimize impacts to natural resources and the area of disturbance.
- LU-22: Limit structure heights to ensure protection of scenic resources and compatibility with surrounding settings.
- LU-23: 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 preliminary hydrologic or geologic testing shall be restored and not be considered an existing access road for subsequent development proposals.
- LU-24: 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-25: 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-26: Require open space areas in individual developments to connect trails, open space, and wildlife corridors wherever possible.
- LU-27: 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.
- LU-28: 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-29: Concentrate commercial, office, and other higher-intensity uses along areas where appropriate, 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-30: 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-31: Require all new commercial and institutional development to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties through careful use of 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.

Goal LU-3: A well-regulated telecommunications network that serves the needs of the general public, limits negative impacts to the environment, and avoids contributing to visual blight.

- LU-32: Limit the visual and safety impacts of wireless telecommunications 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 telecommunication facilities and structures, wherever possible, to help avert unnecessary proliferation of such facilities.

LU-33: All facilities and related support structures shall be sited, designed, and operated 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-34: All facilities shall place support facilities underground, where feasible. New communication transmission lines shall be sited and designed to be located underground except where it would present or contribute to geologic hazards or if to do so 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.

E. LIVESTOCK/ANIMALS AS PETS

Goal LU-4: To allow the North Area community to retain its rural feel by keeping animals and livestock on a small scale, while recognizing the necessity for wildlife movement in the area.

Policies:

LU-35: Work with North Area residents, local public agencies and stakeholder groups to protect livestock while allowing opportunities for wildlife connectivity

LU-36: Collaborate with other County, State and National agencies in the North Area to develop the best enclosure practices for sheltering livestock and pets

LU-37: Manage the location of livestock, including 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-38: To protect outdoor animals from predators native to the Santa Monica Mountains, an enclosed structure that is secured at nighttime shall be required for all outdoor animals, with the exception of equines.

LU-39: Require animal containment facilities and animal living quarters to utilize BMPs to minimize erosion and avoid sediment and pollutant impacts.

LU-40: Limit the siting of confined animal facilities and 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-41: Night lighting of facilities should be limited to necessary security lighting that is controlled by motion detectors and limited to 60 watts or equivalent. Arena and round pen lighting by bollard or fence-mounted fixtures may be permitted if: they do not exceed four feet in height; are shielded; are directed downward; use the best available Dark Skies technology; and where it is demonstrated through a site-specific evaluation that they will avoid adverse impacts to scenic and sensitive biological resources.

F. AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

Goal LU-5: To create a balance between agricultural uses of water, soil and erosion and conserving California's natural resources in a changing climate.

Policies:

LU-42: All new development in the North Area shall adequately address the issue of water delivery, or installation of new wells during the development process with all required Departments of the County of Los Angeles

LU-43: Applications in all zones shall describe where water for any agricultural and residential uses will be delivered from

LU-44: Any installation of new wells in the North Area shall require discretionary review

LU-45: New agricultural uses should be sited 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-46: The use of reclaimed water for any approved agricultural use is required where feasible.

LU-47: Encourage the use of integrated pest management and use of least toxic methods of pest control.

LU-48: Encourage organic or biodynamic farming practices.

LU-49: Crop uses must include measures to minimize impacts to water quality.

G. SPECIAL 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 makes it necessary to ensure that special event facilities do not cause adverse impacts to the surrounding community.

Goal LU-6: To allow the use of Special Event Facilities for enjoyment and recreation in the Santa Monica Mountains in applicable zones, while adhering to policies regarding public safety, Dark Skies, noise and surrounding land uses.

Policies:

LU-50: Establish “Primary Special Event” and “Accessory Special Event” uses in the North Area Plan which will regulate and monitor potential impacts, such as noise, traffic, wildlife movement and public safety issues

LU-51: Promote the collaboration of business owners in the area to address noise, traffic safety and cumulative impacts of operations.

LU-52: Allow for a variety of uses including wedding venues, wineries, tasting rooms, festivals and other special events while maintaining maximum accessibility and safety for residents of the North Area.

LU-53: Ensuring the necessary evacuation routes during emergencies can be accessed by residents and visitors to the North Area

H. EQUESTRIAN USES

The Santa Monica Mountains have historically been home to various different equestrian uses. The equestrian community in the area is unique in that it contains a horse friendly trail system, and provides nearby zones for horse keeping. The Santa Monica Mountains is one of a small number of areas in the Los Angeles basin which maintains a rural setting that most equestrian community members seek.

