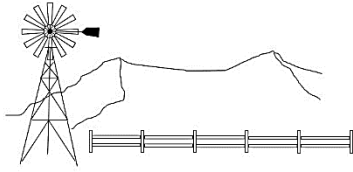


DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	25-OPT-02
Project Title:	Prairie Song Reliability Project
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Document Title:	Jacqueline Ayer Comments - SORT supplemental comments pertaining to General Plan and Zoning consistency and significant environmental impacts
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Comment Received From: Jacqueline Ayer
Submitted On: 11/5/2025
Docket Number: 25-OPT-02

**SORT supplemental comments pertaining to General Plan and
Zoning consistency and significant environmental impacts**

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



SAVE OUR RURAL TOWN

November 5, 2025

Lisa Worrall, Project Manager
California Energy Commission
715 P Street, MS-40
Sacramento, CA 95814
5 Page Letter and 3 Attachments

Subject: Supplemental Comments by Save Our Rural Town (SORT) pertaining to the AB-205 Application Submitted for a Proposed Battery Energy Storage Project in Acton, CA filed in Docket Number 25-OPT-02.

Dear Ms. Worrall;

Save Our Rural Town (SORT) respectfully submits the following comments to the California Energy Commission (Commission) pertaining to the licensing Application filed in Docket 25-OPT-02 for a proposed Battery Energy Storage System (proposed BESS) in the rural community of Acton.

INTRODUCTION.

On August 18, 2025, SORT submitted extensive comments on the proposed BESS development; nonetheless, changes in the regulatory landscape that have occurred since August now prompt SORT to augment our previous comments with additional information. For instance, SORT's previous comments discussed pending litigation that repudiates the "Interpretation Memorandum" relied upon by the Applicant to claim the proposed BESS complies with local zoning requirements; this litigation is now resolved and it should be reflected in the record of Docket 25-OPT-02.

Additionally, SORT previously commented that, because the BESS project does not conform with local ordinances and General Plan Goals and Policies, AB 205 precluded the Commission from approving it without first finding that the BESS project is required for public convenience and necessity and that more prudent and feasible means of achieving such public convenience and necessity are not available. However, the Governor signed legislation in September which eliminates the requisite "public

convenience and necessity” findings for energy projects that violate local ordinances and standards¹. Regardless of this change, the Commission will still analyze the extent to which the proposed BESS complies with local laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards that would have applied in absence of the Commission’s jurisdiction under AB 205²; the Commission will also report on what, if any, efforts are made to eliminate non-compliance³. SORT’s purpose is to inform these Commission analyses by providing supplemental evidence pertaining to significant environmental impacts that will result from the BESS Project’s inconsistencies with General Plan Policies that were adopted for the purpose of mitigating environmental impacts; the supplemental evidence will also inform any potential “Statement of Overriding Conditions” that the Commission may consider.

Finally, SORT takes this opportunity to present and discuss the BESS Guidance Document that was recently issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and which provides best practices for the installation and operation of BESS facilities; for reasons set forth below, SORT believes it is essential that the Commission adhere to EPA’s BESS siting recommendations in Docket 25-OPT-2.

SORT understands that the Applicant has submitted additional information to the Commission pertaining to the proposed BESS; we are carefully analyzing this information and intend to submit additional comments in the near future to address noted deficiencies⁴.

¹ The Governor signed SB 254 on September 30, 2025 which amended Section 25545.8 of the Public Resources Code to eliminate the requirement that the Commission comply with paragraph 1 of Section 25523(d) for all energy developments that are approved under AB 205. Apparently, this legislation will somehow reduce homeowner insurance rates [<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2025/09/30/governor-newsom-signs-executive-order-launching-next-phase-of-whole-of-government-response-to-the-economic-and-insurance-consequences-of-climate-crisis/>].

² Public Resources Code Section 25794.5(c).

³ 20 CCR § 1879(a)(2)

⁴ For example, the Applicant continues to represent to the Commission that the local “Acton Agua Dulce School District” (“AADUSD”) has more than 12,000 enrolled students [Data Request Response 2 Part 4 - Section 3.10.1.5 of the revised application dated October, 2025]. As SORT explained in our comment letter sent August 18, 2025, this claim is categorically false. The AADUSD has only three schools (one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school) and a total student body of approximately 1,100. District funding is based on this modest number. And, while AADUSD sponsors a number of “Charter Schools” that serve more than 11,000 students who are spread all over Southern California, *none of these charter students are enrolled at the AADUSD*. The Commission is invited to confirm this fact by contacting Superintendent Sahakian at esahakian@aadusd.k12.ca.us or by telephoning the District directly at (661) 269-0750. Worse yet, the Applicant persistently fails to disclose that the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the BESS will be concentrated solely in the Community of Acton and falsely claims that, because the project is in an unincorporated area, the impacts will be spread across the entire County of Los Angeles [Data Request Response 2 Part 4 - Section 3.10.1.1 dated October, 2025].

A RECENT COURT RULING REPUDIATES APPLICANT’S CLAIM THAT THE PROPOSED BESS COMPLIES WITH THE COUNTY ZONING CODE.

In our prior comments, SORT explained that the BESS project (which is proposed for development in established agricultural zones) does not comply with adopted Zoning Code provisions because the Los Angeles County Zoning Code expressly prohibits BESS facilities in all agricultural zones⁵. In particular, SORT took issue with the Applicant’s claim that the BESS Project complied with the local Zoning Code based on a “Memorandum” issued by the Los Angeles County Director of Regional Planning (Director) that “interpreted” the Zoning Code to mean that BESS are permitted in any agricultural zone despite plainly written code provisions that clearly prohibit such uses⁶. SORT further explained that the “Memorandum” was in litigation and should thus be accorded no weight until a court ruling issued. The ruling did issue on October 14 and it establishes that the Director’s authority to “interpret” the County Code is limited and “that such authority cannot be used in such a way as to violate the provisions of the Zoning Code”⁷. Accordingly, and contrary to what the Applicant asserts, the interpretation “Memorandum” *does not* authorize the proposed BESS in any agricultural zone because the Zoning Code expressly prohibits BESS in all agricultural zones. Therefore, SORT urges the Commission to reject all Applicant claims regarding BESS project zoning conformance.

THE PROPOSED BESS WILL RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS BECAUSE IT DOES NOT COMPLY WITH COUNTY-ADOPTED GENERAL PLAN POLICIES, GOALS, AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES.

The Courts have long held that an inconsistency between a proposed project and an adopted General Plan Policy, Goal, or Development Objective will implicate the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) when the Policy, Goal, or Objective was adopted for the purpose of mitigating environmental impacts. [*Joshua Tree Downtown Business Alliance v. County of San Bernardino* 1 Cal.App.5th 677, *Pocket Protectors v. City Of Sacramento* (2004) 124 Cal.App.4th 903]. Accordingly, a potentially significant environmental impact is deemed to exist in each instance where the proposed BESS Project is inconsistent with a General Plan Policy, Goal, or Development Objective that was adopted for the purpose of mitigating environmental impacts. Given the many inconsistencies with adopted Policies that are posed by the proposed BESS, it is essential that these inconsistencies be carefully assessed to determine which implicate

⁵ Pages 4-5 of letter filed by SORT in Docket 25-OPT-2 on August 18, 2025.

⁶ Id at 4-6.

⁷ Page 8 of Ruling provided in Attachment 1.

CEQA and therefore pose a potentially significant environmental impact that will be analyzed by the Commission. SORT has evaluated the Policies, Goals, and Development Objectives that were incorporated in the County General Plan (General Plan) and the Antelope Valley Area Plan (AV Area Plan) for the purpose of mitigating environmental impacts, and found the proposed BESS controverts more than 60 of them (as discussed in Attachment 2); each of these inconsistencies constitute a potentially significant environmental impact of the proposed BESS.

THE PROPOSED BESS WILL RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT, UNMITIGABLE IMPACTS AND ITS FAILURE TO CONFORM WITH LOCAL ORDINANCES AND STANDARDS CANNOT BE CORRECTED.

SORT understands that, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 25794.5(c), the Commission will prepare an analysis of the potential environmental, public health, and safety impacts of the proposed BESS as well as the local laws, ordinances, and standards that would have applied to the BESS in the absence of Commission jurisdiction. SORT anticipates that the Commission's Section 25794.5(c) analysis will factor in extensive evidence that has already been provided pertaining to the BESS project's significant and unmitigable public safety, wildfire, noise, aesthetic, waste management, and air quality impacts⁸ along with the abovementioned significant environmental impacts stemming from the BESS project's inconsistencies with adopted General Plan Policies, Goals, and Development Objectives. SORT also anticipates that these significant impacts will be fully addressed in the Statement of Overriding Considerations⁹ that is issued in the event the Commission elects to approve the BESS.

SORT also understands that the Commission will assess the extent to which the proposed BESS conforms with local laws, ordinances, and standards that would have applied to the BESS in the absence of Commission jurisdiction and whether any efforts were made to eliminate instances of non-compliance as required by 20 CCR § 1879(a)(2). SORT anticipates that the extensive evidence provided in our earlier comments demonstrating the extent to which the proposed BESS fails to conform with local zoning ordinances and adopted Antelope Valley Area Plan policies will be factored

⁸ Pages 6-21 and 31-65 of letter filed by SORT in Docket 25-OPT-2 on August 18, 2025.

⁹ CEQA precludes licensing of the proposed BESS because of its significant and unmitigable environmental impacts unless there is substantial evidence showing that 1) all such impacts are outweighed by clearly enumerated and quantified project benefits; 2) such benefits can only be derived from the proposed project configuration; and 3) no alternative locations or configurations are feasible. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, such evidence must be identified in a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" that must be adopted before the BESS can be approved.

into the Commission's analysis under 20 CCR § 1879(a)(2), and we now supplement these previous comments with the additional information provided in Attachment 2 which demonstrates the extent to which the proposed BESS fails to conform with specific General Plan Policies, Goals, and Development Objectives.

THE PROPOSED BESS IS INCONSISTENT WITH EPA GUIDANCE.

The EPA recently issued guidance for siting and operating BESS facilities¹⁰; a summary of EPA's BESS Guidance is provided in Attachment 3. First and foremost, EPA advises the adoption of "proactive safety measures" such as siting BESS projects in a manner that complies with local zoning requirements to "ensure site suitability" and "minimize the risk of a BESS fire". SORT concurs with this proactive measure not only because it increases public safety but also because it eliminates the environmental impacts stemming from a non-conforming use that is both contrary to the Zoning Code and inconsistent with the General Plan Policies, Goals, and Development Objectives upon which the Zoning Code is based. Notably, the proposed BESS **does not** comply with local zoning requirements (as explained above) and therefore *fails to conform with the most basic safety measure adopted by EPA Guidelines*; this is a substantial deficiency that cannot be overcome. SORT urges the application of EPA's BESS Guidance to the Commission's consideration of the BESS development proposed in Docket 25-OPT-2 and, if the Commission nonetheless concludes that the BESS should be approved, ensure that it is approved for a location that is far from people, homes, and communities.

Sincerely;

/S/ Jacqueline Ayer

Jacqueline Ayer, Director
Save Our Rural Town

¹⁰ <https://www.epa.gov/electronics-batteries-management/battery-energy-storage-systems-main-considerations-safe>

ATTACHMENT 1

**COURT RULING ON PETITION FOR
WRIT OF MANDATE ISSUED OCTOBER
14, 2025.**

**Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles**

OCT 14 2025

David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court
By: M. Mort, Deputy

SAVE OUR RUAL TOWN,

Petitioner,

vs.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES,
et al.,

Respondents.

HECATE GRID HUMIDOR
STORAGE 1 LLC, *et al.*,

Real Parties in
Interest.

Case No. 23STCP03422

**RULING ON PETITION FOR
WRIT OF MANDATE**

Dept. 86 (Hon. Curtis A. Kin)

This matter concerns Los Angeles County's approval for real party in interest Hecate Energy, LLC ("Hecate") to construct a Battery Energy Storage System ("BESS") in the rural community of Acton, California, known as the Humidor BESS, as well as the County's approval of a Franchise Ordinance for a Transmission Line to serve the Humidor BESS.

Petitioner Save Our Rural Town seeks a writ of mandate directing respondents County of Los Angeles and its Board of Supervisors (collectively "County") to vacate and set aside: (1) the County Planning Director's Memorandum, dated October 18, 2021, entitled Subdivision And Zoning Ordinance Interpretation No. 2021-03—Battery Electric Storage Systems; (2) the approval of the Humidor BESS and Transmission Line Franchise Ordinance; and (3) the CEQA Notices of Exemption (the "NOEs") for the Humidor BESS and Franchise Ordinance. Petitioner also seeks to require the County to prepare and certify an Environmental Impact Report in accordance with CEQA before the Humidor BESS project may proceed.

For the reasons that follow, the Court GRANTS the petition.

10/14/2025

I. BACKGROUND

A. Overview of the Project and its Location

Petitioner Save Our Rural Town holds itself out as a non-profit organization formed to assist communities in maintaining their rural character. (Pet. Br. at 10.) Acton is an unincorporated rural community within Los Angeles County with its zoning and development subject to the 2015 Antelope Valley Area Plan (“AV Plan”). (AR 11046.) The AV Plan employs a “rural preservation strategy” to protect residents from hazards. (AR 11050-51.)

In April 2021, real party in interest Hecate applied for a Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) to construct the Humidor BESS in east Acton. (AR 8580-89, 9164.) The original plan had the proposed site split between two different zones as defined under the County’s Zoning Code, with a portion of the site built in a Light Industrial M-1 Zone and the remainder built in an Agricultural A-2 Zone. (AR 9428, 16749-50, 22036.) The plan was later revised to be located exclusively in an M-1 Zone. (See AR 24954.) County and real parties in interest describe the Humidor BESS project as follows:

[T]he BESS will be located on approximately 12 acres of a 25.6-acre site. (AR 3334, 9424.) It will include 440 enclosed battery cabinets, each 20’ long, 8’ wide and 9’6” tall, and will store up to 400 MW. (AR 3334, 9424, 9585–87, 9735–36.) The cabinets will be placed on concrete pads along with other infrastructure, forming rows of low-profile structures. (AR 3334.) The site is flat, highly disturbed, with a paintball facility and truck parking area. (AR 3337, 3342–48, 9426.) Construction will be limited to grading, building foundations and a perimeter wall, and installing utilities and equipment. (AR 3334.) The site will be landscaped for visual screening and to provide a fire protective buffer. (AR 3336, AR3342–48.)

(Opp. Br. at 10 [parentheses added].) The Humidor BESS would operate under a Large Scale Interconnection Agreement between Hecate, California Independent System Operator (“CAISO”), and Southern California Edison. (AR 139.)

The purpose of the Humidor BESS would be to store electricity before being dispatched onto a transmission grid by CAISO via a 230-kV Transmission Line constructed by Hecate. (AR 17, 9360-61, 19304, 10350, 19255, 21785.) Due to its location within a County right-of-way, approval of a Franchise Ordinance by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (“County Board”) was required for the Transmission Line. (AR 9360.)

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B. Planning Director's October 18, 2021 Memorandum

BESS facilities are not explicitly listed as permissible land uses in the County's Zoning Code. (AR 8.) On October 18, 2021, the Director of the County's Department of Regional Planning ("Department") issued a memorandum to Department staff, entitled Subdivision and Zoning Ordinance Interpretation No. 2021-03—Battery Electric Storage Systems ("Interpretation"). (AR 7992-93.) The Interpretation states that it is the Department's official interpretation for all parcels within unincorporated Los Angeles County regarding the definition of utility-scale energy storage devices until such time as the Department issues a subsequent interpretation or the County's Zoning Code, specifically, Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the County Code, is amended. (AR 7992.)

The Interpretation notes that Section 22.14.050 of the Zoning Code defines both Electric Distribution Substation ("EDS") and Electric Transmission Substation ("ETS") and concludes that "[f]or purposes of defining energy storage devices as a land use, energy storage devices shall be considered most similar to EDS." (AR 7992.) Specifically, for a BESS, the Interpretation states that "BESS devices are similar in size, bulk, and use to EDS" and concludes that "BESS are more similar to EDS" than ETS for zoning purposes. (AR 7993.) Thus, the Interpretation concludes:

In conclusion, to regulate these facilities in a consistent manner and to properly regulate them for community computability, the use most closely associated with them shall be EDS. Development standards for EDS, Section 22.140.200, shall apply to BESS.

(AR 7993.)

C. Approvals for the Humidor BESS Project

On August 8, 2022, in light of the Interpretation and based on the understanding that the Humidor BESS would be located in an M-1 Zone only, the Department ministerially approved Hecate's BESS plan. (AR 8596-603, 16815, 16692.) In accordance with the Zoning Code's requirements for approval of an EDS in an M-1 Zone, the Department used a ministerial Site Plan Review ("SPR") as the approval process for the BESS. (AR 8428.) Due to such ministerial approval of the Humidor BESS, the Department filed a CEQA Notice of Exemption for the project on August 10, 2022. (AR 8604.) On January 10, 2023, the County Board approved the Franchise Ordinance for the Transmission Line. (AR 12373.)

On or about December 20, 2022, a Department supervisor learned that the Humidor BESS project was not limited to an M-1 Zone and would also occupy an Agricultural A-2 zone. (AR 22036.) Under the Zoning Code, industrial zones and agricultural zones have different approval requirements for particular uses.

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(Compare LACC § 22.22.030 [land use regulations for industrial zones] with LACC § 22.16.030 [land use regulations for agricultural zones].) On February 3, 2023, Hecate submitted a revised site plan for the Humidor BESS project, changing the project's location to be solely in an M-1 Zone. (AR 24954, 25262.)

On February 9, 2023, the Department informed Hecate that its approval of the original site plan for the Humidor BESS was rescinded, explaining that the Department had received correspondence from the Acton Town Council causing the Department to determine the Humidor BESS was inconsistent with the definition of an EDS under the Zoning Code. (AR 26139, 26140.) Further, the Department explained that, due to the rescission, Hecate's revised site plan could not be considered. (AR 26140.) Due to the Department's action, the Franchise Ordinance for the Transmission Line was also referred back from the County Board to the Department of Public Works. (AR 26055, 26173.)

Ultimately, on August 1, 2023, the Department approved the revised site plan for the Humidor BESS. (AR 3334.) In its letter to the Acton Town Council regarding its decision, the Department explained that Hecate had submitted a new SPR application for the project that relocated development for the Humidor BESS such that it was no longer located within the A-2 Zone for agriculture. (AR 10.) The Department also explained its belief that, because BESS is not expressly listed as an allowed use in the Zoning Code, the Department "reviews allowable uses identified in the Zoning Code to determine whether there is an allowable use most similar to the proposed used." (AR 8.) The Department noted that the Interpretation was the Department's "official interpretation" for the definition of utility-scale energy storage devices and that the Interpretation "determined the use most similar to a BESS to be an electric distribution substation ('EDS'), as described in County Code Section 22.14.050." (AR 8.) The Department affirmed the Interpretation, concluding: "LA County Planning has determined the Humidor BESS project is more closely associated with an EDS and may be approved through the SPR process." (AR 9.)

On August 16, 2023, the Department filed an NOE for the revised Humidor BESS project, indicating its exemption from CEQA due to the ministerial SPR approval of the project. (AR 36584.) On August 25, 2023, petitioner appealed the Department's NOE to the County Board. (AR 12-27.) On December 19, 2023, the County Board denied petitioner's appeal and upheld the Department's determination that the project was exempt from CEQA due to its ministerial approval. (AR 964-1003, 2874.)

On October 8, 2024, the County Board adopted a Resolution of Intent to grant Hecate the Franchise Ordinance for the Transmission Line. (AR 9359-611, 11924.) On November 26, 2024, over the protest of petitioner (AR 10322-420), the County Board approved the Franchise Ordinance (AR 9691-92.) The Department filed a CEQA NOE for the ordinance on November 27, 2024. (AR 9286-88.)

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D. The Petition for Writ of Mandamus

On September 15, 2023, petitioner filed a Verified Petition for Writ of Mandate. Through stipulation, the operative Third Amended Verified Petition and Complaint (“TAP”) was deemed filed on December 27, 2024. On March 27, 2025, respondents filed their answer to the TAP. On the same day, real parties in interest filed their answer to the TAP.

On May 2, 2025, petitioner filed an opening brief. On June 2, 2025, respondents and real parties in interest filed a joint opposition, to which petitioner filed a reply on June 17, 2025. The Court has received an electronic copy of the administrative record and a hard copy of the joint appendix.

II. STANDARD OF REVIEW

CCP § 1085(a) provides: “A writ of mandate may be issued by any court to any inferior tribunal, corporation, board, or person, to compel the performance of an act which the law specially enjoins, as a duty resulting from an office, trust, or station, or to compel the admission of a party to the use and enjoyment of a right or office to which the party is entitled, and from which the party is unlawfully precluded by that inferior tribunal, corporation, board, or person.”

“When a party seeks review of an administrative decision pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1085, judicial review is limited to examining the agency proceedings to ascertain whether the agency’s action has been arbitrary, capricious or lacking entirely in evidentiary support, or whether the agency failed to follow the proper procedure and give notices required by law. And, where the case involves the interpretation of a statute or ordinance, our review of the trial court’s decision is de novo.” (*Ideal Boat & Camper Storage v. County of Alameda* (2012) 208 Cal.App.4th 301, 311, citing *Pomona Police Officers’ Assn. v. City of Pomona* (1997) 58 Cal.App.4th 578, 584.) In independently reviewing legal questions, “[a]n administrative agency’s interpretation does not bind judicial review but it is entitled to consideration and respect.” (*Housing Partners I, Inc. v. Duncan* (2012) 206 Cal.App.4th 1335, 1343.)

In a CCP § 1085 writ petition, the petitioner generally bears the burden of proof. (*California Correctional Peace Officers Assn. v. State Personnel Bd.* (1995) 10 Cal.4th 1133, 1154.)

III. DISCUSSION

As a preliminary matter, the Court GRANTS respondents and real parties’ request for judicial notice, pursuant to Evidence Code § 452(b). Relatedly, the Court OVERRULES petitioner’s evidentiary objections to Exhibits B and C to respondents and real parties’ request for judicial notice.

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On the merits, the Court finds that the County's approval for Hecate's Humidor BESS Project in an M-1 Zone was arbitrary and capricious, as so doing was contrary to the County's Zoning Code. The Court, however, first turns to respondents and real parties' claim that petitioner has brought its claims untimely.

A. Petitioner's Challenge is Timely

Respondents and real parties contend that the underlying petition is time-barred under Government Code § 65009(c)(1)(E). Government Code § 65009 establishes a short time frame (*i.e.*, 90 days) within which actions challenging various local planning and zoning decisions must be filed and served. Specifically, Government Code § 65009(c)(1)(E) provides, in pertinent part:

[N]o action or proceeding shall be maintained in any of the following cases by any person unless the action or proceeding is commenced and service is made on the legislative body within 90 days after the legislative body's decision (E) to attack, review set aside, void, or annul any decision on the matters listed in Section 65901

Section 65901 concerns decisions of a board of zoning adjustment or zoning administrator regarding application for conditional uses or other permits, as well as their "exercise of any other power granted by local ordinance." (Gov. Code § 65901(a).) The 90-day limitations period of section 65009(c)(1) applies to decisions of a city planning director empowered to review development projects, which is the case here. (*See Stockton Citizens for Sensible Planning v. City of Stockton* (2012) 210 Cal.App.4th 1481, 1492-93.)

Here, the Department completed its SPR and approved Hecate's revised site plan for the Humidor BESS on August 1, 2023. (AR 3334.) Petitioner challenges that determination (as well as use of the Interpretation to do so) by having filed the instant petition on September 15, 2023, which was within 90 days of the August 1, 2023 SPR approval. Accordingly, petitioner's challenge is timely.¹ (*Hensler v. City of Glendale* (1994) 8 Cal.4th 1, 22 ["[I]f the challenge is to the application of the

¹ Respondents and real parties' characterization of the petition as solely making an untimely facial challenge to the October 18, 2021 Interpretation is unconvincing, as petitioner clearly challenges the August 1, 2023 approval of the Humidor BESS and application of the Interpretation. (*See* TAP ¶¶ 7-8 & Prayer ¶ 1(b)-(f); Pet. Br. at 7, 29.) Moreover, if respondents and real parties were correct that this is purely a facial challenge to the Interpretation standing alone, then it would appear the three-year statute of limitations under Code of Civil Procedure section 338 would apply, thereby rendering the petition timely in any event. (*See Venice Town Council, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles* (1996) 47 Cal.App.4th 1547, 1567-68.)

regulation to a specific piece of property, the statute of limitations for initiating a judicial challenge to the administrative action runs from the date of the final adjudicatory administrative decision”).)

B. The Zoning Code Does Not Permit the Department’s Approval of the Humidor BESS

Chapter 22.22 of the Zoning Code for the County concerns Industrial Zones. (AR 8382-451.) In section 22.22.020 Table A, the Zoning Code identifies particular Industrial Zones used in the code, including Zone M-1 for “Light Manufacturing,” Zone M-1.5 for “Restricted Heavy Manufacturing,” and Zone M-2 for “Heavy Manufacturing.” (AR 8383 [LACC § 22.22.020, Table A].) Table B of section 22.22.030.C sets forth the type of permit or review (*e.g.*, ministerial site plan review (“SPR”) or conditional use permit (“CUP”)) required for a particular principal land use (*e.g.*, industrial use, recreational use, or retail/commercial use) in any particular industrial zone (*e.g.*, M-1 or M-2). (AR 8384 [LACC § 22.22.030.C].) For the principal land use category of “Transportation, Electrical, Gas, Communications, Utilities, and Public Service Uses,” Table B lists both EDS and ETS and identifies the particular permit or review required for such use in a particular zone type (*e.g.*, SPR approval for an EDS in an M-1 Zone). (AR 8428 [LACC § 22.22.030.C, Table B].)

