

Chapter 8

Chapter 8: Plan Implementation

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I. Introduction

The California Government Code Section 65400 requires that upon adoption of a general plan, a planning agency shall “investigate and make recommendations to the legislative body regarding reasonable and practical means for the implementing the general plan or element of the general plan, so that it will serve as an effective guide for orderly growth and development, preservation and conservation of open-space land and natural resources, and the efficient expenditure of public funds relating to the subjects addressed in the general plan”. The Antelope Valley Area Plan (Area Plan) is part of the General Plan and the two documents must be consistent with each other. The Area Plan refines countywide goals and policies in the General Plan by addressing issues specific to the Antelope Valley. This Chapter describes the intent of the Area Plan with regards to the specific implementation programs that are to be enacted after the adoption of the Area Plan, as well as provide clear guidelines as to how these programs will be designed and implemented.

II. Implementation Programs

A. Significant Ecological Areas

The Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) in this Area Plan are based on conservation biology principles that seek to conserve habitats of unique and threatened species, and retain linkages and wildlife movement across important ecological areas. The SEA Program recognizes that many of the properties within the SEAs are privately owned. The SEA Program, as detailed in this implementation program, alongside the goals and policies of this Area Plan is created to conserve the biological resources in the SEAs while recognizing these private property rights, facilitating development compatible with the SEAs, and incentivizing conservation and preservation of these important ecological areas. The SEA Program within this Area Plan is intended to complement and where appropriate, further refine aspects of the General Plan SEA Program, and will be consistent with it.

The SEAs established in this Area Plan are intended to change gradually over time. Development and conservation within and around the SEAs will affect the ecological value and biological resources they contain. Additionally, the location or value of biological resources in the Antelope Valley may change. It is anticipated that the future will include new forms of development and new techniques in conservation planning. In order to respect the diverse ecological values of areas within the SEAs, the SEA Program must retain a flexible regulatory approach that connects levels of review to the potential impacts of individual development projects. The SEA Program is intended to change and adapt alongside the SEAs. In order to ensure the Antelope Valley SEA Program continues to remain relevant and appropriately located, the County will review the performance of the SEA Program periodically.

This implementation program may be subsumed by a more comprehensive, countywide program as part of a General Plan update and/or Zoning Ordinance amendment.

1. SEA Ordinance and Permitted Uses

Every two years the SEA Program shall be assessed to ensure that implementation of the SEA Program has not affected the operations of legally approved uses within the SEAs. The assessment shall consist of accepting public comment on issues faced by those who have attempted to develop within the SEAs, or own already developed properties within the SEAs, with the intent to improve any process or regulation in order to create simpler or more economically feasible development processes within the SEAs. If the recommended changes may be implemented without creating harmful impacts or compromising the sustainability of the SEAs, such changes may consist of an amendment to this Area Plan or changes to relevant portions of the Zoning Ordinance (Please see Subsection 2 below).

2. SEA Program Monitoring and Status Reporting

The SEA Program shall also be reviewed every two years to assess how the implementation of the SEA Program maintains the sustainability of the SEAs. This assessment will consist of any methods used to identify issues and opportunities of the SEA Program. Such assessment may include developing new biological studies or cumulative impact studies; compiling a review of studies conducted in and around SEAs in the previous years; and/or monitoring and disclosing the impacts from approved uses and human activities within the SEAs. The information gathered during this process should be used as the basis for recommending any changes to the SEA Program that would enhance the biological value of or reduce the impacts to the SEAs.

This SEA Program review shall include a public review process where Department of Regional Planning staff present their recommendations and receive public comments. When necessary, the recommendations and public input may be used to amend the SEA ordinance, SEA boundaries, and/or SEA descriptions to address any changes required to continue to meet the overall objective of the SEA Program. Particular care should be taken during this review to address any comments or concerns regarding the SEA boundaries and criteria, from members of the public or from specific property owners in the SEAs.

3. Incentives for Conservation and Mitigation

As SEAs provide value as important habitat, privately owned land within SEAs can be important sources for conservation and mitigation land required for development within the Antelope Valley. Projects in the Antelope Valley that require mitigation land shall meet their mitigation requirements from land within the SEAs identified in this Area Plan, to the greatest extent feasible.

B. Agricultural Resource Areas Program

In order to encourage the continued operation of local farms in the Antelope Valley, it is the intent of this Area Plan to develop a program allowing greater flexibility for local farms to establish and operate additional compatible uses as incidental or accessory to their primary farming operation. This would allow property owners to explore and develop additional sources of income to augment their primary farming use. This program may consist of developing more flexible zoning regulations for parcels used for farming purposes ; allowing the transfer of development rights from agricultural lands with the option of retaining agricultural easements on the property; creating a more streamlined process for permits on identified farmlands; and other such incentives for continuing their farming operations on their properties.

C. Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs)

As more details are finalized with the High Desert Corridor and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement projects (i.e. route alignments, location of on-ramps, number of lanes etc.), further planning activities may be necessary for each EOA to ensure that the Area Plan's Goals and Policies, as well as Land Use Policy and zoning are consistent with the final design of the two projects. Future planning activities may involve the preparation of a Community Plan or Specific Plan, with associated land use and zoning changes as well as specific goals, policies and implementing strategies that would ensure that the economic opportunities presented by these infrastructure projects are balanced with preserving the rural character and ecological value of the surrounding areas and communities. In addition, any development within the Antelope Valley Area Plan boundaries shall be required to further analyze infrastructure impacts at a project level. This may require additional feasibility engineering studies so that infrastructure development requirements can be established to the satisfaction of the County Department of Public Works (DPW).

