

Chapter 2

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LAND USE ELEMENT

I. BACKGROUND

Purpose

Land use is the act of defining compatible activities and built forms in order to determine their appropriate distribution within a given area. Land use authority is given to local governments to shape the physical environment by recognizing daily needs and directing future long-term changes in housing, business, recreation, and open space.

This Land Use Element contains two major components, the Land Use Goals and Policies and Land Use Policy Map, which explain how development and preservation of land should occur in the Antelope Valley. The Land Use Goals and Policies articulate how the Area Plan's Vision Statement and Rural Preservation Strategy will be achieved by setting out intended land use outcomes. As a visual reflection of the Land Use Goals and Policies, the Land Use Policy Map provides land use designations that establish locations for various types and densities of land use in the unincorporated Antelope Valley. The Land Use Policy Map determines the highest intensity of future development that the land can accommodate within a certain timeframe.

Issues

Over the last few decades, the Antelope Valley experienced surges of development pressures. Policymakers and citizens gained a greater knowledge of how new development contributes to environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and natural hazard risks. Accordingly, local governments needed to balance increased growth with obligations to protect existing natural resources. These new obligations, combined with a better understanding of the importance of balancing rural and urban areas in Los Angeles County, have created a new model for regional development. This new model, which directs new investment to areas with existing services and facilities and away from areas with natural hazards and environmental resources, will shape land use in the Valley, with policies that emphasize resource efficiency and the preservation of rural character. Over the next 20 years, this Element will balance regional growth pressures, the desires of residents, and the need for hazard avoidance and mitigation to determine the maximum level of development that these factors can support.

Vision and Strategy

The Area Plan's Vision Statement sets the tone of this Element, which is intended to create opportunities for the Antelope Valley to change and grow in ways that further enhance the rural lifestyle enjoyed by current residents. The Area Plan's Rural Preservation Strategy guides the Land Use Policy Map, creating a pattern of local town center areas, rural town areas, and rural preserve areas. Each town in the Valley will flow outward from vibrant town centers that offer a range of housing and local-serving activities for day-to-day living. Lower-density rural residences will surround these town centers, buffered by large contiguous open spaces that contain habitat areas, recreational spaces, and rural economic activities.

II. GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal LU 1

A land use pattern that maintains and enhances the rural character of the unincorporated Antelope Valley.

- **Policy LU 1.1:** Direct the majority of the entire Antelope Valley's future growth to the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale.
- **Policy LU 1.2:** Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to rural town center areas and rural town areas.
- **Policy LU 1.3:** Limit the amount of potential development in rural preserve areas.
- **Policy LU 1.4:** Maintain the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley as Rural Land, allowing for agriculture, equestrian and animal-keeping uses, and single family homes on large lots.
- **Policy LU 1.5:** Ensure there are appropriate lands for commercial and industrial services throughout the unincorporated Antelope Valley sufficient to serve the daily needs of rural residents and to provide local employment opportunities.

- **Policy LU 1.6:** Provide varied lands for residential uses sufficient to meet the needs of all segments of the population, and allow for agriculture, equestrian uses, and animal-keeping uses in these areas where appropriate.

Goal LU 2

A land use pattern that protects environmental resources.

- **Policy LU 2.1:** Limit the amount of potential development in Significant Ecological Areas, including Joshua Tree Woodlands, wildlife corridors, and other sensitive habitat areas.
- **Policy LU 2.2:** Limit the amount of potential development near and within Scenic Resource Areas, including water features, significant ridgelines, and Hillside Management Areas.
- **Policy LU 2.3:** Limit the amount of potential development in Agricultural Resource Areas, including important farmlands designated by the State of California and historical farmland areas.
- **Policy LU 2.4:** Limit the amount of potential development in Mineral Resource Areas.
- **Policy LU 2.5:** Limit the amount of potential development in riparian areas and groundwater recharge basins.
- **Policy LU 2.6:** Limit the amount of potential development near the National Forests and on private lands within the National Forests.

Goal LU 3

A land use pattern that minimizes threats from hazards.