It is undisputed that BESS is not listed as one of the principal land uses identified in Table B of subsection C. Where a particular use is not identified, subsection D states that “[a]ny use not listed in Subsection C . . . may be permitted” in three specific instances: (1) with an SPR in Zone M-1.5 for other uses “similar to” any use permitted with a ministerial review in Zone M-1.5 as identified in subsection C; (2) with an SPR in Zone M-2 for other uses “similar to” any use permitted with a ministerial review in Zone M-2 as identified in subsection C; and (3) with a CUP in Zone M-2 “for any other industrial uses not listed in subsection C.”² (AR 8443 [LACC § 22.22.030.D].) Subsection D provides no exception for uses in an M-1 Zone that are not listed in subsection C, even if such use may be “similar to” another use listed in subsection C. Thus, an unlisted use such as BESS may only be implemented within Zones M-1.5 and M-2 (if “similar to” a listed use for those zones), but not in an M-1 Zone.³ Accordingly, the Zoning Code does not permit the Department’s approval of the Humidor BESS in an M-1 Zone.

² Subsection D also states that the additional use cannot be a prohibited use listed in subsection E. (See AR 8443 [LACC § 22.22.030.D & E].) It is undisputed that BESS is not listed in subsection E.

³ Such straightforward interpretation makes sense, as there may be good reason for the Zoning Code to be more restrictive about expanding permissible uses in an M-1 Zone, as opposed to other industrial zones. M-1 refers to “light industry, repair, wholesale, and packaging, including the manufacture, assembly, distribution, and storage of goods that have low nuisance impacts” (AR 8382

Respondents and real parties nonetheless contend that the Interpretation allows for BESS approval in an M-1 Zone. They reason that, because an EDS is permitted in an M-1 Zone (AR 8428) and because the Interpretation states the Zoning Code development standards for EDS “shall apply to BESS” (AR 7993), this must mean that “if the Code permits EDS in the M-1 zone, it permits BESS, too.” (Opp. Br. at 17.) Such expansive use of the Interpretation runs contrary to the Zoning Code itself.

While it is true the Zoning Code states the Director of the Department “may issue a written interpretation” regarding the “meaning or applicability of any provision” of the Zoning Code, such interpretive authority is limited to provisions that are “subject to interpretation.” (AR 8469 [LACC § 22.234.020].) Subsections D.1 and D.2 of section 22.22.030 state that unlisted uses in M-1.5 and M-2 zones that are “similar to” listed uses in such zones may be permitted. Thus, the Director would have authority to interpret which unlisted uses were “similar to” enumerated uses in those zones. By contrast, the exclusion of any reference in subsection D to any additional uses permitted in an M-1 Zone means the Zoning Code excludes any unlisted uses from being permitted in an M-1 Zone, which means there is no need or authority for the Director to render an interpretation regarding unlisted uses “similar to” permissible uses in an M-1 Zone. (*Gikas v. Zolin* (1993) 6 Cal.4th 841, 852 [*Expressio unius est exclusio alterius*. The expression of some things in a statute necessarily means the exclusion of other things not expressed]).)

Consequently, respondents and real parties’ reliance on the existence of other interpretive memos and guidance by the Director is beside the point. (*See, e.g.*, RJN Ex. B [interpretation for fitness centers]; RJN Ex. C [guidance for wireless facilities].) There is no dispute the Director has authority to issue memos and interpretations for Zoning Code provisions subject to interpretation (*see* RJN Ex. D [Department webpage for “Memos and Interpretations”]), but, as discussed above, such authority cannot be used in such a way as to violate the provisions of the Zoning Code.

Accordingly, notwithstanding what the Interpretation may conclude with respect to the similarity of use between BESS and EDS, the Department’s approval of Hecate’s Humidor BESS project in an M-1 Zone was arbitrary and capricious because the Zoning Code does not permit any unlisted uses such as BESS in an M-1 Zone.

[LACC § 22.22.010(B)(1)].) By contrast, Zones M-1.5 and M-2 are designated for Restricted Heavy Manufacturing and Heavy Manufacturing, respectively, which allow for greater “nuisance impacts.” (AR 8382 [LACC § 22.22.010(B)(2)-(3)].)

10/14/2025

IV. CONCLUSION

The petition is GRANTED. Respondents' ministerial approval of the Humidor BESS project and related NOE shall be set aside and vacated. As noted by the parties during the July 17, 2025 hearing in this matter, because the Court's finding that a BESS could not be approved in an M-1 Zone is dispositive, this Court need not reach petitioner's additional contentions that the Interpretation is facially invalid, that CEQA was not complied with, or that the project was inconsistent with the AV Plan. Further, per petitioner's concession at the hearing, the Court need not address petitioner's challenges to the Franchise Ordinance for the Transmission Line in light of this ruling.

Pursuant to Local Rule 3.231(n), petitioner shall prepare, serve, and ultimately file a proposed judgment and form of writ in accordance herewith.

Date: October 14, 2025


HON. CURTIS A. KIN

10/14/2025

ATTACHMENT 2

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL
PLAN GOALS, POLICIES, AND
DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES THAT
ARE CONTROVERTED BY THE
PROPOSED BESS AND THUS
CONSTITUTE SIGNIFICANT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS UNDER
CEQA.**

CEQA compels compliance with General Plan goals, policies, and development objectives, and in weighing such compliance, Courts apply the fair argument standard when the goals, policies, and objectives were adopted to mitigate environmental effects [*Joshua Tree Downtown Business Alliance v. County of San Bernardino* 1 Cal.App.5th 677, *Pocket Protectors v. City Of Sacramento* (2004) 124 Cal.App.4th 903].

Accordingly, each inconsistency with an adopted County General Plan (General Plan) or Antelope Valley Area Plan (AV Area Plan) policy, goal, or objective that is posed by the proposed BESS constitutes a potentially significant environmental impact that must be addressed by the Commission when such policies, goals, and objectives were adopted for the purpose of mitigating environmental impacts. SORT has analyzed the policies, goals, and objectives enumerated in the AV Area Plan and the General Plan as well as the Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) were certified for these Plans, and concluded that the proposed BESS creates more than 60 potentially significant environmental impacts because of the goals, policies, and objectives it intrinsically controverts.

AV Area Plan Policies That Were Adopted To Mitigate Environmental Impacts And Which Are Controverted By The Proposed BESS.

The EIR that was certified for the AV Area Plan clearly establishes that the policies, goals, and development objectives set forth therein were adopted for the purpose of avoiding environmental effects. Specifically, the EIR connects “land use impacts” to “land use incompatibilities” (page 5.10-1 of AV Plan EIR Section 5.10 provided in attached Document 1¹) and establishes that the land use goals and policies adopted in the AV Area Plan “ensure land use compatibility throughout the Project Area” (Page 5.10-20 of attached Document 1). Together, these statements affirm that AV Area Plan goals and policies were adopted by the County to *ensure land use compatibility* and thereby *avoid direct environmental impacts*. More importantly, the EIR states “The following is a list of the goals and policies of the Proposed Project that would reduce potentially adverse effects concerning land use” and then lists virtually every goal and policy adopted by the AV Area Plan (pages 5.10-5 to 5.10-18 of attached Document 1). Additionally, the AV Area Plan Final EIR states that compliance with AV Area Plan goals and policies will ensure that environmental impacts (specifically, aesthetic impacts) are “less than significant” (pages 2-64, 2-48 of AV Plan Final EIR provided in attached Document 2). These EIR pages specifically establish that *virtually every goal and policy adopted by the AV Area Plan is intended to reduce environmental effects*; therefore, every AV Area Plan goal and policy that is controverted by the proposed BESS constitutes a significant environmental impact.

¹ The Final EIR certified for the AV Area Plan consists of the Draft EIR, public comments received pursuant thereto, and responses prepared by the Lead Agency (see page 1-1 of Final EIR posted here: <https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Final-EIR.zip>). The attached provides the relevant portions of the Draft EIR that comprise the Final EIR.

Additionally, the AV Area Plan establishes that the land uses designated therein mitigate noise, fire, air pollution, and other impacts (page I-6 of AV Area Plan - relevant excerpts are provided in attached Document 3); by extension, any uses that are not consistent with AV Area Plan land use designations are deemed to pose such impacts. Moreover, the AV Area Plan establishes that adopted goals and policies are implemented by the “Land Use Policy Map” through the “Rural Preservation Strategy”² and the “Community Specific Land Use Concepts”³; both the “Land Use Policy Map” and the “Community Specific Land Use Concepts” are founded on the “Land Use Legend” in Table L-1 which establishes the fundamental purpose of each land use category. Collectively, the “Land Use Policy Map”, the “Rural Preservation Strategy”, Table LU-1, and the “Community Specific Land Use Concepts” of the AV Area Plan implement the goals and policies, and as such, they were all adopted for the purpose of avoiding direct environmental impacts.

The 42 AV Area Plan goals, policies, and objectives that are directly controverted by the proposed BESS are identified in Table 1.

Table 1. AV Plan Policies that are Controverted by the BESS Project.

AV Area Plan Policy/Goal/Objective	Reason for Inconsistency
Policy LU 1.4: Ensure there are 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.	The BESS is not consistent with the purpose of industrial uses in the Antelope Valley because it does not “provide local employment opportunities” or “serve the daily needs of rural residents”.
Policy LU 3.2: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1).	Developer claims consistency simply because the BESS does not have residential uses. However, the BESS controverts this policy because it is a high density development in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) that poses a significant wildfire risk because it is prone to explosion and deflagration.
Policy LU 3.3: Except in economic opportunity areas, limit potential development in Flood Zones through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities.	Developer claims consistency because the BESS is not a residential use. However, the non-residential development of a 500 kV transmission line) in a FEMA Flood Zone is facially inconsistent.

² The Rural Preservation Strategy creates a “pattern of rural town center areas, rural town areas, rural preserve areas, and economic opportunity areas” and together with the Land Use Policy Map, it lays out the “framework” for development. See pages LU-2 and LU-5 of attached Document 3.

³ the “Community Specific Land Use Concepts” are established in AV Area Plan Chapter 7 and expressly describe how AV Area Plan Land Use goals and policies are implemented within each community. See Page COMM-1 of attached Document 3.

Policy LU 4.1: Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to the economic opportunity areas and areas that are served by existing or planned infrastructure, public facilities, and public water systems, as indicated in the Land Use designations shown on the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.	Developer claims consistency because the BESS is remotely operated (which is irrelevant). However, the BESS entirely controverts this policy because it places a high density, high intensity industrial development in an area with no infrastructure, public facilities, or public water systems. Even worse, <i>the BESS site has no public water connections</i> and even if the BESS connected to the local municipal water system, the local system <i>does not have sufficient capacity to water needed to suppress the fires that will frequently erupt</i> from the massive BESS development. Everything about the BESS project substantially violates this policy and therefore substantially endangers the entire Community of Acton.
Policy LU 5.1: Ensure that development is consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy, an element of the Regional Transportation Plan developed by the Southern California Association of Governments.	The BESS controverts key elements of the current SCS ⁴ , including “conservation of habitats that are prone to hazards exacerbated by climate change such as wildfires” (because it eliminates habitat in a VHFHSZ), “conservation of agricultural lands” (because it eliminates agricultural lands), and “support hazard [wildfire] planning in land use” (because it puts a dangerous, deflagration prone industrial development in a VHFHSZ at a site that has insufficient water resources to suppress the fires that will frequently erupt at the BESS site).
Policy LU 6.2: Ensure the Area Plan is flexible in adapting to new issues and opportunities without compromising rural character.	The BESS controverts this policy because it substantially compromises the rural character of Acton by blighting a designated rural, scenic, and agricultural area with an impermissible industrial development.
Policy COS 3.1: Discourage the use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides in landscaping to reduce water pollution.	The BESS will substantially increase chemical usage in an existing natural area where such chemicals are not currently used.
Policy COS 3.4: Support preservation, restoration and strategic acquisition of open space to preserve natural streams, drainage channels, wetlands, and rivers, which are necessary for the healthy functioning of ecosystems.	Developer claims consistency because the BESS will be decommissioned.; however, the BESS controverts this policy by eliminating a massive open space and not preserving or restoring streams, drainage channels, wetlands, or rivers.

⁴ 2024 SCAG Sustainable Communities Strategy; Page 119 [<https://scag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/23-2987-connect-socal-2024-final-ch-03-our-plan-040424.pdf>].

Policy COS 3.5: Protect underground water supplies by enforcing controls on sources of pollutants.	Developer claims consistency because the BESS complies with adopted standards. However, the BESS threatens groundwater because it is susceptible to deflagration and the release of heavy metals into the soil during deflagration and into the groundwater during fire suppression.
Policy COS 4.1: Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to rural town centers and economic opportunity areas, minimizing the potential for habitat loss and negative impacts in Significant Ecological Areas.	Developer claims consistency because the BESS is not in an SEA and the 500 kV transmission line "falls in line" with the Vincent Substation. However, the BESS and transmission line substantially controvert this policy by increasing wildfire risks to the SEA and thereby posing a significant threat to habitat and biological diversity. These impacts are exacerbated because insufficient water resources are available to suppress the fires that will frequently erupt at the BESS site.
Policy COS 4.2: Limit amount of potential development in Significant Ecological Areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities.	The BESS creates an industrial, 243 foot high non-residential transmission line in an SEA and it threatens the SEA with an ignition prone BESS and wildfire-susceptible transmission line.
Policy COS 4.3: Require new development in Significant Ecological Areas to comply with applicable Zoning Code requirements, ensuring that development occurs on the most environmentally suitable portions of the land.	The BESS controverts this policy because the 500 kV transmission line that will be located in and SEA is not a permitted use in agricultural zones, so it does not comply with the zoning code.
Policy COS 4.5: Require new development to provide adequate buffers from preserves, sanctuaries, habitat areas, wildlife corridors, State Parks, and National Forest lands.	The BESS violates this policy because it provides no buffers for the SEA that is immediately adjacent to it and because the transmission line (which is in the SEA and violates the Zoning Code) has no buffers.
Policy COS 4.6: Encourage connections between natural open space areas to allow for wildlife movement.	Developer claims consistency because the BESS is located between two transportation corridors. This is incorrect; much of it is adjacent to SEA open space. The BESS also does not comply because it eliminates open space and provides no wildlife connections.
Policy COS 4.8: Ensure ongoing habitat preservation by coordinating with California Fish and Wildlife to obtain information on threatened and endangered species.	Developer claims compliance because of communications with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. However, the BESS <i>does not</i> "ensure ongoing habitat preservation" because it destroys 70+ acres of habitat; also, conversations do not constitute compliance.

Policy COS 4.10: Restrict development that would reduce size of water bodies and minimize potential for loss of habitat and water supply.	The BESS destroys an extensive habitat area adjacent to the Santa Clara River headwaters, and its propensity for deflagration threatens habitat in the Santa Clara River.
Policy COS 5.2: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development in Scenic Resource Areas through appropriate land use designations with very low densities to minimize negative impacts.	The BESS controverts this policy because it is a development outside an economic opportunity zone that is in a Scenic Resource Area which does not comply with the underlying land use designation and is a high density industrial use that creates many significantly negative impacts.
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).	The Developer claims this policy is irrelevant because the BESS site “is not in a designated Scenic Drive”. This is incorrect because this policy pertains to viewsheds of scenic drives. The BESS is adjacent to, and in the viewshed of, 2 scenic drives and it completely destroys these viewsheds; thus, it definitively and substantially controverts this policy.
Policy COS 9.2: Develop multi-modal transport systems that offer alternatives to auto travel to reduce vehicle trips, including regional transportation, transit, bicycle routes, trails, and pedestrian networks.	Developer claims consistency because the BESS is “remotely operated”. However, the BESS does not offer a multi modal transport system; furthermore, it fails to comply because it <i>reduces</i> trail and pedestrian networks by <i>eliminating</i> existing trails.
Policy COS 9.7: Encourage reforestation and the planting of trees to sequester greenhouse gas emissions.	Developer claims consistency because there is a “Landscaping Plan” but the BESS permanently “deforests” 70+ acres of native vegetation and it will not plant trees because of ignition risk (only small, low vegetation will be planted).
Policy COS 10.1: Encourage the use of non-hazardous materials in utility-scale renewable energy production facilities to prevent leaching of potentially dangerous run-off materials into soils and watersheds.	The BESS substantially controverts this policy because the BESS units consist of thousands of tons of hazardous materials that will release hazardous materials into the air, soil, and groundwater with every deflagration event.
Policy COS 13.1: Direct utility-scale renewable energy production facilities, such as solar facilities, to locations where environmental, noise, and visual impacts will be minimized.	The BESS is not located where environmental impacts are minimized; to the contrary, the location in a rural residential area maximizes the noise, aesthetic, wildfire, public safety, and land use impacts that it creates.
Policy COS 13.3: Require all utility-scale renewable energy production facilities to implement a decommissioning plan, with full and financial guarantee instruments that will restore the full site to its natural state upon complete discontinuance of operations.	The “Decommissioning Plan” indicates footings and thousands of “slab on grade” concrete foundations below 3 feet will be “abandoned in place” which will impair native vegetation growth; it proves the site <i>will not</i> be restored to a “natural state”.

Policy COS 13.5: Where utility-scale energy facilities cannot avoid sensitive biotic areas, require open space dedication in SEAs.	Developer claims consistency because the BESS “will comply” but the Application does not identify the size of the open space dedication or where it will be located (it merely states that “up to” 71 acres will be set aside).
Policy COS 13.6: Ensure utility-scale renewable energy production facilities do not create land use conflicts with adjacent agricultural lands or existing residential areas.	The BESS is a high density industrial use in a rural residential area and is thus intrinsically in conflict with adjacent agricultural lands and residential areas; these conflicts cannot be eliminated by buffering or development standards.
Policy COS 13.7: Limit aesthetic impacts of utility-scale energy facilities to preserve rural character.	The BESS is a utility scale energy facility with high density industrial facilities that obliterate rural character; its aesthetic impacts <i>cannot</i> be limited.
Policy COS 14.1: Require transmission lines to be place underground when feasible.	The BESS 500 kV transmission line could easily be placed underground, but it is not.
Policy COS 14.2: If new transmission lines cannot be placed underground, require they be collocated with existing transmission lines, or along existing transmission corridors when feasible.	The aboveground BESS 500 kV transmission line will cut a new transmission corridor and roads through the Santa Clara River SEA
Policy COS 14.3: If new transmission lines cannot be feasibly placed underground or collocated with existing transmission lines or along existing transmission corridors due to physical constraints, direct transmission lines to locations where visual and environmental impacts will be minimized.	The wildfire-prone 500 kV transmission line could be placed underground but instead will be constructed entirely in an SEA within a VHFHSZ and will have 243 foot high towers. Therefore, it will result in significant visual and environmental impacts that cannot be minimized.
Policy COS 14.4: Discourage the placement of new transmission lines on undisturbed lands containing sensitive biotic communities.	The BESS 500 kV transmission line will be constructed almost entirely on undisturbed land in an SEA that contains sensitive biotic communities and thus controverts this policy.
Policy COS 14.5: Discourage placement of new transmission lines through existing communities or properties with existing residential uses.	The BESS 500 kV transmission line runs through the community of Acton and is located on properties with existing residential uses; thus, it controverts this policy.
Policy COS 14.6: Review all proposed transmission line projects for conformity with the Goals and Policies of the AV Area Plan, including those listed above. When the California Public Utilities Commission is the decision-making authority for these projects, provide comments regarding conformity with the Goals and Policies of the Area Plan.	The developer claims consistency because the BESS will comply with CPUC General Orders; however, compliance with CPUC General Orders is irrelevant, The BESS transmission line is facially inconsistent with this policy because it does not conform with any applicable AV Area Plan Goal or Policy.

Policy COS 16.1: Except within Economic Opportunity Areas, require development to minimize removal of native vegetation. Discourage clear-scraping of land and ensure a large percentage of land is left in its natural state.	Developer claims consistency because the BESS removes vegetation for “fire protection and defensible space”; however, this policy is intended to <i>preserve</i> native vegetation. It is utterly controverted by the BESS which <i>clear scrapes</i> vegetation and leaves <i>nothing</i> in its natural state.
Policy PS 1.2: Require new developments provide sufficient access for emergency vehicles and sufficient evacuation routes for residents and animals.	The BESS controverts this policy by eliminating an existing secondary access route that is used by emergency vehicles and which provides residential evacuation opportunities.
Policy PS 3.1: Limit the amount of potential development in Flood Zones designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities.	Developer claims this policy is not applicable because the BESS “is not within a Flood Zone”. However, the BESS Transmission Line <i>is</i> in a Flood Zone (Figure 3.15-41) and because it does not have a “very low residential density”, it does not comply.
Policy ED 1.10: Promote small-scale, household based renewable energy systems to enable Antelope Valley residents to become energy independent.	Utility scale energy projects like the BESS <i>substantially controvert</i> this policy by <i>disincentivizing</i> household based energy projects. This is because California now compels all customers to pay a fixed fee on their electrical bill to cover the cost of utility scale projects (like the BESS) <i>even though customers with household-based renewable energy systems do not use power from such projects</i> . The BESS <i>does not</i> promote small-scale, household based renewable energy systems; to the contrary, it disincentivizes them.
Policy ED 1.11: Encourage development of utility-scale renewable energy projects at appropriate locations to ensure any negative impacts are sufficiently mitigated.	The BESS facially violates this policy because it is in a location that will create significant aesthetic, noise, public safety, and economic impacts on local residents <i>which cannot be mitigated</i> .
Land Use Objective: Agricultural, equestrian, and animal keeping uses are allowed in Acton’s Rural Town Areas provided Zoning Code requirements are met (Page COMM-5 of attached Document 3).	The BESS is located in Acton’s Rural Town Area but it is not consistent with this Land Use Objective because it is not an agricultural or equestrian or animal keeping use and it does not meet Zoning Code requirements.
Land Use Objective: The intent and purpose of the “Rural” Land Use designation is to provide for “Single-family residences, equestrian and limited animal uses, and limited agricultural activities” (Page LU-9 of attached Document 3).	The BESS is not consistent with this Land Use Objective because it is not a single-family residence or an equestrian or limited animal use and it does not support a limited agricultural or related activity.

Land Use Objective: The intent and purpose of industrial uses is to serve local residents (Page LU-7 of attached Document 3).	The BESS is not consistent with this Land Use Objective because it is an industrial use that does not serve local residents.
Land Use Objective: The intent and purpose of the industrial lands in Acton is to provide local employment opportunities (Page COMM-4 of attached Document 3).	The BESS is not consistent with this Land Use Objective because it is an industrial use that does not provide local employment opportunities.
Land Use Objective: The Establishment of industrial uses in Acton that are outside of Industrial Zones is not compatible with community character and is strongly discouraged (Page COMM-5 of attached Document 3).	The BESS facially violates this Land Use Objective because it establishes a heavy industrial use on land that is not zoned for any industrial use; therefore, the BESS is, by definition, intrinsically incompatible with Acton's community character.

General Plan Policies That Were Adopted To Mitigate Environmental Impacts And Which Are Controverted By The Proposed BESS.

The General Plan record demonstrates that most General Plan policies, goals, and development objectives were adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental impacts. For instance, the General Plan Mitigation and Monitoring Program states that the adopted goals and policies will “preserve rural character” by limiting “incompatible” development (page 8 of the General Plan MMRP - relevant excerpts are provided in attached Document 5); this is reiterated on page 1-8 of the Draft EIR incorporated into the Final EIR. The Draft EIR also explains that virtually every General Plan goal and policy was adopted to reduce aesthetic, air quality, land use incompatibilities, and noise impacts (pages 5.1-11 to 5.1-15, 5.1-20, 5.1-27, 5.3-18 to 5.3-27, 5.10-13 to 5.10-32, and 5.12-56 to 5.12-57 of the Draft EIR). These citations are too voluminous to include in this filing; thus, they are incorporated herein by reference⁵.

The Final EIR adopted for the General Plan also states that General Plan goals, policies and programs will “protect areas with hazard, environmental and resource constraints” (page 2-14 of the General Plan Final EIR - relevant excerpts are provided in attached Document 6), and the CEQA Findings of Fact adopted by the Board states that adherence to the policies of the General Plan would result in impacts which are “less than significant” and that policies were developed to reduce fire hazards and “minimize wildland fire” impacts (pages 31-32 of the adopted General Plan CEQA Findings of Fact - relevant excerpts are provided in attached Document 7). Accordingly, each General Plan policy, goal, or development objective that is controverted by the proposed BESS and which addresses land use incompatibilities, scenic resources, noise, rural preservation, and air quality or which pertains to areas that have environmental

⁵ The County General Plan Draft EIR that was incorporated as part of the Final EIR is found here: https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/gp_2035_deir.pdf.

constraints (i.e., Significant Ecological Areas) or pose hazards (i.e., VHFHSZs) constitutes a potentially significant environmental impact. SORT found notes at least 20 such inconsistencies; they are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. County General Plan Policies that are Controverted by the BESS Project.

General Plan Policy/Goal/Objective	Reason for Inconsistency
Policy LU 3.2: Discourage development in areas with high environmental resources and/or severe safety hazards.	The BESS introduces an explosion and fire-prone industrial development in a VHFHSZ.
Policy LU 6.1: Protect rural communities from encroachment of incompatible development that conflict with existing land use patterns and service standards.	The BESS introduces a high density heavy industrial development on agricultural land in a rural, bucolic residential neighborhood.
Policy LU 6.2: Encourage land uses and developments that are compatible with the natural environment and landscape.	The BESS is a high density, heavy industry development that is intrinsically incompatible with the existing natural, rural environment.
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.	The BESS is a high density, heavy industry development in a rural area and it is intrinsically incompatible with the surrounding rural character; it also eliminates open space and agricultural land.
Policy LU 10.9: Encourage land uses and design that stimulate positive and productive human relations and foster the achievement of community goals.	The BESS does not stimulate positive or productive human relations: it operates autonomously, it eliminates trails, and it thwarts rural community preservation goals.
Policy M 2.7: Require sidewalks and trails to accommodate existing and projected volumes of pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle activity.	The BESS eliminates existing trails and pedestrian pathways and does not accommodate pedestrian/ equestrian uses.
Policy M 2.8: Connect trails and pedestrian paths to schools, public transport, employment centers, shopping, residential neighborhoods, and other destinations.	The BESS eliminates existing pedestrian and equestrian trails that currently connect area residences to the rest of the Community.
Policy AQ 1.1: Minimize health risks to people from industrial toxic or hazardous air pollutant emissions, with an emphasis on local hot spots, such as existing point sources affecting immediate sensitive receptors.	The BESS increases health risks by introducing a fire-prone industrial use which, upon deflagration, emits hazardous air pollutants that immediately endanger all the sensitive receptors in the surrounding area.
Policy C/NR 1.2: Protect and conserve natural resources, natural areas, and available open spaces.	The BESS eliminates existing natural resources, natural areas, and open spaces adjacent to two scenic resource areas.

