



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



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REPORT TO THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED:	April 13, 2021		
MEETING DATE:	April 28, 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	5
PROJECT NUMBER:	2019-003989-(5)		
PROJECT NAME:	Three Points-Liebre Mountain Community Standards District		
PLAN NUMBER(S):	Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2018002324		
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT:	5		
PROJECT LOCATION:	Three Points-Liebre Mountain		
PROJECT PLANNER:	Kristina Kulczycki, Principal Regional Planner kkulczycki@planning.lacounty.gov		

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Regional Planning (“Department”) staff (“staff”) recommends that the Regional Planning Commission (“RPC”) approve the attached resolution (Exhibit B – Draft Resolution of the RPC) recommending **APPROVAL** to the County of Los Angeles (“County”) Board of Supervisors (“Board”) of the Three Points-Liebre Mountain Community Standards District (“CSD”), Project Number 2019-003989-(5), Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2018002324.

Staff recommends the following motion:

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AND FIND THAT THE PROJECT IS CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT PURSUANT TO STATE AND LOCAL CEQA GUIDELINES.

I ALSO MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT THE ATTACHED RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE THREE POINTS-LIEBRE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT, PROJECT NO. 2019-003989-(5), ADVANCE PLANNING NO. RPPL2018002324.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION**A. Project**

Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2018002324 is a proposed ordinance amending Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the Los Angeles County Code ("County Code") to establish the Three Points-Liebre Mountain CSD.

Three Points-Liebre Mountain is a small unincorporated community of approximately 125 households. It is located in the Antelope Valley, northwest of the community of Lake Hughes and south of the community of Neenach. The community is characterized by its natural setting of pine trees, canyons, hillsides, and nearby lakes. The Angeles National Forest is south of Pine Canyon Road and covers a portion of the community. The Countywide General Plan ("General Plan") identifies that nearly 40,000 acres of the land located within the Los Padres National Forest and Angeles National Forest are privately-owned. For these parcels, commonly referred to as in-holdings, the County retains responsibility for land use regulation. Privately-owned parcels in the national forests are regulated consistently with the overall mission and management plans of the national forests, which the U.S. Forest Service prepares and periodically updates.

The northwestern boundary of the community is near Quail Lake on the southern side of Lancaster Road. From Lancaster Road, the community boundary generally follows the Old Ridge Route Road south and then east into Pine Canyon Road. The community's boundary ends at the western boundary for the Elizabeth Lake-Lake Hughes CSD. The community's boundary also extends northward along Three Points Road at the intersection with Pine Canyon Road to Avenue D (Exhibit C – GIS Maps). The Pacific Crest Trail runs through the community close to Pine Canyon Road and Three Points Road. Properties near Three Points Road are located within a 100-year floodplain. Most of the community is in the San Andreas Significant Ecological Area ("SEA") and the entirety of the community is within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone ("VHFHSZ") and the Rural Outdoor Lighting District. The San Andreas Fault bisects the community near Pine Canyon Road, and the community contains properties within the San Andreas Fault Zone.

Three Points-Liebre Mountain is largely undeveloped, but with some single-family homes on large lots and agricultural uses, and is generally not served by existing infrastructure and public facilities. According to the Antelope Valley Area Plan ("AVAP"), the community does not have a rural town center area, but there is a store south of the intersection of Pine Canyon Road and Three Points Road that serves the residents. There is a community identification sign at this intersection, and a community message board along Pine Canyon Road. The community is considered a rural preserve area by the AVAP, and most properties have a land use designation of Rural Land 20 (RL20), with a maximum density of one residential unit for each 20 gross acres of land. This density reflects the underlying environmental resources and safety constraints. The AVAP specifies that development in rural preserve areas should be limited to single-family

homes on large lots, light and heavy agriculture, equestrian and animal-keeping uses, and other uses where appropriate.

The CSD implements the AVAP Rural Preservation Strategy with development standards that preserve the community's natural setting and rural character. Proposed development standards include sign regulations, standards for specific accessory structures, vegetation protections, standards for new subdivisions, rural road design, setbacks, building materials, locational criteria and design standards for businesses that include drive-through services, and scenic drive provisions.

