

REPORT TO THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: October 4, 2022

MEETING DATE: October 19, 2022 AGENDA 5
ITEM:

PROJECT NUMBER: 2019-003977-(5)

PROJECT NAME: Lake Los Angeles Community Standards District

PLAN NUMBER(S): Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2018002312

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 5

PROJECT LOCATION: Lake Los Angeles, Antelope Valley Planning Area

PROJECT PLANNER: Thomas Dearborn, Senior Regional Planner
tdearborn@planning.lacounty.gov

RECOMMENDATION

LA County Planning staff (“staff”) recommends the Regional Planning Commission adopt the attached resolution (Exhibit C - Draft Resolution) recommending **APPROVAL** to the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors the Lake Los Angeles Community Standards District, Project Number 2019-003977-(5), Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2018002312.

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, THE LAKE LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT, PROJECT NUMBER 2019-003977-(5), ADVANCE PLANNING CASE NUMBER RPPL2018002312.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project

Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2018002312 is a proposed ordinance amending Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the Los Angeles County Code to establish the Lake Los Angeles Community Standards District (“CSD”).

Lake Los Angeles is a large rural community in the eastern portion of the Antelope Valley with a population of approximately 13,200 people. The community is characterized by its desert landscape, numerous buttes, wildlife sanctuaries, film locations, and Joshua trees. Lake Los Angeles is bordered by Roosevelt and Hi Vista to the north, Sun Village and Littlerock to the south, the City of Palmdale to the west, and the County of San Bernardino to the east. The Antelope Valley Area Plan (“AVAP”) describes the area as “developed or partially developed with a wide range of uses and a distinctly rural character. The remaining portions are largely undeveloped and generally not served by existing infrastructure, include environmental resources, such as buttes and Significant Ecological Areas (“SEA”), and are subject to safety hazards, such as Flood Zones.”

The AVAP identifies three economic opportunity areas (“EOA”) where major infrastructure projects are being planned by state and regional agencies. The southwest corner of the CSD boundary, including the rural town center, is located within the EOA due its proximity to the proposed High Desert Corridor project, which is proposed to run along E Palmdale Blvd. The rural town center is located along Avenue O between 167th Street East and 172nd Street East and along 170th Street East, between Avenue O and Glenfall Avenue. Stephen Sorenson Park and a concentration of most of the developed residential parcels surround the rural town center. The remainder of Lake Los Angeles has dispersed agricultural and residential uses, and undeveloped parcels. A large portion of the community is in the Antelope Valley SEA and the entire community is located within the Rural Outdoor Lighting District.

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 rural road design, additional hillside management protections, sign regulations, standards for new subdivisions, vegetation protections, standards for specific accessory structures, home-based occupation provisions, and architectural design standards.

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. 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). 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 the creation of the Lake Los Angeles CSD.

C. Major Elements and Key Components

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

- **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.
- **Hillside Management Area (“HMA”)** – Includes a lower grading threshold for properties within an HMA and encourages development guidelines to protect hillsides.
- **Signs** – Allows residential ranch signs, freestanding business signs, and prohibits billboards.
- **Subdivisions** – Requires a minimum lot area of two gross acres and requires utilities to be placed underground where feasible.
- **Trails** – Specifies trail design standards for the development of trails within new subdivisions or discretionary land use permits.
- **Vegetation and Landscaping** – Includes protections and requirements for vegetation removal for properties outside of an SEA.
- **Accessory Cargo Shipping Containers** – Permits accessory cargo shipping containers on agricultural and residential parcels, with development standards and quantity limitations.
- **Fences and Walls** – Permits the maximum height of fences and walls to be six feet within front yards, and eight feet in the interior side and rear yards.
- **Animal Keeping** – Increases the maximum number of dogs permitted without an animal permit, depending on lot size.
- **Home-Based Occupations** – Amends current home-based occupation regulations and designates additional permitted occupations.
- **Commercial Architectural Design Standards** – Requires new commercial buildings and modifications to existing buildings to meet the Old West/Western Frontier or Southwestern architectural style guidelines.
- **Modification of CSD Standards** – Requires a Conditional Use Permit.

ANALYSIS

A. Draft Plan/Ordinance Updates

The public hearing draft was posted for public review on LA County Planning's website and the project website on August 19, 2022.