Policy C/NR 3.8: Discourage development in areas with identified significant biological resources, such as SEAs	The BESS includes a massive high voltage electrical transmission line that runs more than a mile through a protected SEA.
Policy C/NR12.3: Encourage distributed systems that use existing infrastructure and reduce environmental impacts.	The BESS is a utility scale energy project which, <i>by definition</i> , supplants and discourages distributed energy systems.
Policy C/NR 13.1: Protect scenic resources through land use regulations that mitigate development impacts.	The BESS controverts this policy because it is a development that violates all land use regulations that were adopted to mitigate development impacts and it decimates all scenic resources in the vicinity of the BESS.
Policy C/NR 13.4: Encourage developments to be designed to create a consistent visual relationship with the natural terrain and vegetation	The BESS is a massive, walled, heavy industrial use that has no visual relationship with natural terrain or vegetation, and it heavily alters and removes both.
Policy P/R 4.3: Develop a network of feeder trails into regional trails.	The BESS eliminates existing feeder trails.
Policy N 1.1: Utilize land uses to buffer noise-sensitive uses from sources of adverse noise impacts.	The BESS provides no land uses to buffer surrounding sensitive receptors from the adverse noise impacts that it creates.
Policy N 1.2: Reduce exposure to noise impacts by promoting land use compatibility.	The BESS is an incompatible industrial land use that <i>increases</i> noise impact exposures.
Policy N 1.11: Maximize buffer distances and design and orient sensitive receptor structures (hospitals, residential, etc.) to prevent noise and vibration transfer from commercial/light industrial uses.	The BESS is a heavy industrial use that will result in significant noise transfers to surrounding sensitive residential receptors because it cannot be designed to prevent low frequency noise insults or A-weighted noise insults to sensitive receptors that have a direct “line of sight” to the BESS facilities.
Policy PS/F 1.1: Discourage development in areas without adequate public services and facilities	The BESS project completely controverts this policy because it is located where there is no municipal water service. And, even if water service were brought to the site, the local municipality has insufficient water resources to continuously suppress the frequent and lengthy fires that will erupt at the BESS. Also, the local fire station in Acton is small, the nearest hazmat response team is more than 45 minutes away, and Los Angeles County Fire Department is already understaffed ⁶ .

⁶ GovTech.com reported in January, 2025 that the Los Angeles County Fire Department staffing ratio is 1.16 firefighters per 1000 residents [<https://www.govtech.com/em/preparedness/some-major-california-fire-departments-are-understaffed>]; this is much less than the average of 1.54 to 1.81 firefighters per 1,000 residents reported by NFPA [<https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/research/nfpa-research/fire-statistical-reports/us-fire-department-profile>].

Policy PS/F 6.7: Discourage above-ground electrical distribution and transmission lines <i>in hazard areas</i> .	The BESS 500 kV transmission line fully contradicts this policy because it is above-ground and located entirely in a VHFHSZ.
Policy PS/F 6.10: Encourage utility siting to be localized and <i>decentralized to reduce impacts</i> ; reduce transmission losses; promote local conservation by connecting users to their systems more directly; and reduce system malfunctions.	The BESS expressly controverts this policy because it is not a localized or decentralized energy development. It is just the opposite and therefore creates transmission losses, does not promote or facilitate direct connections between users and their systems, and its lithium battery chemistry ensures frequent and dangerous system malfunctions.

Conclusion

The facts above demonstrate that the proposed BESS is inconsistent with more than 60 General Plan goals, policies, and development objectives that were adopted for the purpose of mitigating impacts; therefore, each of these inconsistencies constitutes a potentially significant environmental impact that must be addressed as part of the Commission's CEQA review of the proposed BESS development.

DOCUMENT 1

SECTION 5.10 OF THE DRAFT EIR CERTIFIED FOR THE ANTELOPE VALLEY AREA PLAN (WITH RELEVANT SECTIONS HIGHLIGHTED).

Source: <https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/DEIR.zip>

5. Environmental Analysis

5.10 LAND USE AND PLANNING

This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) evaluates potential impacts to land use in the Project Area related to implementation of the Proposed Project. This section is based on proposed land uses described in Section 3, *Project Description*, and shown in Figure 3-4(a-c), *Proposed Land Use Policy Map*. Goals and policies included in the Proposed Area Plan have been evaluated to determine their consistency with other relevant sections of the Proposed Project. In addition, compatibility of proposed land use changes with existing land uses in the surrounding area is discussed in this section. Lastly, the Proposed Project is evaluated for consistency with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

Land use impacts can be direct or indirect. **Direct impacts result in land use incompatibilities,** the division of neighborhoods or communities, or interference with other land use plans, including habitat and wildlife conservation plans. This section focuses on direct land use impacts. Indirect impacts are secondary effects resulting from land use policy implementation, such as an increase in demand for public utilities or services, or increased traffic on roadways. Indirect impacts are addressed in other topical sections of this DEIR.

5.10.1 Environmental Setting

5.10.1.1 REGULATORY SETTING

State and regional laws, regulations, plans, or guidelines applicable to the Proposed Project are summarized below.

State

State Planning Law and Complete Streets Act

State planning law (California Government Code Section 65300) requires every city and county in California to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the jurisdiction and of any land outside its boundaries that, in the planning agency's judgment, bears relation to its planning (sphere of influence). A general plan should consist of an integrated and internally consistent set of goals and policies grouped by topic into a set of elements and guided by a jurisdiction-wide vision. State law requires that a general plan address seven elements or topics (land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety), but allows some discretion on the arrangement and content. Additionally, each of the specific and applicable requirements in the state planning law should be examined to determine if there are environmental issues within the community that the general plan should address, such as hazards or flooding.

Additionally, Assembly Bill 1358 (AB 1358), the California Complete Streets Act, became effective January 1, 2011. AB 1358 places the planning, designing, and building of complete streets into the larger planning framework of the general plan by requiring jurisdictions to amend their circulation elements to plan for multimodal transportation networks.

5. Environmental Analysis

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The Proposed Project is not a General Plan. However, the Proposed Area Plan would refine countywide goals and policies in the General Plan by addressing specific issues relevant to the Project Area. The Proposed Project's consistency with state planning law and the California Complete Streets Act is provided in the analysis for Impact 5.10-2.

Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375

Land use in California is also influenced by application of requirements established in California Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), which link transportation and land use decisions. AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, was passed by the California state legislature on August 32, 2006. The act embodies state guidance and goals for reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with the intent of placing the State on a course toward meeting specific reduction targets, which were established in Executive Order S-3-05. In 2008, SB 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, was adopted to connect GHG emissions reductions targets established in the 2008 Scoping Plan for the transportation sector to local land use decisions that affect travel behavior. Its intent is to reduce GHG emissions from light-duty trucks and automobiles (excludes emissions associated with goods movement) by aligning regional long-range transportation plans, investments, and housing allocations to local land use planning to reduce VMT and vehicle trips. Specifically, SB 375 required the California Air Resources Board to establish GHG emissions reduction targets for each of the 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). SCAG is the MPO for the Southern California region, which includes the Project Area.

Regional

Southern California Association of Governments

See Section 4.2.2, *Regional Planning Considerations*, in Chapter 4 for an introduction to SCAG, the 2012–2035 RTP/SCS, and High Quality Transit Areas (HQTAs).

The Proposed Project is considered a project of regional significance according to the criteria in SCAG's Intergovernmental Review Procedures Handbook (November 1995) and Section 15206 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. As of April 2012, the adopted regional plan to be referred to for consistency analysis is the 2012–2035 RTP/SCS. The Proposed Project's consistency with applicable RTP/SCS goals is analyzed in detail in Table 5.10-2, *Consistency with SCAG's 2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Goals*.

Unique to the SCAG region is the option for subregions to create their own SCS. However, the North Los Angeles County subregion, which includes the Project Area, has not chosen to create its own SCS.

Airport Land Use Plans

There are two public-use airports/airfields within the Antelope Valley: General William J. Fox Airfield in Lancaster and Palmdale Regional Airport in Palmdale. Information for these airports is shown below in Table 5.10-1. Their locations are also shown in Figures 3-4a and 3-4b. Neither of these airports is located within the Project Area. However, the airport influence area for both airports extends into the Project Area.

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Table 5.10-1 Public-Use Airports/Airfields in the Region

Airport/Airfield	IATA Airport Code	Type	Location
General William J. Fox Airfield	WJF	General Aviation	Lancaster (Influence Area includes parts of the Project Area)
Palmdale Regional Airport	PMD	Commercial	Palmdale (Influence Area includes parts of Lancaster and the Project Area)

Source: County of Los Angeles 2014.
IATA = International Air Transport Association

An Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) is a planning document that contains policies for promoting safety and compatibility between airports and the communities that surround them. In 1991, the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) adopted a comprehensive Los Angeles County ALUCP that covers all airports within its jurisdiction except for General William J. Fox Airfield, which has its own ALUCP. The ALUC has begun implementing a plan to develop individual ALUCPs for each airport in Los Angeles County.

The General William J. Fox Airfield and Los Angeles County ALUCPs provide guidance related to the placement of land uses near airports. These recommendations are based on a variety of factors, including those related to noise, safety, and aircraft movement. In addition to the identification of land use compatibility issues, the ALUCPs identify notification/disclosure areas around each airport.

Habitat Conservation Plans

There are two habitat conservation plan areas within the Project Area: the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) and the West Mojave Plan HCP. These plans are summarized below and in Section 5.4, *Biological Resources*, of this DEIR.

Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan NCCP/HCP

The Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan NCCP/HCP covers approximately 22.5 million acres of federal and nonfederal lands in the California deserts and adjacent lands in Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties. It is a collaboration between state (e.g., California Energy Commission, CDFW) and federal (e.g., BLM, USFWS) agencies, with input from local governments (including the County), environmental organizations, private industry, and other interested parties to provide effective protection, conservation, and management of desert ecosystems, while allowing for appropriate development and timely permitting of renewable energy projects.

Once approved, implementation of the NCCP/HCP would result in an efficient and effective biological mitigation and conservation program providing renewable energy project developers with binding, long-term endangered species permit assurances, while facilitating the review and approval of solar thermal, utility-scale solar photovoltaic, wind, and other forms of renewable energy and associated infrastructure, such as electric

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transmission lines necessary for renewable energy development within the Mojave and Colorado desert regions of California.

West Mojave Plan HCP

The West Mojave Plan HCP covers approximately 9.3 million acres of the western portion of the Mojave Desert in California, including parts of Inyo, Los Angeles, Kern, and San Bernardino counties. The West Mojave Plan is an interagency HCP that was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in collaboration with federal and state agencies. The County is a participating agency for the HCP.

The purpose of the HCP is to conserve and protect the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and nearly 100 other sensitive plant and wildlife species as well as the habitats on which these species depend, while providing developers of public and private projects with a streamlined program for compliance with federal and California Endangered Species Acts by reducing delays and expenses, eliminating uncertainty, and applying the costs of compensation and mitigation equitably to all agencies and parties. The HCP allows incidental take of covered species and is consistent with the resource management plans adopted by each of the region's five military bases as well as with the Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan. The term of the WMP is 30 years.

The HCP was adopted by BLM in 2006; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued an amended Biological Opinion to the WMP in 2007. In Los Angeles County, the HCP plan area is coterminous with that of the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan and applies to the Antelope Valley.

5.10.1.2 EXISTING LAND USE

The Project Area is located in northern Los Angeles County. It borders San Bernardino County to the east, Ventura County to the west, and Kern County to the north. The northern portion of the Project Area is dominated by the Antelope Valley, but also contains the Sierra Pelona Mountains and the southern end of the Tehachapi Mountains. The southern portion of the Project Area consists of the San Gabriel Mountains, which are largely within the Angeles National Forest. The Project Area covers 1,800 square miles, or 44 percent of Los Angeles County. The cities of Lancaster and Palmdale are located in the Antelope Valley, but are not included in the Project Area.

The Project Area is predominantly rural and either undeveloped or occupied by government uses (such as National Forests). A smaller portion of land is occupied by single-family uses, military facilities, farmland, and regional parks. Remaining land uses each occupy less than 1 percent of total land area. They include multi-family residential, commercial, office, industrial, golf courses, schools, and miscellaneous uses.

Unincorporated areas in the Antelope Valley are primarily undeveloped, except near Lancaster and Palmdale and in a few scattered communities. Rural residential communities include those surrounded by Lancaster and Palmdale (Desert View Highlands, Quartz Hill, and White Fence Farms), adjacent to those cities (Acton, Antelope Acres, Leona Valley, Littlerock, and Sun Village) and a few that are more isolated (Crystallaire, Fairmont, Gorman, Green Valley, Juniper Hills, Lake Los Angeles, The Lakes communities, Llano, Neenach, Pearblossom, Roosevelt, and Three Points). These areas include commercial and other nonresidential uses,

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but primarily contain parcels that are residential or undeveloped. Notable recreational uses in the Antelope Valley included the Antelope Valley California Poppy Preserve and Saddleback Butte State Park. The Project Area contains the majority of active agricultural land uses in Los Angeles County. A substantial portion of land in the northern portion of the Project Area is used for military operations. In particular, portions of Edwards Air Force Base in Los Angeles County are in the Project Area.

A vast majority of unincorporated areas in the San Gabriel Mountains is within the Angeles National Forest and is undeveloped.

5.10.2 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the Proposed Project may have a significant adverse impact on land use and planning if it would result in any of the following:

- LU-1 Physically divide an established community.
- LU-2 Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
- LU-3 Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

5.10.3 Relevant Area Plan Goals and Policies

The following is a list of the goals and policies of the Proposed Project that would reduce potentially adverse effects concerning land use and planning.

Land Use Element

Goal LU 1: A land use pattern that maintains and enhances the rural character of the unincorporated Antelope Valley.

- **Policy LU 1.1:** Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to rural town center areas, rural town areas, and identified economic opportunity areas.
- **Policy LU 1.2:** Limit the amount of potential development in rural preserve areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **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.

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- **Policy LU 1.4:** Ensure 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.

Goal LU 2: A land use pattern that protects environmental resources.

- **Policy LU 2.1:** Limit the amount of potential development in Significant Ecological Areas, including Joshua Tree Woodlands, wildlife corridors, and other sensitive habitat areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **Policy LU 2.2:** Limit the amount of potential development near and within Scenic Resource Areas, including water features, significant ridgelines, and Hillside Management Areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **Policy LU 2.3:** Limit the amount of potential development in Agricultural Resource Areas, including important farmlands designated by the State of California and historical farmland areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **Policy LU 2.4:** Limit the amount of potential development in Mineral Resource Areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **Policy LU 2.5:** Limit the amount of potential development in riparian areas and groundwater recharge basins, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **Policy LU 2.6:** Limit the amount of potential development near the National Forests and on private lands within the National Forests, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.

Goal LU 3: A land use pattern that minimizes threats from hazards.

- **Policy LU 3.1:** Prohibit new development on fault traces and limit the amount of potential development in Seismic Zones, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.

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- **Policy LU 3.2:** Limit the amount of potential development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
 - **Policy LU 3.3:** Limit the amount of potential development in Flood Zones designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
 - **Policy LU 3.4:** Limit the amount of potential development on steep slopes identified as Hillside Management Acres, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
 - **Policy LU 3.5:** Limit the amount of potential development in landslide and liquefaction areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
 - **Policy LU 3.6:** Limit the amount of potential residential development in airport influence areas near military lands, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Goal LU 4:** A land use pattern that promotes the efficient use of existing and/or planned infrastructure and public facilities.
- **Policy LU 4.1:** Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to areas that are served by existing or planned infrastructure, public facilities, and public water systems.
- Goal LU 5:** A land use pattern that decreases greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Policy LU 5.1:** Reduce the total amount of potential development requiring vehicle trips in the unincorporated Antelope Valley.
 - **Policy LU 5.2:** Encourage the continued development of rural town center areas that provide for the daily needs of surrounding residents, reducing the number of vehicle trips and providing local employment opportunities.
 - **Policy LU 5.3:** Preserve open space areas to provide large contiguous carbon sequestering basins.
 - **Policy LU 5.4:** Ensure that there is an appropriate balance of residential uses and employment opportunities within close proximity of each other.
- Goal LU 6:** A land use pattern that makes the Antelope Valley a sustainable and resilient place to live.

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- **Policy LU 6.1:** Periodically review changing conditions to ensure that land use policies are compatible with the Area Plan's Rural Preservation Strategy.
- **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.

Mobility Element

Goal M 1: Land use patterns that promote alternatives to automobile travel.

- **Policy M 1.1:** Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to rural town center areas, rural town areas and where appropriate to economic opportunity areas, to minimize travel time and reduce the number of vehicle trips.
- **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 1.3:** Encourage new parks, recreation areas, and public facilities to locate in rural town center areas, rural town areas, and, where appropriate, economic opportunity areas.
- **Policy M 1.4:** Ensure that new developments have a balanced mix of residential uses and employment opportunities as well as park, recreation areas and public facilities within close proximity of each other.
- **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.

Goal M 2: Reduction of vehicle trips and emissions through effective management of travel demand, transportation systems, and parking.

- **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 2.2:** Encourage trip reduction through promotion of carpools, vanpools, shuttles, and public transit.
- **Policy M 2.3:** In evaluating new development proposals, require trip reduction measures to relieve congestion and reduce air pollution from vehicle emissions.
- **Policy M 2.4:** Develop multi-modal transportation systems that offer alternatives to automobile travel by implementing the policies regarding regional transportation, local transit, bicycle routes, trails, and pedestrian access contained in this Mobility Element.

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- **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 2.6:** Within rural town center areas, explore flexible parking regulations such as allowing residential and commercial development to meet parking requirements through a combination of on-site and off-site parking, where appropriate, or encouraging the provision of different types of parking spaces.

Goal M 3: An efficient network of major, secondary, and limited secondary highways to serve the Antelope Valley.

- **Policy M 3.1:** Implement the adopted Highway Plan for the Antelope Valley, in cooperation with the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. Ensure adequate funding on an ongoing basis through financing programs, such as grants, congesting pricing, bonding, fair share cost assignments, etc.
- **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 3.3:** Implement highway improvements only when necessitated by increasing traffic or new development or for safety reasons.
- **Policy M 3.4:** Maintain existing highways to ensure safety, and require adequate street and house signage for emergency response vehicles.
- **Policy M 3.5:** As future land use changes occur, periodically review traffic counts and traffic projections and revise the Highway Plan accordingly.

Goal M 4: A network of local streets that support the rural character of the unincorporated Antelope Valley without compromising public safety.

- **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 4.3:** Encourage ongoing maintenance of private local streets to ensure public safety.

Goal M 5: Long-haul truck traffic is separated from local traffic, reducing the impacts of truck traffic on local streets and residential areas.

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- **Policy M 5.1:** Support development of the High Desert Corridor and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project, to provide a route for truck traffic between Interstate 5, State Route 14, and Interstate 15.
- **Policy M 5.2:** Direct truck traffic to designated truck routes, such as major and secondary highways, and prohibit truck traffic on designated scenic routes, to the greatest extent feasible.
- **Policy M 5.3:** Require that designated truck routes are designed and paved to accommodate truck traffic, preventing excessive pavement deterioration from truck use.
- **Policy M 5.4:** Add rest stops along designated truck routes to provide stopping locations away from residential areas.
- **Policy M 5.5:** Develop appropriate regulations for truck parking on local streets to avoid impacts to residential areas.

Goal M 6: A range of transportation options to connect the Antelope Valley to other regions.

- **Policy M 6.1:** Support the development of Palmdale Regional Airport and encourage a range of commercial air travel options.
- **Policy M 6.2:** Support the development of William J. Fox Airfield as a facility for general aviation, air cargo operations, and commuter air travel.
- **Policy M 6.3:** Support the development of the High Desert Corridor and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project between Interstate 5, State Route 14, and Interstate 15, and encourage the participation of private enterprise and capital.
- **Policy M 6.4:** Support increases in Metrolink commuter rail service, and support the expansion of commuter rail service on underutilized rail lines where appropriate.
- **Policy M 6.5:** Support the development of the California High Speed Rail system, with a station in Palmdale to provide links to Northern California and other portions of Southern California, and encourage the participation of private enterprise and capital.
- **Policy M 6.6:** Support the development of a high-speed rail system linking Palmdale to Victorville and Las Vegas, and encourage the participation of private enterprise and capital.
- **Policy M 6.7:** Establish a regional transportation hub in Palmdale with feeder transit service to the rural areas of the unincorporated Antelope Valley.
- **Policy M 6.8:** In planning for all regional transportation systems, consider and mitigate potential impacts to existing communities, and minimize land use conflicts.

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Goal M 7: Bus service is maintained and enhanced throughout the Antelope Valley.

- **Policy M 7.1:** Maintain and increase funding to the Antelope Valley Transit Authority for bus service.
- **Policy M 7.2:** Support increases in bus service to heavily traveled areas and public facilities, such as parks and libraries.
- **Policy M 7.3:** Support increases in bus service to rural communities, linking them to a regional transportation hub in Palmdale and shopping and employment centers in Lancaster and Palmdale.
- **Policy M 7.4:** Improve access for all people, including seniors, youth, and the disabled, by maintaining off-peak service and equipping transit vehicles for wheelchairs and bicycles.
- **Policy M 7.5:** Encourage the use of advanced technologies in the planning and operation of the transit system.

Goal M 8: Alternative transit options in areas not reached by bus service.

- **Policy M 8.1:** Support the expansion of dial-a-ride services to rural communities, linking them to a regional transportation hub in Palmdale and shopping and employment centers in Lancaster and Palmdale.
- **Policy M 8.2:** Evaluate the feasibility of alternative transit options, such as community shuttle services and privately operated transit, to increase accessibility.

Goal M 9: A unified and well-maintained bicycle transportation system throughout the Antelope Valley with safe and convenient routes for commuting, recreation, and daily travel.

- **Policy M 9.1:** Implement the adopted Bikeway Plan for the Antelope Valley in cooperation with the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. Ensure adequate funding on an ongoing basis.
- **Policy M 9.2:** Along streets and highways in rural areas, add safe bicycle routes that link public facilities, a regional transportation hub in Palmdale, and shopping and employment centers in Lancaster and Palmdale.
- **Policy M 9.3:** Ensure that bikeways and bicycle routes connect communities and offer alternative travel modes within communities.
- **Policy M 9.4:** Encourage provision of bicycle racks and other equipment and facilities to support the use of bicycles as an alternative means of travel.

Goal M 10: A unified and well-maintained multi-use (equestrian, hiking, and mountain bicycling) trail system that links destinations such as rural town centers and recreation areas throughout the Antelope Valley.

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- **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 10.2:** Connect new developments to existing population centers with trails, requiring trail dedication and construction through the development review and permitting process.
- **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 needs and character.

Goal M 11: A continuous, integrated system of safe and attractive pedestrian routes linking residents to rural town center areas, schools, services, transit, parks, and open space areas.

- **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 M 11.3:** Within rural town center areas, promote pedestrian-oriented scale and design features, including public plazas, directional signage, and community bulletin boards.
- **Policy M 11.4:** Within rural town center areas, encourage parking to be located behind or beside structures, with primary building entries facing the street. Encourage also the provision of direct and clearly delineated pedestrian walkways from transit stops and parking areas to building entries.
- **Policy M 11.5:** Implement traffic calming methods in areas with high pedestrian usage, such as school zones.

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Conservation and Open Space Element

Goal COS 1: Growth and development are guided by water supply constraints.

- **Policy COS 1.1:** Require that all new development proposals demonstrate a sufficient and sustainable water supply prior to approval.
- **Policy COS 1.2:** Limit the amount of potential development in areas that are not or are not expected to be served by existing and/or planned public water infrastructure through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **Policy COS 1.3:** Limit the amount of potential development in groundwater recharge areas through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.

Goal COS 3: A clean water supply untainted by natural and man-made pollutants and contaminants.

- **Policy COS 3.4:** Support preservation, restoration and strategic acquisition of open space to preserve natural streams, drainage channels, wetlands, and rivers, which are necessary for the healthy functioning of ecosystems.

Goal COS 4: Sensitive habitats and species are protected to promote biodiversity.

- **Policy COS 4.1:** Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to rural town center areas, rural town areas, and where appropriate, economic opportunity areas, minimizing the potential for habitat loss and negative impacts in Significant Ecological Areas.
- **Policy COS 4.2:** Limit the amount of potential development in Significant Ecological Areas, including the Joshua Tree Woodlands, wildlife corridors, and other sensitive habitat areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **Policy COS 4.3:** Require new development in Significant Ecological Areas to comply with applicable Zoning Code requirements, ensuring that development occurs on the most environmentally suitable portions of the land.
- **Policy COS 4.4:** Require new development in Significant Ecological Areas, to consider the following in design of the project, to the greatest extent feasible:
 - Preservation of biologically valuable habitats, species, wildlife corridors and linkages;
 - Protection of sensitive resources on the site within open space;

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- Protection of water sources from hydromodification in order to maintain the ecological function of riparian habitats;
 - Placement of development in the least biologically sensitive areas on the site, prioritizing the preservation or avoidance of the most sensitive biological resources onsite;
 - Design of required open spaces to retain contiguous undisturbed open space that preserves the most sensitive biological resources onsite and/or serves to maintain connectivity;
 - Maintenance of watershed connectivity by capturing, treating, retaining and/or infiltrating storm water flows on site; and
 - Consideration of the continuity of onsite open space with adjacent open space in project design.
- **Policy COS 4.5:** Require new development to provide adequate buffers from preserves, sanctuaries, habitat areas, wildlife corridors, State Parks, and National Forest lands.
 - **Policy COS 4.6:** Encourage connections between natural open space areas to allow for wildlife movement.
 - **Policy COS 4.10:** Restrict development that would reduce the size of water bodies, minimizing the potential for loss of habitat and water supply.
- Goal COS 5:** The Antelope Valley's scenic resources, including scenic drives, water features, significant ridgelines, buttes, and Hillside Management Areas, are enjoyed by future generations.
- **Policy COS 5.1:** Identify and protect natural landforms and vistas with significant visual value by designating them as Scenic Resource Areas.
 - **Policy COS 5.2:** Limit the amount of potential development in Scenic Resource Areas through appropriate land use designations with very low densities in order to minimize negative impacts from future development.
 - **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 5.6:** Restrict development on buttes and designated significant ridgelines by requiring appropriate buffer zones.
 - **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).

