

WSGVAP Fact Sheet for Northern Altadena Land Use and Zone Changes

The WSGVAP includes updates to land use and zone designations for properties in northern Altadena and its foothills to implement the WSGVAP's goals and policies. The proposed changes consider several existing land use and regulatory constraints, including *Altadena Community Plan* and *L.A. County General Plan* policies, that limit potential development in hillsides, hazard zones, and significant ecological areas, while directing future development to areas near major transit corridors.

1. Can properties in the San Gabriel Mountain foothills/North Altadena be developed to maximum densities? NO

The properties in North Altadena and San Gabriel Mountain foothills have several existing land use and regulatory constraints that limit potential development. They include the following:

- a. Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone
- b. Hillside Management Areas (HMA), which limit development by the steepness of the existing slopes ([link to HMA information](#))
- c. Significant Ecological Areas (SEA), which contain designated sensitive habitats and species ([link to SEA program](#))
- d. Properties are in the Angeles National Forest
- e. Significant Ridgelines, designated by the Altadena CSD
- f. Seismic Hazards, including landslide zones
- g. Restricted road access and limited infrastructure
- h. Adjoining San Gabriel Mountains National Monument
- i. Streams and creeks flow through several properties

2. Are the land use and zone changes consistent with the *Altadena Community Plan* and *L.A. County General Plan*? YES

- a. Land use and zoning changes are consistent with the *Altadena Community Plan*, proposed *Area Plan*, and *General Plan*, including recent updates to the *Safety Element*.
- b. The land use changes are consistent with the density from the *Altadena Community Plan* and in most cases do not reduce the potential buildable density of the property.
- c. For a small percentage of properties where multiple land use constraints limit the buildable density, recommended land use changes propose a reduction in the maximum density allowed.
- d. The proposed changes are consistent with the following existing *Altadena Community Plan* policies:
 - “*Land Use: National Forest, 4.5.8*. Approximately 476 acres of the Altadena community is within the Angeles National Forest. The

Community Plan provides for the retention of this significant open space.” (p.4-14)

- “*Land Use: Implementation Measure, 7.* Continue the County's existing standards for hillside development and National Forest in-holdings in order to preserve the foothill areas of the San Gabriel Mountains.” (p.4-14)
- “*Environmental Resources: Policy, 11.* Prohibit the disruption of riparian corridors and other significant environmental habitats in the San Gabriel Mountain foothills.” (p.10-2)

3. Are there further limits to development in the Angeles National Forest? YES

- a. Currently, the *Altadena Community Plan* designates most properties in the Angeles National Forest as - *N (Non-urban)*.
- b. Density per acre, measured as the number of dwelling units (du) per acre (ac), is based on the slope of the property according to the following:
 - <25% slope: 1 du/5 ac - 1 du/1 ac
 - 25-50% slope: 1 du/10 ac - 1 du/2 ac
 - >50% slope: 1 du/20 ac
- c. Properties in the Angeles National Forest cannot achieve maximum density under existing constraints and regulations.
- d. Properties in *Altadena Community Plan N (Non-urban)* designation are being converted to *General Plan RL (Rural Land)* according to the following table depending on slope conditions and existing constraints:

<i>Altadena Community Plan Land Use Designation</i>	<i>Proposed General Plan Category</i>
N, < 25% slopes (1du/5ac - 1du/1ac)	RL1 (1du/ac), RL2 (1du/2ac), or RL5 (1du/5ac)
N, 25%-50% slopes (1du/10 ac - 1du/2ac)	RL2, RL5, or RL10(1du/10ac)
N, >50% slopes (1du/20ac)	RL20 (1du/20ac)

- e. Land use changes from *Altadena Community Plan N (Non-urban)* to *General Plan RL (Rural Land)* make potential density clearer to property owners since *Altadena Community Plan* requires slope/density calculations to determine potential density.
- f. Per the *General Plan*: “The County does not encourage development in the national forests, and regulation is coordinated closely with the U.S. Forest Service.” (p. 130)
- g. *General Plan, Policy C/NR 3.5*: “Ensure compatibility of development in the National Forests in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plan.” (p.137)

4. Are densities being increased in Fire Hazard Areas? NO

- a. The *Altadena Community Plan*'s land use categories are being converted to the *General Plan*'s land use legend. There are no density increases in Fire Hazard Areas as a result of the conversion.
- b. The Land Use category regulates density. Zoning regulates the use and can also include a minimum lot size requirement denoted by a suffix.
- c. Most properties in the Fire Hazard Areas have *Altadena Community Plan* designations of *N (Non-urban)* and *LD (Low Density Residential, 0-6 du/gross ac)*.
- d. Properties in *N (Non-urban)* are being converted to *General Plan RL (Rural Land)* per the table above.
- e. Properties in Fire Hazard Areas with an existing *Altadena Land Use Category* of *LD (Low Density Residential, 0-6 du/gross ac)* are going to *General Plan H5 (0-5 du/net ac)*, *H2 (0-2 du/net ac)*, or *RL*. These categories are lower density than *LD*.
- f. Most properties in the Fire Hazard Areas have existing zoning of *R-1-10,000* up to *R-1-40,000*, which denotes 10,000 sq ft up to 40,000 sq ft minimum lot sizes respectively. The *Altadena Community Plan* to *General Plan* conversion factors the lot size requirement into the land use conversion.
- g. Properties are generally being converted according to this table:

<i>Altadena Community Plan</i> Land Use Designation	Zoning	Proposed <i>General Plan</i> Category
LD, Low Density (0-6 du/gross acre)	R-1-10,000 to R-1-15,000	H5 (0-5du/net acre);
LD (0-6 du/gross acre)	R-1-20,000 to R-1-40,000	H2 (0-2du/net acre);
LD* 25%-50% slopes (1du/10 ac - 1du/2ac)	R-1 or A-1	RL2 (1du/2ac), RL5 (1du/5ac), or RL10(1du/10ac)
LD* >50% slopes (1du/20ac)	R-1 or A-1	RL20 (1du/20ac)

*for properties with sloping terrain in the Angeles National Forest.

