



Significant Ecological Areas Program

January 23, 2013



SEAs

Ecosystem areas that support the cumulative biodiversity of Los Angeles County

Generally undisturbed.

Public and private lands- SEAs are not preserves.

Components of the SEA Program



1. General Plan:

- Map
- Policies
- Descriptions

2. SEA Ordinance

3. Supporting Studies



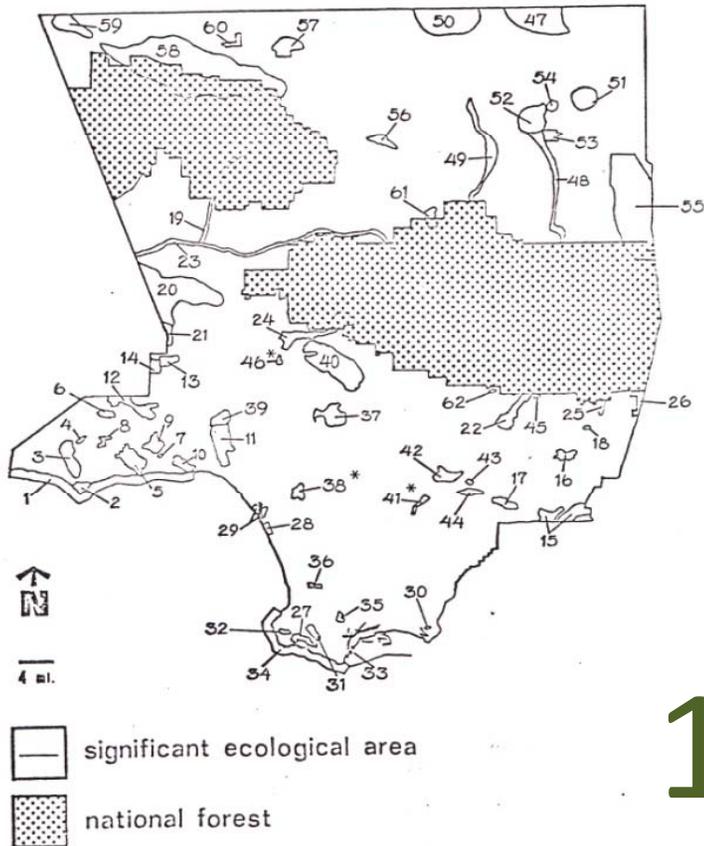
2012 Draft General Plan

Goals and Policies

- Active monitoring of the SEAs- biannual reporting to the Board on development, studies, and additional measures.
- Collaboration for conservation- mitigation lands, preservation.
- **Main Goal:** sustainability of the SEAs. This includes representative species as well as physical linkages.

SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS
IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

RECOMMENDED BY ENGLAND AND NELSON



61 Adopted SEAs

1980s- Today



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
GENERAL PLAN
Significant Ecological Areas and
Coastal Resource Areas**

Figure 6.2

October, 2011

LEGEND.

- Significant Ecological Area (Proposed)
 - Ecological Transition Areas (Proposed)
 - Coastal Resource Areas*
 - Significant Ecological Areas (Adopted)
 - Open Space
- Base Features**
- Perennial Water Body
 - Intermittent Water Body
 - Dry Water Body
 - City Boundaries (transparent write over Proposed SEAs)
 - Unincorporated Area
 - National Forest

PROPOSED SEA:

1. General Plan
2. Shading Patterns and Analysis
3. Analysis Areas
4. Coastal Area System Plan
5. Land Use Management
6. Strategic Plan
7. Land Use Management
8. Strategic Plan
9. Strategic Plan
10. Strategic Plan
11. Strategic Plan
12. Strategic Plan
13. Strategic Plan
14. Strategic Plan
15. Strategic Plan
16. Strategic Plan

PROPOSED SEA:

17. Strategic Plan
18. Strategic Plan
19. Strategic Plan
20. Strategic Plan
21. Strategic Plan
22. Strategic Plan
23. Strategic Plan
24. Strategic Plan
25. Strategic Plan
26. Strategic Plan
27. Strategic Plan
28. Strategic Plan
29. Strategic Plan
30. Strategic Plan
31. Strategic Plan
32. Strategic Plan