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Goal COS 6: Farming is a viable profession for Antelope Valley residents, contributing to the Valley's rural character and economic strength.

- **Policy COS 6.1:** Limit the amount of potential residential development in Agricultural Resource Areas (Map 4.3: Agricultural Resource Areas) through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan, minimizing the potential for future land use conflicts.
- **Policy COS 6.2:** Limit incompatible non-agricultural uses in Agricultural Resource Areas. Where non-agricultural uses are necessary to meet regional or community needs, require buffering and appropriate development standards to minimize potential conflicts with adjacent agricultural uses.
- **Policy COS 6.7:** Investigate the feasibility of financial and/or zoning incentive programs for farmers, such as Williamson Act contracts, conservation easements and flexible zoning provisions.

Goal COS 8: Mineral resources are responsibly extracted.

- **Policy COS 8.1:** Allow new mineral resource extraction activities only in designated Mineral Resource Areas.
- **Policy COS 8.2:** Where new mineral resource extraction activities are allowed, ensure that applications undergo full environmental review and public noticing. Require site remediation after completion of mineral resource extraction activities.

Goal COS 9: Improved air quality in the Antelope Valley.

- **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 alternative 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 9.3:** In evaluating new development proposals, consider requiring trip reduction measures to relieve congestion and reduce air pollution from vehicle emissions.
- **Policy COS 9.4:** Promote recycling and composting throughout the Antelope Valley to reduce air quality impacts from waste disposal activities and landfill operations.
- **Policy COS 9.5:** Encourage the use of alternative fuel vehicles throughout the Antelope Valley.
- **Policy COS 9.7:** Encourage reforestation and the planting of trees to sequester greenhouse gas emissions.

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- **Policy COS 9.8:** Coordinate with the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District and other local, regional, state, and federal agencies to develop and implement regional air quality policies and programs.

Goal COS 18: Permanently preserved open space areas throughout the Antelope Valley.

- **Policy COS 18.1:** Encourage government agencies and conservancies to acquire lands in the following areas and preserve them as permanent open space:
 - Significant Ecological Areas, including Joshua Tree Woodlands, wildlife corridors, and other sensitive habitat areas;
 - Hillside Management Areas;
 - Scenic Resource Areas, including water features such as the privately owned portion of Elizabeth Lake, significant ridgelines, buttes, and other natural landforms;
 - Lands adjoining preserves, sanctuaries, State Parks, and National Forests; and
 - Privately owned lands within the National Forest.
- **Policy COS 18.4:** Pursue funding for open space acquisition and maintenance on an ongoing basis.

Goal COS 19: New development meets open space objectives while maintaining rural character.

- **Policy COS 19.1:** Require new development in Hillside Management Areas and Significant Ecological Areas to comply with applicable Zoning Code requirements for open space preservation.
- **Policy COS 19.2:** When new development is required to preserve open space, require designs with large contiguous open space areas that maximize protection of environmental and scenic resources.
- **Policy COS 19.3:** Allow large contiguous open space areas to be distributed across individual lots so that new development preserves open space while maintaining large lot sizes that are consistent with a rural environment, provided that such open space areas are permanently restricted through deed restrictions.
- **Policy COS 19.4:** Pursue innovative strategies for open space acquisition and preservation through the land development process, such as Transfers of Development Rights, Land Banking, and Mitigation Banking, provided that such strategies preserve rural character.

Public Safety, Services, and Facilities Element

Goal PS 1: Protection of the public through fire hazard planning and mitigation.

- **Policy PS 1.1:** Limit the amount of potential master-planned development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.

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Goal PS 2: Protection of the public through geological hazard planning and mitigation.

- **Policy PS 2.1:** Limit the amount of potential development in Seismic Zones and along the San Andreas Fault and other fault traces, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **Policy PS 2.2:** Limit the amount of potential development on steep slopes (Hillside Management Areas) and within landslide and liquefaction areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.

Goal PS 3: Protection of the public through flood hazard planning and mitigation.

- **Policy PS 3.1:** Limit the amount of potential development in Flood Zones designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.

Goal PS 8: Antelope Valley residents enjoy access to parks and recreational facilities.

- **Policy PS 8.3:** Provide new parks as additional development occurs or as the population grows, with a goal of four acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.
- **Policy PS 8.4:** Prioritize new parks for existing park deficient communities.
- **Policy PS 8.6:** Within rural town center areas, promote the inclusion of parks, recreational facilities, and other gathering places that allow neighbors to meet and socialize.

Goal PS 10: A wide range of educational opportunities for Antelope Valley residents.

- **Policy PS 10.1:** Coordinate with all Antelope Valley school districts to ensure that new schools are provided as additional development occurs or as the population grows.
- **Policy PS 10.2:** Encourage new schools to locate in rural town center areas, rural town areas, and economic opportunity areas, where appropriate, where they will be accessible by pedestrian walkways, trails, bikeways, and bicycle routes.
- **Policy PS 10.3:** Encourage new schools to locate near parks and recreational facilities.

Economic Development Element

Goal ED 1: A healthy and balanced economic base in the Antelope Valley that attracts a wide range of industries and businesses and provides high-paying jobs for local residents.

- **Policy ED 1.1:** Promote the continued development of regional commercial and industrial employment centers in appropriate areas in the Antelope Valley, including the Fox Field Industrial Corridor.

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- **Policy ED 1.2:** Allow the development of commercial and industrial uses at the Palmdale Regional Airport site, provided that those uses are compatible with airport operations and do not restrict or prohibit future expansion of the airport.
- **Policy ED 1.3:** Support the growth of “high tech” industries to employ the Antelope Valley population’s highly educated workforce.
- **Policy ED 1.4:** Support the development of the High Desert Corridor and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement projects to improve the east-west movement of goods, particularly between the Antelope Valley and the industrial areas of Kern and San Bernardino counties and beyond.
- **Policy ED 1.5:** Promote the development of an “Inland Port” in the Antelope Valley, providing additional employment in the trade and logistics sectors.
- **Policy ED 1.6:** Support the development of a range of travel options that better connect the Antelope Valley to existing regional trade and employment in other regions, including the High Desert Corridor and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Projects.
- **Policy ED 1.7:** Promote farming and other agricultural activities that contribute to the Antelope Valley economy.
- **Policy ED 1.11:** Encourage the development of utility-scale renewable energy projects at appropriate locations and with appropriate standards to ensure that any negative impacts to local residents are sufficiently mitigated.
- **Policy ED 1.13:** Ensure early discussions with Edwards Air Force Base and U.S. Air Force Plant 42 regarding new industries, such as utility-scale renewable energy production facilities, to limit potential impacts on mission capabilities.
- **Policy ED 1.14:** Promote appropriate types of residential development in the vicinity of existing communities and town centers that are in reach of existing infrastructure and utilities.
- **Policy ED 1.15:** Where appropriate, promote residential development as part of a wider mixed-use strategy in communities that desire such uses in their areas and where plans for major infrastructure and facilities are currently underway. These areas have been identified as economic opportunity areas as shown in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- **Policy ED 1.16:** Preserve the scenic resources of the Antelope Valley, including Scenic Drives, Significant Ridgelines and Significant Ecological Areas, in such a way that can contribute to the economic activities in the area.

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5.10.4 Environmental Impacts

The following impact analysis addresses Appendix G thresholds of significance. The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

Impact 5.10-1: Implementation of the Proposed Project would not include construction of roads or other improvements that could divide an established community. [Threshold LU-1]

Impact Analysis: The Proposed Area Plan is a long-range plan for the future of the Project Area. In addition to identifying land use and zoning changes in the Project Area, the Proposed Area Plan discusses proposed and planned roadways in the Project Area. These improvements are discussed for conceptual purposes; approval of the Proposed Project does not include approval of individual transportation or infrastructure projects. The following analysis discusses the potential effects of the Proposed Project on established communities.

Land Use and Zoning Changes

As described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this DEIR, most increases in land use densities proposed by the Proposed Project are concentrated in economic opportunity areas (EOAs), which generally feature established roadway networks that would remain the same under the Proposed Project. The proposed land use and zoning changes do not introduce radically different land uses into neighborhoods, propose new street patterns, or otherwise divide any existing established communities. Although buildout calculations for the Proposed Area Plan contain unbuilt development capacity on parcels outside areas planned for increases in residential densities, this capacity, if developed, would generally occur along existing land use patterns and roadways. Furthermore, the Proposed Project's Rural Preservation Strategy policy would ensure that drastically new land use patterns and development types would not be introduced in rural areas.

At a programmatic level, the Proposed Project does not allow land uses patterns that would result in division of an established neighborhood or community.

Streets and Highways

Portions of the Project Area identified as EOAs are expected to see substantial growth in the coming decades. Accordingly, the Mobility Element includes goals and policies related to expansion and enhancement of the Project Area's streets and highways. These are aimed at ensuring that the roadway network is sized and designed to serve the land uses and growth allowed under the Proposed Project. Plans are also underway to dramatically improve the capacity and quality of existing road networks through a couple of major infrastructure projects being undertaken by Metro and Caltrans, namely the High Desert Corridor and the NW138 Corridor Improvement Project.

The Proposed Project includes an updated Highway Plan for the Project Area (see Figure 5.1-2 of this DEIR) that will amend the Adopted General Plan Highway Plan and establishes new street classifications for both new and existing roadway segments. Major and secondary highways identified in the proposed Highway Plan are generally extensions or upgrades of existing two-lane roadways, although new roadways are also identified. Highways identified in the Highway Plan would generally not travel through existing

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neighborhoods; they would traverse largely vacant areas and would increase regional access and connectivity between Lancaster, Palmdale, and surrounding unincorporated areas. The proposed Land Use Policy Map also shows potential alignments for the proposed High Desert Corridor freeway and Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement project. However, these alignments are conceptual only. Approval of the High Desert Corridor or the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project is not part of the discretionary project analyzed in this DEIR.

Because the Proposed Project does not involve approval of specific improvement projects related to the existing roadway network, the Highway Plan of the Proposed Project would not result in the division of an existing neighborhood or community.

Public Transit

Although the proposed Mobility Element includes goals and policies related to public transit in the Project Area, the element does not specify locations or alignments for future transit projects. Because the location, scale, and design of future transportation projects is unknown, analysis of their localized impacts is speculative. Future airport, commuter rail, and high speed rail projects constructed prior to buildout of the Proposed Project would be subject to project-level CEQA review.

Conclusion

New land uses allowed under the Proposed Project would generally follow existing land use patterns and are not anticipated to divide existing communities. Although the Proposed Project discusses expansion of the existing street, highway, and transit networks in the Project Area, the project does not involve approval of any specific transportation projects. Impacts would be less than significant.

Impact 5.10-2: Implementation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with applicable plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. [Threshold LU-2]

Impact Analysis: The following is an analysis of the Proposed Project's consistency with applicable state and regional laws, regulations, plans, and guidelines.

State Planning Law and California Complete Streets Act Consistency

Although the Proposed Project is not a General Plan, the Area Plan has been prepared in accordance with state planning law, as provided in California Government Code Section 65300. The Area Plan is meant to be a framework for guiding planning and development in the Project Area through 2035 and beyond and can be thought of as the blueprint for Project Area's growth and development. The proposed Land Use Policy Maps (see Figure 3-4(a-c)) and goals and policies in the updated elements strive to preserve and ensure land use compatibility throughout the Project Area. The proposed Mobility Element also contains policies that would help the County implement AB 1358. In particular, Policies M 11.1, M 11.2, and M 11.5 require that the circulation network in "rural town centers" be designed to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians.

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Each of the specific and applicable requirements in the state planning law (California Government Code Section 65300) have been examined and considered to determine if there are environmental issues within the community that the General Plan should address, such as fire hazards and flooding. The various environmental issues associated with the Proposed Project (e.g., air quality, hazards, flooding, traffic, etc.) are addressed in their respective topical sections in Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, of this DEIR.

SCAG 2012–2035 RTP/SCS

Table 5.10-2 provides an assessment of the Proposed Project's relationship to pertinent 2012–2035 SCAG RTP/SCS goals. Proposed Area Plan policies identified in the table are listed in Subsection 5.10-4 of this section.

Table 5.10-2 Consistency with SCAG's 2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Goals

RTP/SCS Goal #	SCAG Goal	Project Compliance with Goal	Relevant Area Plan Policies
G1	Align the plan investments and policies with improving regional economic development and competitiveness.	Not Applicable: This is not a project-specific goal and is therefore not applicable. However, the Proposed Area Plan does include goals and policies aimed at improving regional economic development and competitiveness. These are largely found in Chapter 6, <i>Economic Development</i> , of the Area Plan.	ED 1.1 through ED 1.19
G2	Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region.	Consistent: Upon implementation of the Proposed Project, the transportation network in the Project Area would be designed, developed, and maintained to meet the needs of local and regional transportation and to ensure efficient mobility and accessibility. A number of regional and local plans and programs would be used to guide development and maintenance of transportation networks in the Project Area, including but not limited to: • SCAG's 2012–2035 RTP/SCS • County of Los Angeles Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines • Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program • 2009 Metro Long Range Transportation Plan • 2012 Los Angeles County Bicycle Master Plan • Caltrans Traffic Impact Studies Guidelines and Highway Capacity Manual • Assembly Bill 1358 (The California Complete Streets Act) Additionally, the County is required by the California Government Code to coordinate its Mobility Element with regional transportation plans, including SCAG's 2012–2035 RTP/SCS. The Mobility Element is a comprehensive transportation management strategy that addresses infrastructure capacity. The Mobility Element of the Proposed	LU 3.6, LU 5.1 and LU 5.2, LU 5.4, M 1.1 through M 1.5, M 2.1 through M 2.5, M 3.1 through M 3.5, M 4.3, M 5.1 through M 5.3, M 6.1 through M 6.8, M 7.1 through M 7.5, M 8.1 and M 8.2, M 9.1 through M 9.4, M 10.1 through M 10.8, M 11.1 through M 11.3, PS 8.7, PS 9.1 and PS 9.2, PS 10.2, PS 11.4, PS 12.4, ED 1.2, ED 1.4 through ED 1.6, ED 1.20

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Table 5.10-2 Consistency with SCAG's 2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Goals

RTP/SCS Goal #	SCAG Goal	Project Compliance with Goal	Relevant Area Plan Policies
		Area Plan contains policies (see list at right) that provide specific guidance on how to improve mobility in the Project Area and create a transportation network that accommodates all users. Refer to Section 5.16, <i>Transportation and Traffic</i>, which addresses local and regional transportation, traffic, circulation, and mobility in more detail.	
G3	Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region.	Consistent: All modes of public (including motorized and nonmotorized) and commercial transit throughout the Project Area would be required to follow safety standards established by corresponding state, regional, and local regulatory documents, standards, and regulations. For example, pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes must follow safety precautions and standards established by local (e.g., County of Los Angeles) and regional (e.g. SCAG, Caltrans) agencies. Additionally, pedestrian circulation systems are required to be designed and constructed for the adaption and use of people with disabilities, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and state requirements. The County is also committed to ensuring that adequate pedestrian circulation is provided in future growth areas. Furthermore, roadways must follow safety standards established for the local and regional plans mentioned in the analysis for RTP/SCS Goal G2, as well as the County's adopted engineering standards for vehicular circulation improvements and systems. The provision of safe and reliable modes of transit throughout the Project Area would be ensured through the County's development review and building plan check process. The Mobility, and Public Safety, Services and Facilities Elements of the Proposed Area Plan provide guidance and policies that promote the safe movement of people and goods, with importance placed on pedestrian and vehicular safety.	M 3.3 through M 3.5, M 4.2 and M 4.3, M 5.2, M 6.8, M 7.1, M 7.4, M 8.1 and M 8.2, M 9.2, M 10.6, M 11.1 and M 11.2, M 11.4 and M 11.5, PS 4.2, PS 6.6, PS 9.1 through PS 9.3
G4	Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system.	Consistent: All major new roadway improvements and other upgrades to the existing transportation network would be required to be assessed by some level of traffic analysis (e.g., traffic assessments, traffic impact studies) to determine how the developments would impact existing traffic capacities and to determine the need for improving future traffic capacities. Additionally, the regional plans mentioned in the analysis for RTP/SCS Goal	LU 5.1 through LU 5.4, LU 6.1 and LU 6.2, M 1.1 through M 1.5, M 2.1 through M 2.6, M 6.1 through M 6.8

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Table 5.10-2 Consistency with SCAG's 2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Goals

RTP/SCS Goal #	SCAG Goal	Project Compliance with Goal	Relevant Area Plan Policies
		G2 would be applicable to the design and development of the regional roadway network in the Project Area. The Mobility Element of the Proposed Area Plan encourages regional coordination of transportation issues and provides guidance and policies that help preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system.	
G5	Maximize the productivity of our transportation system.	Consistent: The local and regional transportation system would be improved and maintained to maximize efficiency and productivity. The County's Public Works Department oversees the improvement and maintenance of the Project Area's public rights-of-way on a routine basis. The County strives to maximize productivity of the region's public transportation system (e.g., bus, rail, and bicycle) for residents, visitors, and workers. For example, the County implements a Bicycle Master Plan, adopted in 2012, that encourages the development and maintenance of a safe and convenient bikeway system. The Mobility Element of the Area Plan has been designed to be consistent with, and implement, the Bicycle Master Plan. Public transit in the Project Area is provided by Amtrak (bus), Antelope Valley Transit Authority, and Metrolink. The Transportation Division of the Public Works Department coordinates with these agencies to ensure that transportation in the Project Area is efficient and safe. Furthermore, the Mobility Element of the Proposed Area Plan contains guidance and policies to improve the region's transportation system (see list at right).	M 1.1 through M 1.5, M 3.1 through M 3.5, M 4.2 and M 4.3, M 5.1 through M 5.3, M 6.1 through M 6.8, M 7.1 through M 7.5, M 8.1 and M 8.2, M 9.1 through M 9.4, M 10.1 through M 10.4, M 10.6 and M 10.7, M 11.1
G6	Protect the environment and health of our residents by improving air quality and encouraging active transportation (i.e. nonmotorized transportation, such as bicycling and walking).	Consistent: The reduction of energy use, improvement of air quality, and promotion of more environmentally sustainable development would be encouraged through the development of alternative transportation methods, green-design techniques for buildings, and other energy-reducing techniques. For example, individual development projects in Los Angeles County are required to comply with provisions of the California Building Standards Code, which includes the Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen). Compliance with these regulations would be ensured through the development review and building plan check process. The County also strives to maximize protection of the environment and improvement of air quality by	LU 1.1, LU 4.1, LU 5.1 through LU 5.4, M 1.1 through M 1.5, M 2.1 through M 2.5, M 9.1 through M 9.4, M 10.1 through M 10.8, M 11.1 through M 11.5, COS 9.1 through COS 9.8

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Table 5.10-2 Consistency with SCAG's 2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Goals

RTP/SCS Goal #	SCAG Goal	Project Compliance with Goal	Relevant Area Plan Policies
		encouraging and improving the use of the region's public transportation system (i.e., bus, rail, and bicycle). As mentioned in the analysis for RTP/SCS Goal G5, the County implements its own Bicycle Master Plan. The Mobility Element of the Area Plan has been designed to be consistent with, and implement, the Bicycle Master Plan. Additionally, the County is committed to ensuring that, consistent with complete streets strategies, adequate pedestrian circulation is provided in areas planned for growth. Furthermore, the Proposed Project's emphasis on focusing new development capacity in three economic opportunity areas (see Chapter 3 of this DEIR for descriptions of the EOAs) would incentivize nonmotorized transportation modes such as biking and walking. This strategy, which acknowledges the relationship between land use and mobility, would reduce vehicle miles traveled and thereby reduce impacts related to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and traffic. Elements of the Proposed Area Plan contain guidance and policies to improve and protect the region's air quality and environment and promote nonmotorized transportation. Policies related to the encouragement of nonmotorized transportation are largely concentrated in the Mobility Element, while additional policies related to air quality and greenhouse gases are identified in the Conservation and Open Space Element. A comprehensive list of applicable Proposed Area Plan policies is identified at right.	
G7	Actively encourage and create incentives for energy efficiency, where possible.	Consistent: As mentioned in the response to RTP/SCS Goal G6, the County Code includes provisions that require buildings constructed in Los Angeles County to be energy efficient. In particular, Title 31 of the County's Code incorporates the California Green Building Standards Code by reference. Elements of the Proposed Area Plan also contain policies that promote energy efficient building practices and transportation systems (see full list at right).	M 2.1 through M 2.5, COS 7.2, COS 9.1 and COS 9.2, COS 9.5 and COS 9.6, COS 10.1 through 10.5, COS 11.1 through 11.3, COS 12.1 and COS 12.2, COS 14.6, COS 17.1 through 17.5, ED 1.10 through ED 1.14

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Table 5.10-2 Consistency with SCAG's 2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Goals

RTP/SCS Goal #	SCAG Goal	Project Compliance with Goal	Relevant Area Plan Policies
G8	Encourage land use and growth patterns that facilitate transit and nonmotorized transportation.	Consistent: See response to RTP/SCS Goal G6.	LU 1.1 and LU 1.2, LU 4.1, LU 5.1 and LU 5.2, LU 5.4, M 1.1 through M 1.5, M 2.1, M 2.5, M 9.1, M 11.2, M 11.3 These policies—which address land use and growth patterns—would be complemented by implementation of policies that directly facilitate transit and nonmotorized transportation (see policies listed under Goal G5 and G6, above).
G9	Maximize the security of our transportation system through improved system monitoring, rapid recovery planning, and coordination with other security agencies.	Consistent: The County conducts frequent monitoring of existing and newly constructed roadways and transit routes to determine the adequacy and safety of these systems. Other local and regional agencies (i.e., Caltrans and SCAG) would continue to work with the County to manage these systems. Security situations involving roadways and evacuations would be addressed in the County's emergency management plans developed in accordance with the state and federal mandated emergency management regulations. Elements of the Proposed Area Plan contain guidance and policies for a safe and efficient transportation system. In particular, implementation of Policies PS 6.1 through PS 6.6 in the proposed Public Safety, Services and Facilities Element would ensure that emergency planning in the Project Area would be a collaborative effort shared by a wide range of agencies and organizations.	M 3.5, M 4.3, M 7.5, M 8.2, PS 6.1 through PS 6.6

Source: 2012–2035 SCAG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.

The analysis in Table 5.10-2 concludes that the Proposed Project would be consistent with the applicable RTP/SCS goals. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in significant land use impacts related to the RTP/SCS.

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans

Buildout of the Proposed Project would involve new development and redevelopment on parcels within the plan areas of the comprehensive Los Angeles County ALUCP—which includes Palmdale Regional Airport—and the ALUCP for the General William J. Fox Airfield. However, future development under the Proposed Project would be required to be consistent with any applicable ALUCP. Furthermore, compliance with policies included in the Land Use Element and Public Safety, Services & Facilities Element of the Proposed Area Plan related to land use compatibility would ensure that development would not conflict with airport land use plans. In particular,

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Policy ED 1.2 requires that new land uses near Palmdale Regional Airport be compatible with the airport and not “restrict or prohibit future expansion of the airport.” Policy LU 3.6 limits new residential uses in airport influence areas and near military land.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in Table 5.10-2 and the other subsections above, the Proposed Project would not conflict with goals contained within SCAG’s 2012–2035 RTP/SCS or other land use plans. Therefore, impacts related to compatibility between the Proposed Project and applicable plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects would be less than significant.

Impact 5.10-3: The Proposed Project would not conflict with the West Mojave Plan. [Threshold LU-3]

Impact Analysis: As discussed above under Section 5.10.1.1, *Regulatory Setting*, the West Mojave Plan HCP (WMP) applies to portions of the Project Area. A second HCP, the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), is under development, but not yet adopted. Consistency between these two plans and the Proposed Project is discussed below.

The plan areas for the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan NCCP/HCP and the West Mojave Plan HCP cover the northern two-thirds of the Project Area. This region is north of the San Gabriel Mountains and contains the Antelope Valley and its eastward transition into the Mojave Desert. Within Los Angeles County, the plans areas for the two conservation plans are coterminous.

Once approved, the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan NCCP/HCP would provide renewable energy project developers with binding, long-term endangered species permit assurances while facilitating the review and approval of solar thermal, utility-scale solar photovoltaic, wind, and other forms of renewable energy and associated infrastructure. Because the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan NCCP/HCP is not yet approved, implementation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with the Plan. Furthermore, the Proposed Area Plan establishes that site-specific renewable energy systems are highly preferred over new utility-scaled energy projects (see Policy COS 12.1). Lastly, approval of the Proposed Project does include approval of specific energy projects in the plan area of the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan NCCP/HCP.

The intent of the West Mojave Plan is to conserve habitat for special-status species in the Mojave Desert while creating a streamlined permit process that minimizes the need for individual consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Although buildout of the Proposed Project would result in substantial growth and development in the West Mojave Plan HCP area, individual development projects in the Antelope Valley would be required comply with provisions of the West Mojave Plan HCP and other local, state, and federal regulations. Furthermore, conservation areas identified in the West Mojave Plan are located in Rural Preserve Areas in the proposed Land Use Policy Map and covered by policies related to the County’s Rural Preservation Strategy, which would limit development in these areas. Therefore, the Proposed Project does not conflict with the West Mojave Plan HCP.

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Conclusion

As demonstrated above, the Proposed Project would not conflict with adopted habitat conservation plans. Although buildout of the Proposed Project would include development and redevelopment in areas covered by conservations plans, such development would be required to comply with provisions of those plans. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

5.10.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative projects in the region would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact if they would, in combination, conflict with existing land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact. Similar to the Proposed Project, cumulative projects in the region would utilize regional planning documents such as SCAG's RTP/SCS during planning, and the general plans of cities would be consistent with the regional plans, to the extent that they are applicable. Cumulative projects in these jurisdictions would be required to comply with the applicable land use plan or they would not be approved without a general plan amendment.