1. East EOA

The East EOA is located in the eastern part of the Antelope Valley, along the proposed route of the High Desert Corridor. It includes the communities of Lake Los Angeles, Sun Village, Littlerock, Pearblossom, Llano and Crystalaire, as previously described in Chapter 7 (Community-Specific Land Use Concepts). Further planning activities may be pursued for the East EOA as the High Desert Corridor Project is developed.

2. Central EOA

The Central EOA is located in the general vicinity of the intersection of Avenue D and State Route 14, north of William J. Fox Air Field. It includes areas just outside the eastern border of Antelope Acres, as well as a concentration of light and heavy industrial uses in the vicinity of the Lancaster Landfill. It is also encompasses the Lancaster Water Reclamation Plant, which provides the area with potential access to recycled water that can help support the residential, commercial and industrial uses

being proposed for the area. Further planning activities for the Central EOA may be prepared with the development of the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project.

3. West EOA

The West EOA is located in the northwestern part of the Antelope Valley along the proposed route of the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project. The area includes large contiguous landholdings that have been proposed for master-planned developments, as well as the western portion of Neenach. Due to its proximity to Interstate 5, new retail and housing in Kern County to the north, and to ensure orderly development in the area, any master-planned community within the West EOA will require further planning activities in addition to this Area Plan.

With the number and size of contiguous parcels owned by two property owners (Tejon Ranch Company and Bruce Burrows), a Specific Plan or similar planning activity will be required for more specific master-planning activities for these specific parcels. This is necessary to ensure that development in the area occurs in an orderly and sustainable way, and that the required infrastructure and public utilities are in place at a master-planned level before these new developments are established. Thus, this Area Plan specifically requires the preparation and adoption of a Specific Plan or similar planning document for these parcels before any master-planned development (as defined by this Area Plan in Chapter 1) can be approved. If a complete application for a Specific Plan or similar planning document is not submitted within five years of the effective date of this Area Plan, the Department of Regional Planning may initiate a Community Plan for the West Economic Opportunity Area.

D. Transfer of Development Rights Program

This Area Plan recognizes that increasing or limiting residential densities through Land Use designations can only go so far in terms of either encouraging development or protecting the environment, respectively, in the areas where they are appropriate. Thus, it is the intent of this Area Plan to develop a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program for the Antelope Valley in order to fully realize the potential development in the EOAs and encourage preservation of SEA lands.

1. Sending Areas

Sending Areas shall be lands designated or identified as SEAs or Seismic Zones or are otherwise located in the Rural Preserve Areas, with land use designations of Rural Land 10 (RL10) or Rural Land 20 (RL20). The Department of Regional Planning shall explore ways to give property owners incentives to take advantage of the program, such as, but not limited to, density bonuses in transferring development rights. For example, while development proposed in these areas are subject to a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit for each 10 or 20 acres of land, the development rights in these areas may be

transferrable to receiving areas at densities as high as 1 dwelling unit for each two acres of land.

2. Receiving Areas

Receiving Areas should be those areas identified as EOAs. Depending on the specific circumstances within each EOAs, development rights transferred into these areas may either be part off or in addition to those densities established by the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan. This shall be determined through further analysis in a comprehensive, Antelope Valley-wide TDR Program.

E. Antelope Valley Scenic Drives Program

This Area Plan has identified a number of Scenic Drives in the Antelope Valley (Map 4.2) that should be preserved to ensure that their scenic value is maintained in the years to come. Thus, it is the intent of this Area Plan to develop and implement a program for future review of proposed developments within viewsheds of these Scenic Drives, which may include:

- Required Visual Impact Assessment for proposed development within the viewsheds of identified Scenic Drives;
- Required finding for discretionary entitlements that the proposed development is compatible with the scenic character of the route; or
- Applicable development standards for development along a Scenic Drive.

F. Antelope Valley Community Standards Districts

As indicated in Title 22 (Zoning Code) Chapter 22.44.090, the “Community Standards Districts (CSDs) are established as supplemental districts to provide a means if implementing special development standards contained in adopted neighborhood, community, area, specific and local coastal plans within the unincorporated areas, or to provide a means of addressing special problems which are unique to certain geographic areas within the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.”

There are currently five adopted CSDs in the Antelope Valley: in the rural communities of Acton, the Lakes (Elizabeth Lake and Lake Hughes), Juniper Hills, Leona Valley, and Southeast Antelope Valley (Littlerock and Sun Village). In addition to these, the Department of Regional Planning has received proposal for six new CSDs: for the rural communities of Antelope Acres, Fairmont, Green Valley, Lake Los Angeles, Quartz Hill, and Roosevelt as well proposed amendments to the CSDs of Leona Valley and Southeast Antelope Valley (Littlerock and Sun Village).

This Area Plan is the foundational planning document for the development of the Antelope Valley for the next 20 to 30 years. As part of its implementation, this Plan shall require a comprehensive review of all the existing CSDs in the Antelope Valley. This review may also include a program to prepare and adopt any proposed new CSDs or amendments to existing CSDs in the next several

years after the adoption of the Area Plan. When a comprehensive review has been conducted, and new and/or updated CSDs have been adopted, these CSDs may specify whether a variance shall be granted only under extraordinary circumstances.