COASTAL RESOURCE AREA

33. Strategic Plan
34. Strategic Plan
35. Strategic Plan
36. Strategic Plan
37. Strategic Plan
38. Strategic Plan
39. Strategic Plan
40. Strategic Plan

***REGULATORY INFORMATION:**
The County requires the following regulatory codes: State Coastal Act and State Marine Reserves; County General Plan and other applicable laws. The County also requires the following regulatory codes: State Coastal Act and State Marine Reserves; County General Plan and other applicable laws. The County also requires the following regulatory codes: State Coastal Act and State Marine Reserves; County General Plan and other applicable laws.

NOTES:

This map is a component of the County General Plan. It is a technical report subject to review. The map and its data will be subject to the County's General Plan and other applicable laws. The County also requires the following regulatory codes: State Coastal Act and State Marine Reserves; County General Plan and other applicable laws.

VICINITY MAP



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
 DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
 100 N. WILSON AVENUE
 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

2011

SEA Ordinance History

- Preliminary Draft SEA Ordinance released November 2011
- Summary Draft SEA released June 4th.
- **Draft 3** of the SEA Ordinance released December 31st.
- *90 day comment period- April 1st.*

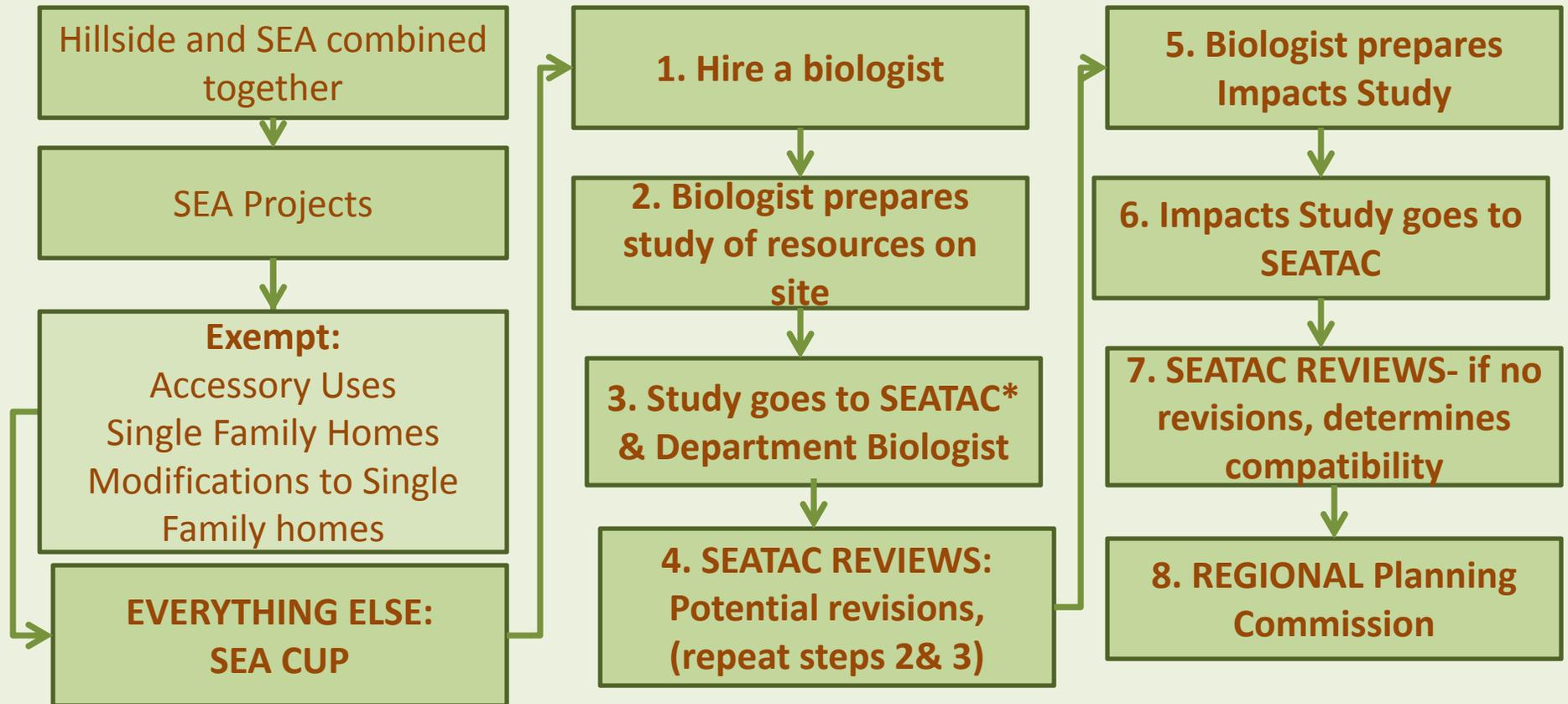
Issues with the Current Ordinance

- Limited approach reduces flexibility
- Issues of fairness- some exempt uses may be more impactful than many non exempt uses
- Too many uses require a full SEA Conditional Use Permit (costs approximately \$18,000).
- Our burden of proof for the CUP lacks clarity, similar projects may undergo different process.

Draft Ordinance: Solutions

- 4 level of SEA regulation create flexibility.
- Uses that were formerly exempted now follow some standards and have some inspection of site for rare species.
- Many uses more uses undergo a lesser process- many CUPS and all currently built areas.
- New standards say what we are looking for specifically- give numbers or impacts, not broad wording.

Current SEA Ordinance



**SEATAC= SEA Technical Advisory Committee: comprised of expert biologists*

Current Ordinance Applicability:

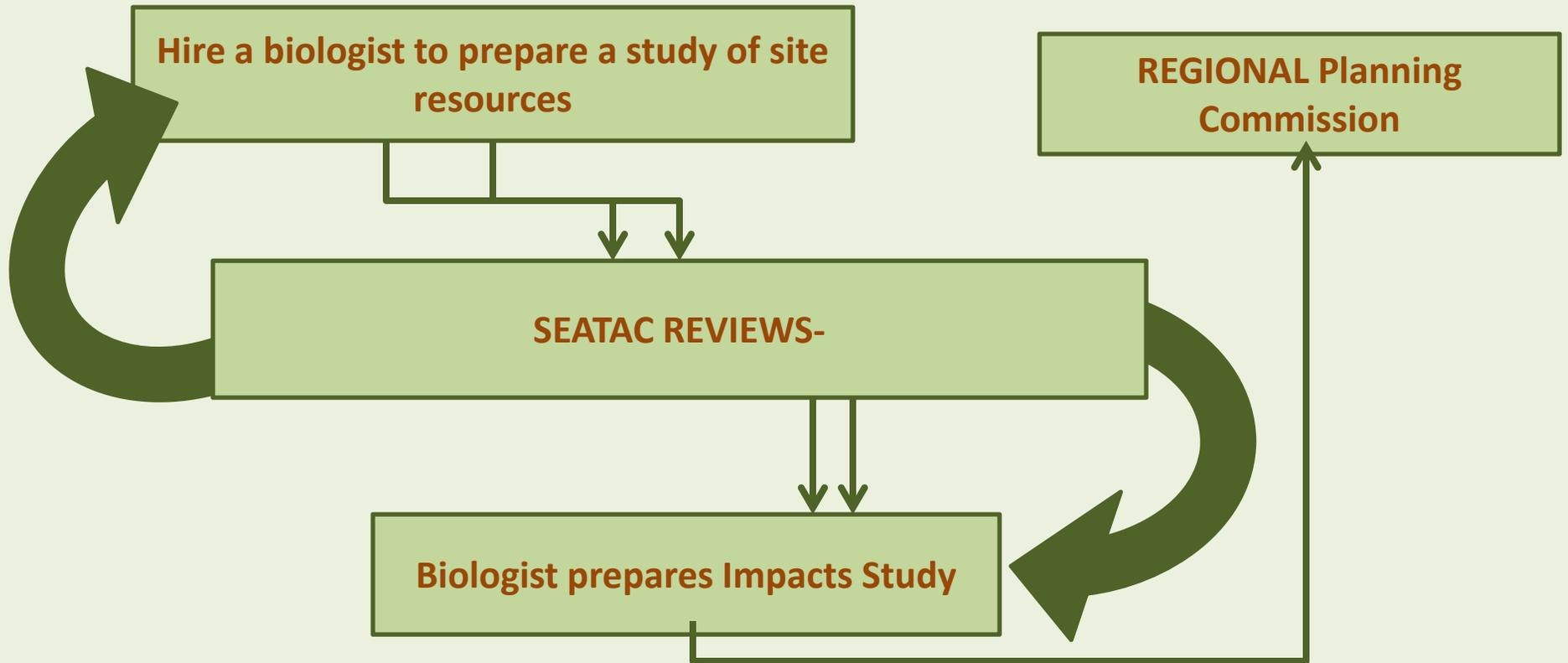
Exempt:

