

From: Dan Silver [mailto:dsilverla@me.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 16, 2014 9:05 AM
To: Emma Howard
Cc: Richard Bruckner; Connie Chung; Susan Tae; Mark Child; Carl Nadela
Subject: Procedures for single family homes

Dear Emma:

As you further consider the SEA Ordinance, I wanted to bring to your attention the procedures – called the “Expedited Review Process” – that Riverside County uses to site single family homes on legal lots in areas where habitat values need to be protected. In Riverside County, the “Criteria Area” is the equivalent of Significant Ecological Areas. With the Criteria Area, most but not all of the land is ultimately intended to become part of the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). While land on small single family lots is not likely to become part of the reserve, the goal, nevertheless, is always to achieve *compatibility* by siting the house, driveway, ancillary structures, etc. on the *least environmentally sensitive portion* of the lot.

Avoidance of resources through site design is thus central to this process. There is no transfer of property interest or easement recordation, but a development footprint is designated and mapped.

The footprint map is filed with appropriate County departments and land outside the designated development area is flagged and protected in case another discretionary permit (clearing, grading, etc.) is applied for in the future.

If, however, all or portion of the lot is needed for actual inclusion in the reserve, there is a voluntary negotiation process which may result in acquisition. But this is at the discretion of the landowner and is not required. The situation is different when a parcel map or subdivision is proposed. In that case, an “Environmental Constraints Sheet” is created and non-development areas are recorded with protective easements as conditions of approval.

Compared to SEAs, the MSHCP is a more formal regulatory process that involves state and federal endangered species permitting, but the goals of protecting large portions of a mapped area (SEAs or Criteria Areas) and otherwise ensuring compatible uses are very similar. If Riverside County can do it, so can LA County! We strongly believe that the draft SEA Ordinance can and should be improved in regard to resource avoidance and site design for both single family homes and subdivisions.

As far as I know, the Riverside County process for siting single family homes on the least sensitive portions of legal lots has worked well. I’ve enclosed an excerpt from the MSHCP (with link) and also a County brochure. More information could be obtained from Chad Young of the Environmental Programs Department (<CMYOUNG@rctlma.org> 951-955-8159).

I hope this information is helpful, and EHL looks forward to continuing to work with you on the Ordinance.

Best regards,
Dan

http://www.wrc-rca.org/Permit_Docs/MSHCP_Docs/volume1/Vol1-Sec6.pdf