Some equestrian activities which currently occur in the North Area include horseback riding, horseback riding lessons, horse 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 create runoff into streams and drainages in the mountains. The goals and policies of this section should be used to promote the equestrian culture in the Santa Monica Mountains while minimizing the environmental impacts these activities may have on the region.

Goal LU-7: Create a balance between land use, equestrian activities, and environmental protection

Policies:

- LU-54: Consistent with all resource protection policies of this SMMNAP, preserve the opportunity for horsekeeping 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-55: 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-56: Allow for the limited boarding of horses by private individuals if it complies with all policies and provisions of the SMMNAP.
- LU-57: 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-58: Manage the collection/disposal of animal wastes to protect streams/natural drainages/water runoff/ groundwater
- LU-59: 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-60: At the periphery of areas devoted to recreation, 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.

I. LAND USE POLICY MAP

The Land Use Policy Map 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, highway access, the maintenance of local community character, and development necessary to serve local and regional needs, including business, housing and recreational opportunities.

It is important to recognize that the maximum number of units possible overall on any parcel is established by the Land Use Map, not by the zoning designation. Land use policy and zoning have related, but different functions:

- 1) Land use policy establishes the basic category and intensity of use permitted by this SMMNAP. Categories of use include Open Space, Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, and Public and Semi-public Facilities. Intensity of use is defined in terms of lot coverage (or floor-area ratio) for commercial uses and density (units per acre) for residential uses. Residential density is the maximum number of dwelling units that can be created on any given parcel.
- 2) Zoning sets the specific standards that must be observed in utilizing the land, including such factors as the minimum size of any lot created by a subdivision. Lots created by subdivision may be larger than the minimum size, and under certain circumstances they can be smaller providing the resulting density is consistent with the overall land use plan density. Once again, the land use policy establishes the total number of lots or units that can be created.

While the Land Use Map establishes the maximum number of units possible on a parcel, neither land use policy nor zoning standards are the sole determinants of the number of dwelling units appropriate for, or which may be approved for, a given parcel. The application of all other LUP policies, in addition to the requirements of other regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over the property, may significantly reduce the number of units.

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, production of natural 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. The following Open Space categories are used on the Land Use Map:

OS Open Space

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 use is passive, resource-dependent recreation.

OS-P Open Space - Parks

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 resource-dependent recreation.

OS-DR Open Space – Deed Restricted

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.

OS-W Open Space – Water

Water bodies dedicated to an open space use. Principal uses in the North Area include Malibou Lake.

MOUNTAIN LANDS

Lands designated Mountain Lands 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. Mountainous 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 camp grounds, bed-and-breakfast lodging, low intensity conference centers, public and private schools, water tanks, telecommunications 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. The following categories of Mountain Lands are used on the Land Use Policy Map:

N 20 Mountain Lands 20

Not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 20 acres (1 du/20 ac)

N10 Mountain Lands 10

Not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 10 acres (1 du/10 ac)

NS Mountain Lands 5

Not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 5 acres (1 du/5 ac)

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The *Rural Residential* land use category is intended to provide for low density single family detached housing in a setting consistent with the North Area Plan's definition of 'rural' area. Clustering may be useful in providing community open space and protecting resources. Other uses that may be appropriate include: agriculture, equestrian uses, retreats, monasteries, private camp grounds, bed-and breakfast lodging, low intensity conference centers, public and private schools and telecommunications facilities and other local serving public facilities, including uses permitted by the underlying zone such as local-serving commercial. 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. The following *Rural Residential* land use categories are used on the Land Use Policy Map:

N2 Rural Residential 2

Not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 2 acres (1 du/2 ac)

N1 Rural Residential 1

Not to exceed a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per acre (1 du/ac)

RESIDENTIAL

The *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. The following *Residential* land use categories are used on the Land Use Policy Map:

U2 Residential 2

Not to exceed a maximum residential density of two dwelling units per acre (2 du/ac)

U4 Residential 4

Not to exceed a maximum residential density of four dwelling units per acre (4 du/ac)

US Residential 8

Not to exceed a maximum residential density of eight dwelling units per acre (8 du//ac)

COMMERCIAL

The following *Commercial* land use categories are used on the Land Use Policy Map:

C Commercial

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. Appropriate uses include a range of general commercial, including retail and personal service uses, specialty shops, offices, highway oriented uses, financial institutions, motels, and art and studio facilities. Quiet, non-polluting light industrial uses such as those found in "high tech"

business parks may also be located in areas designated Commercial. Maximum land use intensity of 0.5 floor area ratio (FAR).