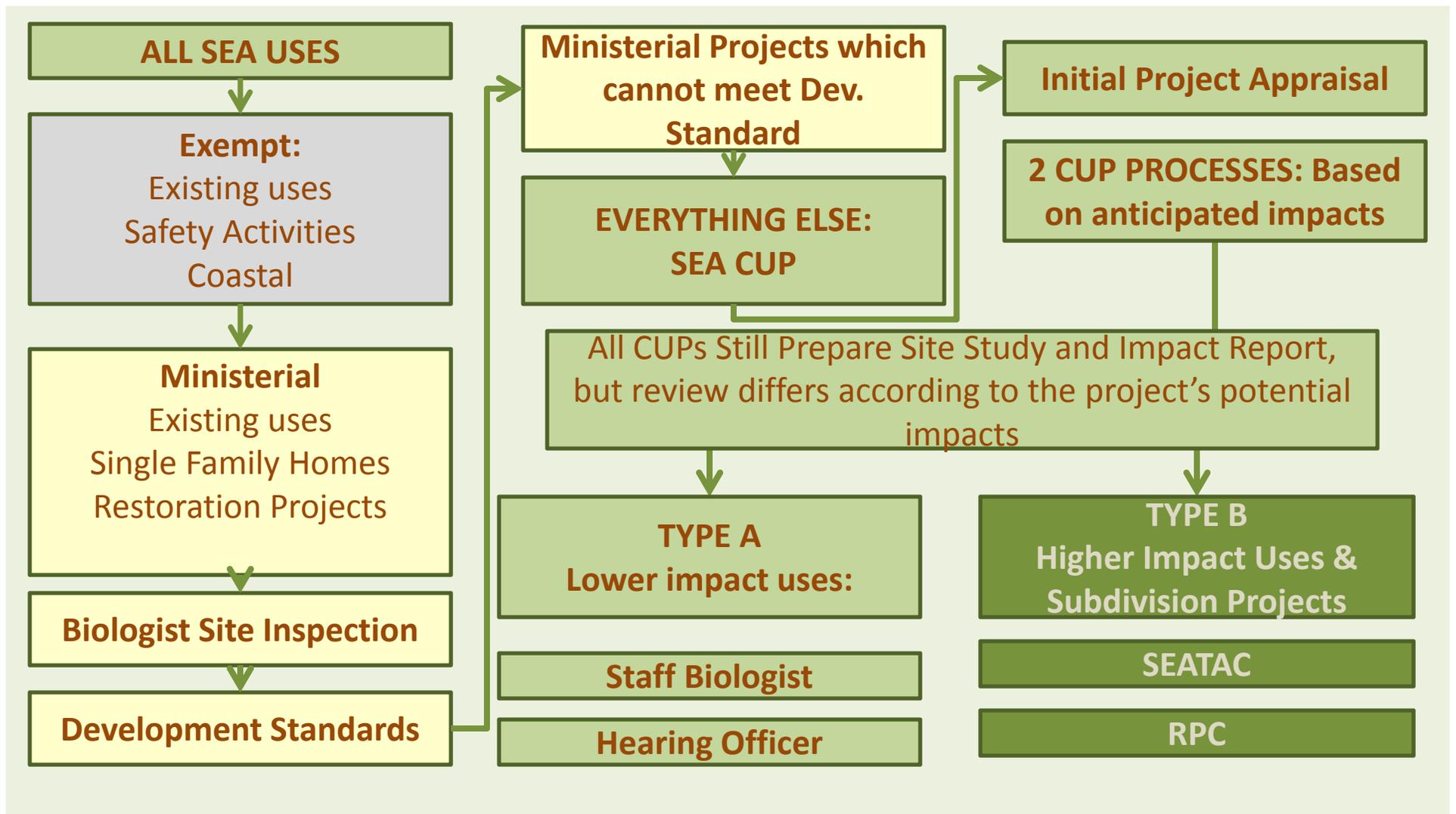
Accessory Uses
Single Family Homes
Modifications to Single
Family homes