As discussed above, implementation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with existing land use plans, policies, or regulations of agencies with jurisdiction over the Project Area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact.

5.10.6 Existing Regulations

State

- State planning law (California Government Code Section 65300)
- Assembly Bill 1358, the California Complete Streets Act

Local

- Los Angeles County Code
- Adopted Los Angeles County General Plan

5.10.7 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements, the following impacts would be less than significant: 5.10-1, 5.10-2, and 5.10-3.

5.10.8 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are necessary.

5.10.9 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No significant impacts were identified with regard to land use and planning.

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5.10.10 References

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 2013. West Mojave Plan Amendment Activity.
http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd/west_mojave__wemo.html.
- County of Los Angeles. 1991 (Revised 2004). Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan (ALUP).
<http://planning.lacounty.gov/view/alup/>.
- .2014. Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) Airport Information.<http://planning.lacounty.gov/aluc/airports>.
- .2009, April. Background Report to the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update.

DOCUMENT 2

EXCERPTS FROM THE FINAL EIR CERTIFIED FOR THE ANTELOPE VALLEY AREA PLAN (WITH RELEVANT SECTIONS HIGHLIGHTED).

Source: <https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Final-EIR.zip>

October 2014 | Final Environmental Impact Report

ANTELOPE VALLEY AREA PLAN

County of Los Angeles

Prepared for:

County of Los Angeles

Contact: Carl Vincent Nadela, AICP, Regional Planner
Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street, Room 1356
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213.974.6476
tnc@planning.lacounty.gov

Prepared by:

PlaceWorks

Contact: William Halligan, Esq., Principal, Environmental Services
3 MacArthur Place, Suite 1100
Santa Ana, California 92707
714.966.9220
info@placeworks.com
www.placeworks.com

1. Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and CEQA Guidelines (California Administrative Code Section 15000 et seq.).

According to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15132, the FEIR shall consist of:

- (a) The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) or a revision of the Draft;
- (b) Comments and recommendations received on the DEIR either verbatim or in summary;
- (c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies comments on the DEIR;
- (d) The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process; and
- (e) Any other information added by the Lead Agency.

This document contains responses to comments received on the DEIR for the Antelope Valley Area Plan during the public review period, which began August 22, 2014, and closed October 6, 2014. This document has been prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines and represents the independent judgment of the Lead Agency. This document and the circulated DEIR comprise the FEIR, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15132.

1.2 FORMAT OF THE FEIR

This document is organized as follows:

Section 1, Introduction. This section describes CEQA requirements and content of this FEIR.

Section 2, Response to Comments. This section provides a list of agencies and interested persons commenting on the DEIR; copies of comment letters received during the public review period, and individual responses to written comments. To facilitate review of the responses, each comment letter has been reproduced and assigned a number: A-1 through A-10 for letters received from agencies and organizations, and R-1 through R-2 for letters received from residents and businesses. Individual comments have been numbered for each letter and the letter is followed by responses with references to the corresponding comment number.

2. Response to Comments

environmental perspective. Future master-planned development within the West EOA would be subject to further discretionary review and CEQA requirements, which will provide project-specific site design and environmental review.

- A4-4 Please refer to Response A4-2 above.
- A4-5 As discussed on Page 5.1-26 of the DEIR, designated Scenic Drives are located within EOAs. The Scenic Drive designation does not preclude development on adjacent lands. However, the Proposed Area Plan includes goals and policies that would protect scenic views along the designated corridors. In particular, implementation of Policy COS 5.7 would ensure that development standards and guidelines are established for development within the viewsheds of scenic drives. However, your comment is hereby noted and will be forwarded to the appropriate County decision makers for their review and consideration.
- A4-6 Although the West EOA does designate portions of the area for urban uses, a significant portion of the area is designated for open space as well as very low density residential uses (RL20), consistent with the Rural Preservation Strategy. An updated Rural Preservation Strategy Map also updates the H5 – Residential 5 (5 dwelling units/acre), RL1 – Rural Land 1 (1 dwelling unit/acre), CR (Rural Commercial) and IL (Light Industrial) areas as Rural Town Areas. Thus, this Proposed Area Plan directs growth to certain areas to help preserve other more environmentally sensitive areas.
- A4-7 Seismic hazards related to the Proposed Project are discussed in Section 5.6 of the DEIR. As listed in Subsection 5.6.6 of the DEIR, all future development will be required to comply with the County Building Code, the County Grading Ordinance, and the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, regardless of the underlying land use designations. Therefore, no additional land use changes are necessary to comply with existing regulations relating to seismic hazards.
- A4-8 The Fire Hazard Severity Zones are shown on Figure 5.8-1, *Fire Hazard Severity Zones*, of the DEIR. It clearly shows the Very High, High, and Moderate Fire Hazard Zones. The majority of these areas are designated Open Space or SEA in the Draft Area Plan. Please refer to Sections 5.8 and 5.14.1 of the DEIR for a complete discussion of fire hazards and fire protection.
- A4-9 Comment is hereby noted and will be forwarded to the appropriate County decision makers for their review and consideration.
- A4-10 As discussed in Chapter 7 of the DEIR, three alternatives to the Proposed Project were analyzed in detail including the No Project/Existing Area Plan Alternative, Reduced Intensity Alternative, and the Alternative Land Use Policy Map. In addition, two alternatives were considered during the scoping process for the EIR including various Project Planning Alternatives, and the No Growth/No Development Alternative. As

2. Response to Comments

Project Area. However, your comment is hereby noted and will be forwarded to the appropriate County decision makers for their review and consideration.

A5-3 Please refer to Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, for a discussion of the visual impacts of the Proposed Project. Although the State Scenic Highways program is a State program, the County has designated SR-138 as a Scenic Drive in the Proposed Area Plan.

A5-4 All future development within the Project Area will be required to comply with all existing County codes and ordinances, including the Rural Outdoor Lighting District (“Dark Skies”) ordinance. Although not related to the Proposed Project, existing code violations should be reported to the County for enforcement.

A5-5 One of the main objectives of the Proposed Project is to direct future development within the Project Area to three separate Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs), while reducing allowable densities elsewhere and allowing for expansion of the existing SEA boundaries. The EOAs are proposed to focus development in areas near major infrastructure opportunities while preserving both open space and greater value habitat elsewhere. The land use designations within each EOA were developed to provide a balance between jobs and housing. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project allows for greater opportunities to preserve large, contiguous open space areas as compared to the Adopted Area Plan, which allows higher density development over a much larger area. However, your comment is hereby noted and will be forwarded to the appropriate County decision makers for their review and consideration.

As discussed in Section 5.1 of the DEIR, aesthetic impacts were not determined to be significant provided future projects comply with existing County regulations and the goals and policies included in the Proposed Area Plan. As a result, these additional mitigation measures, as suggested by the commenter, are not necessary.

A5-6 The Commenter provided additional mitigation measures to be considered for incorporation into the DEIR. Per the Commenter recommendation, Mitigation Measure GHG-2 has been revised to include some of the measures suggested. The change has been incorporated into Section 3.2, *DEIR Revisions in Response to Written Comments*, of this FEIR as shown below. The other remaining measures suggested by the Commenter were considered, but were not incorporated as additional mitigation measures in the DEIR as they are either beyond the control of the County, are within the purview of the proposed policies of the Proposed Area Plan, are covered under a current mitigation measure or existing regulation (e.g., County Building Code or Tree Planting Ordinance), or would not provide measurable reductions in air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

GHG-2 The County of Los Angeles shall include the following additional implementation actions in the Antelope Valley Area Plan Implementation Plan (Chapter 8) to ensure progress toward meeting the long-term GHG reduction goals of Executive Order S-03-05:

DOCUMENT 3

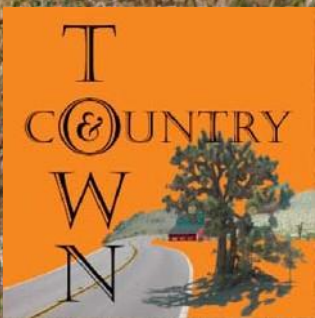
EXCERPTS FROM THE ADOPTED ANTELOPE VALLEY AREA PLAN (WITH RELEVANT SECTIONS HIGHLIGHTED).

Source: <https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Antelope-Valley-Area-Plan.pdf>

Antelope Valley Area Plan

Town & Country

June 2015



I. PURPOSE AND VALUES

Purpose

The purpose of the Antelope Valley Area Plan (Area Plan) is to achieve the communities' shared vision of the future through the development of specific goals, policies, land use and zoning maps, and other planning instruments. This shared vision is articulated in the Town and Country Vision Statement, which was developed by the Antelope Valley communities in various workshops in 2008. It goes:

The Antelope Valley region is a wonderful place to live, work, play, and raise a family. The Valley is a mosaic of unique small towns in which rural lifestyles are cherished. These diverse towns are unified by an extraordinary environmental setting that includes agricultural lands, natural open spaces, expansive mountain views, diverse ecological habitats, and dark night skies. The Valley's network of trails, roads, and transit link these dispersed towns to each other and to a wide offering of local-serving businesses and quality social, educational, cultural, and recreational services and facilities.

Residents, business owners, and property owners collaborate with a responsive local government to ensure that life in the Antelope Valley region will continue to be exciting, enjoyable, and rewarding. The growing population's need for additional housing and employment opportunities is balanced against the need to respect historical heritage and preserve the natural environment. Public improvements and private developments are sustainable, conserving available resources and relying on alternative energy sources, and complement the small scale of existing rural towns. A wide array of activities and opportunities for youth ensure that the Valley's high quality of life will be sustained for future generations.

The Area Plan is a blueprint for future development and conservation in the Antelope Valley that informs decision-making at all levels to help ensure that individual activities are consistent with, and supportive of, the communities' vision. It is a tool for residents, elected officials, planners, service providers, and developers. Each group will use the Area Plan in different ways, but all are guided by its vision, goals, and policies. Residents will use the Area Plan as a benchmark in attaining their aspirations for the development and preservation of their communities. Elected officials and planners will refer to the Area Plan when allocating resources to address residents' most important issues and priorities. Service providers will use the Area Plan as a guide for deciding which infrastructure and improvement projects should be undertaken and which programs should be established or improved. Developers will look to the Area Plan's goals and policies in deciding what to build, including location, character, and appearance.

As a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan, the Antelope Valley Area Plan refines the countywide goals and policies in the General Plan by addressing specific issues relevant to the Antelope Valley, such as community maintenance and appearance, and provides more specific guidance on

elements already found in the General Plan. The General Plan provides guidance on all issues not covered in the Area Plan.

The Area Plan also helps further the countywide objective of reducing greenhouse gases in order to meet the goals of the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill 32) and California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (Senate Bill 375), which aim to achieve reductions of greenhouse gases. Los Angeles County has undertaken countywide measures to address these mandates, including adoption of the Green Building, Drought Tolerant Landscaping, and Low Impact Development Ordinances in 2008. The Area Plan strengthens these efforts by including goals and policies to support local development practices and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Implementation of the Land Use, Mobility, and Conservation and Open Space Elements contained in this Area Plan cumulatively affect the future reduction of greenhouse gases both locally and regionally.

Values

All aspects of the Area Plan are informed by a set of core values that ground and guide the Area Plan. In order to best serve the common interests represented in this Area Plan, planning values outline the shared responsibilities of the many partners who will work together to transform goals and policies into a realized vision. The core values of the Antelope Valley Area Plan are:

1. **Collaboration:** The issues and actions identified in the Area Plan are multi-dimensional and complex. As such, it takes a collaborative effort to accomplish the Area Plan's goals. Working in partnership with individuals from public agencies, private organizations and throughout the community, participants in planning and implementation of the Area Plan can come together to achieve the community's vision.
2. **Participation:** The dedicated commitment and ongoing participation of community members, service providers and elected officials will ensure that the Area Plan's implementation over time remains in line with the communities' vision. Community participation also demonstrates to elected leaders and service providers that constituents support the implementation of the Area Plan and expect results.
3. **Accountability:** By adopting this Area Plan, elected leaders have expressed their commitment to achieving the communities' vision by adhering to the Area Plan's goals and policies and by using the implementation actions to guide their work. Land use decisions will be made to benefit the needs of the community as a whole and not individual interests. Accountability means that all stakeholders take responsibility for their respective components of the Area Plan.
4. **Stewardship:** In order for the Area Plan to be effective in achieving the community's goals, people who live, learn, work, and play in the Antelope Valley will have to take an active role in ensuring the Area Plan's timely and thorough implementation. Community members and service providers can and should provide feedback on the insights into the Area Plan's effectiveness.

5. **Balance:** As the diverse and sometimes conflicting needs of current and future stakeholders evolve, the tools within the Area Plan create a framework which allows for balanced decisions to be made. For residents of the Antelope Valley, achieving a balance will unfold gradually. This shall be achieved by encouraging growth and development in appropriate areas of the Antelope Valley and ensuring that these enhance the quality of life of the communities without compromising their rural character.

II. BACKGROUND

Setting

The Antelope Valley planning area is bounded by the Kern County border to the north, the Ventura County border to the west, the Angeles National Forest (inclusive) to the south, and the San Bernardino County border to the east. It excludes the Cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. This area covers approximately 1,800 square miles and includes over two dozen communities.

For a map of the Antelope Valley and the immediate vicinity, please see Map 1.1: Planning Area Boundary.

History

The historic development of the Antelope Valley started in 1876 with the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad line from San Francisco to Los Angeles via the Antelope Valley. Many communities began to develop, including Lancaster, Palmdale, Rio del Llano and Littlerock, all dependent upon stock raising, dry farming and fruit orchards.

The World War II years brought the development of Edwards Air Force Base and a doubling of the Antelope Valley population. Military defense work expanded in the 1950s, and Palmdale Airport emerged as a national center for jet testing. The latter part of the decade saw the start of an economic downturn throughout the country that slowed military investments in Antelope Valley projects.

The final decades of the 20th century saw the Antelope Valley emerge with major new housing opportunities as vast acreages were subdivided for affordable tract homes. Lancaster and Palmdale incorporated as independent cities, and rural communities continued to grow. Farming regained its status as a productive employer, but the area continued to develop without balancing the growth in housing with a corresponding growth in jobs and investment in infrastructure. Today, many who live in the Antelope Valley commute to jobs in other parts of the Los Angeles Basin. New local commercial centers are expanding the shopping, entertainment and employment opportunities of Antelope Valley residents. For additional information on the setting and history of the Antelope Valley, please see Background Report.

Past and Current Planning Efforts

The previous Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan was adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on December 4, 1986. It contained Valleywide goals and policies pertaining to land use, housing, community revitalization, community design, human resources, circulation, public services and facilities, governmental services, environmental resource management, noise abatement, seismic safety, public safety, and energy conservation. This Area Plan replaces the previous Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan in its entirety.

This Area Plan covers issues that were important in 1986 and are still important to the communities; for example, managing growth, minimizing disruption of ecological resources, placing development away from natural hazards, and ensuring a variety of housing types and costs. This Area Plan also addresses new issues that have emerged in recent years; for example, maintaining agricultural uses, improving mobility, developing renewable energy resources, and curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

Community Participation

The Area Plan is the result of a highly inclusive and extensive community participation program launched in the fall of 2007. Through a series of 23 community meetings, residents and other stakeholders worked alongside planners to develop a shared vision of the future, identify community issues, draft proposals for the future, and prioritize their recommendations, forming the foundation of the Area Plan.

Building on the foundation laid by the communities, planners partnered with other County departments to explore the recommendations, refine the proposed goals and policies, plan for program implementation, and gather support to ensure success. Plan development is an iterative process, and in this case, the communities were included in the earliest steps of development and subsequent rounds of review. The Area Plan began with, and will be realized by, the dedicated residents and stakeholders who have committed, and will continue to commit their time, energy and interests to the Antelope Valley.

III. VISION AND STRATEGY

Vision Statement

At the heart of the County's approach to community planning is the idea that the Area Plan is an adopted version of the communities' aspirations for the future. Collectively, those aspirations amount to a community vision, based on shared values and common goals. The communities reached consensus on the following vision statement:

The Antelope Valley region is a wonderful place to live, work, play, and raise a family. The Valley is a mosaic of unique small towns in which rural lifestyles are cherished. These diverse towns are unified by an extraordinary environmental setting that includes agricultural lands, natural open spaces, expansive mountain views, diverse ecological

habitats, and dark night skies. The Valley's network of trails, roads, and transit link these dispersed towns to each other and to a wide offering of local-serving businesses and quality social, educational, cultural, and recreational services and facilities.

Residents, business owners, and property owners collaborate with a responsive local government to ensure that life in the Antelope Valley region will continue to be exciting, enjoyable, and rewarding. The growing population's need for additional housing and employment opportunities is balanced against the need to respect historical heritage and preserve the natural environment. Public improvements and private developments are sustainable, conserving available resources and relying on alternative energy sources, and complement the small scale of existing rural towns. A wide array of activities and opportunities for youth ensure that the Valley's high quality of life will be sustained for future generations.

This vision of the Antelope Valley's future serves as a touchstone through the planning process, and it is reflected in the land use map, goals, and policies that comprise the Area Plan.

Issues

Through the planning and visioning process, the County identified issues of Valleywide significance that, it determined, were best addressed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. In anticipation of future growth, the planning effort focused on ways to manage this growth and addressed the need for balance on the following issues:

1. Preservation and enhancement of each unique town's rural character, allowing for continued growth and development without compromising the rural lifestyle;
2. Preservation of open space around existing towns, in order to preserve hillside areas and significant ridgelines, conserve biological resources, provide opportunities for recreation, and make more efficient use of existing infrastructure in the core areas;
3. Planning for integrated circulation systems, including bikeways, walkways, and multi-purpose trails;
4. Conservation of significant resources, including agricultural lands, mineral resources, water supply, and scenic areas;
5. Preservation of public health, safety, and welfare, through identification of natural and environmental hazards, including noise, seismic, fire, and airborne emissions, and designation of land uses in an appropriate manner to mitigate these impacts; and
6. Coordination on enhancing public and community services such as law enforcement, fire protection, and parks.

Rural Preservation Strategy

The Area Plan's Rural Preservation Strategy addresses issues of Valleywide significance in a manner that builds upon the communities' vision statement. While each community in the Antelope Valley possesses its own identity, they are all unified in the pursuit of preserving the rural lifestyle and the rural

character of the region. This rural character is what makes the Antelope Valley so unique and valuable to the rest of Southern California.

The term “rural” is defined by the following characteristics:

- Living in a low density environment without high intensity land uses, such as regional commercial centers;
- A natural, peaceful, quiet setting, with the ability to find a sense of solitude;
- Views of adjacent natural areas by day, such as hillsides and ridgelines, and views of starry skies by night;
- Agricultural and equestrian uses that are sensitive to the land; and
- An absence of infrastructure generally found in urban and suburban areas, including but not limited to curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lighting, and traffic signals.

The Rural Preservation Strategy is based on four types of environments – rural town center areas, rural town areas, rural preserve areas, economic opportunity areas – that serve different purposes. Collectively, these environments preserve the rural character of the region, conserve environmental resources, and protect residents from potential hazards while allowing for additional growth and development. For more information on these environments, please see Chapter 2: Land Use Element.

Rural town center areas are the focal points of rural communities, serving the daily needs of residents and providing local employment opportunities. The majority of new locally-oriented public facilities and new locally-oriented commercial uses should be directed to these areas. These areas will provide pleasant pedestrian environments and will be accessible by a range of transportation options to reduce vehicle trips. Some of these areas will allow for a mix of commercial and residential uses.

Rural town areas provide a transition between rural town center areas and rural preserve areas, as they are occupied by a mix of residential and light agricultural uses. Residents living in these areas are willing to forego urban infrastructure and services in order to live in a rural environment. The majority of new residential development should be directed to these areas, provided that such development is consistent with the existing community character and allows for light agricultural, equestrian, and animal-keeping uses where appropriate. These areas will provide transportation linkages to rural town center areas and other nearby destination points.

Rural preserve areas are areas outside of the Town Areas, which are largely undeveloped and generally not served by existing or planned infrastructure and public facilities. Many of these areas contain environmental resources, such as Significant Ecological Areas, Scenic Resource Areas, and Agricultural Resource Areas. In addition, many of these areas contain safety hazards, such as Seismic Zones, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and Flood Zones. The primary benefit of these areas is that they provide habitat for regionally significant biological species while simultaneously providing scenic value to residents. A secondary benefit of these areas is that they contain natural resources which provide economic opportunities. Development in these areas should be limited to single family homes at very low densities, light and heavy agricultural uses, including equestrian and animal-keeping uses, and other uses where appropriate.

Economic opportunity areas are defined clusters of land along the routes of two new proposed major infrastructure projects in the Antelope Valley, namely the High Desert Corridor and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project. These areas were identified as having tremendous potential for economic growth and development. Thus, any development induced by these two infrastructure projects should be guided to these areas so that the areas around them can be preserved and maintained at low density, or agricultural uses. This is intended to balance the growth and development which the two projects will undoubtedly bring, with the general intent of this Area Plan to preserve the ecological value and rural character of the Antelope Valley.

The Rural Preservation Strategy necessitates a “trade-off” between preserving rural character and developing additional infrastructure, as infrastructure improvements are typically funded by increased property tax revenues and developer fees. In rural town center areas and rural town areas, the amount of potential development allowed by this Area Plan will be equal to, or greater than, the amount of potential development allowed by the previous Area Plan. Therefore, those areas are likely to benefit from increased property tax revenues and developer fees, which can help fund additional infrastructure. In rural preserve areas, the amount of potential development allowed by this Area Plan will be far less than the amount of potential development allowed by the previous Area Plan. Therefore, rural preserve areas are unlikely to benefit from increased property tax revenues and developer fees, which may make it difficult to fund additional infrastructure. The Area Plan acknowledges this “trade-off” by directing additional infrastructure to rural town center areas and rural town areas, where the placement of additional infrastructure may be more cost-effective and environmentally sensitive, and not to rural preserve areas, where the placement of additional infrastructure may not be necessary. Residents of rural preserve areas should be prepared to forego additional infrastructure in order to live in a very remote rural environment and enjoy the benefits offered by such an environment. On the other hand, the economic opportunity areas provide an opportunity for the Area Plan to maximize the investment that state and regional agencies are bringing into the area, while still achieving the general goal of rural preservation in the Antelope Valley.

IV. HOW TO USE THE ANTELOPE VALLEY AREA PLAN

Definitions

The following definition shall apply only as it specifically appears in this Area Plan and shall not be used in any other context outside of this Area Plan.

“Legal lot” means any lot created in compliance with the provisions of the Subdivision Map Act, or would qualify for a conditional certificate of compliance as provided in the Subdivision Map Act. Where a conditional certificate of compliance is reviewed by the County, the conditions imposed therein will be based on those required at the time the lot was created, including land use density and required area under the zoning code.

Area Plan Format and Content

The Area Plan is organized into eight chapters. Chapter 1 (Introduction) presents the Area Plan's purpose and values, the geographic area, and the communities' vision statement. Chapter 2 (Land Use Element) discusses how the communities' vision translates into a development pattern through the concept of land use. Chapter 3 (Mobility Element) describes the multi-modal approach to moving around the Antelope Valley. Chapter 4 (Conservation and Open Space Element) describes conservation efforts to address potential threats to natural resources. Chapter 5 (Public Safety, Services and Facilities Element) provides measures to ensure services are in place to maintain the safety and welfare of residents. Chapter 6 (Economic Development Element) provides the blueprint for the planning area to build a healthy and sustainable economic base that will drive development and private-sector led conservation and preservation of open space in the area. Chapters 2 through 6 contain goals and policies specific to each chapter's respective topic but all work jointly to comprehensively implement the overall vision. Chapter 7 (Community-Specific Land Use Concepts) highlights each established town and describes its land use form in more detail. Finally, Chapter 8 (Plan Implementation) describes future planning activities that will be undertaken to further implement the goals and policies of this Area Plan. Appendix A includes descriptions of the Significant Ecological Areas within the Antelope Valley Area Plan.

Applicability

The following provisions shall apply to complete applications filed prior to the effective date of this Antelope Valley Area Plan.

The applicant can choose whether the application will be reviewed for consistency with the previously adopted Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan or this Antelope Valley Area Plan. In either case, approval of the application is not guaranteed.

If an application is reviewed for consistency with the previously adopted Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan, the applicant may modify the application prior to consideration by the Regional Planning Commission, Hearing Officer, or Director. The modification will be reviewed for consistency with the previously adopted Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan if it does not change the housing type (e.g., from single family to two family or multifamily) nor increase:

- The residential density;
- The floor area or lot coverage of non-residential space;
- The amount of grading; or
- The area of ground disturbance.

A modification may necessitate the submittal of revised, updated, or additional materials and reports, such as site plans, elevations, and oak tree reports. In addition, a modification may necessitate

additional environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and the County's environmental review procedures.

Modification to an application that is already approved but not used, can be reviewed for consistency with the previously adopted Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan if it is found to be in substantial conformance with such application as determined by the Director. Otherwise a modification shall be considered a new application and shall be reviewed for consistency with this Antelope Valley Area Plan.

If an approval is used and has a grant term, the approved use may be maintained until the end of the grant term. At the end of the grant term, the use shall be subject to the Antelope Valley Area Plan policies in effect at that time. During the grant term, a modification to the approved use will be reviewed for consistency with the previously adopted Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan if the modification is found to be in substantial conformance with such application as determined by the Director. Otherwise, a modification to the approved use shall be subject to the Antelope Valley Area Plan policies in effect at that time.

If an approval is used and does not have a grant term, the approved use may be maintained in perpetuity unless a time limit is specified in the Zoning Code. In addition, all applicable non-conforming use provisions of the Zoning Code shall apply to the approved use. A modification to the approved use will be reviewed for consistency with the previously adopted Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan if the modification is found to be in substantial conformance with the use originally approved as determined by the Director. Otherwise, a modification to the approved use shall be subject to the Antelope Valley Area Plan policies in effect at that time.

