

July 18, 2014

Emma Howard
ehoward@planning.lacounty.gov
LA County Department of Regional Planning
320 W Temple Street, Room 1354
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Comments Draft 5 of the Significant Ecological Area (SEA) Ordinance

Dear Emma'

As we discussed previously, earlier this year I became the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Los Angeles appointed Referee in Partition for the land holdings more commonly known as the Temescal Ranch, which is located in northwestern Los Angeles County. In that capacity and amongst a number of other various responsibilities lies my responsibility to insure that no additional encumbrances are placed on the property. To that end I am submitting my comments to Draft 5 of the Significant Ecological Area (SEA) Ordinance dated April, 2014.

I would acknowledge that each draft of the above referenced ordinance has improved in some form or another, especially with respect to applicability. That said, however, there remain a number of issues that are of great concern to the ownership of the Temescal Ranch, not limited to those enumerated below.

- The ordinance appears to overreach existing requirements under CEQA, and other state and federal regulations, as well as instituting a completely burdensome and quite complex process that any future applicant will go through that in large measure restricts and removes the elected Supervisors' land-use discretion and authority.
- SEATAC manual remains inconsistent with CEQA on a number of issues, and there is no procedure given as to how the SEATAC process would integrate with existing CEQA processes. The implementation of the current approach will result in duplicative reports and findings in any effort to obtain CEQA clearances in the future.
- The ranch land, if ultimately designated as being almost entirely within an SEA will not be able to remove that designation without obtaining a CUP as well as a General Plan Amendment in order to alter the boundary.
- As the Temescal Ranch has been rather arbitrarily placed within the Santa Felicia SEA as indicated above, the proposed SEA Ordinance permits the use of LA County's land use authority to stop all future development on the ranch, and does not address any mitigation opportunities which may be available in order to address environmental impacts. Effectively this ranch may not be capable of any future or further development, which appears to be contrary to law.
- This draft includes language related to ecological transition areas and connectivity areas, which appear to expand land which may be subject to this proposed SEA ordinance. Additionally

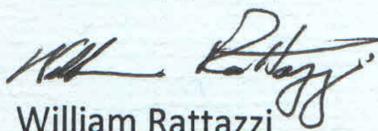
there are a number of inconsistencies apparent in the reading of Sections 22.52.2905, para; B, C and E, in relation to 22.52.2925, para F as to the dimensions that such areas may have or how development may be or may not be located within such areas. For example as development areas have been defined as including "access roads" , and on a ranch of the size of the Temescal Ranch access roads are located throughout the ranch, are we then no longer permitted to maintain viability of these roads for fire access as well as ongoing and historically consistent ranch operations.

- With ongoing and historically consistent cattle operations, as well as other farm operations throughout the ranch, we do not understand why this ordinance:
 - seeks to prohibit barbed wire fencing in an SEA area where cattle operations are ongoing.
 - Prohibits brush clearance mandated by the Fire Department, without compliance with various tenets of the proposed ordinance.
 - Does not adequately address, nor appear to be consistent with Draft No. 2 of the Renewable Energy Ordinance.
- Under Section 22.52.2915, Permitted Uses, the current language in subsection A must be further clarified, especially the term "coordinated effort as determined by the Director". Additionally under subsection C, development appears to be limited to 10% of the gross area of a parcel/lot, not to exceed 3 gross areas. The Temescal Ranch contains 20 legal parcels with an average size of over 300 acres each. The current language in the proposed ordinance limits the total development of any kind within the boundaries of the ranch to less than one tenth of one percent of the land holding in total, or effectively constituting a taking under the law.

Finally I would ask one question of this current draft ordinance; what are the intended goals of such ordinances? If they are to effectively prohibit the construction of any further development in a number of areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County, then they will be successful. If, however they are intended to provide a framework and guideline for moving forward with appropriate and sensitive development that will meet the demands of future housing and economic development of a viable county, they must be reconsidered, redrafted, and re-proposed, and I would urge the Department of Regional Planning to do so at this time.

Thank you for your consideration in this regard, and I look forward to the continued hearing in August.

Very truly yours;



William Rattazzi

Referee in Partition