B. Project Background

On June 16, 2015, the Board adopted the AVAP, which includes goals and policies applicable to the unincorporated areas within the Antelope Valley. As part of its implementation, the AVAP specifies that a comprehensive review shall be required of all existing CSDs and may include a program to prepare and adopt any proposed new CSDs (AVAP, Page IMP 6).

On June 13, 2018, the RPC initiated the Antelope Valley CSDs Update Program, which includes this CSD.

C. Major Elements and Key Components

The AVAP identifies the purpose of CSDs as community-specific zoning regulations that shall be consistent with the goals and policies of the AVAP. Such regulations shall be instituted only when a unique or detrimental condition exists within a community that prevents implementation of the AVAP (AVAP, Page I-11).

The following summarizes how the CSD maintains and enhances the community's unique rural character:

- **SEA** – Removes the Antelope Valley exemptions and requires that development comply with the SEA Ordinance.
- **Vegetation** – Outside of the SEA, requires a vegetation buffer and a discretionary review when vegetation removal exceeds the threshold.
- The County Code contains existing ordinances that regulate the removal of oak trees and impacts to the natural habitat within the SEAs. However, there are exemptions in the SEA Ordinance for certain developments in the Antelope Valley area. The CSD removes these exemptions for the community of Three Points-Liebre Mountain. Furthermore, for properties outside of the SEA, standards requiring a vegetation buffer and adding threshold limitations on vegetation removal will provide additional protections for the community and ensure more compatibility with the areas in the SEA.

- **Fences** – Requires perimeter fences to be open for the passage of wildlife and maintain the visual aesthetic of the rural community.
- **Hillside Management** – Includes a lower grading threshold within hillside management areas and design guidelines to protect hillsides.
- **Small-Scale Solar Energy Facilities** – Requires ground-mounted systems allowed outside of required yards.
- **Signs** – Prohibits outdoor advertising signs, community identification signs for subdivisions and planned developments, roof signs, pole signs, and internally illuminated signs; limits the size for wall business signs and monument signs; allows residential ranch signs; and regulates temporary real estate signs.
- **Trails** – Specifies trail design standards for the development of trails within new subdivisions or discretionary land use permits.
- **Cargo Shipping Containers** – Includes standards for accessory cargo shipping containers on agricultural lots.
- **Subdivisions** – Includes a required area of at least 20 gross acres, requires the undergrounding of utilities, where feasible, and prohibits gated or walled subdivisions.
- **Highways and Local Streets** – Prohibits curbs, gutters, and sidewalks on new streets unless deemed necessary by other departments, and prescribes street widths to promote alternative rural design.
- **Drive-Through Services** – Prohibits drive-through services.
- **Commercial and Rural** – Limits height and types of materials for new buildings; sets hours of operation for new commercial uses; and establishes a 10-foot front yard setback for new commercial buildings. Prohibits alcohol sales within 1,000 feet of a public or private school or child care center.
- **Residential and Agricultural** – Includes larger setbacks based on the size of the lot, limits siding materials, and requires a minimum eave length.
- **Scenic Drives** – Limits height and building massing, includes design standards related to use of earth-tones, and prohibits small-scale wind systems within 500 feet of a Scenic Drive.
- **Modifications** – Requires a discretionary review to modify a CSD standard.
- **Notification** – Requires that at least 15 parcels of real property be notified of public hearings.

ANALYSIS

A. Draft Plan/Ordinance Updates

Staff posted the public hearing draft for public review on the Department's website on March 18, 2021. Staff did not receive comments regarding this draft.

B. General Plan Consistency

Policies in the General Plan and AVAP support the community's vision for rural character. To the community, rural means narrower roads without curbs, gutters, or sidewalks; smaller signage; local-serving businesses with lower-profile designs that blend with the residential fabric of the area; vegetation and hillside protections; subdivisions that fit within the existing character of the area; and design features, such as colors or building materials, which blend in with the surrounding environment.

The General Plan defines "rural" as a way of life characterized by living in a non-urban or agricultural environment at low densities without typical urban services. Urban services and facilities not normally found in rural areas, unless determined to be necessary for public safety, include curbs, gutters and sidewalks; street lighting, landscaping and traffic signalization; public solid waste disposal, integrated water and sewerage system; and commercial facilities dependent on large consumer volumes, such as regional shopping centers, sports stadiums, and theaters.