EVERYTHING ELSE:

**SEA CUP
(\$\$\$)**

Current Process For SEA CUPS





Draft Ordinance Applicability:

Exempt:

Existing uses
Safety Activities
Coastal
(0\$)

Site Plan Review:

Single Family Homes
Developed & Disturbed Areas
Restoration Projects
(\$)

Everything Else:

SEA CUP Type A
(\$\$)

High Impact Projects:

SEA CUP Type B
(\$\$\$)

Site Plan Review

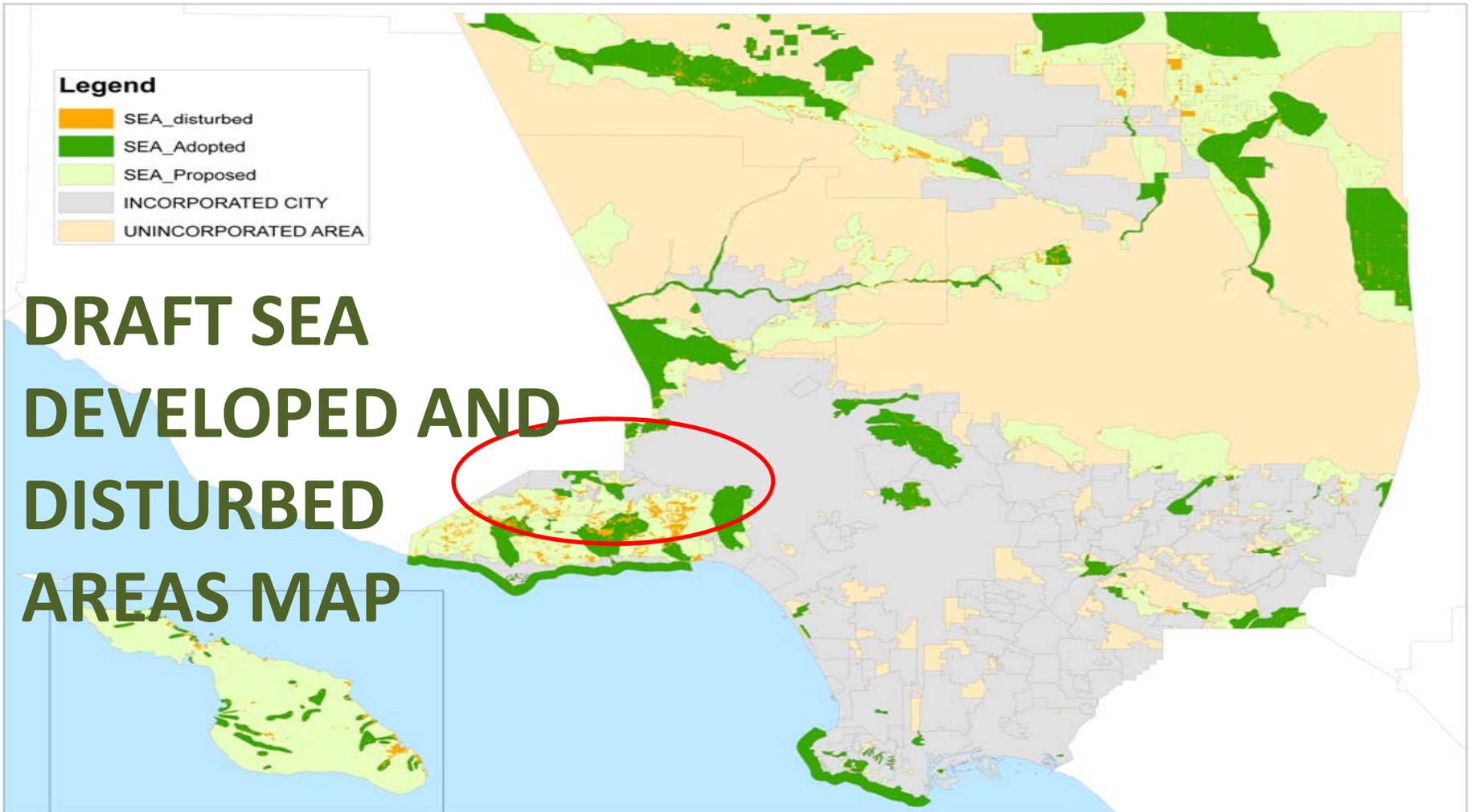
- Single Family Homes
- Developed & Disturbed Areas
- Restoration Projects