Guidance

The Antelope Valley Area Plan is a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan. All of its maps, goals, policies, and implementing actions must be consistent with the elements of the Countywide General Plan. Users should be guided by the following:

- **General Plan Applicability:** Should any areas of conflicting interpretation arise, unless specifically noted, the provisions of the Countywide General Plan shall prevail.
- **Comprehensive Area Plan:** The Land Use Policy Map is never to be interpreted as a stand-alone document, but must be interpreted in light of applicable written policies in the Area Plan.
- **Equally Weighted Policies:** No policy, whether in written or diagram form, shall be given greater weight than any other policy in evaluating the policy intent of this Antelope Valley Area Plan.
- **Vision and Rural Preservation Strategy:** The interpretation of policy should be governed by the Vision and Rural Preservation Strategy of the Antelope Valley Area Plan.

- **Established Town Descriptions:** Descriptions of established towns in Chapter 7 are intended to provide more detailed descriptions of existing land use patterns, local character, and desired local development patterns, and should be referred to in addition to the remainder of the Area Plan in planning for local projects.
- **Non-Conforming Uses:** All legally established uses in existence at the time of adoption of this Antelope Valley Area Plan are deemed to be consistent with this Area Plan, although Zoning Ordinance provisions regarding Non-Conforming Uses may apply.
- **Undersized Parcels:** Existing legal lots may be developed (following current development requirements) regardless of lot size. For example, a 10 acre parcel designated Rural Land 20 (1du/20ac) may still develop one home.
- **Pending Projects:** Completed applications filed prior to the effective date of this Area Plan shall be allowed to be reviewed for consistency with the previously adopted Area Plan. Projects may be maintained as originally approved provided the approval is still valid and has not expired. Any subsequent changes of use or intensity shall be subject to the policies of this Area Plan.
- **Community Standards Districts:** Community-specific zoning regulations shall be consistent with the goals and policies of this Area Plan. Such regulations shall be instituted only when a unique or detrimental condition exists within a community that prevents implementation of this Area Plan.
- **Regulatory Codes:** Title 21 (Subdivision) and 22 (Zoning) of the Los Angeles County Code provide detailed development guidelines that work to implement this Area Plan. Project applications shall refer to these codes, including Community Standards Districts, to ensure that development and land use activities are compatible with the zoning and to not threaten the health, safety, and welfare of the communities.
- **Staff Consultation:** While the Antelope Valley Area Plan is meant to be a guide for the public in determining allowable uses of private property, the public is encouraged to consult with members of the County's planning staff prior to investing in the preparation of development plans that might later prove to be inconsistent with the Antelope Valley Area Plan.

In addition to the direction provided by this Area Plan, new development and land use activities are regulated by many agencies other than the Department of Regional Planning. Obtaining approval for certain types of actions may require proof of the availability for public services, fair-share provisions for public facilities, and other permitting. The applicant for any such application is advised to consult with all applicable departments and agencies.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2: Land Use Element

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I. Background

Purpose

Land use is the act of defining compatible activities and built forms in order to determine their appropriate distribution within a given area. Land use authority is given to local governments to shape the physical environment by recognizing daily needs and directing future long-term changes in housing, business, recreation, and open space.

This Land Use Element contains two major components, the Land Use Goals and Policies, and Land Use Policy Map, which explain how development and preservation of land should occur in the Antelope Valley. The Land Use Goals and Policies articulate how the Area Plan's Vision Statement and Rural Preservation Strategy will be achieved by setting out intended land use outcomes. As a visual reflection of the Land Use Goals and Policies, the Land Use Policy Map provides land use designations that establish locations for various types and densities of land use in the unincorporated Antelope Valley. The Land Use Policy Map determines the highest intensity of future development that the land can accommodate within a certain timeframe.

Issues

Over the last few decades, the Antelope Valley experienced surges of development pressures. Policymakers and citizens gained greater knowledge of how new development contributes to environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and natural hazard risks. Accordingly, local governments needed to balance increased growth with obligations to protect existing natural resources. These new obligations, combined with a better understanding of the importance of balancing rural and urban areas in Los Angeles County, have created a new model for regional development. This new model, which directs new investment to areas with existing and/or planned services and facilities and away from areas with natural hazards and environmental resources, will shape land use in the Valley, with policies that emphasize resource efficiency, economic growth, and the preservation of rural character. Over the next 20 years, this Element will balance growth and economic development, the desires of residents to preserve their rural way of life, and the need for hazard avoidance and mitigation to determine the level of development that these factors can support.

Vision and Strategy

The Area Plan's Vision Statement sets the tone of this Element, which is intended to create opportunities for the Antelope Valley to change and grow while preserving the rural lifestyle enjoyed by current residents and support a vibrant economy. The Area Plan's Rural Preservation Strategy guides the Land Use Policy Map, creating a pattern of rural town center areas, rural town areas, rural preserve areas, and economic opportunity areas. Each town in the Valley will flow outward from vibrant town centers that offer a range of housing and local-serving activities for day-to-day living. Lower-density rural residences will surround these town centers, buffered by large contiguous open spaces that contain habitat areas, recreational spaces, and rural economic activities. In addition, the Rural Preservation Strategy and the Land Use Policy Map lay out the framework for how the Antelope Valley

will deal with the changes that result from, and take advantage of the opportunities brought on by, new state and regional infrastructure projects, particularly the High Desert Corridor and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project.

II. Goals and Policies

Goals LU 1: A land use pattern that maintains and enhances the rural character of the unincorporated Antelope Valley.

- Policy LU 1.1: Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to rural town center areas and identified economic opportunity areas, through appropriate land use designations, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 1.2: Limit the amount of potential development in rural preserve areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- 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.

Goal LU 2: A land use pattern that protects environmental resources.

- Policy LU 2.1: Limit the amount of potential development in Significant Ecological Areas, including Joshua Tree Woodlands, wildlife corridors, and other sensitive habitat areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 2.2: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development within Scenic Resource Areas, including water features, significant ridgelines, and Hillside Management Areas, through appropriate land use designations, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 2.3: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development in Agricultural Resource Areas, including important farmlands designated by the State of California and historical farmland areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 2.4: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development in Mineral Resource Areas, through appropriate land use designations with

very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.

- Policy LU 2.5: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development in riparian areas and groundwater recharge basins, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 2.6: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development near the National Forests and on private lands within the National Forests, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.

Goal LU 3: A land use pattern that minimizes threats from hazards.

- Policy LU 3.1: Except within economic opportunity areas, prohibit new development on fault traces and limit the amount of development in Seismic Zones, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 3.2: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 3.3: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development in Flood Zones designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 3.4: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development on steep slopes identified as Hillside Management Areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 3.5: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development in landslide and liquefaction areas, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 3.6: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential residential development in airport influence areas and near military lands, through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.
- Policy LU 3.7: All development projects located on parcels that are within an airport influence area shall be consistent with all policies of that airport's land use compatibility plan.

Goal LU 4: A land use pattern that promotes the efficient use of existing and/or planned infrastructure and public facilities.

- Policy LU 4.1: Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley's future growth to the economic opportunity areas and areas that are served by existing or planned infrastructure, public facilities, and public water systems, as indicated in the Land Use designations shown on the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan.

Goal LU 5: A land use pattern that decreases greenhouse gas emissions.

- Policy LU 5.1: Ensure that development is consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy adopted in 2012, an element of the Regional Transportation Plan developed by the Southern California Association of Governments.
- 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 providing local employment opportunities.
- Policy LU 5.3: Preserve open space areas to provide large contiguous carbon sequestering basins.
- Policy LU 5.4: Ensure that there is an appropriate balance of residential uses and employment opportunities within close proximity of each other.

Goal LU 6: A land use pattern that makes the Antelope Valley a sustainable and resilient place to live.

- Policy LU 6.1: Periodically review changing conditions to ensure that land use policies are compatible with the Area Plan's Rural Preservation Strategy, including economic opportunity areas.
- 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.

III. Land Use Policy Map

The Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1: Land Use Policy) implements the Goals and Policies through the framework of rural town center areas, rural town areas, rural preservation areas and economic opportunity areas outlined in the Area Plan's Rural Preservation Strategy (Map 2.2: Rural Preservation Strategy). These areas are described below and are further explained in the discussion of land use concepts for each community that is provided in Chapter 7: Community Specific Land Use Concepts.

Rural Town Center Areas

Rural town center areas are the focal points of rural communities, serving the daily needs of residents and providing local employment opportunities. The majority of new locally-oriented public facilities and new locally-oriented commercial uses should be directed to these areas. These areas will provide pleasant pedestrian environments and will be accessible by a range of transportation options to reduce

vehicle trips, as directed in the policies of the Mobility Element. Some of these areas will allow for a mix of commercial and residential uses.

Rural town center areas are located within the following Antelope Valley communities:

- Acton – Along Crown Valley Road between Gillespie Avenue and Soledad Canyon Road.
- Antelope Acres – Along 90th Street West between Avenue E-4 and Avenue E-12.
- Gorman – Along the Golden State Freeway surrounding the Gorman School Road interchanges.
- Lake Hughes – Along Elizabeth Lake Road between Trail I and Mountain View Road.
- Lake Los Angeles – Along Avenue O between 167th Street East and 172nd Street East, and along 170th Street East between Avenue O and Glenfall Avenue.
- Leona Valley – Intersection of Elizabeth Lake Road and 90th Street West.
- Littlerock – Along Pearblossom Highway between Little Rock Wash and 89th Street East.
- Pearblossom – Along Pearblossom Highway between 121st Street East and 133rd Street East.
- Quartz Hill – Along 50th Street West between Avenue L-6 and Avenue M-2.
- Roosevelt – Intersection of 90th Street East and Avenue J.
- Sun Village – Along Palmdale Boulevard between Little Rock Wash and 110th Street East, and along 90th Street East between Palmdale Boulevard and Avenue Q-14.

On the Land Use Policy Map, the primary land use designations in the rural town center areas include:

- Rural Commercial (CR)
- Mixed-Use – Rural (MU-R)
- Major Commercial (CM)
- Light Industrial (IL)

Rural Town Areas

Rural town areas provide a transition between rural town centers and rural preserve areas, as they are occupied by a mix of residential and a wide variety of agricultural uses. The majority of new residential development should be directed to these areas, provided that such development is consistent with the existing community character and allows for various agricultural, equestrian, and animal-keeping uses where appropriate. These areas will provide transportation linkages to rural town center areas and other nearby destination points, as directed in the policies of the Mobility Element.

On the Land Use Policy Map, rural town areas are designated as Residential or as Rural Land, depending on the density of existing residential development. These land use designations include:

- Residential 30 (H30) – Maximum density of 30 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 18 (H18) – Maximum density of 18 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 9 (H9) – Maximum density of 9 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 5 (H5) – Maximum density of 5 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 2 (H2) – Maximum density of 2 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Rural Land 1 (RL1) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 1 gross acre of land.

- Rural Land 2 (RL2) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 2 gross acres of land.
- Rural Land 5 (RL5) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 5 gross acres of land.

These maximum densities shall apply to all new land divisions. Existing legal lots may be developed with one residential unit each, regardless of lot size, provided that such development meets applicable County Code requirements, and the siting of the structure is supportive of the policies in this Area Plan.

In addition, some rural town areas are designated for commercial or industrial use. These land use designations acknowledge existing commercial or industrial uses or identify appropriate locations for future commercial and industrial uses to serve local residents.

Rural Preserve Areas

Rural preserve areas are areas of the unincorporated Antelope Valley outside of Rural Town Center and Town Areas, which are largely undeveloped and generally not served by existing infrastructure and public facilities. Many of these areas contain environmental resources, such as Significant Ecological Areas, Scenic Resource Areas, and Agricultural Resource Areas. In addition, many of these areas contain safety hazards, such as Seismic Zones, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and Flood Zones. The primary benefit of these areas is that they provide habitat for regionally significant biological species while simultaneously providing scenic values to residents. A secondary benefit of these areas is that they contain natural resources which provide economic opportunities. Development in these areas should be limited to single-family homes at very low densities, light and heavy agricultural uses, including equestrian and animal-keeping uses, and other uses where appropriate.

On the Land Use Policy Map, rural preserve areas are designated as Rural Land with a range of very low densities that reflect the underlying constraints, environmental resources, and safety hazards. These land use designations include:

- Rural Land 10 (RL10) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 10 gross acres of land.
- Rural Land 20 (RL20) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 20 gross acres of land.

The lowest land use densities (RL20) of the Area Plan have been used primarily for the Seismic Zones and Significant Ecological Areas, as these are areas where it is critical to limit development to ensure the safety of residents as well as the preservation of important ecological resources in the area. These maximum densities shall apply to all new land divisions. Existing legal lots may be developed with one residential unit each, regardless of lot size, provided that such development meets applicable County Code requirements, and the siting of the structure is supportive of the policies in this Area Plan.

In addition, some rural preserve areas are designated for commercial or industrial use. These land use designations acknowledge uses or identify appropriate locations for future commercial and industrial uses to serve local and regional needs.

Economic Opportunity Areas

The Land Use Policy Map of the Area Plan also identifies three economic opportunity areas (EOAs). These are areas where major infrastructure projects are being planned by state and regional agencies, which would bring tremendous opportunities for growth and economic development in the vicinity of these projects. These projects include the High Desert Corridor on the east side of the Antelope Valley, and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project on the west side. Both projects are being undertaken by Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

The Area Plan identifies three EOAs located along the proposed route of the two projects. These are the East EOA, encompassing the communities of Lake Los Angeles, Sun Village, Littlerock, Pearblossom, Llano, and Crystalair; the Central EOA, located along Avenue D, just north of William J. Fox Airfield and west of State Route 14 Freeway; and the West EOA near the Interstate 5 along State Route 138/Avenue D, immediately east and west of the California Aqueduct and including portions of the Neenach and Gorman communities.

The EOAs include areas identified as existing Rural Town Centers, or Rural Town Areas. The EOAs also include areas that have the potential to develop as future Rural Town Areas, as well as Non-Preserve Areas that may be used for a variety of rural uses compatible with the surrounding areas, such as residential, agricultural and open-space uses. Wherever appropriate, these EOAs are designated with land use designations that would allow for a balanced mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses, while preserving the rural character and ecological resources of the surrounding areas. A jobs-housing balance is achieved by using medium-density residential, commercial and industrial land use designations in areas appropriate for development, while designating areas with important ecological resources as open space conservation areas. The land use designations within the EOAs include:

- Residential 18 (H18) – Maximum density of 18 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 5 (H5) – Maximum density of 5 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Residential 2 (H2) – Maximum density of 2 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- Rural Land 1 (RL1) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 1 gross acre of land.
- Rural Land 2 (RL2) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 2 gross acres of land.
- Rural Land 10 (RL10) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 10 gross acres of land.
- Rural Land 20 (RL20) – Maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 20 gross acres of land.
- Conservation (OS-C)
- Rural Commercial (CR)
- Mixed Use – Rural (MU-R)
- Light Industrial (IL)
- Heavy Industrial (IH)

Public and Open Space Land

Existing open space lands throughout rural town center areas, rural town areas, rural preserve areas and EOAs are identified on the Land Use Policy Map as one of the following Open Space designations, depending on the use of the land:

- Parks and Recreation (OS-PR)
- Conservation (OS-C)
- Water (OS-W)
- Bureau of Land Management (OS-BLM)
- National Forest (OS-NF)
- Military Land (OS-ML)

Privately owned lands within the National Forest are designated on the Land Use Policy Map as Rural Land, indicating the underlying infrastructure constraints, environmental resources, and safety hazards.

Existing public and semi-public facilities are designated on the Land Use Policy Map as Public and Semi-Public Facilities (P).

Land Use Legend

Table L-1: Land Use Legend

Land Use	Code	Permitted Density or FAR	Purpose
RURAL			
Rural Land 1	RL1	Residential: Maximum 1du/1 gross ac Non-Residential: Maximum FAR 0.5	Single-family residences; equestrian and limited animal uses; and limited agricultural and related activities.
Rural Land 2	RL2	Residential: Maximum 1 du/2 gross ac Non-Residential: Maximum FAR 0.5	
Rural Land 5	RL5	Residential: Maximum 1 du/5 gross ac Non-Residential: Maximum FAR 0.5	
Rural Land 10	RL10	Residential: Maximum 1 du/10 gross ac Non-Residential: Maximum FAR 0.5	Single-family residences; equestrian and animal uses; and agricultural and related activities.
Rural Land 20	RL20	Residential: Maximum 1 du/20 gross ac Non-Residential: Maximum FAR 0.5	
RESIDENTIAL			
Residential 2	H2	Residential: 0–2 du/net ac	Single-family residences.
Residential 5	H5	Residential: 0–5 du/net ac	

Residential 9	H9	Residential: 0–9 du/net ac	
Residential 18	H18	Residential: 0–18 du/net ac	Single-family residences, two-family residences
Residential 30	H30	Residential: 0-30 du/net ac	Single-family residences, two-family residences, multifamily residences.
COMMERCIAL			
Rural Commercial	CR	Residential: 0-5 du/net ac Non-Residential: Maximum FAR 0.5	Limited, low-intensity commercial uses that are compatible with rural and agricultural activities, including retail, restaurants, and personal and professional offices.
MIXED USE			
Mixed Use - Rural	MU-R	Residential: 0-5 du/net ac Non-Residential: Maximum FAR 0.5 Mixed Use: 0-5 du/net ac and FAR 0.5	Limited, low intensity commercial uses that are compatible with rural and agricultural activities, including retail, restaurants, and personal and professional offices; residential and commercial mixed uses.
INDUSTRIAL			
Light Industrial	IL	Non-Residential: Maximum FAR: 1.0	Light industrial uses, including light manufacturing, assembly, warehousing and distribution.
Heavy Industrial	IH	Non-Residential: Maximum FAR: 1.0	Heavy industrial uses, including heavy manufacturing, refineries, and other labor and capital intensive industrial activities.
PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC			
Public and Semi-Public Facilities	P	Residential: Density Varies Non-Residential: Maximum FAR: 3.0	Public and semi-public facilities and community-serving uses, including public buildings and campuses, schools, hospitals, cemeteries, and fairgrounds; airports and other major transportation facilities. Other major public facilities, including planned facilities that may be public-serving but may not be publicly accessible, such as landfills, solid and liquid waste disposal sites, multiple use stormwater treatment facilities, and major utilities. * In the event that the public or semi-public use of mapped facilities is terminated, alternative uses that are compatible with the surrounding development, in keeping with community character, are permitted.
OPEN SPACE			

Conservation	OS-C	N/A	The preservation of open space areas and scenic resource preservation in perpetuity. Applies to land that is legally <u>dedicated for open space and conservation efforts</u> .
Parks and Recreation	OS-PR	N/A	Open space recreational uses, such as regional and local parks, trails, athletic fields, community gardens, and golf courses.
National Forest	OS-NF	N/A	Areas within the National Forest and managed by the National Forest Service.
Bureau of Land Management	OS-BLM	N/A	Areas that are managed by the Federal Bureau of Land Management.
Water	W	N/A	Bodies of water, such as lakes, reservoirs, natural waterways, and man-made infrastructure, such as drainage channels, floodways, and spillways. Includes active trail networks within or along drainage channels.
Military Land	ML	N/A	Military installations and land controlled by U.S. Department of Defense.
OVERLAYS			
Special Management Areas	SMA	N/A	Special Management Areas require additional development regulations due to the presence of natural resources, scenic resources, or identified hazards. Development regulations are necessary to prevent loss of life and property, and to protect the natural environment.
-- Agricultural Resource Areas	ARA	N/A	Agricultural Resource Areas consist of farmlands identified by the California Department of Conservation and farms that have received permits from the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures. The County encourages the preservation and sustainable utilization of agricultural land, agricultural activities and compatible uses within these areas.
-- Mineral Resource Zones	MRZ	N/A	Mineral Resource Zones are commercially viable mineral or aggregate deposits, such as sand, gravel and other construction aggregate. The County's Mineral Resources consist of the California Geological Survey's identified deposits of regionally significant aggregate resources.
-- Significant Ecological Areas	SEA	N/A	Significant Ecological Areas are lands in the County that contain irreplaceable biological resources. Individual SEAs include undisturbed or lightly disturbed habitat supporting valuable and threatened species, linkages and corridors to promote species movement, and are sized to support sustainable populations of its component species. Note: the SEAs within the jurisdiction of cities are shown on the map for reference and visual continuity, and are intended to be used for informational purposes only.
Specific Plan	SP	N/A	Specific Plans contain precise guidance for land development, infrastructure, amenities and resource conservation. Specific plans must be consistent with the General Plan. Detailed policy and/or regulatory requirements are contained within each adopted Specific Plan document.

Irrespective of the residential densities specified for each land use category, existing prohibitions on further subdivision of previously subdivided lots shall apply and be strictly enforced.

IV. Additional Considerations

Special Management Areas

Special Management Areas, identified in the Countywide General Plan, are environmental features found throughout rural town areas and rural preserve areas. Goals and Policies regarding these Special Management Areas are provided in the other Elements of this Area Plan, as follows:

- Agricultural Resource Areas – Conservation and Open Space Element (Goal COS 6 and related policies, Goal COS 7 and related policies)
- Flood Zones – Public Safety, Services and Facilities Element (Goal PS 7 and related policies)
- Hillside Management Areas – Land Use Element (Goal LU 3 and related policies), Conservation and Open Space Element (Goal COS 5 and related policies, Goal COS 16 and related policies, Goal COS 19 and related policies), Public Safety, Services and Facilities Element (Goal PS 6 and related policies)
- Landslide Zones – Public Safety, Services and Facilities Element (Goal PS 6 and related policies)
- Liquefaction Zones – Public Safety, Services, and Facilities Element (Goal PS 6 and related policies)
- Mineral Resource Zones – Conservation and Open Space Element (Goal COS 8 and related policies)
- Scenic Resource Areas – Conservation and Open Space Element (Goal COS 5 and related policies, Goal COS 15 and related policies)
- Seismic Zones – Public Safety, Services and Facilities Element (Goal PS 6 and related policies)
- Significant Ecological Areas – Land Use Element (Goal LU 2 and related policies), Conservation and Open Space Element (Goal COS 4 and related policies, Goal COS 16 and related policies, Goal COS 18 and related policies, Goal COS 19 and related policies)
- Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones – Conservation and Open Space Element (Goal COS 5 and related policies, Goal COS 16 and related policies), Public Safety, Services and Facilities Element (Goal PS 7 and related policies)

Major Planned Infrastructure Projects

There are two major infrastructure projects in the Antelope Valley that are in varying stages of planning and environmental review. These are the High Desert Corridor (HDC) and the Northwest 138 Corridor Improvement Project (NW138), which are both joint projects of Metro and Caltrans.

The HDC is a proposed new multi-purpose transportation link between State Route 14 in Los Angeles County and State Route 18 in San Bernardino County. This project is envisioned to connect some of the fastest growing residential, commercial and industrial areas in Southern California, including the cities of Palmdale, Lancaster, Adelanto, Victorville, and the Town of Apple Valley.

The NW138 is a proposed substantial upgrade of the existing State Route 138 segment from Interstate 5 to State Route 14. This corridor currently serves as a bypass for people and goods movement, which provides critical mobility to, from and within the western portion of the Antelope Valley.

Development of the HDC and the NW138 projects would significantly impact the land use pattern in the unincorporated Antelope Valley. Together, these two projects will connect the Antelope Valley to major economic centers in Northern and Southern California, Nevada and beyond. In some areas, these future projects could support commercial and industrial development, providing additional local employment opportunities and reducing the need for long-distance commuting.

As mentioned earlier, three EOAs have been identified along the proposed routes of these projects, where increased residential, commercial and industrial uses are encouraged. As more details of these infrastructure projects are finalized in the coming years (i.e. route alignments, location of on-off ramps, number of lanes etc.), a comprehensive study of each of these EOAs should be undertaken in order to make any necessary adjustments to the Area Plan to fit the final design of these projects. This will be undertaken through a community planning process that should carefully consider potential changes to the Area Plan, including the Land Use Policy Map, balancing the need for economic development and local employment with rural preservation and environmental priorities.

Utility-Scale Renewable Energy Production Facilities

Utility-scale renewable energy production facilities may be allowed in Rural Land designations without a Plan Amendment. However, applications for such facilities may require discretionary approval and shall be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act and the County's environmental review and public hearing procedures. Applications for such facilities must be carefully considered and must be consistent with the relevant Goals and Policies of the Area Plan, especially Goal COS 10 and related policies, Goal COS 13 and related policies, and Goal COS 14 and related policies. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Conservation and Open Space Element)

Palmdale Regional Airport

Los Angeles World Airports owns a number of parcels in the central portion of the Antelope Valley that are currently in unincorporated territory but are surrounded by the City of Palmdale. These parcels have been designated as Public and Semi-Public Facilities (P) to acknowledge the existing Palmdale Regional Airport, which will be significantly expanded to become a regional commercial airport. Policies in the Mobility Element, and the Public Safety, Services and Facilities Element support the development of Palmdale Regional Airport, and that is the primary vision for these parcels. However, at the time of this Area Plan's adoption, the airport is inactive and no commercial air service is offered. Until such time that the airport is expanded, this Area Plan recommends that commercial and industrial uses be allowed on these parcels without a Plan Amendment, as such development will offer opportunities for employment and economic growth. However, these uses must be compatible with airport operations and must not restrict or prohibit future expansion of the airport.

Amendments to the Land Use Policy Map

After the Area Plan is adopted, property owners may request amendments to the Land Use Policy Map. These applications will be subject to the County's environmental review and public hearing procedures for Plan Amendments.

Amendments to the Land Use Policy Map requested by property owners must be carefully considered and may be approved through a public hearing and recommendation by the Regional Planning Commission and subsequent public hearing and adoption by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, subject to the following findings:

- The Plan Amendment is necessary to realize an unmet community need;
- The Plan Amendment will allow development that maintains and enhances rural character, protects environmental resources, minimizes threats from hazards, helps implement economic opportunity areas, and promotes the efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in a manner that is equal or superior to the development allowed by the existing land use designation;
- The Plan Amendment is consistent with the relevant Goals and Policies of the various Elements of the Area Plan; and
- The Plan Amendment meets the applicable findings required by the Countywide General Plan.