- **Policy LU 3.1:** Prohibit new development on fault traces and limit the amount of potential development in seismic zones.
- **Policy LU 3.2:** Limit the amount of potential development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

- **Policy LU 3.3:** Limit the amount of potential development in Flood Zones designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- **Policy LU 3.4:** Limit the amount of potential development on steep slopes identified as Hillside Management Areas.
- **Policy LU 3.5:** Limit the amount of potential development in landslide and liquefaction areas.
- **Policy LU 3.6:** Limit the amount of potential residential development in airport influence areas and near military lands.

Goal LU 4

A land use pattern that promotes the efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities.

- **Policy LU 4.1:** Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to areas that are served by existing or approved planned infrastructure, public facilities, and public water systems.

Goal LU 5

A land use pattern that decreases greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Policy LU 5.1:** Reduce the total amount of potential development requiring vehicle trips in the unincorporated Antelope Valley.
- **Policy LU 5.2:** Encourage the continued development of rural town center areas that provide for the daily needs of surrounding residents, reducing the number of vehicle trips and providing local employment opportunities.
- **Policy LU 5.3:** Preserve open space areas to provide large contiguous carbon sequestering basins.

Goal LU 6

A land use pattern that makes the Antelope Valley a sustainable and resilient place to live.

- **Policy LU 6.1:** Periodically review changing conditions to ensure that land use policies are compatible with the Area Plan's Rural Preservation Strategy.
- **Policy LU 6.2:** Ensure the Area Plan is flexible in adapting to new issues and opportunities without compromising the rural character of the unincorporated Antelope Valley.

III. LAND USE POLICY MAP

The Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1: Land Use Policy) implements the Goals and Policies through the framework of rural town center areas, rural town areas, and rural preserve areas outlined in the Area Plan's Rural Preservation Strategy (Map 2.2: Rural Preservation Strategy). These areas are described below and are further explained in the discussion of land use concepts for each community that is provided in Chapter 6: Community-Specific Land Use Concepts.

Rural Town Center Areas

Rural town center areas are the focal points of rural communities, serving the daily needs of residents and providing local employment opportunities. The majority of new locally-oriented public facilities and new locally-oriented commercial uses should be directed to these areas. These areas will provide pleasant pedestrian environments and will be accessible by a range of transportation options to reduce vehicle trips, as directed in the policies of the Mobility Element. Some of these areas will allow for a mix of commercial and residential uses.

Rural town center areas are located within the following Antelope Valley communities:

- Acton – Along Crown Valley Road between Gillespie Avenue and Soledad Canyon Road.
- Antelope Acres – Along 90th Street West between Avenue E-4 and Avenue E-12.

- Gorman – Along the Golden State Freeway surrounding the Gorman School Road interchanges.
- Lake Hughes – Along Elizabeth Lake Road between Trail I and Mountain View Road.
- Lake Los Angeles – Along Avenue O between 167th Street East and 172nd Street East, and along 170th Street East between Avenue O and Glenfall Avenue.
- Leona Valley – Intersection of Elizabeth Lake Road and 90th Street West.
- Littlerock – Along Pearblossom Highway between Little Rock Wash and 89th Street East.
- Pearblossom – Along Pearblossom Highway between 121st Street East and 133rd Street East.
- Quartz Hill – Along 50th Street West between Avenue L-6 and Avenue M-2.
- Roosevelt – Intersection of 90th Street East and Avenue J.
- Sun Village – Along Palmdale Boulevard between Little Rock Wash and 95th Street East, and along 90th Street East between Palmdale Boulevard and Avenue Q-14.

On the Land Use Policy Map, the primary land use designations in the rural town center areas include:

- Rural Commercial (CR)
- Mixed-Use – Rural (MU-R)
- Major Commercial (CM)
- Light Industrial (IL)

Rural Town Areas

Rural town areas provide a transition between rural town center areas and rural preserve areas, as they are occupied by a mix of residential and light agricultural uses. Residents living in these areas are willing to forego urban infrastructure and services in order to live in a rural environment. The majority of new residential development should be directed to these areas, provided that such development is consistent with the existing community character and

allows for light agricultural, equestrian, and animal-keeping uses where appropriate. These areas will provide transportation linkages to rural town center areas and other nearby destination points, as directed in the policies of the Mobility Element.