Site Plan Review

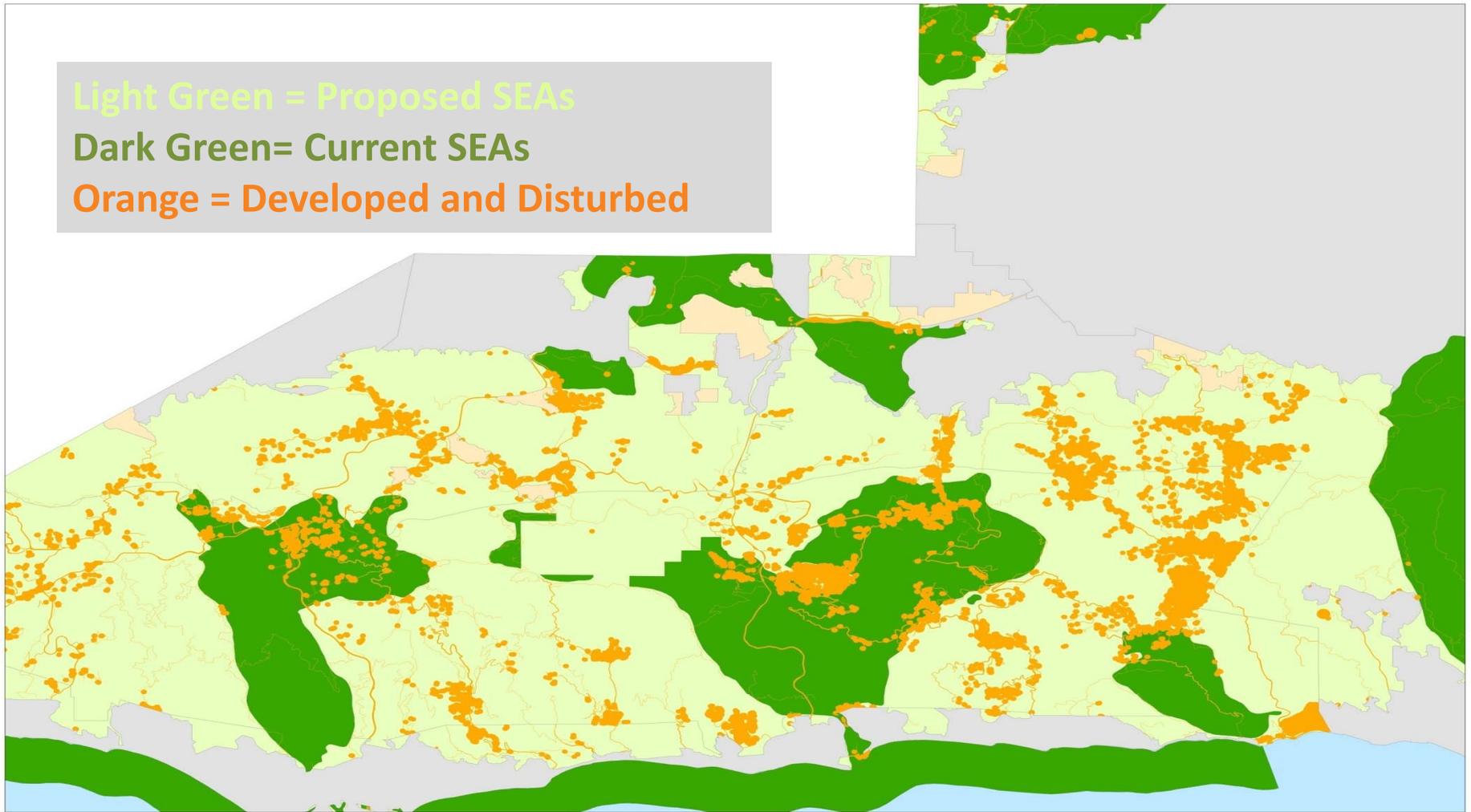
- Site plan review is our standard approach to permitting
- Biologist checklist review- DRP biologist inspects site, looks for resources. When found applies the development standard.
- Can be moved to CUP based on resource discovery.