- Placement of development in the least biologically sensitive areas on the site, prioritizing the preservation or avoidance of the most sensitive biological resources onsite;
- Design of required open spaces to retain contiguous undisturbed open space that preserves the most sensitive biological resources onsite and/or serves to maintain connectivity;
- Maintenance of watershed connectivity by capturing, treating, retaining and/or infiltrating storm water flows on site; and
- Consideration of the continuity of onsite open space with adjacent open space in project design.
- Policy COS 4.5: Subject to local, state or federal laws, require new development to provide adequate buffers from preserves, sanctuaries, habitat areas, wildlife corridors, State Parks, and National Forest lands, except within Economic Opportunity Areas.
- Policy COS 4.6: Encourage connections between natural open space areas to allow for wildlife movement.
- Policy COS 4.7: Restrict fencing in wildlife corridors. Where fencing is necessary for privacy or safety, require appropriate development standards that maximize opportunities for wildlife movement.
- Policy COS 4.8: Ensure ongoing habitat preservation by coordinating with the California Department of Fish and Game to obtain the latest information regarding threatened and endangered species.
- Policy COS 4.9: Ensure water bodies are well-maintained to protect habitat areas and provide water to local species.
- Policy COS 4.10: Restrict development that would reduce the size of water bodies, minimizing the potential for loss of habitat and water supply.

Scenic Resources

Goal COS 5: The Antelope Valley's scenic resources, including scenic drives, water features, significant ridgelines, buttes, and Hillside Management Areas, are enjoyed by future generations.

- Policy COS 5.1: Identify and protect natural landforms and vistas with significant visual value, such as the California Poppy Preserve, by designating them as Scenic Resource Areas.
- Policy COS 5.2: Except within economic opportunity areas, limit the amount of potential development in Scenic Resource Areas through appropriate land use designations with very low densities in order to minimize negative impacts from future development.
- 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 5.5: Require adequate erosion control measures for all development in Hillside Management Areas, both during and after construction.
- Policy COS 5.6: Restrict development on buttes and designated significant ridgelines by requiring appropriate buffer zones.
- 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).

Agricultural Resources

Goal COS 6: Farming is a viable profession for Antelope Valley residents, contributing to the Valley's rural character and economic strength.

- Policy COS 6.1: Limit the amount of potential residential development in Agricultural Resource Areas (Map 4.3: Agricultural Resource Areas) through appropriate land use designations with very low residential densities, as indicated in the Land Use Policy Map (Map 2.1) of this Area Plan, minimizing the potential for future land use conflicts.
- Policy COS 6.2: Limit incompatible non-agricultural uses in Agricultural Resource Areas. Where non-agricultural uses are necessary to meet regional or community needs, require buffering and appropriate development standards to minimize potential conflicts with adjacent agricultural uses.
- Policy COS 6.3: Ensure that agricultural activities are included within the Antelope Valley's economic development strategies and pursue funding to support rural economic development and agriculture.
- Policy COS 6.4: Encourage the establishment of community farms, community gardens, and similar agricultural operations to produce local food and demonstrate the history, importance, and value of agriculture in the Antelope Valley.
- Policy COS 6.5: Encourage the establishment of local farmer markets, roadside stands, wineries and tasting rooms, and other forms of "agricultural tourism" throughout the Antelope Valley to expand potential sources of farm income.
- Policy COS 6.6: Provide educational resources to farmers.
- Policy COS 6.7: Investigate the feasibility of financial and/or zoning incentive programs for farmers, such as Williamson Act contracts, conservation easements and flexible zoning provisions.
- Policy COS 6.8: Support innovative agricultural business practices, such as agricultural tourism and farmers' cooperatives, necessary for adapting to changing economic and environmental conditions by streamlining regulations.

Goal COS 7: Farming practices are sustainable, balancing economic benefits with water and biological resource management priorities, and minimize greenhouse gas emissions and water pollution.

Chapter 7

COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC LAND USE CONCEPTS

Chapter 7: Community-Specific Land Use Concepts Element

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I. Background

Purpose

The previous Chapters of this Area Plan set forth general goals and policies that may be applied throughout the unincorporated Antelope Valley. However, each community varies in its nature, form, and character. The Community-Specific Land Use Concepts contained in this Chapter describe in greater detail how this Area Plan, particularly the Land Use Element, is to be implemented in each community within the unincorporated Antelope Valley.

The Land Use Concepts (Concepts) attempt to provide expectations for how each rural community may change and grow throughout the life of this Area Plan. The Concepts specify the desired land uses for each area and identify potentially incompatible land uses that would not be desirable. Residents, stakeholders, and decision-makers should refer to the Concepts to familiarize themselves with the setting and character of each community and should use this information when considering the appropriateness of land use development projects, infrastructure improvements, and consideration efforts.

The following communities are addressed in this Chapter:

- Acton
- Antelope Acres
- Crystallaire
- El Dorado and White Fence Farms
- Elizabeth Lake and Lake Hughes (The Lakes)
- Fairmont
- Gorman
- Green Valley
- Juniper Hills
- Lake Los Angeles
- Lakeview
- Leona Valley
- Littlerock and Sun Village (Southeast Antelope Valley)
- Llano
- Neenach
- Pearblossom
- Quartz Hill
- Roosevelt
- Three Points

Vision and Strategy

The Area Plan's Vision Statement acknowledges that the unincorporated Antelope Valley "is a mosaic of unique small towns" and the Community-Specific Land Use Concepts are intended to reflect each community's unique nature, form, and character, as well as each community's unique vision of the future. The Area Plan's Rural Preservation Strategy seeks to achieve the Area Plan's Vision Statement

through a framework of rural town centers, rural town areas, rural preserve areas, and economic opportunity areas. The Community-Specific Land Use Concepts describe how this framework has been applied to each community and refines the framework in a manner that addresses each community's individual needs. Overall, this Chapter ensures that the Area Plan will serve as a living document that will shape future implementation efforts in a manner that is both complementary of the overall Vision Statement and Rural Preservation Strategy and relevant to, and appropriate for, each community within the unincorporated Antelope Valley.

Community Standards Districts

Some of the communities described in this Chapter are within Community Standards Districts (CSD's). CSD's are overlays in the Zoning Code that provide specific development standards with unique land use issues that are not adequately addressed by the County's Subdivision and Zoning Codes. CSD's, as well as other applicable County Code requirements, should be consulted when projects are being considered in a community.

II. Land Use Concepts

Acton

The community of Acton is located in the southwestern portion of the Antelope Valley, south of the City of Palmdale along State Route 14. The community is adjacent to the National Forest, and natural hillsides and significant ridgelines separate the community from the City of Palmdale and the remainder of the Antelope Valley. Community residents are concerned about urbanization of the area and wish to remain an unincorporated rural community with a unique identity. Some portions of the community are partially developed with a variety of agricultural uses and single-family homes on large lots. Other portions are largely undeveloped, are generally not served by existing infrastructure, contain environmental resources, such as Significant Ecological Areas and Hillside Management Areas, and are subject to safety constraints, such as Very High Hazard Severity Zones.

The community has a rural town center area along Crown Valley Road between Gillespie Avenue and Soledad Canyon Road. The rural town center area has been designated as Rural Commercial (CR) to serve the daily needs of residents and provide local employment opportunities. New buildings in the rural town center area shall be limited to two stories in height and shall include Old West design elements with earth tone colors at a pedestrian-oriented scale, with primary building entries facing Crown Valley Road or adjacent local streets. New development in the rural town center that would require the installation of urban infrastructure, such as concrete curbs and gutters, street lights, and traffic signals, shall be strongly discouraged as this does not fit with the community's unique rural character and identity.

The rural town centers shall continue to be the focal point of the community and shall be linked to the surrounding rural town area through trails and pedestrian routes. Pedestrian routes shall have permeable paving, consistent with rural community character, instead of concrete sidewalks. Public amenities, such as plazas and community bulletin boards, are encouraged in this area.

Some areas outside the rural town center area have also been designated as Rural Commercial (CR) to acknowledge existing uses and to provide additional commercial services and local employment opportunities. The intent of these designations is to allow low-intensity local commercial uses that

serve community residents and to prohibit high-intensity regional commercial uses that serve travelers along State Route 14. Moving west to east through the community, areas with this designation include:

- Two parcels along Sierra Highway, generally between Sand Creek Drive and Wanstead Drive, north of State Route 14;
- A parcel along Sierra Highway, east of Red Rover Mine Road and north of State Route 14;
- Several parcels surrounding the intersection of Crown Valley Road and Sierra Highway and of Crown Valley Road and Antelope Woods Road, both of which are adjacent to State Route 14;
- A parcel at the northeast corner of Soledad Canyon Road and Santiago Road;
- Several parcels at the northwest and northeast corners of the intersection of Sierra Highway and Santiago Road, north of State Route 14;
- Several parcels along the south side of Sierra Highway between San Gabriel Avenue and State Route 14; and
- Several parcels along the north side of Sierra Highway, west of State Route 14.

New buildings in these CR designations shall also be limited to two stories in height, shall include Old West design elements with earth tone colors at a pedestrian-oriented scale, and shall be linked to surrounding rural town areas through trails and pedestrian routes. Pedestrian routes shall have permeable paving, consistent with rural community character, instead of concrete sidewalks. Development in these CR designations that would require the installation of urban infrastructure, such as concrete curbs and gutters, street lights and traffic signals, shall be discouraged as this does not fit with the community's unique rural character and identity. New commercial uses outside of these CR designations, or outside the CR designation within a rural town center area, are also strongly discouraged, as they are not compatible with the community character.

Some areas within the community have been designated as Light Industrial (IL) to acknowledge existing uses and to provide additional local employment opportunities. Moving west to east through the community, areas with this designation include:

- Several parcels at the northeast and southeast corners of Sierra Highway and Red Rover Mine Road;
- Several parcels along Soledad Canyon Road, south of the Crown Valley Road intersection and the rural town center area;
- Several parcels along Soledad Canyon Road, northeast of the Crown Valley Road intersection, and also along Syracuse Avenue and Gillespie Avenue, all east of the rural town center area;
- Several parcels along the south side of Soledad Canyon Road between Santiago Road and Malinta Avenue; and

- Several parcels along Sierra Highway, west and north of the Vincent Grade/Acton Metrolink Station.

New buildings in these IL designations shall be limited to two stories in height, shall include Old West design elements with earth tone colors at a pedestrian-oriented scale, and shall be linked to surrounding rural town areas through trails and pedestrian routes. Pedestrian routes shall have permeable paving, consistent with rural community character, instead of concrete sidewalks. Development in these IL designations that would require the installation of urban infrastructure, such as concrete curbs and gutters, street lights and traffic signals shall be strongly discouraged as this does not fit with the community's unique rural character and identity. New industrial uses outside of these IL designations are also strongly discouraged, as they are not compatible with the community character.

All advertising signs shall be limited to no more than 35 feet. More restrictions on the allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR), drive-through services and other such regulations may be adopted by the community through their Community Standards District. Please see Chapter 8 (Plan Implementation) of this Area Plan for more details.

Most of the community is considered to be a rural town area. The rural town area has been designated as Rural Land 5 (RL5), with a maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 5 gross acres of land, Rural Land 2 (RL2), with a maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 2 gross acres of land, and Rural Land 1 (RL1), with a maximum density of 1 residential unit for each 1 gross acre of land. Small portions of the rural town area have other designations, as follows:

- The area generally bounded by Syracuse Avenue to the north, Bartlett Street and 1st Street to the west, Cory Avenue and 9th Street to the south, and 3rd Street to the east has been designated as Residential 5 (H5), with a maximum density of 5 residential units for each 1 net acre of land. In addition, a few parcels between Syracuse Avenue and Gillespie Avenue, east of Crown Valley Road, have been designated as H5; and
- The area surrounding the H5 designation, generally bounded by Sacramento Avenue to the north, 41st Street West and 40th Street West to the west, 9th Street and Spring Avenue to the south, and Crown Valley Road to the east, has been designated as Residential 2 (H2), with a maximum density of 2 residential units for each 1 net acre of land.
- The RL5, RL2, RL1, H2, and H5 designations are intended to reflect the existing densities within various parts of the rural town area, which are developed or partially developed as the result of previous land divisions. The RL5, RL2, RL1, H2, and H5 designations are not intended to promote further land divisions. New land divisions in the rural town area shall maintain a large minimum lot size to ensure consistency with the desired community character.

The majority of new residential development in Acton shall be directed to the rural town area instead of the surrounding rural preserve area, provided that such development is consistent with existing community character. New land divisions shall maintain a large minimum lot size. Various types of agriculture, equestrian, and animal-keeping uses should be allowed through the rural town area, provided that lots meet Zoning Code requirements for those uses. Home-based occupations may also be permitted throughout the rural town area, provided that they meet Zoning Code requirements.

The remainder of the community is considered to be a rural preserve area and has been designated as Rural Land 10 (RL10), with a maximum density of 1 residential unit per 10 gross acres of land, or Rural Land 20 (RL20), with a maximum density of 1 residential unit per 20 gross acres of land. These very low densities reflect the underlying infrastructure constraints, environmental resources, and safety constraints. Development in the rural preserve area shall be limited to single-family homes on very large lots, light and heavy agriculture, equestrian and animal-keeping uses, and other uses where appropriate.

Antelope Acres

The community of Antelope Acres is located in the northwestern portion of Antelope Valley, west of the City of Lancaster. Community residents are concerned about urbanization of the area and wish to remain an unincorporated rural community with a unique identity. Some portions of the community are partially developed with light agricultural uses and single-family homes on large lots, while other portions are largely undeveloped and contain environmental resources, such as Significant Ecological Areas and Agricultural Resource Areas.

The community has a rural town center area located along 90th Street West between Avenue E-4 and Avenue E-12. The rural town center area has been designated as Rural Commercial (CR) to serve the daily needs of residents and provide local employment opportunities. New buildings in the rural town center area should be limited to one story in height and should include Old West design elements at a pedestrian-oriented scale, with primary building entries facing 90th Street West. No other portions of the community have been designated for commercial or industrial use, and new commercial and industrial uses outside the rural town center area are strongly discouraged, as they are incompatible with the community character.

Over time, the rural town center areas should become the focal point of the Antelope Acres community and should be linked to surrounding rural town areas through trails and pedestrian routes. Pedestrian routes should have permeable paving, consistent with rural community character, instead of concrete sidewalks. Public amenities, such as plazas and community bulletin boards, are encouraged in this area.

The community includes rural town areas that surround the rural town center area and are generally bounded by Avenue E and Avenue C to the north, 80th Street West to the east, Avenue F and Avenue F-8 to the south, and 95th Street West and 90th Street West to the west. These areas have been designated as Rural Land 2 (RL2), with a maximum density of 1 residential unit per 2 gross acres of land. This designation is intended to reflect the existing density of the rural town areas and is not intended to promote further land divisions. New land divisions in the rural town areas shall maintain a large minimum lot size to ensure consistency with the existing community character.

The majority of new residential development in Antelope Acres should be directed to the rural town areas instead of the surrounding rural preserve areas, provided that such development is consistent with the existing community character and allows for light agriculture, equestrian, and animal-keeping uses should be allowed through the rural town area, provided that lots meet Zoning Code requirements for those uses. Heavy agriculture uses should be discouraged in the rural town areas because of potential impacts on existing residents. Home-based occupations are also appropriate in the rural town areas, provided that they meet Zoning Code requirements.

DOCUMENT 4

EXCERPTS FROM THE CEQA FINDINGS OF FACT FOR THE ANTELOPE VALLEY AREA PLAN (WITH RELEVANT SECTIONS HIGHLIGHTED).

Source: <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/89565.pdf>

**CEQA FINDINGS OF FACT
FOR THE
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE
ANTELOPE VALLEY AREA PLAN EIR**

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2014061043

I. BACKGROUND

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that a number of written findings be made by the lead agency in connection with certification of an environmental impact report (EIR) prior to approval of the project pursuant to Sections 15091 and 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines and Section 21081 of the Public Resources Code. This document provides the findings required by CEQA and the specific reasons for considering the project acceptable even though the project has significant impacts that are infeasible to mitigate.

The lead agency is responsible for the adequacy and objectivity of the EIR. The County of Los Angeles (County), as lead agency, has subjected the Draft EIR (DEIR) and Final EIR (FEIR) to the agency's own review and analysis. The Board of Supervisors certifies that the DEIR, FEIR, and Findings of Fact reflect the independent judgment of the County.

A. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Proposed Project is a comprehensive update of the 1986 Antelope Valley Area Plan. The project includes updated goals and policies, identification of implementing programs and associated zoning consistency and ordinances as well as a new Land Use Policy Map for the area covered by the Proposed Area Plan (Project Area).

The Proposed Project identifies 1) Rural Preserve Areas, where residential densities would be reduced to protect important ecological and agricultural resources as well as minimize development in very high hazard areas; 2) Rural Town Areas, where maximum residential densities and minimum lot sizes would be established to preserve rural character; 3) Rural Town Centers, where urban commercial uses would be discouraged but rural commercial uses would be incentivized; and 4) Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs), where plans for major infrastructure development are underway that create opportunities for economic growth and development than what is currently existing on the ground. The Proposed Area Plan anticipates that future planning may be needed in these areas to determine any appropriate land use and zoning changes needed when these infrastructure projects are completed.

As a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan, the Proposed Area Plan would refine the countywide goals and policies in the Adopted General Plan by addressing specific issues relevant to the Project Area, such as community maintenance and appearance, preservation of rural character, open space, and agricultural lands, and provides more specific guidance on elements already found in the Adopted General Plan. All issues not covered in the Proposed Area Plan are addressed by the Adopted General Plan.

As stated above, the Proposed Area Plan would replace all elements, including the Land Use Policy Map, of the Adopted Area Plan. In addition, the adoption of the Area Plan will also amend the Adopted General Plan to reflect updated policy maps regarding the Highway Plan, hazards and resources, and Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs), etc. The Proposed Project will also include an expansion of the proposed boundaries of the SEAs in the Antelope Valley. These updated SEA boundaries are one of the main underpinnings of the proposed Land Use Policy Map of the

County to be reduced to a level of less than significant, and the County has found—in accordance with CEQA Section 21081(a)(1) and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(a) (1)—that “Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment. This is referred to herein as “Finding 1.” Where the County has determined—pursuant to CEQA Section 21081(a)(2) and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(a)(2)—that “Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been, or can and should be, adopted by that other agency,” the County’s finding is referred to herein as “Finding 2.” Finding 2 is not utilized in this findings document.

Where, as a result of the environmental analysis of the project, the County has determined that either: (1) even with the compliance with existing laws, codes and statutes, and/or the identification of feasible mitigation measures, potentially significant impacts cannot be reduced to a level of less than significant, or (2) no feasible mitigation measures or alternatives are available to mitigate the potentially significant impact, the County has found in accordance with CEQA Section 21081(a)(3) and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(a)(3) that “Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the environmental impact report.” This is referred to herein as “Finding 3.”

A. IMPACTS DETERMINED TO BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

The County determined that all environmental topics in the Environmental Checklist (CEQA Guidelines Appendix G) would have the potential to result in significant impacts. Thus, an Initial Study was not prepared and a Notice of Preparation for the Proposed Project was issued on June 12, 2014. All environmental topics were therefore determined to require full assessment in the DEIR.

Draft EIR

This section identifies environmental impacts of the proposed project determined to be less than significant without implementation of project-specific mitigation measures. This determination, however, does assume compliance with existing regulations as detailed in Chapter 5 of the DEIR.

1. Aesthetics

Impact 5.1-1: Implementation of the Proposed Project would alter existing views of scenic vistas.

Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.1-19 of Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

Buildout of the Proposed Project has the potential to result in adverse impacts to scenic vistas. New development would partially obstruct or interrupt viewsheds that were previously unobstructed. However, the existing regulatory setting, as well as the goals and policies in the Proposed Area Plan, would serve to lessen potential impacts to scenic vistas associated with implementation of the Proposed Project. Additionally, approval of the Proposed Project itself does not authorize construction of development that would affect scenic vistas. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Finding:

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and conditions of approval for any future discretionary projects, this impact would be less than significant.

Impact 5.1-2: Implementation of the Proposed Project would not substantially alter scenic resources with a state scenic highway.

Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.1-26 of Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

There is only one adopted state scenic highway in the Project Area: the Angeles Crest Highway (SR-2). Another highway in the Project Area is identified as being eligible for such a designation in the future: SR-39 between I-210 and the Angeles Crest Highway. Both of these roadways are located in the San Gabriel Mountains in the Angeles National Forest. The Proposed Project does not introduce new development capacity near the Angeles Crest Highway or SR-39, nor does it propose any other changes for the corridors that they traverse. The areas that the roadways travel through would remain protected natural areas at buildout of the Proposed Project. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not alter scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

The Proposed Project includes a Scenic Drives Map that identifies 53 routes in the region as “scenic drives.” While many of these routes are located entirely within the Project Area, several extend into the cities of Lancaster or Palmdale, or into other areas of Los Angeles County. Most of the scenic drives are located in mountainous areas or at the south edges of the Antelope Valley. Some of the routes are located in areas targeted for growth under the Proposed Project, including Rural Town Centers. However, the Proposed Area Plan includes goals and policies that would protect scenic views along the designated corridors. In particular, implementation of Policy COS 5.7 would ensure that development standards and guidelines are established for development within the viewsheds of scenic drives.

As stated above, implementation of the Proposed Project would not alter scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Impacts would be less than significant.

Finding:

Upon implementation of programs identified in the Proposed Area Plan as well as regulatory requirements, this impact would be less than significant.

Impact 5.1-3: Implementation of the Proposed Project would alter the existing visual character of portions of the Project Area and its surroundings.

Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.1-26 of Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

Implementation of the Proposed Project would have the potential to result in changes to the visual character of the Project Area, primarily related to the overall magnitude of growth anticipated. However, at a programmatic level, the land use patterns and development types allowed in the Project Area by the Proposed Area Plan are designed to maintain the region’s rural character. Furthermore, the implementation of guidelines and development standards in the existing regulatory

framework would serve to lessen the potential impacts of the Proposed Project by providing consistency between existing and future development. Additionally, the goals, policies, and implementation programs contained in the Proposed Area Plan would lessen or mitigate potential impacts of the Proposed Project by providing direction for future decision making, as well as by requiring additional future review of potential impacts of individual development projects that would be accommodated by the Proposed Project. Therefore, while changes to the region's visual appearance and character would occur, these would not be inherently adverse changes. Impacts related to visual character and quality would be less than significant.

Finding:

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and standard conditions of approval, this impact would be less than significant.

Impact 5.1-4: Implementation of the Proposed Project would generate additional sources of light and glare that could adversely affect day and nighttime views in the Project Area.

Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.1-31 of Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

Because buildout of the Proposed Project would result in the construction of additional development throughout the Project Area, its implementation would generate additional sources of light and glare that could adversely affect existing day and nighttime views. However, most growth would occur in established communities where existing levels of nighttime illumination are high. Elsewhere, growth would occur at the type of very low densities that would not create excessive light pollution. Solar facilities and other energy projects could be considered as part of buildout of the Project Area, and these facilities could add glare. A separate County effort is underway to prepare a Renewable Energy Ordinance that regulates solar and wind renewable energy systems and facilities for on-site and off-site use as well as temporary meteorological towers. Any impacts related to light and glare associated specifically with renewable energy will be separately analyzed as part of that project's environmental document. The Proposed Area Plan specifically addresses visual impacts, including energy projects, and includes policies to minimize such potential impacts. Furthermore, these and other individual projects that would have potentially significant impacts related to lighting, such as large industrial buildings, would be subject to project-level CEQA review.

Although growth in the Antelope Valley (and other rural areas) could potentially diminish existing nighttime views and/or dark skies, these impacts would be minimized by applicable regulations. Applicable regulations include the County's Rural Outdoor Lighting District Ordinance, which specifies regulations for much of the Project Area to shield and minimize outdoor lighting and its negative effects. Upon implementation of applicable sections of the County Code, provisions of the County Building Code, and goals and policies in the Proposed Area Plan, impacts related to light and glare would be less than significant.

Finding:

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and standard conditions of approval, this impact would be less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts: Scenic Vistas and Scenic Resources

Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.1-33 of Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

Growth anticipated in the subregion could affect scenic vistas and specific scenic resources. However, because development allowed under the Proposed Project would be subject to goals, policies, and regulations that reduce impacts of the Proposed Project on scenic resources to a less than significant level, the Proposed Project's contribution to subregion-wide impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project related to scenic vistas and scenic resources are therefore considered less than significant.

Finding:

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and standard conditions of approval, this impact would be less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts: Visual Character and Quality

Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.1-34 of Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

During the planning period of the Proposed Project, growth and development would fundamentally alter visual character and quality in some areas of the region. However, because development allowed under the Proposed Project would be subject to goals, policies, and regulations that reduce impacts of the Proposed Project on visual character and quality to a less than significant level, the Proposed Project's contribution to subregion-wide impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project related to visual character and quality are therefore considered less than significant.

Finding:

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and standard conditions of approval, this impact would be less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts: Light and Glare

Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.1-34 of Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

The construction and operation of cumulative projects located in the subregion would also have the potential to result in a new source of light and glare from new development or redevelopment that requires night lighting, such as security lighting in commercial areas, or is constructed with materials that would result in glare, such as expanses of glass on office buildings. Glare could also be generated by new solar projects allowed in parts of the region outside the Project Area. However, impacts from light and glare are generally localized and not cumulative in nature. Although a cluster of solar projects straddling the boundaries of the Project Area and an adjacent city—Lancaster or Palmdale—

The State Board of Forestry and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) have drafted a comprehensive document for wildland fire protection in California. The Fire Plan Unit of LACoFD is in charge of implementing the California Fire Plan in Los Angeles County. The Strategic Fire Plan prepared by LACoFD identifies and prioritizes pre- and post-fire management strategies and tactics to reduce loss of life, property, and natural resources. The plan is updated annually.

Fuel modification plans are required for projects within areas designated as FHSZs within the State Responsibility Areas (SRA) or VHFHSZs within the Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs), as described in Title 32, Fire Code, Section 4908 of the County Code. The fuel modification plan identifies specific zones within a property that is subject to fuel modification. Vegetation management, as it relates to wildland fire, refers to the total or partial removal of high-fire-hazard grasses, shrubs, or trees. This includes thinning to reduce the amount of fuel and modification of vegetation arrangement and distribution to disrupt fire progress. The Vegetation Management Program (VMP) is a cost-sharing program that focuses on the use of prescribed fire, hand crews, mechanical, biological and chemical means, for addressing wildland fire fuel hazards, habitat restoration, and other resource management issues on SRA and LRA lands.