The following policies of the General Plan are applicable to the project:

Signage and Commercial Development Standards

- *Policy C/NR 13.6: Prohibit outdoor advertising and billboards along scenic routes, corridors, waterways, and other scenic areas.*
- *Policy LU 6.1: Protect rural communities from the encroachment of incompatible development that conflict with existing land use patterns and service standards.*
- *Policy LU 6.3: Encourage low density and low intensity development in rural areas that is compatible with rural community character, preserves open space, and conserves agricultural land.*
- *Policy LU 10.3: Consider the built environment of the surrounding area and location in the design and scale of new or remodeled buildings, architectural styles, and reflect appropriate features such as massing, materials, color, detailing or ornament.*

Vegetation

- *Policy LU 6.2: Encourage land uses and developments that are compatible with the natural environment and landscape.*
- *Policy AQ 2.3: Support the conservation of natural resources and vegetation to reduce and mitigate air pollution impacts.*
- *Policy S 3.4: Reduce the risk of wildland fire hazards through the use of regulations and performance standards, such as fire resistant building materials, vegetation management, fuel modification and other fire hazard reduction programs.*
- *Policy S 3.5: Encourage the use of low-volume and well-maintained vegetation that is compatible with the area's natural vegetative habitats*

Hillside Management Areas (HMAs)

- *Policy C/NR 13.2: Protect ridgelines from incompatible development that diminishes their scenic value.*

- *Policy C/NR 13.8: Manage development in HMAs to protect their natural and scenic character and minimize the risk from natural hazards, such as fire, flood, erosion, and landslides.*

Subdivisions

Road design

- *Policy M 7.5: In rural areas, require rural highway and street standards that minimize the width of paving and the placement of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lighting, and traffic signals, except where necessary for public safety.*

Gated subdivisions

- *Policy LU 10.3: Consider the built environment of the surrounding area and location in the design and scale of new or remodeled buildings, architectural styles, and reflect appropriate features such as massing, materials, color, detailing or ornament.*
- *Policy LU 10.12: Discourage gated entry subdivisions (“gated communities”) to improve neighborhood access and circulation, improve emergency access, and encourage social cohesion.*

Underground utilities

- *Policy PS/F 6.6: Encourage the construction of utilities underground, where feasible*

SEAs

- *Policy C/NR 3.8: Discourage development in areas with identified significant biological resources, such as SEAs.*

Trails

- *Policy P/R 4.1: Create multi-use trails to accommodate all users.*
- *Policy P/R 4.2: Develop staging areas and trail heads at strategic locations to accommodate multi-use trail users.*
- *Policy P/R 4.3: Develop a network of feeder trails into regional trails.*
- *Policy P/R 4.4: Maintain and design multi-purpose trails in ways that minimize circulation conflicts among trail users.*

The following policies of the AVAP are applicable to the project:

Vegetation

- *Policy COS 9.7: Encourage reforestation and the planting of trees to sequester greenhouse gas emissions.*
- *Policy COS 16.1: Except within Economic Opportunity Areas, require new development to minimize removal of native vegetation. Discourage the clear-scraping of land and ensure that a large percentage of land is left in its natural state.*
- *Policy COS 16.2: Maximize the use of native vegetation in landscaped areas, provided that vegetation meets all applicable requirements of the Fire Department and the Department of Public Works.*
- *Policy LU 1.3: Maintain the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley as Rural Land, allowing for agriculture, equestrian and animal-keeping uses, and single-family homes on large lots*
- *Policy ED 1.7: Promote farming and other agricultural activities that contribute to the Antelope Valley economy.*

- *Policy PS 1.3: Promote fire prevention measures, such as brush clearance and the creation of defensible space, to reduce fire protection costs.*

Highways and Local Streets

Narrow roads, limits on use of curbs, gutters, and sidewalks

- *Policy M 3.2: In rural areas, require rural highway standards that minimize the width of paving and placement of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lighting, and traffic signals, as adopted by the Department of Public Works.*
- *Policy M 4.1: Require rural local street standards that minimize the width of paving and placement of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lighting, and traffic signals, as adopted by the Department of Public Works.*

