

## 2. Introduction

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### 2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all state and local governmental agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority prior to taking action on those projects. This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared to satisfy CEQA, as set forth in the Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15000, et seq. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the public document designed to provide decision makers and the public with an analysis of the environmental effects of the Proposed Antelope Valley Area Plan Update (Proposed Project), to indicate possible ways to reduce or avoid environmental damage and to identify alternatives to the project. The EIR must also disclose significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided; growth inducing impacts; effects not found to be significant; and significant cumulative impacts of all past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21067, the Lead Agency means “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project which may have a significant effect upon the environment.” The County of Los Angeles (County) has the principal responsibility for approval of the Antelope Valley Area Plan and associated zoning consistency (“Proposed Project”). For this reason, the County is the CEQA Lead Agency for the Proposed Project.

The intent of the DEIR is to provide sufficient information on the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project to allow the County to make an informed decision regarding approval of the Proposed Project. Specific discretionary actions to be reviewed by the County are described later in Section 3.4, *Intended Uses of the EIR*.

This DEIR has been prepared in accordance with requirements of the:

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.)
- State Guidelines for the Implementation of the CEQA of 1970 (herein referenced as CEQA Guidelines), as amended (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.)

The overall purpose of this DEIR is to inform the lead agency, responsible agencies, decision makers and the general public of the environmental effects of implementation of the Proposed Project. This DEIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Project, including effects that may be

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significant and adverse, evaluates a number of alternatives to the Proposed Project, and identifies mitigation measures to reduce or avoid adverse effects.

### 2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The County determined that an EIR would be required for the Proposed Project and issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on June 12, 2014, to the State Clearinghouse, responsible agencies, trustees and interested parties. The 30-day public review period ran from June 12, 2014 through July 11, 2014. The NOP is included as Appendix A and the NOP responses are included as Appendix B.

The NOP process is used to help determine the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the DEIR. Based on this process, all environmental categories included in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist were identified as having the potential to result in significant impacts. Since a “full-scope” EIR was determined to be necessary, no Initial Study was prepared. All issues considered Potentially Significant are addressed in this DEIR.

### 2.3 DEIR SCOPING MEETINGS

Pursuant to the California Public Resources Code Section 21803.9, the County conducted two public scoping meetings on June 26, 2014, and July 7, 2014. The purpose of these meetings was to provide information regarding the components of the Proposed Project, the overall process, and the DEIR. The meetings also provided a public forum for dialogue regarding these components. The scoping meetings were attended by various stakeholders, and community members. Issues/questions raised at the scoping meetings included:

- Proposed Economic Opportunity Area (EOA) boundaries
- Centennial Specific Plan
- Programmatic versus Project EIRs
- Water supply issues
- Ability to make further land use changes
- Projected buildout estimates for proposed land uses
- How future community plans relate to the Proposed Area Plan

### 2.4 SCOPE OF THIS DEIR

The scope of the DEIR was determined based upon review of the Proposed Project by County staff, comments received in response to the NOP, and comments received at the scoping meetings conducted by the County. Pursuant to Section 15126.2 and 15126.4 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the DEIR should identify any potentially significant adverse impacts and recommend mitigation that would reduce or eliminate these impacts to levels of insignificance.

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The information contained in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, establishes the basis for analyzing future Proposed Project-related environmental impacts. However, further environmental review by the County will be required as applications for individual discretionary projects are submitted.

### 2.4.1 Impacts Considered Less Than Significant

No environmental impact categories are identified here as not being significantly affected by, or affecting, the Proposed Project.

### 2.4.2 Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts

Potentially significant impacts have been identified for 17 environmental issue areas if the Proposed Project is implemented. Therefore these impacts are analyzed in this DEIR:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population/Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities/Service Systems

### 2.4.3 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts

This DEIR identifies significant and unavoidable adverse impacts, as defined by CEQA, which would result from implementation of the Proposed Project. Unavoidable adverse impacts may be considered significant on a project-specific basis, cumulatively significant, and/or potentially significant. If the County, as the Lead Agency, determines that unavoidable significant adverse impacts will result from the Proposed Project, the County must prepare a “Statement of Overriding Considerations” before it can approve the Project. A Statement of Overriding Considerations states that the decision-making body has balanced the benefits of