Although fires are a natural part of the wildland ecosystem, development in wildland areas increases the danger of wildfires to residents, property, and the environment. Although multiple regulations are in place to ensure that adequate infrastructure, such as peak load water supplies and necessary disaster routes are incorporated into new developments, older communities with aging and substandard infrastructure may face greater risks from wildland fires. In addition, current regulations cannot ensure that all developments that locate in VHFHSZs are protected from wildland fire threats.

The Proposed Project policies the Land Use Policy Map that limits development in high fire prone areas, and conditions of approval for future development projects within the Project Area, in addition to compliance with applicable regulations, will minimize Proposed Project impacts related to wildland fires. Consequently, the overall associated impacts would be less than significant.

Finding:

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and standard conditions of approval, this impact would be less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts: Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.8-22 of Section 5.8, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

In general, cumulative impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials are more prevalent for commercial or industrial land uses. Hazardous material use or hazardous emissions would be cumulatively significant when the combined activities of individual industrial or commercial businesses that use, transport, or dispose of hazardous materials result in hazardous conditions. Cumulative impacts may also occur when multiple development projects disrupt existing hazardous materials sites in adjacent areas. Additionally, the transportation of hazardous materials may increase as a direct result of increased hazardous materials usage within Los Angeles County. Continued growth and development in the Project Area will significantly affect the LACoFD and LASD operations. Any future development would be required to comply with applicable federal, state and local regulations related to hazardous materials, emergency response, wildland fires, and public

2. Avenue D & 60th Street West
4. Pearblossom Highway (SR-138) & 82nd Street East

Based on the established significant impact criteria, the Proposed Project would have a significant impact if it causes a freeway segment at LOS E or F to experience a change in V/C of 0.02 or greater. Based on the results of the modeling and impact analysis, numerous locations are forecast to be significantly impacted (see Page 5.16-44 of the DEIR for a list of the locations).

Mitigation Measures:

- T-1 The County shall continue to monitor potential impacts on roadway segments and intersections on a project-by-project basis as buildout occurs by requiring traffic studies for all projects that could significantly impact traffic and circulation patterns. Future projects shall be evaluated and traffic improvements shall be identified to maintain minimum levels of service in accordance with the County's Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines, where feasible mitigation is available.
- T-2 The County shall implement over time objectives and policies contained within the Antelope Valley Area Plan and the Adopted General Plan Transportation Element. Implementation of those policies will help mitigate any potential impacts of Project growth and/or highway amendments on the transportation system.
- T-3 The County shall participate with Metro, the CMP agency in Los Angeles County, on a potential Congestion Mitigation Fee program that would replace the current CMP Debit/Credit approach. Under a countywide fee program, each jurisdiction, including the County, will select and build capital transportation projects, adopt a fee ordinance, collect fees and control revenues. A fee program will require a nexus analysis, and apply only to net new construction on commercial and industrial space and additional residential units and needs to be approved by Metro and the local jurisdictions. A countywide fee, if adopted, will allow the County to mitigate the impacts of development via the payment of the transportation impact fee in lieu of asking each development project for individual mitigation measures, or asking for fair share payments of mitigation. The fee program would itself constitute a "fair-share" program that would apply to all development (of a certain size) within the unincorporated areas.
- T-4 The County of Los Angeles shall continue to secure the funding needed to implement the future planned improvements within the Project Area. A variety of funding sources shall be explored, such as Metro's CMP Fee Program as described under T-3, Metro Call for Project funds, and federal and state grant opportunities. If the CMP fee program is not adopted by Metro and the County of Los Angeles, other funding sources for regional transportation needs in the Project Area, including Caltrans facilities, shall be pursued such as a potential North County Development Impact Fee Program, development agreements for large projects, and/or mitigation agreements between future applicants and Caltrans for projects that impact Caltrans facilities.
- T-5 The County shall work with Caltrans as they prepare plans to add additional lanes or complete other improvements to various freeways within and adjacent to unincorporated areas. This includes adding or extending mixed flow general purpose lanes, adding or extending existing HOV lanes, adding Express Lanes (high occupancy toll lanes), incorporating truck climbing lanes, improving interchanges and other freeway related improvements.

timing and placement of utilities and services, and create a stronger sense of community than would occur without this type of planning document.

However, the Proposed Area Plan is more than just a policy and land use plan; it has components that are meant to guide government and community interaction and maintain the future sustainability of the economic, physical, and social development goals. The Proposed Area Plan is a living document designed to adjust continuously to new opportunities and challenges. Through the continual upkeep of the Proposed Area Plan, the County's approach to development throughout the project area would be comprehensive and unified.

C. Improves Quality of Life and the Physical Environment

Although development in the Antelope Valley would have significant impacts on the environment (such as those on agriculture, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and transportation), a number of the policies would reduce these impacts on the environment and promote more environmentally sustainable development than would otherwise result in the development of the region. These types of policies include those that:

- Manage the roadway network and encourage multimodal and complete streets system of transportation: Mobility (M) Policies 1.1 through 1.5; 2.1 through 2.6; 3.1 through 3.6; 4.1 through 4.3; 5.1 through 5.5; 6.1 through 6.9; 7.1 through 7.5; 8.1 through 8.2; 9.1 through 9.4; 10.1 through 10.8; and 11.1 through 11.5.
- Maintain and conserve natural resources and agricultural resources: Conservation and Open Space (COS) Policies 1.1 through 1.4; 2.1 through 2.8; 3.1 through 3.5; 4.1 through 4.10; 5.1 through 5.7; 6.1 through 6.8; 7.1 through 7.4; 8.1 through 8.6; 9.1 through 9.8; 10.1 through 10.6; 11.1 through 11.3; 12.1 and 12.2; 13.1 through 13.8; and 14.1 through 14.7; 15.1 through 15.4; 16.1 and 16.2; 17.1 through 17.9; 18.1 through 18.5; and 19.1 through 19.4; Land Use (LU) Policies 2.1 through 2.6.
- Encourage health and wellness: Public Safety (PS) Policies 4.1 through 4.4; 5.1 through 5.5; 6.1 through 6.6; and 12.1 through 12.5.
- Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions: Conservation and Open Space (COS) Policies 9.1 through 9.8.
- Promote water quality: Conservation and Open Space (COS) Policies 2.1 through 2.8 and 3.1 through 3.5.
- Promote opportunities for economic development: Economic Development (ED) Policies 1.1 through 1.21.

D. The Proposed Project is Considered Environmentally Superior to Continuation of the Adopted Area Plan

Continuation of Adopted Area Plan would allow future growth that may not be compatible with the current goals and objectives of the County. The Adopted Area Plan would not update the existing SEA boundaries within the Project Area. Since the updated SEA boundaries are based on the latest biological information and GIS mapping data, they are considered biologically superior to the smaller

DOCUMENT 5

EXCERPTS FROM THE MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP) ADOPTED FOR THE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN (WITH RELEVANT SECTIONS HIGHLIGHTED).

Source: https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/3.-gp_2035_lac-mmrp-final.pdf

March 2015 | Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

County of Los Angeles

Prepared for:

County of Los Angeles

Contact: Connie Chung, AICP, Supervising Regional Planner
Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street, Room 1356
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213.974.6417
genplan@planning.lacounty.gov

Prepared by:

PlaceWorks

Contact: William Halligan, Esq., Principal, Environmental Services
3 MacArthur Place, Suite 1100
Santa Ana, California 92707
714.966.9220
info@placeworks.com
www.placeworks.com



1. Introduction

Zoning Consistency

In order to maintain consistency between the updated General Plan Land Use Policy Map and the Zoning Map, rezoning is necessary where the proposed land use designation would no longer be consistent with zoning. In addition, the zoning consistency program also includes amendments to the Zoning Code. The General Plan Land Use Policy Map establishes the long-range vision for general intended uses. Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the Los Angeles County Code (Zoning Code herein) and Zoning Map implement that vision by providing details on specific allowable uses.

Proposed Zoning Map Amendments

Approximately 4,500 parcels are proposed to be rezoned. For the General Plan Update, the staff used two approaches to rezoning: 1) implementation of major policies in the Plan, and 2) “clean-up” of the Zoning Map. The Master Parcel List and map are provided in Appendix D of the DEIR. The Proposed Zoning Maps are provided as Appendix C3, *Proposed Zoning Maps*, of the DEIR.

Proposed Amendments to the Zoning Code

As discussed above, the Proposed General Plan Update introduces major new goals and policies that aim to:

- Encourage mixed use opportunities, and infill and transit-oriented development,
- Preserve employment-rich land; and
- Preserve rural character by limiting incompatible commercial activities in rural communities

In order to implement these goals and policies, and to align Title 22 to be consistent with the Plan, new residential, commercial and industrial zones and revisions to the existing mixed-use and industrial zones are proposed. Furthermore, an industrial zone, an existing rural mixed use zone and the TOD Ordinance are proposed for elimination.

Proposed Ordinances

The proposed amendments to the Zoning Code include updating the following ordinances, which are provided in Appendix E of the DEIR.

- **Hillside Management Area (HMA) Ordinance Update:** The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure that development preserves the physical integrity and scenic value of HMAs, provides open space, and enhances community character by avoiding development in HMAs to the extent feasible; locating development in the portions of HMAs with the fewest constraints; and using sensitive design techniques.
- **Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) Ordinance Update:** The purpose of the SEA Ordinance is to provide a process that allows balanced development within the SEAs and reconciles potential conflicts between conservation and development within the SEAs. This process would ensure that environmentally sensitive development standards and designs are applied to proposed developments within the SEAs and that the biological resources within development sites, as well as potential

DOCUMENT 6

EXCERPTS FROM THE FINAL EIR ADOPTED FOR THE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN (WITH RELEVANT SECTIONS HIGHLIGHTED).

Source: https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/1.-gp_2035_lac-gpu-final-eir-final.pdf

March 2015 | Final Environmental Impact Report

LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

County of Los Angeles

Prepared for:

County of Los Angeles

Contact: Connie Chung, AICP, Supervising Regional Planner
Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street, Room 1356
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213.974.6417
genplan@planning.lacounty.gov

Prepared by:

PlaceWorks

Contact: William Halligan, Esq., Principal, Environmental Services
3 MacArthur Place, Suite 1100
Santa Ana, California 92707
714.966.9220
info@placeworks.com
www.placeworks.com



2. Response to Comments

1) Transit Oriented Districts (TODs): TODs are areas where the General Plan Update encourages infill development, pedestrian-friendly and community-serving uses near transit stops. The goal is to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use. The General Plan Update will expand the existing TODs from approximately a ¼ mile radius to ½ mile radius from the transit stations. In addition, new TODs will be established around transit stations in West Carson, Rancho Dominguez, Del Aire, East Los Angeles and East Pasadena-East San Gabriel. As part of the implementation of the General Plan Update, TODs will be accompanied by a specific plan, or a similar mechanism, with standards, regulations, and infrastructure plans that tailor to the unique characteristics and needs of each community, and address access and connectivity, pedestrian improvements, and safety. The TOD Program is designed to work in conjunction with regional and statewide efforts to incentivize transit-oriented development; creates infill development opportunities in many established unincorporated communities; and will result in co-benefits, such as an increase in transit use and physical activity.

2) Employment Protection Districts (EPDs): The General Plan Update identifies EPDs, which are existing economically viable industrial sites within the unincorporated areas. EPDs are protected by policies that discourage the conversion of industrial areas to non-industrial uses. These policies align with countywide economic development efforts, and will prevent any further loss or fragmentation of industrial areas.

In addition, Program LU-4 Growth Management Program, with the implementation timeframe of 1-2 years, calls for the development of a growth management program for the unincorporated areas that does the following:

- 1) Explore the feasibility of implementing a program that uses infrastructure and service levels as a threshold for development and permitting; and
- 2) Explore the feasibility of establishing greenbelts or other growth management strategies in urbanized areas.

Finally, the General Plan Update identifies various types of opportunity areas in the 11 Planning Areas, which include but are not limited to: Transit Centers, Neighborhood Centers, Corridors, and Economic Opportunity Areas. These areas, providing additional opportunities for future concentration of jobs and housing due to their central locations, connectivity, and access to public services and infrastructure, will be further studied during future community-based planning efforts.

While the General Plan Update identifies neither urban expansion areas(Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, and East San Gabriel Valley) nor an urban growth boundary as part of its growth management strategy, it guides growth countywide through goals, policies and programs, such as those mentioned above, that do the following: discourage sprawling development patterns; protect areas with hazard, environmental and resource constraints; encourage infill development in areas near

DOCUMENT 7

EXCERPTS FROM THE CEQA FINDINGS OF FACT ADOPTED FOR THE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN (WITH RELEVANT SECTIONS HIGHLIGHTED).

Source: https://planning.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2.-gp_2035_lac-fof-soc-final.pdf

**CEQA FINDINGS OF FACT
AND STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS
FOR THE
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE EIR**

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2011081042

I. BACKGROUND

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that a number of written findings be made by the lead agency in connection with certification of an environmental impact report (EIR) prior to approval of the project pursuant to Sections 15091 and 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines and Section 21081 of the Public Resources Code. This document provides the findings required by CEQA and the specific reasons for considering the project acceptable even though the project has significant impacts that are infeasible to mitigate.

The lead agency is responsible for the adequacy and objectivity of the EIR. The County of Los Angeles (County), as lead agency, has subjected the Draft EIR (DEIR) and Final EIR (FEIR) to the agency's own review and analysis. The Board of Supervisors certifies that the DEIR, FEIR, and Findings of Fact reflect the independent judgment of the County.

A. PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed project includes the following components:

- Comprehensive General Plan Update for the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.
- Amendment to Title 22 of the County Code to adopt a Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) Ordinance.
- Amendment to Title 22 of the County Code to adopt a Hillside Management Area (HMA) Ordinance.
- Zone changes for consistency with the General Plan Update.
- Amendments to Title 22 of the County Code related to the industrial zones.
- Amendments to Title 22 of the County Code related to the MXD zone (including rescinding the Transit Oriented Districts Ordinance)
- Amendments to Title 22 of the County Code to add the R-5, C-MJ, and ()-IP zones.
- Zone nomenclature modification of Zone R-3, R-4 and, C-3.
- Adoption of a Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP).

Each of these components is discussed below.

Facts in Support of Finding:

Continued growth and development associated with implementation of the Proposed Project has the potential to strain the emergency response and recovery capabilities of federal, state, and local governments. Coordination among various County departments is necessary to ensure adequate emergency response.

The Office of Emergency Management is responsible for organizing and directing the preparedness efforts of the Emergency Management Organization of Los Angeles County. The emergency response plan for the Project Area is the Operational Area Emergency Response Plan (OAERP), which strengthens short and long-term emergency response and recovery capability, and identifies emergency procedures and emergency management routes in Los Angeles County.

LACoFD provides fire, safety, and emergency medical services to the Project Area. LACoFD operates multiple divisions including Air and Wildland, Fire Prevention, and Forestry. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) is the largest sheriff's department in the country. In addition to specialized services, the LASD is divided into 10 divisions, including the Office of Homeland Security, which focuses on potential threats related to local homeland security issues, such as terrorism or bioterrorism. The LASD provides law enforcement services to more than one million people living within 90 unincorporated communities, as well as to more than four million residents living within 40 contract cities.

Continued growth and development in Los Angeles County will significantly affect the LACoFD and LASD operations. Coordination among various County departments is necessary to ensure adequate emergency response. Collaboration can also ensure that development occurs at a rate that keeps pace with service needs. In addition, several proposed policies of the Safety Element of the Proposed Project have been developed to address this potential hazard.

Compliance with applicable regulations and implementation of the Proposed Project goals and policies would ensure the risk of impaired implementation or physical interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan is less than significant.

Finding:

Implementation of the Proposed Project would be required to adhere to applicable regulations and policies of the Proposed General Plan Update, and impacts would be less than significant.

Impact 5.8-5: Portions of the Project Area are within moderate, high, and very high fire hazard zones and could expose structures and/or residences to fire danger.

Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.8-21 of Section 5.8, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

Los Angeles County faces major wildland fire threats due to its hilly terrain, dry weather conditions, and the nature of its plant coverage. The at-risk areas are designated as Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs) per Government Code Sections 5115–51189. FHSZs in the Project Area are classified as Very High, High, and Moderate in State Responsibility Areas and Very High in Local and Federal Responsibility Areas. The Forestry Division of the LACoFD designates the VHFHSZs in the local responsibility areas.

In an effort to reduce the threats to lives and property, the LACoFD has instituted a variety of regulatory programs and standards for vegetation management, pre-fire management and planning, fuel modification, and brush clearance. In addition to these programs, the LACoFD and the County Department of Public Works enforce fire and building codes related to development in VHFHSZs. The Fire Department has access requirements for single family residential uses built in VHFHSZs. Access requirements for all other uses built within VHFHSZs are determined on a case-by-case basis.

In addition, several proposed policies of the Safety Element of the Proposed Project have been developed to address potential fire hazards.

- **Policy S 3.1:** Discourage high density and intensity development in VHFHSZs.
- **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 and vegetation.
- **Policy S 3.5:** Encourage the use of fire-resistant vegetation that is compatible with the area's natural vegetative habitats in fuel modification activities.
- **Policy S 3.6:** Ensure adequate infrastructure, including ingress, egress, and peak load water supply availability for all projects located in FHSZs.
- **Policy S 3.7:** Site and design developments located within FHSZs, such as areas located near ridgelines and on hilltops, in a sensitive manner to reduce the wildfire risk.

The Proposed Project policies and conditions of approval for future development projects within the Project Area, in addition to compliance with applicable regulations, will minimize Proposed Project impacts related to wildland fires. Consequently, the overall associated impacts would be less than significant.

Finding:

All development within FHSZs is required to comply with applicable regulations by LACoFD, County Department of Public Works, and goals and policies under the Proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant.

7. Hydrology and Water Quality

Impact 5.9-1	Implementation of the Proposed Project would comply with water quality standards and waste discharge requirements and would not substantially degrade water quality.
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Support for this environmental impact conclusion is fully discussed starting on page 5.9-27 of Section 5.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, of the DEIR.

Facts in Support of Finding:

Proposed Project buildout would involve soil disturbance, construction, and operation of developed land uses that could each generate pollutants affecting stormwater. Pollutants associated with stormwater include sediment, nutrients, bacteria and viruses, oil and grease, metals, organics, oxygen-demanding substances, pesticides, and trash and debris. However, construction projects of one acre or more would be required to comply with the General Construction Permit, Order No. 2012-0006-

ATTACHMENT 3

U.S. EPA GUIDANCE FOR SITING AND OPERATING BESS FACILITIES.



Battery Energy Storage Systems: Main Considerations for Safe Installation and Incident Response

Battery Energy Storage Systems Overview

Battery energy storage systems (BESS) stabilize the electrical grid, ensuring a steady flow of power to homes and businesses regardless of fluctuations from varied energy sources or other disruptions. However, fires at some BESS installations have caused concern in communities considering BESS as a method to support their grids. BESS fires pose challenges to first responders due to the:

- Difficulty in putting out lithium-ion battery fires.
- Potential health impacts from emissions.
- Need to clean up and properly dispose of burned or impacted batteries.

Communities should consult BESS safety experts when considering and designing installations. Communities should also note that despite some high-profile incidents, improvements in BESS quality and design have led to a decrease in the number of failure incidents per gigawatt hour deployed (Figure 1).

In recent years, first responder and industry associations have developed guidance to help communities identify focus areas when planning a BESS, including how to work with local responders to improve incident preparedness. This document is a non-comprehensive collection of existing research and guidance.

This document includes information from first responder and industry guidance as well as:

- Background information on BESS, including challenges and recent fires
- BESS installation considerations
- BESS incident response considerations
- Resources for fire planning and response
- Standards and links to additional resources

Facts about Recent Fires

Since 2020, BESS failure incidents have decreased, but some recent fires have gained attention in the media. On May 15, 2024, Gateway Energy Storage Facility in San Diego, California, experienced a BESS fire with continued flare-ups for seven days following the fire. The facility held about 15,000 nickel manganese cobalt lithium-ion batteries. Following the incident, EPA has required the Gateway facility to conduct extensive environmental monitoring during battery handling and disposal operations and submit detailed work plans and progress reports.¹

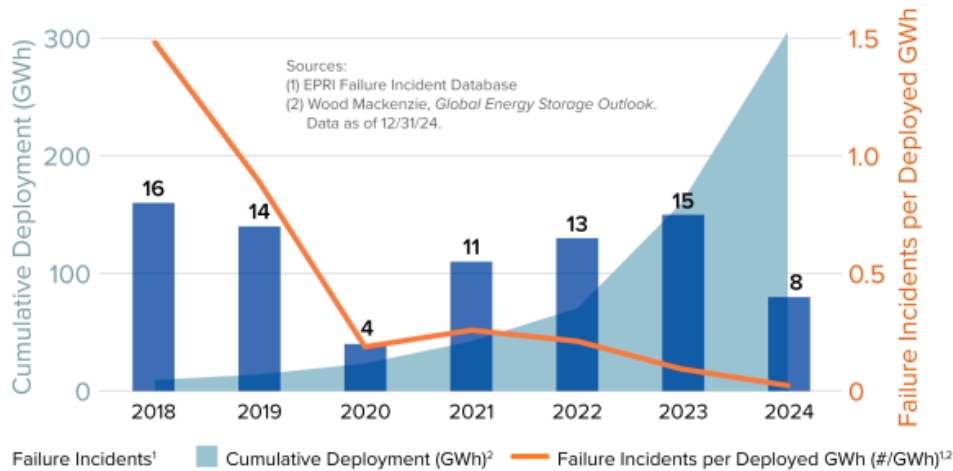


Figure 1. Global grid-scale storage deployment and failure statistics. Source: Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), 2024.

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). Site profile: Gateway Energy Camino lithium-ion battery fire. https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=16485.

On January 16, 2025, a BESS fire broke out at the Moss Landing site in Monterey County, California, resulting in a 24-hour evacuation of about 1,200 residents. A joint effort among company personnel and the North County Fire Department kept the fire contained to one building, though with one notable flare-up. Air quality monitoring and sampling occurred during and after the fire and found no risks to public health. Following the incident, EPA continues to work with other regulators to ensure the safe storage, handling, and transportation of undamaged batteries remaining at the Moss Landing site.²

Clear and comprehensive incident response plans are critical when managing BESS sites to ensure preparedness in the event of a battery fire.

Installation Considerations

Proactive safety measures can be included in a BESS site design to minimize the risk of a BESS fire. Consider the following before installing a BESS:

- Comply with state and local siting, zoning, marking, and permitting requirements to ensure site suitability.
- Consider the design of BESS units (battery chemistry, manufacturing quality assurance/quality checks, unit design, battery management system analytic capabilities, and system integration) and consult the most recent industry safety standards.
- Include remote sensors and monitoring (e.g., infrared, thermal, fire detection).
- Communicate with local first responders to develop emergency response plans for incidents.

Incident Response Considerations

Consider the following when developing an incident response plan for BESS:

- Ensure use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including self-contained breathing apparatuses to protect against hazardous air emissions.
- Set an isolation zone for large commercial BESS that is at least 330 feet, depending on the site.
- Position responders upwind and uphill.
- Evaluate the need for community shelter-in-place or evacuation, depending on the incident and site.
- Current guidance is to focus the response on preventing the spread of fire.
 - Direct fire crews to let the fire burn itself out and to use water to prevent the spread of fire to neighboring batteries or other structures.³
- Assess hazardous air emissions:
 - Use modeling to guide on-site decision making and initially monitor for hydrogen, carbon monoxide, hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen cyanide, and hydrogen chloride.
 - As an incident extends, sample air for metals and other combustion byproducts of burning plastics.
- Minimize, contain, and/or redirect runoff from water application, to the extent possible.
- Package contents safely for transport and disposal after the event, considering Department of Transportation and EPA requirements.

² Vistra. (n.d.). *Moss Landing response*. Moss Landing Response. <https://www.mosslandingresponse.com>.

³ Research is ongoing into the most effective method of water application to prevent spread.

Resources for Fire Planning and Response at BESS Installations

In addition to adhering to existing standards, communities and operators of BESS sites should reference existing resources to enhance fire preparedness and response plans. Table 1 includes a list of trainings, standard operating procedure (SOP) guides, toolkits, emergency response plans, and research for BESS sites.

Relevant BESS Standards

[National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\) Standard 855](#): Standards detailing the requirements for mitigating the hazards associated with energy storage systems (ESS). First edition 2020; current edition 2023; next update 2026.

[Underwriters Laboratory \(UL\) 9540 and 9540A](#): Standards for energy storage systems and equipment: charging and discharging procedures, fire protection, and test methods for BESS. First edition 2016, current edition revised 2025.

Table 1. Additional resources for BESS sites

Resource (Linked)	Description
EPA On-Scene Coordinator Lithium-Ion Battery Outreach Page	• Outreach: The EPA On-Scene Coordinators are available to provide training to city and county fire fighters, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs), and conference audiences. Contact information is available on the Outreach page. • Resources: Resources for pre-planning with local responders, sample standard operating procedures, presentations, and worksheets. • Web-based: Remote training that covers battery basics, hazards, transport and disposal concerns, and air monitoring (coming soon).
NFPA ESS Safety Fact Sheet	• Fact sheet outlining ESS advantages, hazards, and safety measures.
San Diego Fire Department Toolkit	• Collection of resources on lithium-ion battery fire response, incident reports, research, and public safety education.
Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) Toolkit	• Collection of fact sheets and presentations on BESS fire hazards and prevention.
International Association of Fire Chief (IAFC) Fact Sheet	• Fact sheet covering recommended fire department ESS pre-planning and incident response.
Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) Research Hub	• Collection of energy storage research, including information about EPRI's database of BESS failures and root cause categorizations.
Fire Protection Research Foundation Website	• Information about an ongoing research project examining hazards and mitigation for BESS units.
New York Battery and Energy Storage Technology Consortium Library	• Library of systems safety and best practices resources from various associations and fire codes.