Hillsides

- *Policy COS 5.3: Require new development in Hillside Management Areas to comply with applicable Zoning Code requirements, ensuring that development occurs on the most environmentally suitable portions of the land.*
- *Policy COS 5.4: Require appropriate development standards in Hillside Management Areas that minimize grading and alteration of the land's natural contours, ensure that development pads mimic natural contours, and ensure that individual structures are appropriately designed to minimize visual impacts.*

Scenic Drives

- *Policy COS 5.7: Ensure that incompatible development is discouraged in designated Scenic Drives by developing and implementing development standards and guidelines for development within identified viewsheds of these routes (Map 4.2: Antelope Valley Scenic Drives).*

SEAs

- *Policy COS 4.1: Direct the majority of unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to rural town centers and economic opportunity areas, minimizing the potential for habitat loss and negative impacts in SEAs.*
- *Policy COS 4.3: Require new development in SEAs to comply with applicable Zoning Code requirements, ensuring that development occurs on the most environmentally suitable portions of the land.*

Subdivisions

Prohibition of gated or walled subdivisions

- *Policy PS 1.2: Require that all new developments provide sufficient access for emergency vehicles and sufficient evacuation routes for residents and animals.*

Undergrounding utilities

- *Policy COS 14.1: Require that new transmission lines be placed underground whenever physically feasible.*
- *Policy COS 14.2: If new transmission lines cannot feasibly be placed underground due to physical constraints, require that they be collocated with existing transmission lines, or along existing transmission corridors, whenever physically feasible.*
- *Policy COS 14.3: If new transmission lines cannot be feasibly be placed underground or feasibly collocated with existing transmission lines or along existing transmission*

corridors due to Antelope Valley Area Plan physical constraints, direct new transmission lines to locations where environmental and visual impacts will be minimized.

- *Policy COS 14.7: Require that electrical power lines in new residential developments be placed underground.*

Trails

- *Policy PS 8.7: Require that all new developments provide sufficient access for emergency vehicles and sufficient evacuation routes for residents and animals.*
- *Policy PS 8.7: Provide trails, bikeways, and bicycle routes for recreational purposes, as directed in the policies of the Mobility Element.*
- *Policy M 10.1: Implement the adopted Trails Plan for the Antelope Valley in cooperation with the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. Ensure adequate funding on an ongoing basis.*
- *Policy M 10.3: Maximize fair and reasonable opportunities to secure additional trail routes (dedicated multi-use trail easements) from willing property owners.*
- *Policy M 10.4: Ensure trail access by establishing trailheads with adequate parking and access to public transit, where appropriate and feasible.*
- *Policy M 10.5: Locate and design trail routes to minimize impacts to sensitive environmental resources and ecosystems.*
- *Policy M 10.6: Where trail connections are not fully implemented, collaboratively work to establish safe interim connections.*
- *Policy M 10.7: Ensure that existing trails and trailheads are properly maintained by the relevant agencies.*
- *Policy M 10.8: Solicit community input to ensure that trails are compatible with local need and character.*

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption (Class 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 20, and 21 Categorical Exemptions) under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and the County environmental guidelines. The standards proposed in the CSD are more restrictive and more environmentally protective than those found in the County Code. The CSD includes locational criteria and development standards for drive-through services and certain accessory structures (fences, signs, small-scale solar energy facilities, and cargo storage containers); SEA and vegetation standards, which protect the natural environment; development standards for commercial businesses; setbacks and design standards in Residential and Agricultural Zones; and subdivision standards that prohibit gated or walled subdivisions and require the undergrounding of utilities, where feasible, to maintain access in the VHFHSZ.

Proposed street widths and design standards are consistent with the existing rural character of the area. The CSD requires new subdivisions to have a required area of at least 20 gross acres, which is compatible with the RL20 land use designation that applies to most of the community. All proposed development standards are consistent with current practices, or provide additional limitations on development, which further protect the community’s natural environment. Therefore, staff recommends that the Regional Planning Commission find that the project is categorically exempt from CEQA. A

Categorical Exemption (Exhibit D – Environmental Determination) was issued for the project.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

A. County Department Comments and Recommendations

1. Staff consulted with Public Works, Public Health, Parks and Recreation, and Fire on November 17, 2020.
2. The project was cleared for public hearing on December 31, 2020.
3. Staff received correspondence from Public Works, Public Health, and Parks and Recreation (Exhibit F – Agency Correspondence), and incorporated the recommended editorial changes into the draft CSD.

