



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

July 31, 2014

TO: Esther L. Valadez, Chair
Laura Shell, Vice Chair
David W. Louie, Commissioner
Curt Pedersen, Commissioner
Pat Modugno, Commissioner

FROM: Emma Howard, Regional Planning Assistant II
Community Studies North Section

SUBJECT:
**LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS PROGRAM
PROJECT NO. 02-305 (1-5)
ADVANCE PLANNING NO. 2012000001
July 31, 2014 – AGENDA ITEM #6d
*SUPPLEMENTAL MEMO ***

As a follow up to the memo dated July 24 2014, staff is submitting the following supplemental information. Below staff has included statistical information that illustrates the nature of the Significant Ecological Areas (“SEAs”) expansion. Also attached is the file referenced on page six of the staff report of July 24, 2014 containing images of the locations of the requests for changes to the proposed Significant Ecological Areas and Coastal Resource Areas Policy Map (“SEA Map”). Lastly, staff is submitting the supplemental comments received after July 23, 2014 and before July 31, 2014.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SEA MAP EXPANSION

Staff has previously provided your commission with information on the expanded SEA Map. Comparisons we have provided in the past showed the number of acres included in the current adopted SEA Map against the proposed SEA Map and that the difference represented a 167 percent expansion of the acres within SEAs. This comparison needs further explanation. The number of acres based on the current adopted map includes only the acres that are within an SEA. This comparison does not compare the number of acres actually affected by the Hillside Management Area and Significant Ecological Areas Ordinance (“adopted SEA Ordinance”) under the existing SEA Program to the number of acres which will be affected by the proposed SEA Ordinance (Draft 5 of the proposed SEA Ordinance was presented to your Commission on April 23, 2014). This is important because the current adopted map and SEA Ordinance require the same level of regulation for any property that contains SEA, even when it is only a portion of

that property. To make an accurate comparison of the increase from adopted to proposed SEA Map, the calculation must take into account the entire acreage of an affected property because the proposed SEA regulation would only apply to the portion of the property located within a mapped SEA. This is a significant difference between the provisions of the two ordinances.

There are currently 162,237 acres of adopted SEAs in unincorporated Los Angeles County. However, the adopted SEA Ordinance applies to any parcel that is wholly or partially within an SEA. This provision was intended to “buffer” the edges of the SEAs from the effects of development. The sum of the acreages of parcels that are partially within SEAs and therefore subject to the SEA regulations equals 307,551 acres. Of those acres, 15 percent; or 47,336 acres, are within dedicated open space. The number of acres currently subject to the adopted SEA Ordinance and not within dedicated open space is 260,215 acres.

The proposed SEA Ordinance will only apply to development on the portions of the parcel within the SEAs. One of the principles of expanding the proposed SEA Map is that the expansion will include sufficient area to accommodate edge development. Additionally, the focus on site design in the proposed SEA Ordinance is intended to minimize edge fragmentation.

The area within the proposed SEAs equals 433,779 acres. Of those acres, 25 percent; or 109,177 acres, are within dedicated open space. Therefore, 324,662 acres of proposed SEA are not within dedicated open space. Additionally, 5 percent of the proposed SEA Map is included in the SEA Development Map, which establishes that uses within this area will undergo site plan review for basic development standards instead of a more burdensome SEA Conditional Use Permit process. Correcting the comparison for these factors, shows the applicable area affected by the proposed SEA Ordinance is proposed to increase only 15 percent; not 167 percent.

SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS

Since the July 24, 2014 report to your commission, the Department of Regional Planning has received 19 public comments regarding the SEA Program. 15 comments are in support of the SEA Program and four either oppose the program or express concerns about it. These comments and several older comments related to the SEA Program are attached.

Should you have any questions, please contact Emma Howard at (213) 974-6476 or ehoward@planning.lacounty.gov.

MC: EH

Attachment 1: Location Maps for SEA Boundary Comments
Attachment 2: Correspondence