On the Land Use Policy Map, rural town areas are designated as Residential or as Rural Land, depending on the density of existing residential development. These land use designations include:

- Residential 30 (H30) – Maximum density of 30 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 18 (H18) – Maximum density of 18 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 9 (H9) – Maximum density of 9 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 5 (H5) – Maximum density of 5 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 2 (H2) – Maximum density of 2 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Rural Land 1 (RL1) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 1 gross acre of land.
- Rural Land 2 (RL2) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 2 gross acres of land.
- Rural Land 5 (RL5) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 5 gross acres of land.

These maximum densities shall apply to all new land divisions. Existing legal lots may be developed with one residential unit each, regardless of lot size, provided that such development meets applicable County Code requirements, and the siting of the structure is supportive of the policies in this Area Plan.

In addition, some rural town areas are designated for commercial or industrial use. These land use designations acknowledge existing commercial or industrial uses or identify appropriate locations for future commercial and industrial uses to serve local residents.

Rural Preserve Areas

Rural preserve areas are the remaining areas of the unincorporated Antelope Valley, which are largely undeveloped and generally not served by existing infrastructure and public facilities. Many of these areas contain environmental resources, such as Significant Ecological Areas, Scenic Resource Areas, and Agricultural Resource Areas. In addition, many of these areas contain safety hazards, such as Seismic Zones, Very High Hazard Severity Zones, and Flood Zones. The primary benefit of these areas is that they provide habitat for regionally significant biological species while simultaneously providing scenic value to residents. A secondary benefit of these areas is that they contain natural resources which provide economic opportunities. Development in these areas should be limited to single family homes at very low densities, light and heavy agricultural uses, including equestrian and animal-keeping uses, and other uses where appropriate.

On the Land Use Policy Map, rural preserve areas are designated as Rural Land with a range of very low densities that reflect the underlying infrastructure constraints, environmental resources, and safety hazards. These land use designations include:

- Rural Land 10 (RL10) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 10 gross acres of land.
- Rural Land 20 (RL20) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 20 gross acres of land.
- Rural Land 40 (RL40) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 40 gross acres of land.

These maximum densities shall apply to all new land divisions. Existing legal lots may be developed with one residential unit each, regardless of lot size, provided that such development meets applicable County Code requirements, and the siting of the structure is supportive of the policies in this Area Plan.

In addition, a limited number of rural preserve areas are designated for commercial or industrial use. These land use designations acknowledge existing commercial or industrial uses or identify appropriate locations for future commercial and industrial uses to serve local residents or travelers along Interstate 5.

Public and Open Space Land

Existing open space lands throughout rural town center areas, rural town areas, and rural preserve areas are identified on the Land Use Policy Map as one of the following Open Space designations, depending on the use of the land:

- Parks and Recreation (OS-PR)
- Conservation (OS-C)
- Water (OS-W)
- Bureau of Land Management (OS-BLM)
- National Forest (OS-NF)
- Military Land (OS-ML)

Privately owned lands within the National Forest are designated on the Land Use Policy Map as Rural Land, indicating the underlying infrastructure constraints, environmental resources, and safety hazards.

Existing public and semi-public facilities throughout rural town center areas, rural town areas, and rural preserve areas are designated on the Land Use Policy Map as Public and Semi-Public Facilities (P).

Land Use Legend

Table L-1: Land Use Legend

Land Use	Code	Permitted Density or FAR	Purpose
RURAL			
Rural Land 1	RL1	Maximum 1du/1 gross ac Maximum FAR 0.5	Single family residences; equestrian and limited animal uses; and limited agricultural and related activities.
Rural Land 2	RL2	Maximum 1 du/2 gross ac Maximum FAR 0.5	
Rural Land 5	RL5	Maximum 1 du/5 gross ac Maximum FAR 0.5	