B. Project Outreach and Engagement

Staff regularly attended the meetings of the Association of Rural Town Councils, and informed the attendees of the progress of the overall CSD effort on May 30, 2018, June 27, 2018, January 30, 2019, and May 29, 2019.

Also, staff conducted project outreach at community events including the Parks After Dark events held on July 27, 2018, July 28, 2018, August 3, 2018, August 1, 2019, and August 2, 2019; the Leona Valley Cherry Festival on June 2, 2018; and the Valley Fever Walk on August 4, 2018.

Staff received comments from community members and facilitated discussions at CSD Working Group meetings on May 8, 2018, June 20, 2018, July 18, 2018, and July 23, 2020 on CSD topics that are of interest to the community (Exhibit H – Community Comments). Members of the community generally expressed a desire to limit development and protect the community's rural character. Meeting participants identified the following topics to address in the CSD: dark skies; small signage; roads that are narrow in width and do not include curbs, gutters, or sidewalks unless necessary; a limited number of new developments; lower profile buildings that are compatible with the existing residences and community store; vegetation protections; and protections for the natural aesthetics of Scenic Drives in the AVAP, such as Pine Canyon Road. Staff distributed a visual summary of the topics for the CSD, called the Three Points-Liebre Mountain CSD Concept Draft (Exhibit I - Three Points-Liebre Mountain CSD Concept Draft).

Due to the COVID-19 health emergency, which began on March 16, 2020, the Department moved community meetings to an online setting. Following the release of the Three Points-Liebre Mountain CSD Concept Draft, staff posted a flyer online and worked with community members to garner feedback on the concept draft.

On October 19, 2020, staff held another CSD Working Group meeting and facilitated a review of a draft of the Three Points-Liebre Mountain CSD. After receiving feedback from the CSD Working Group, staff revised the draft.

In March 2021, the Department sent an RPC public hearing notice (Exhibit E – Notice of Public Hearing) to 125 property owners and 32 addresses on the courtesy lists. The Department also noticed the RPC public hearing in the Antelope Valley Press newspaper. Staff posted the public hearing notice and materials on the Department’s website and promoted them through social media. The Department was prepared to make copies of the public hearing notice and hearing materials available at the Quartz Hill Library. However, the closure of libraries due to the COVID-19 pandemic prevented this courtesy public access practice. On March 18, 2021, staff sent an email to all individuals that signed up for the project mailing list and distributed a flyer, which announces the release of the draft and a public meeting to discuss the draft and provides options for submitting comments.

A community meeting was held on Saturday, April 10th to discuss the Three Points-Liebre Mountain CSD draft. Community members requested that cargo shipping containers be painted with muted or earth toned colors. They would also like an amortization period for existing cargo shipping containers. They requested that the proposed hours of operation for commercial uses be revised to between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm Sunday through Thursday, and between 7:00 am and 11:00 pm on Friday and Saturday. The community also expressed concern with the number of greenhouses that were being established in the Antelope Valley and would like to limit the size or number of them. There were also concerns about dumping of mulch due to combustion and the amount of trash that is permitted within green waste. Staff clarified that greenhouses and the use of mulch are regulated by the SEA ordinance. Another community member was interested in whether there was any requirement to put community identification signs on public property or if there were any regulations requiring distancing between political signs and community identification signs. Staff responded that there are no such regulations in the Zoning Code.

Based on the feedback during the community meeting, the draft CSD was revised to require earth-tone colors and an amortization period for cargo shipping containers, and the hours of operation for commercial uses were updated.

C. Public Comments


Staff has not received any comments at the time of report preparation.

Report
Reviewed By:



Mark S. Herwick, Supervising Regional Planner

Report
Approved By:



Bianca Siegl, Deputy Director

LIST OF ATTACHED EXHIBITS	
EXHIBIT A	Ordinance
EXHIBIT B	Draft Resolution of the RPC
EXHIBIT C	GIS Maps
EXHIBIT D	Environmental Determination
EXHIBIT E	Notice of Public Hearing
EXHIBIT F	Agency Correspondence
EXHIBIT G	Public Correspondence
EXHIBIT H	Community Comments
EXHIBIT I	Three Points-Liebre Mountain CSD Concept Draft