CR Commercial Recreation - Limited Intensity

The primary purpose of areas designated as *Commercial Recreation - Limited Intensity* is to provide appropriately located areas for the establishment of low intensity uses and facilities adjacent to areas generally designated as *Mountain Lands* or *Rural Residential*. Appropriate uses 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. Maximum land use intensity of 0.3 FAR.

PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC FACILITIES

P Public and Semi-Public Facilities

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, probations camps, educational facilities, and public service facilities.

TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR

TC Transportation Corridor

The primary purpose of areas designated as *Transportation Corridor* is to provide areas for major transportation facilities. Principal uses include freeways, transit stations, and commuter and freight rail lines. The Ventura Freeway is the only such use shown on the Land Use Policy Map.

V. CIRCULATION ELEMENT

A. 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 are the primary determinant of an area's access, 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 the planning area. Significant additional carrying capacity is needed on area roadways and highways to move traffic at desirable levels of service; however, to provide all such additional capacity in the North Area Plan would be environmentally destructive and disruptive to existing residential neighborhoods and rural communities. Transportation planning within the planning area cannot be expected to entirely resolve the problems that exist.

Several significant circulation and capacity problems currently constrain the carrying capacities of 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 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 the need to accommodate this pattern of travel is central to developing an effective circulation policy for the 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, the existence of unstable hillsides and sensitive environmental resources, costs for extending or constructing major new roadways is exorbitantly high, even if physical and environmental mitigation could be provided. 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.

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 Caltrans. Differences also exist between Caltrans and local municipalities with respect to what constitutes an

acceptable peak hour Level of Service on the ramps at these interchanges, and funds for expansion of freeway bridges and interchange improvement are extremely limited.

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

- Balancing Roadway Carrying Capacity with Environmental Sensitivity
- Managing Roadway Carrying Capacity
- Transportation Alternatives
- Access to Recreational Areas.

B. GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The guiding principle for facilitating mobility is:

Facilities and programs to improve traffic flow and access must be implemented within a framework of preserving the natural environment and protecting the unique character of the individual communities with the North Area.

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

C. BALANCING ROADWAY CAPACITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

It is clear that 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 coastal 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. This SMMNAP seeks to improve circulation in and through the planning area, while protecting the environment, through transportation system management techniques. These 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. The application of these techniques in lieu of road construction has the added value of assisting in implementing

Goal CI-1: A transportation system consistent with the area's rural and scenic quality, environmental threshold carrying capacities, and planned growth.

Policies:

- CI-1 Maximize the capacity and operational efficiency of highways consistent with environmental protection and neighborhood preservation, without widening roadways to increase capacity.
- CI-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.
- CI-3 Expand roadway system capacity only where environmental resources (habitats/linkages, viewsheds, trails, etc.), residential neighborhoods, and rural communities are adequately protected. Roadway widening to increase capacity shall be prohibited.
- CI-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 Best Management Practices to eliminate erosion into adjacent drainage courses. Ensure that landslide material is deposited in permitted landfills or sites with valid permits to accept fill.
- CI-5 Where appropriate, increase the capacity of existing major and secondary highways through the application of transportation system management technology 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.

- CI-6 Improve roadway efficiency and highway access through redesign of road intersections and establishment of periodic passing, turnout, and acceleration/deceleration lanes, where appropriate.
- CI-7 Emphasize other transportation system management solutions, including improved public transit and non-motorized transportation, such as bicycles.
- CI-8 Ensure that all recreational easements and other recreational resources are protected during and after roadway construction, maintenance, and repair.
- CI-9 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 cross section as the default standard in the North Area.
- CI-10 Encourage the routing of through-traffic onto highways and designated arterial streets, while discouraging through-traffic in residential neighborhoods.
- CI-11 Analyze and require mitigation of the traffic impacts from projects that generate substantial amounts of “off-peak” traffic, in addition to the traditional roadway capacity analysis.
- CI-12 Limit the requirement for curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and streetlights to urban/suburban areas, unless required by public safety considerations.
- CI-13 Allow road and driveway improvements only where they provide legal access to: 1) existing, lawfully-developed parcels; or 2) legal parcels with and all required permits.
- CI-14 Support Caltrans efforts to improve traffic flow and safety on Pacific Coast Highway, the 101 Freeway, the 405 Freeway, and on other State routes, consistent with the policies of this SMMNAP.