Land Use	Code	Permitted Density or FAR	Purpose
Rural Land 10	RL10	Maximum 1 du/10 gross ac Maximum FAR 0.5	Single family residences; equestrian and animal uses; and agricultural and related activities.
Rural Land 20	RL20	Maximum 1 du/20 gross ac Maximum FAR 0.5	
Rural Land 40	RL40	Maximum 1 du/40 gross ac Maximum FAR 0.5	
RESIDENTIAL			
Residential 2	H2	0-2 du/net ac	Low-density, single-family residences.
Residential 5	H5	0-5 du/net ac	
Residential 9	H9	0-9 du/net ac	Single-family residences.
Residential 18	H18	0-18 du/net ac	Transitional single family and small scale multifamily residences, including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, rowhouses, small lot subdivisions, and townhomes.
Residential 30	H30	0-30 du/net ac	Medium scale, multifamily residences, and single family residences.
COMMERCIAL			
Rural Commercial	CR	Commercial: Maximum FAR 0.5	Limited commercial uses that are compatible with rural, agricultural, and low-intensity visitor-serving recreational activities, including: retail, personal, and professional services; restaurants; general stores; and professional offices.
Major Commercial	CM	Residential: 30-150 du/net ac Commercial: Maximum FAR 3.0 Mixed Use: 30-150 du/net ac and FAR 3.0	Large and intense commercial uses, such as regional and destination shopping malls and centers, tourist and recreation-related commercial services, hotels, and amusement activities; and multi-family residential and residential-commercial mixed uses.
MIXED USE			
Mixed Use - Rural	MU-R	Residential: 0-5 du/ac Commercial: Maximum FAR 0.5 Mixed Use: 0-5 du/ac and FAR 0.5	Limited commercial uses that are compatible with rural, agricultural, and low-intensity visitor-serving recreational activities, including: retail; personal, and professional services; restaurants; general stores; and professional offices; and residential-commercial mixed use.
INDUSTRIAL			

Land Use	Code	Permitted Density or FAR	Purpose
Light Industrial	IL	Maximum FAR: 1.0	Light industrial uses, such as industrial park activities, warehouses, distribution, assembly, disassembly, fabricating, finishing, manufacturing, packaging, and repairing or processing of materials, printing, commercial laundry, photographic film processing, vehicle repair garages, building maintenance shops, metal work, millwork, and cabinetry work.
Heavy Industrial	IH	Maximum FAR: 1.0	Heavy industrial uses, including heavy manufacturing, refineries, and other labor and capital intensive industrial activities.
PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC			
Public and Semi-Public	P	Maximum FAR: 3.0	Public and semi-public facilities and community-serving uses, including: public buildings and campuses, schools, hospitals, cemeteries, government buildings, and fairgrounds. Airports and other major transportati
OPEN SPACE			
Conservation	OS-C	N/A	The preservation of open space areas and scenic resource preservation in perpetuity. Can include passive trail networks. Applies only to land that is legally constrained from future development activities.
Parks and Recreation	OS-PR	N/A	Open space recreational uses, such as regional and local parks, trails, athletic fields, community gardens, and golf courses.
National Forest	OS-NF	N/A	Areas within the National Forest and managed by the National Forest Service.

Land Use	Code	Permitted Density or FAR	Purpose
Bureau of Land Management	OS-BLM	N/A	Areas that are managed by the Federal Bureau of Land Management.
Water	OS-W	N/A	Bodies of water, such as lakes, reservoirs, natural waterways, and man-made infrastructure, such as drainage channels, floodways, and spillways. Includes active trail networks within or along drainage channels.
Military	OS-ML	N/A	Military bases and land controlled by U.S. Department of Defense.
OVERLAYS			

Land Use	Code	Permitted Density or FAR	Purpose
Special Management Areas	SMA	N/A	Special Management Areas require additional development regulations due to the presence of natural resources, scenic resources, or identified hazards. Development regulations are necessary to prevent loss of life and property, and to protect the natural environment.
Specific Plan	SP	N/A	Specific Plans contain precise guidance for land development, infrastructure, amenities and resource conservation. Specific plans must be consistent with the General Plan. Detailed policy and/or regulatory requirements are contained within each adopted Specific Plan document.