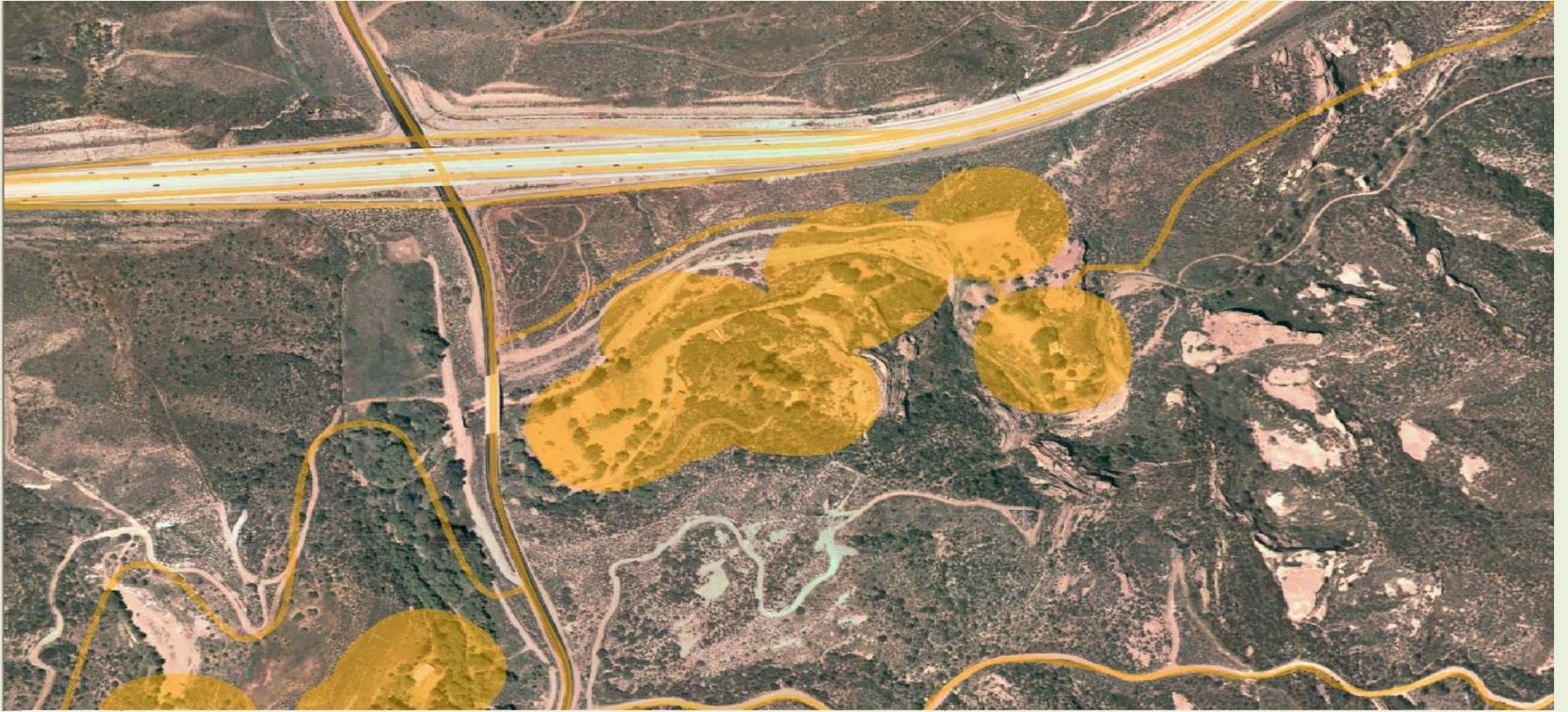
Developed and Disturbed Areas Map

- Exemptions from the SEA ordinance for all projects inside the mapped SEA Developed and Disturbed Areas
- This includes changing uses or building more buildings, provided that you can do it without expanding outside the mapped footprint.
- In High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, this includes the Fuel Mod.



Light Green = Proposed SEAs
Dark Green = Current SEAs
Orange = Developed and Disturbed





Habitat Linkages and Corridors Map

- Simple map, uses the information from the Dev. & Disturbed, plus other geographical features to create linkages and corridors.
- Mapping these areas- will prevent constriction at vital points.



TYPE A & B SEA CUPs

Initial Project Appraisal

All CUPs Still Prepare Site Study and Impact Report, but review level differs according to the project's potential impacts

TYPE A

Lower impact uses:

Staff Biologist

Hearing Officer

TYPE B

Higher Impact Uses & Subdivision Projects

SEATAC

RPC

Type B CUPS

Impacts based criteria:

- subdivisions
- impacts to connectivity,
- water resources,
- transformation of land that is unpaved to paved
- adverse effects to SEA specific species

Provision for open space- 2:1 ratio

Findings

- Current findings: “highly compatible with biotic resources present, including the setting aside of appropriate and sufficient undisturbed areas”
- Draft Criteria : bisecting an SEA, closing a linkage, removal of habitat characteristic of the SEA as described in the SEA Description, removal of habitat that is the only known location of a species described in the SEA Description

The SEA Ordinance: Mission

- New draft ordinance is impacts based.
- As much as is possible the ordinance is objective- numbers, thresholds, standards.
- What we are looking for is clear.
- Builds in more flexibility.