D. MANAGING ROADWAY DEMAND

Mulholland Highway is 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.

Consistent with the environmental protection policies of this SMMNAP, the County can work to improve the efficiency of the roadways through transportation system management tools, as demonstrated in the previous set of policies. However, the SMMNAP must address the other side of the equation – system demand. Through use of transportation demand management techniques, the County must assure that additional development will not significantly impact, and indeed may improve, the existing circulation system in the LUP area.

Goal CI-2: A safe and efficient roadway network that can accommodate projected traffic growth in a manner consistent with protecting environmental resources and existing neighborhoods.

Policies:

- CI-15 Maintain, and potentially enhance, the concentration of business and commercial uses in existing locations that continue to serve the local communities and reduce the length of vehicle trips.
- CI-16 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 generated in the SMMNAP area.
- CI-17 Provide other opportunities, such as centralized learning centers with computer access, to reduce the need to commute long distances to colleges and universities.
- CI-18 Improve roadways as appropriate to accommodate planned 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 the Department of Public Works.
- CI-19 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. Avoid any development in rural and mountainous areas that would require roadway widening to increase capacity. Road widening shall be allowed to protect public safety.
- CI-20 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.

- CI-21 Require each new development causing cumulative circulation impacts to construct or fund its fair share of any necessary circulation system improvements or additions.
- CI-22 Where funding sources prove inadequate, establish assessment districts, impact fees and/or other equitable funding mechanisms to augment roadway funds.

E. ENCOURAGING TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives to the private automobile - including carpooling, public transit, bicycles, walking, and telecommuting - 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 the accessibility of 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.

Goal CI-3: Alternative travel modes to the single-occupant automobile for local commuter, and recreational trips.

Policies:

- CI-23 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.
- CI-24 The extension of public transit facilities and services, including shuttle programs, to maximize public access and recreation opportunities shall be encouraged, where feasible.
- CI-25 Encourage the use of locally-based contractors, service providers, and laborers rather than those that need to travel long distances to work sites in the SMMNAP area.
- CI-26 Assist local employers in transporting employees from homes and worksites in the Santa Monica Mountains, thereby reducing the need for additional vehicle trips.
- CI-27 Work with surrounding cities and transit service providers to offer commuter bus services between inland communities and coastal cities.

- CI-28 Require new development to provide for public transportation needs on existing roadways, where appropriate, when acquisition and improvement activities occur. Cooperate with adjacent jurisdictions to develop and incorporate this and other public transit-friendly design features into new projects and other discretionary project applications.
- CI-29 Incorporate bike lanes and/or bike use signage into local road designs wherever feasible and safe.
- CI-30 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.
- CI-31 Support the region-wide expansion of alternative transportation methods, including rail lines, transit ways, bike paths, and rapid bus systems, where consistent with the policies of this SMMNAP.

VI. PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT

A. 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 Coastal Zone 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 and suburban areas is 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;
- Police services; and
- Solid waste services.

Additional services and facilities addressed by the LUP include parks and recreation (Conservation and Open Space Element) and transportation (Circulation Element). Further, private onsite wastewater treatment systems are addressed in the Water Quality section of the Conservation and Open Space Element.

The Public Facilities Element establishes policies that support the siting of new housing and other development in areas with adequate public services and facilities to avoid wasteful urban sprawl and leapfrog development.

B. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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 as part of agency master planning efforts is more difficult. The absence of public facilities

presents a constraint on new development. 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 as outlined in the policies of this LUP. New development must allow for environmental preservation; the provision of new infrastructure and services must be considered within this context.

C. 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 the Los Angeles County Water Works District. 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 with delivering adequate water and water pressure to these areas. In some of the more remote areas and high elevations, extension of water facilities is possible, but would be extremely costly.

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-range assurance 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 County's Sanitation Districts, 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 at 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, septic systems serve most of the rural hillside areas. Previous development within the hillside areas has been largely scattered, thus requiring the use of a septic systems as a practical matter. However, although many septic systems employ state-of-the-art technologies, numerous septic tank failures have been reported in older systems within the mountain areas, often causing environmental damage to surrounding and downstream riparian areas. For some areas not served by sewers, assessment districts have been established and fees are being assessed to residents on septic systems for the ultimate connection into the LVMWD trunk lines.

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 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.