- h. These areas are currently low-density and are being maintained as low-density.
- i. Policies in the Area Plan also support directing development away from High Fire, Wildland/Urban Interface, other hazards, and scenic and natural

resources. Refer to the Area Plan's Land Use and Conservation and Open Space Elements.

5. Are the A-1 (Light Agriculture) and R-1 (Single-family Residence) Zones comparable? YES

- a. The *General Plan RL (Rural Land)* land use category is the equivalent of the *Altadena Community Plan N (Non-urban)*.
- b. To make land use and zoning designations consistent, the *Agricultural (A)* zones generally accompany the *RL* land use category.
- c. *A-1* and *R-1* zones have the same height limits, setbacks, and other residential standards.
- d. *A-1* allows rural residential and other compatible non-residential uses such as equestrian, nurseries, camps, among other low-intensity uses.
- e. Most of the *A-1* zones are in the Significant Ecological Areas and require additional discretionary review and public hearings for uses other than single-family residences.
- f. Residential areas also have *A-1* Zoning in other areas of the County.

6. Are ADUs allowed in Fire Hazard Areas? YES

- a. Per State law, residential properties are allowed an ADU and Junior ADU by right through a streamlined process, subject to certain standards. County codes cannot restrict their development.
- b. The *Altadena Community Plan* was adopted in 1986 and does not consider the added density of ADUs in its land use designations, particularly for areas with hazards and sensitive resources.

7. Does the Area Plan promote public safety, access to open space, and conservation? YES

The following list includes some of the policies from WSGVAP that promote the protection of natural resources, open space, and public safety.

- *Policy LU-2.1*: Direct growth away from hazard areas. Direct future growth and development away from designated environmental hazard areas, including Fire Hazard Severity Zones, high-flood-risk areas, areas prone to landslides, and polluting uses.
- *Policy LU-2.3*: Limit expansion of the wildland/urban interface. Direct future growth and development away from wildland/urban interface areas along the San Gabriel Mountains and foothills to minimize exposure to future hazards and habitat impacts.
- *Policy LU-2.4*: Ensure adequate road access. Ensure new development is designed to be accessible from existing public roads and provides direct access to multiple primary roads to support community members' safety and aid in efficient evacuation during hazard events.

- *Policy LU-2.8:* Prioritize site developments to promote safety. In fire hazard areas, require that development sites and structures be located off ridgelines, hilltops, and other dangerous topographic features such as chimneys, steep draws, and saddles. In addition, sites and structures must be adjacent to existing development perimeters and avoid incorporating long driveways.
- *Policy LU-5.3:* Protect Significant Ecological Areas and biological resources. Discourage development that threatens sensitive biological resources within SEAs and biological resource areas in the WSGV.
- *Policy LU-5.4:* Prevent habitat disturbance and fragmentation. Direct development away from sensitive habitat areas and minimize or prevent any activity or development that will disturb or fragment habitat areas.
- *Policy LU-10.3:* Mitigate flood hazards. Mitigate future increases in flood hazards and minimize flood risk in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, along the San Gabriel River, and in the valley areas through the development of multi-benefit open spaces for public use, flood attenuation, water infiltration, water quality improvements, and habitat conservation.
- *Policy COS-1.1:* Strengthen ecosystem preservation for biodiversity. Ensure the protection and enhancement of biological resources through strategic habitat preservation efforts, including actions to acquire and conserve areas of high biological significance, sensitive natural communities, and SEA-designated land.
- *Policy COS-1.2:* Protect habitat areas and wildlife linkages. Coordinate with County agencies and adjacent jurisdictions to conserve, protect and enhance habitat areas and wildlife linkages in SEAs and other areas, taking special consideration into studying connections to the Verdugo Mountains, San Rafael Hills, and surrounding waterways such as streams and washes.
- *Policy COS-2.1:* Increase wildlife safety and minimize collisions. Minimize wildlife-vehicular collisions and potential conflict in the urban-wildlife interface by concentrating development towards urban centers and away from natural spaces.
- *Policy COS-2.2:* Foster safe wildlife crossings. Connect fragmented habitat through safe wildlife crossings, such as overpasses and culverts, as alternatives to street crossings.
- *Policy COS-2.3:* Buffers for wildlife crossings. Establish compatible, low-intensity land uses as buffers around wildlife crossings to ensure safe passage and undeterred movement of wildlife through the landscape.
- *Policy COS-3.1:* Open space dedications and continuity. Ensure that open space dedications for development projects prioritize the preservation of sensitive resources and are continuous with existing open space and preserved lands.
- *Policy COS-3.7:* Limit light pollution and disturbance to wildlife species. Limit or restrict lighting towards natural areas at night to limit light pollution and

disturbance to wildlife species by encouraging implementation of the County's Rural Outdoor Lighting District Ordinance (ROLD) practices outside of mandated areas, and by requiring the installation of timers to automatically shut lights during "dark hours" at night to protect wildlife from the effects of artificial light.