IV. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Special Management Areas

Special Management Areas, identified in the Countywide General Plan, are environmental features found throughout rural town areas and rural preserve areas. Goals and Policies regarding these Special Management Areas are provided in the other Elements of this Area Plan, as follows:

- Agricultural Resource Areas – Conservation & Open Space Element (Goal COS 6 and related policies, Goal COS 7 and related policies)
- Flood Zones – Public, Safety, Services & Facilities Element (Goal PS 7 and related policies)
- Hillside Management Areas – Conservation & Open Space Element (Goal COS 5 and related policies, Goal COS 15 and related policies, Goal COS 16 and related policies), Public Safety, Services & Facilities Element (Goal PS 6 and related policies)
- Landslide Zones -- Public, Safety, Services & Facilities Element (Goal PS 6 and related policies)
- Liquefaction Zones -- Public, Safety, Services & Facilities Element (Goal PS 6 and related policies)
- Mineral Resource Areas – Conservation & Open Space Element (Goal COS 8 and related policies)
- Scenic Resource Areas – Conservation & Open Space Element (Goal COS 5 and related policies, Goal COS 15 and related policies)
- Seismic Zones – Public, Safety, Services & Facilities Element (Goal PS 6 and related policies)
- Significant Ecological Areas – Conservation & Open Space Element (Goal COS 4 and related policies, Goal COS 15 and related policies, Goal COS 16 and related policies)
- Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones – Public, Safety, Services & Facilities Element (Goal PS 5 and related policies)

High Desert Corridor

The High Desert Corridor (HDC) is currently in the planning stages. The HDC is envisioned as a limited-access highway linking Interstate 5, State Route 14, and Interstate 15 through Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. The HDC would replace State Highway 138 (Avenue D and Pearblossom Highway) as the preferred east-west route for truck traffic across the Antelope Valley and would promote continued economic development in the Valley. Policies in the Mobility Element support the development of the HDC.

Development of the HDC would impact the land use pattern in the unincorporated Antelope Valley. In some communities, such as Lake Los Angeles, the HDC could support commercial and industrial development, providing additional local employment opportunities and reducing the need for long-distance commuting. The HDC could consolidate trucking routes and alleviate the truck congestion on local arterials. However, a preferred alignment for the HDC was not yet identified when the Area Plan was prepared.

A comprehensive study of the Area Plan should be undertaken when a preferred alignment for the HDC is identified and funded for construction. The study should carefully consider potential changes to the Area Plan, including the Land Use Policy Map, balancing the need for economic development and local employment with environmental priorities. If the study recommends changes to the Area Plan, a Plan Amendment may be initiated to adopt those changes, pursuant to the County's environmental review and public hearing procedures.

Utility-Scale Renewable Energy Production Facilities

Utility-scale renewable energy production facilities may be allowed in Rural Land designations without a Plan Amendment. However, applications for such facilities shall require discretionary approval and shall be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act and the County's environmental review and public hearing procedures. Applications for such facilities must be carefully considered and shall be consistent with the relevant Goals and Policies of the Area Plan, especially Goal COS 10 and related policies, Goal COS 13 and related policies, and Goal COS 14 and related policies. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Conservation and Open Space Element)

Palmdale Regional Airport

Los Angeles World Airports owns several parcels in the central portion of the Antelope Valley that are currently in unincorporated territory but are surrounded by the City of Palmdale. These parcels have been designated as Public and Semi-Public (P) to acknowledge the existing Palmdale Regional Airport, which will be significantly expanded to become a regional commercial airport. Policies in the Mobility Element and the Public Safety, Services, & Facilities Element support the development of Palmdale Regional Airport, and that is the primary vision for these parcels. However, at the time of this Area Plan's adoption, the airport is inactive and no commercial air service is offered. Until such time that the airport is expanded, this Area Plan recommends that commercial and industrial uses be allowed on these parcels without a Plan Amendment, as such development will offer opportunities for employment and economic growth. However, those uses must be compatible with airport operations and must not restrict or prohibit future expansion of the airport.

Amendments to the Land Use Policy Map

After the Area Plan is adopted, property owners may request amendments to the Land Use Policy Map. These applications will be subject to the County's environmental review and public hearing procedures for Plan Amendments.

Amendments to the Land Use Policy Map requested by property owners must be carefully considered and shall be approved only if the following findings can be made:

- The Plan Amendment is necessary to realize an unmet community need;
- The Plan Amendment will allow development that maintains and enhances rural character, protects environmental resources, minimizes threats from hazards, and promotes the efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in a manner that is equal or superior to the development allowed by the existing land use designation;
- The Plan Amendment is consistent with the relevant Goals and Policies of the various Elements of the Area Plan; and
- The Plan Amendment meets the applicable findings required by the Countywide General Plan.