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the Project against its unavoidable significant environmental effects and has determined that the benefits of the Project outweigh the adverse effects. Therefore, the adverse effects are considered to be acceptable. The impacts that were found in the DEIR to be significant and unavoidable are:

- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

## 2.5 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

All documents cited or referenced are incorporated into the DEIR in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15148 and 15150, including but not limited to the following:

- 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, SCAG (2012)
- County of Los Angeles General Plan, County of Los Angeles, Department of Regional Planning (1980)
- Countywide Siting Element, County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works Environmental Programs Division (1997)
- Fuel Modification Guidelines, County of Los Angeles, Fire Department Forestry Division (2011)
- Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program, Metro (2010)
- Los Angeles County All Hazard Mitigation Plan, County of Los Angeles, Chief Executive Office, Office of Emergency Management (2013)
- Los Angeles County Housing Element, County of Los Angeles, Department of Regional Planning (2014)
- Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan, County of Los Angeles (2011)
- Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan Guide, County of Los Angeles, Department of Regional Planning (2014)
- Los Angeles County Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines, Department of Public Works

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- Low Impact Development Standards Manual, County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works (2014)
- Noise Ordinance, Title 12, Los Angeles County Code (2001)
- Strategic Fire Plan, County of Los Angeles, Fire Department (2014)
- Sewer System Management Plan, County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works (2013)

In each instance where a document is incorporated by reference for purposes of this DEIR, the DEIR shall briefly summarize the incorporated document, or briefly summarize the incorporated data if the document cannot be summarized. In addition, the DEIR shall explain the relationship between the incorporated part of the referenced document and the DEIR.

This DEIR relies upon previously adopted regional and statewide plans and programs, agency standards, and background studies in its analyses. Chapter 13, *Bibliography*, provides a complete list of references utilized in preparing this DEIR. All of the documents listed in Chapter 13, as well as the aforementioned documents that are incorporated by reference, are available for review at:

### **Los Angeles County**

Department of Regional Planning  
320 West Temple Street, Room 1354  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

## 2.6 FINAL EIR CERTIFICATION

This DEIR is being circulated for public review for a period of 45 days. Interested agencies and members of the public are invited to provide written comments on the DEIR to the address shown below. Upon completion of the 45-day review period, the County will review all written comments received and prepare written responses for each comment. A Final EIR (FEIR) will then be prepared incorporating all of the comments received, responses to the comments, and any changes to the DEIR that result from the comments received. This FEIR will then be presented to the County Board of Supervisors at a public hearing for potential certification as the environmental document for the Proposed Project. All persons who commented on the DEIR will be notified of the availability of the FEIR.

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All comments received from agencies and individuals on the DEIR will be accepted during the 45-day public review period. All comments on the DEIR should be sent to:

**Carl Nadela, AICP**

Community Studies North Section  
Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning  
320 W Temple Street, Room 1354  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
E-mail: [tnc@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:tnc@planning.lacounty.gov)

The DEIR will also be posted online on the County's website: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/tnc/environmental>. Copies will be available at the Department's main office at the address listed above; the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita field office locations listed at the following link: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/locations>; all County libraries in the Antelope Valley, namely Acton-Agua Dulce Library (33792 Crown Valley Road, Acton, CA 93510), Quartz Hill Library (42018 North 50th Street West, Quartz Hill, CA 93536), Lancaster Regional Library (601 West Lancaster Boulevard, Lancaster, CA 93534), Littlerock Library (35119 80th Street East, Littlerock, CA 93543), Lake Los Angeles Library (16921 East Avenue O, Suite A, Palmdale, CA 93591), Castaic Library (27971 Sloan Canyon Road, Castaic, CA 91384), and Stevenson Ranch Library (Dr. Richard H. Rioux Memorial Park, 26233 West Faulkner Drive, Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381); and Palmdale City Library (700 East Palmdale Boulevard, Palmdale, CA 93550).

## 2.7 MITIGATION MONITORING

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 requires that agencies adopt a monitoring or reporting program for any project for which it has made findings pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081 or adopted a Negative Declaration pursuant to 21080(c). Such a program is intended to ensure the implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration.

The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Proposed Project will be completed as part of the FEIR and will be completed prior to consideration of the Proposed Project by the County Board of Supervisors.