B. General Plan Consistency

Policies in the General Plan and AVAP support the community's vision for rural character and development. 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. To the community, this means rural roads, environmental protections, rural design guidelines, and additional accessory uses that accommodate the rural lifestyle, such as cargo shipping containers for storage, the allowance of more home-based occupations, and taller fence heights.

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

- *Policy LU 3.1: Encourage the protection and conservation of areas with natural resources, and SEAs.*
- *Policy LU 3.2: Discourage development in areas with high environmental resources and/or severe safety hazards.*
- *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 6.2: Encourage land uses and developments that are compatible with the natural environment and landscape.*
- *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 10.2: Design development adjacent to natural features in a sensitive manner to complement the natural environment.*
- *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 10.5: Encourage the use of distinctive landscaping, signage and other features to define the unique character of districts, neighborhoods or communities, and engender community identity, pride and community interaction.*
- *Policy M 2.1: Provide transportation corridors/networks that accommodate pedestrians, equestrians and bicyclists, and reduce motor vehicle accidents through a context-sensitive process that addresses the unique characteristics of urban, suburban, and rural communities whenever appropriate and feasible.*
- *Policy M2.8: Connect trails and pedestrian and bicycle paths to schools, public transportation, major employment centers, shopping centers, government buildings, residential neighborhoods, and other destinations*
- *Policy M 3.3: Complete the following studies prior to the implementation of innovative design concepts:*

- *An analysis of the current and future context of the community and neighborhood in which they are proposed;*
- *A balanced assessment of the needs of all users and travel modes (i.e., pedestrian, bicycle, transit, vehicular, and equestrian, where appropriate);*
- *A technical assessment of the operational and safety characteristics for each mode; and*
- *A consistency check with transportation network plans, including the Highway Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, and Community Pedestrian Plans.*
- *Policy M 7.1: Minimize roadway runoff through the use of permeable surface materials, and other low impact designs, wherever feasible.*
- *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, and sidewalks, street lighting, and traffic signals, except where necessary for public safety.*
- *Policy AQ 2.3: Support the conservation of natural resources and vegetation to reduce and mitigate air pollution impacts.*
- *Policy AQ 3.6: Support rooftop solar facilities on new and existing buildings.*
- *Policy C/NR 1.2: Protect and conserve natural resources, natural areas, and available open spaces.*
- *Policy C/NR 3.9: Discourage development in areas with identified significant biological resources, such as SEAs.*
- *Policy C/NR 13.4: Encourage developments to be designed to create a consistent visual relationship with the natural terrain and vegetation.*
- *Policy C/NR 13.5: Encourage required grading to be compatible with the existing terrain.*
- *Policy C/NR 13.6: Prohibit outdoor advertising and billboards along scenic routes, corridors, and other scenic areas.*
- *Policy C/NR 13.8: Manage development in HMAs to protect their natural and scenic character and minimize risks from natural hazards, such as fire, erosion, and landslides.*
- *Policy C/NR 13.9: Consider the following in the design of a project that is located within an HMA, to the greatest extent feasible:*
 - *Public safety and the protection of hillside resources through the application of safety and conservation design standards;*
 - *Maintenance of large contiguous open areas that limit exposure to landslide, liquefaction, and fire hazards and protect natural features, such as significant ridgelines, watercourses and SEAs.*
- *Policy P/R 4.1: Create multi-use trails to accommodate all 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.*
- *Policy P/R 4.6: Create new multi-use trails that link community destinations including parks, schools and libraries.*
- *Policy PS/F 6.6: Encourage the construction of utilities underground, where feasible*
- *Policy ED 2.5: Encourage employment opportunities to be located in proximity to housing.*