Accompanying Documents & Programs

- Developed and Disturbed Areas Map
- Habitat Linkage Map
- SEA Design Manual- maintain best practice
- Report to the Board of Supervisors next week
- SEATAC improvements

SEA Webpage: planning.lacounty.gov/sea



[SEA Home](#)

[Proposed SEAs](#)

[SEA Ordinance](#)

[SEATAC](#)

[SEA History](#)

[Studies & Resources](#)

[SEAs & the General Plan](#)

The Significant Ecological Area (SEA) Program is a component of the [Los Angeles County General Plan Conservation/Open Space Element](#). SEAs are ecologically important land and water systems that support valuable habitat for plants and animals, often integral to the preservation of rare, threatened or endangered species and the conservation of biological diversity in the County. While SEAs are not preserves, they are areas where the County deems it important to facilitate a balance between development and resource conservation. Development activities in the SEAs are reviewed closely in order to conserve fragile resources such as streams, oak woodlands and threatened or endangered species and their habitat.

The biological resources found in Los Angeles County are some of the most diverse in the United States. Many island, valley, mountain and desert habitats still retain unusual or relatively undisturbed examples of the original plant and animal species indigenous to the County, and in some cases are not found outside Southern California.

The County first began to inventory biotic resources and identify important areas of biological diversity in the 1970s. Today, the primary mechanism used by the County to conserve biological diversity is a planning overlay called Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) designated in the County's General Plan. Together the General Plan overlay, and the SEA conditional use permit process, are referred to as the SEA Program.