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 to ensure that adequate water supplies and adequate water and sewer infrastructure are available to support existing and planned development.
- PF-2 Minimize consumption of new water supplies through active water conservation programs and the use of reclaimed water--on site, wherever possible.
- PF-3 Encourage tertiary treatment of waste water, which will help to improve effluent quality, while expanding the potential uses for reclaimed water.
- PF-4 Maximize the uses of reclaimed water and thereby reduce the need for exploiting domestic water supplies for purposes where potable water is not required.
- PF-5 Require proposed development projects to gain approval of design and financial arrangements from the LVMWD (or Los Angeles County Water Works District) for the construction of water and sewer facilities prior to recordation of tract maps (or issuance of grading or building permits, if a tract map is not involved). Strictly enforce these conditions of approval.
- 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 those specific areas where this is the desired long-term wastewater management solution.
- PF-9 In rural areas, avoid the build-out of clustered subdivisions where the cumulative effect of septic tanks will negatively impact the environment, either by stream

pollution or by contributing to the potential failure of unstable soils.

D. 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 SMMNAP 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 Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District includes a small portion of the western North Area.

Schools in the Santa Monica Mountains area have a reputation for offering education of exceptional quality, helping to make the LUP area a desirable place in which to live. Not only is the quality of schools high in the area, but their location, nestled in the Santa Monica Mountains, provides an excellent opportunity to incorporate outdoor environmental education into school curriculum.

As the area population grows, school facilities will need to expand. The ability of the County and the school districts to coordinate land development with the need for additional schools is an important component of protecting quality of life for both existing and future area residents.

Goal PF-2: Adequate public school facilities to meet projected growth.

Policies:

- PF-10 Require development projects to pay the maximum school impact fees permitted by law.
- PF-11 Maintain a flexible policy toward school impact mitigation, accepting land dedication, facilities construction, and payment of fees, with appropriate mitigation as determined by the applicable school district.
- PF-12 Cooperate with school districts to:
- Encourage the State legislature to maintain and amend as necessary, legislation that supports the financing of new school construction as needed for a growing population;
 - 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; and
 - Provide all State-required cooperative educational services to residents.

- PF-12 Cooperate with the school districts to reduce new school construction costs through cooperative agreements for the development of joint use school/park sites, joint school/community facilities, and joint school/library facilities.
- PF-13 Support the joint use of school/park sites and, where the law permits, use a portion of local park funds to purchase and construct the recreational portions of these joint sites.
- PF-14 New development of school facilities shall comply with all applicable policies of the LUP.

E. FIRE AND PARAMEDIC SERVICES

The Santa Monica Mountains have been designated by the Los Angeles County Fire Department 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 service 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 with associated effects on 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 in areas 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, Malibu Lake and Old Topanga do not have fire stations

within their communities. The CFPD is planning to build a fire station between Calabasas Highlands and Old Topanga in the future.

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.

Goal PF-3: Adequate fire and paramedic services to meet existing and future demand.

Policies:

- PF-15 Continue to consult and coordinate with the Fire Department as part of the project review process.
- PF-16 Review new development for adequate water supply and pressure, fire hydrants, and access to structures by firefighting equipment and personnel.
- PF-17 Require, where appropriate, on-site fire suppression systems for all new development to reduce the dependence on Fire Department equipment and personnel.
- PF-18 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 fire fighters.
- PF-19 Require clearly visible address signs during the day and night for easy identification during emergencies.
- PF-20 Facilitate the formation of volunteer fire departments and EMS providers.
- PF-21 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.

F. POLICE SERVICES

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is the main provider of police 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 the motoring public as they use 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 often-confusing street layout and 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 may be some potential to aggravate the existing emergency access constraints should roadway conditions (e.g., traffic congestion) deteriorate.

Goal PF-4: Adequate police services to meet local needs and provide a safe and secure environment for people and property.

Policies:

- PF-22 Continue to consult and coordinate with the Sheriff's Department and CHP as part of the environmental review process for projects subject to CEQA.
- PF-23 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-24 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.

G. SOLID WASTE SERVICES

Solid waste collection and hauling services are provided by private operators. 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 area as well as Thousand Oaks and western portions of the City of Los Angeles including Brentwood, Encino, and Granada Hills.

Goal PF-5: Adequate solid waste services to meet existing and future demands without degrading the quality of the natural environment.

Policies:

- PF-25 Design all new buildings with proper facilities for solid waste storage, handling, and collection pickup.
- PF-26 Prohibit commercial and industrial land uses which generate large volumes of solid waste.
- PF-27 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.

PF-28 Support measures for recycling of materials and financing mechanisms for solid waste reduction programs.