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

- *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 LU 1.4: Ensure that there are appropriate lands for commercial and industrial services throughout the unincorporated Antelope Valley sufficient to serve the daily needs of rural residents and to provide local employment opportunities.*
- *Policy LU 1.5: Provide varied lands for residential uses sufficient to meet the needs of all segments of the population, and allow for agriculture, equestrian uses and animal-keeping uses in these areas where appropriate.*
- *Policy LU 5.2: Encourage the continued development of rural town centers that provide for the daily needs of surrounding residents, reducing the number of vehicle trips and provide local employment opportunities.*
- *Policy LU 5.4: Ensure that there is an appropriate balance of residential uses and employment opportunities within close proximity of each other.*
- *Policy LU 6.2: Ensure that the Area Plan is flexible in adapting to new issues and opportunities without compromising the rural character of the unincorporated Antelope Valley.*
- *Policy M 1.2: Encourage the continued development of rural town center areas that provide for the daily needs of local residents, reducing the number of vehicle trips and providing local employment opportunities.*
- *Policy M 1.5: Promote alternatives to automobile travel in rural town center areas and rural town areas by linking these areas through pedestrian walkways, trails, and bicycle routes.*
- *Policy M 2.1: Encourage the reduction of home-to-work trips through the promotion of home-based businesses, live-work units, and telecommuting.*
- *Policy M 2.5: As residential development occurs in communities, require transportation routes, including alternatives to automotive transit, to link to important local destination points such as shopping, services, employment, and recreation.*
- *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,*
- *Policy M 4.2: Maintain existing local streets to ensure safety, and require adequate signage for emergency response vehicles.*
- *Policy M 10.2: Connect new development to existing population centers with trails, requiring trail dedication and construction through the development review and permitting process.*
- *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 needs and character.*

- *Policy M 11.1: Improve existing pedestrian routes and create new pedestrian routes, where appropriate and feasible. If paving is deemed necessary, require permeable paving consistent with rural community character instead of concrete sidewalks.*
- *Policy M 11.2: Within rural town center areas, require that highways and streets provide pleasant pedestrian environments and implement traffic calming methods to increase public safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrian riders.*
- *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.*
- *Policy COS 9.1: Implement land use patterns that reduce the number of vehicle trips, reducing potential air pollution, as directed in the policies of the Land Use Element.*
- *Policy COS 9.2: Develop multi-modal transportation systems that offer alternatives to automobile travel to reduce the number of vehicle trips, including regional transportation, local transit, bicycle routes, trails, and pedestrian networks, as directed in the policies of the Mobility Element.*
- *Policy COS 14.1: Require that new transmission lines be placed underground whenever physically feasible.*
- *Policy COS 15.1: Ensure that outdoor lighting, including street lighting, is provided at the lowest possible level while maintaining safety.*
- *Policy COS 15.2: Prohibit continuous all-night outdoor lighting in rural areas, unless required for land uses with unique security concerns, such as fire stations, hospitals, and prisons.*
- *Policy COS 15.3: Replace outdated, obtrusive, and inefficient light fixtures with fixtures that meet dark sky and energy efficiency objectives.*
- *Policy 15.4: Require compliance with the provisions of the Rural Outdoor Lighting District throughout the unincorporated Antelope Valley.*
- *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 COS 17.8: Require onsite stormwater infiltration in all new developments through use of appropriate measures, such as permeable surface coverage, permeable paving of parking and pedestrian areas, catch basins, and other low impact development strategies.*
- *Policy PS 1.2: Require that all new developments provide sufficient access for emergency vehicles and sufficient evacuation routes for residents and animals.*
- *Policy PS 2.4: Ensure that new development does not cause or contribute to slope instability.*
- *Policy PS 3.2: Require onsite stormwater filtration in all new developments through use of appropriate measures, such as permeable surface coverage, permeable paving of parking and pedestrian areas, catch basins, and other low impact development strategies.*

- *Policy PS 3.3: Review the potential local and regional drainage impacts of all development proposals to minimize the need for new drainage structures.*
- *Policy PS 3.4: Ensure that new drainage structures are compatible with the surrounding environment by requiring materials and colors that are consistent with the natural landscape. Discourage concrete drainage structures.*

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. Most of the standards proposed in the CSD are more restrictive and more environmentally protective than those found in the County Code. There are additional standards that meet the baseline condition of the community. These regulations do not create a change in land use or density for any of the properties located within the CSD boundaries. The CSD includes development standards for accessory structures (fences, signs, and cargo containers); HMA and vegetation standards to protect the natural environment; design and development standards for commercial uses; and subdivision standards that require underground utilities, where feasible. No construction or specific developments are proposed as part of this ordinance. All proposed development standards are consistent with current practices, consistent with the existing rural character of the area, and do not add significant additional land use impact. Therefore, staff recommends that the RPC determine that the project is categorically exempt from CEQA. A Notice of Exemption (Exhibit E – Environmental Determination) was prepared for the project.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

A. County Department Comments and Recommendations

1. Fire Department submitted a clearance letter on June 9, 2022.
2. Public Health submitted a clearance letter on June 13, 2022.
3. Parks and Recreation submitted a clearance letter on June 14, 2022 with recommendations for some minor revisions to the text.
4. Public Works submitted a clearance letter on June 14, 2022 with a request to revise the existing CSD language from "Trash receptacles" to "Solid waste and recycling receptacles."

5. Project Outreach and Engagement

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

Additionally, 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; the Valley Fever Walk on August 4, 2018; and the Juneteenth celebration at Jackie Robinson Park on July 18, 2022.

CSD Working Group meetings were held with community members on April 5, 2018, May 10, 2018, October 18, 2018, and November 18, 2018 to identify and discuss the topics that they would like to see addressed in the CSD. Following the CSD Working Group meetings and additional outreach, staff created and distributed visual summaries of the topics for the CSD, titled the "Lake Los Angeles CSD - Concept Draft" (Exhibit J - Community Concept Draft).

Following the release of the Lake Los Angeles Concept Draft, postcards were mailed to all property owners within the community advertising the concept drafts and an open house event on Saturday, October 26, 2019, at the Jackie Robinson Park gymnasium. The event was well-attended and gave an opportunity for community members to share their thoughts on the concept draft and improvements to the community.

Due to the COVID-19 health emergency staff moved community meetings to an online setting. Staff joined a Lake Los Angeles Parks Association meeting on September 18, 2021 to reintroduce the project and meet with community members. Virtual CSD Committee meetings were held with staff and community members on October 18, 2021, November 18, 2021, and January 12, 2022 to discuss feedback on the concept draft and develop a scope of work for the CSD draft. Outreach also continued through the project website (planning.lacounty.gov/avcsds), phone calls, and the AV CSDs Update Program newsletter distributed by email.

During the CSD Committee meetings, the following topics were discussed to be included in the CSD draft: rural road design, HMAs, signs, subdivisions, trails, vegetation and landscaping, accessory cargo shipping containers, fences and walls, dogs, home-based occupations, and commercial design standards. These meetings were open to the community, recorded by the Lake Los Angeles Town Council, and posted on their website. The CSD was drafted with consideration to the community-prepared CSD drafts submitted to LA County Planning in 2009 and 2013 (Exhibit I - Community Drafts), the community meetings, and conversations with community members. A preliminary draft was shared with the CSD Committee on March 21, 2022 to gather additional community input. An updated draft was shared with the committee on July 18, 2022 for final input on the ordinance.

Another CSD Working Group meeting was held on July 18, 2022, which included a review of the draft. After receiving feedback from the CSD Working Group, staff revised the draft. Based on feedback from the meetings and outreach, a final CSD draft was created and posted on the project website on August 19, 2022.

In August 2022, staff sent an RPC public hearing notice (Exhibit F – Notice of Public Hearing) to 10,637 property owners and 13 addresses on the department's applicable courtesy lists.

Staff also noticed the RPC public hearing in the Antelope Valley Press newspaper. Staff posted the public hearing notice and materials on the Antelope Valley CSD project website (planning.lacounty.gov/avcsds) and promoted them through social media. On September 7, 2022, staff sent an email to all individuals that signed up to be added to the project mailing list and distributed a flyer, which announced the release of the draft and a public meeting to discuss the draft and provided options for submitting comments.

A community meeting was held on September 15, 2022, to discuss the updates to the Lake Los Angeles CSD draft. The meeting was attended by eight community members and property owners. There were no requests to modify the draft during the meeting. A supplemental memo will be prepared if any changes are recommended to the CSD draft.

6. Public Comments

On August 30, 2022, staff received an email from a resident that had concerns about further restrictions in the area. The resident indicated that wall heights, storage containers, and the like should all be under the discretion of individual property owners alone.

On October 2, 2022, staff received an email from a resident that requested changes to the development standards for accessory cargo shipping containers. The resident requested changing the minimum lot requirements and changing the number of quantities to linear feet.

Report

Reviewed By:


Mark S. Herwick, Supervising Regional Planner

Report

Approved By:


Connie Chung, Deputy Director

LIST OF ATTACHED EXHIBITS	
EXHIBIT A	Ordinance
EXHIBIT B	Project Summary Sheets
EXHIBIT C	Draft Resolution
EXHIBIT D	GIS Maps
EXHIBIT E	Environmental Determination
EXHIBIT F	Notice of Public Hearing
EXHIBIT G	Agency Correspondence
EXHIBIT H	Public Correspondence
EXHIBIT I	Community Drafts
EXHIBIT J	Community Concept Draft