



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



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Director

**NOTICE OF LOCAL PUBLIC MEETING
NOTICE OF COMPLETION AND AVAILABILITY
OF DRAFT RECIRCULATED PORTIONS OF THE EIR FOR
MISSION VILLAGE PROJECT
COUNTY PROJECT NO. 04-181
VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 61105
SEA CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. RCUP200500080
OAK TREE PERMIT NO. ROAK200500032
OAK TREE PERMIT NO. 200500043
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. (OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENTS) 200500081
(ON-SITE AND OFF-SITE GRADING AND IMPROVEMENTS)
PARKING PERMIT NO. 200500011
SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMANCE REVIEW NO. 201000001
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2005051143**

Agenda Item 13
SMMC
12/12/16

The Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, acting in the capacity of "Lead Agency" under the County Environmental Guidelines, Chapter III, Section 304, has filed this "Notice of Completion and Availability" of the Draft Recirculated Portions of the EIR (County-EIR) for the Mission Village project (Project). Mission Village is one of five villages within the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors (Board) for the County of Los Angeles (County) in 2003. The County-EIR provides the response to court directives issued in the related California Supreme Court decision in *Center for Biological Diversity v. California Department of Fish and Wildlife* (2015) 62 Cal.4th 204 (CBD). The CBD decision provides the substantive direction needed in the related Mission Village litigation (*California Native Plant Society v. County of Los Angeles*, Appellate No. B258090; Los Angeles County No. BS138001) for the County to revisit two legal issues in connection with the Board's May 2012 decision to approve the Mission Village Project, namely, the previously-certified Mission Village Environmental Impact Report's (EIR) analysis of the Project's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the two mitigation measures for the unarmored threespine stickleback (stickleback). Accordingly, County-EIR reevaluates the Project's GHG emissions and stickleback mitigation, consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the two referenced court decisions.

The County-EIR has been prepared in accordance with, and pursuant to, CEQA, Public Resources Code sections 21000 et seq.; and the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (State CEQA Guidelines), California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 15000 et seq. (including section 15160).

PUBLIC REVIEW/COMMENT PERIOD

The public review/comment period for the County-EIR will be from November 17, 2016 through January 17, 2017 (62 days). All comments received by the close of the public review/comment period will be considered in the Project's Final Recirculated Portions of the EIR (FRP-EIR).

Because the County is recirculating only the revised portions of the EIR for the Mission Village Project, the County is only seeking comments to the revised portions of the recirculated EIR. (See CEQA Guidelines section 15088.5(f).)

PROJECT SITE LOCATION

The Project site is located in unincorporated Los Angeles County and the Santa Clarita Valley Planning Area (Valley Planning Area). Specifically, the Project site is located within the northeastern corner of Newhall Ranch in western unincorporated Los Angeles County, south of the Santa Clara River and State Route 126 (SR-126), and west of Interstate 5 (I-5). The project applicant proposes to develop the Mission Village project, which would be constructed on 1,261.8 acres of property located primarily within the boundary of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan (of the 1,261.8-acre tract map, approximately 39.1 acres are located outside the Specific Plan boundaries).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mission Village is one of five villages within the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, a large-scale mixed-used community located in unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley in northwestern Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan in 2003. The Specific Plan guides the long-term development and conservation of the 11,999-acre Newhall Ranch community, which includes a broad range of residential, mixed-use, commercial/retail uses within five villages.

The Mission Village Project includes development of the 1,261.8-acre Mission Village tract map (Vesting Tentative Tract Map (VTTM 61105)). As approved by the County Board of Supervisors on May 15, 2012, Mission Village would provide 4,055 homes (specifically, 351 single-family and 3,704 multi-family homes) and 1,555,100 square feet of commercial (retail/office) uses. The Project also would include a 9.5-acre elementary school, 3.3-acre library, 1.5-acre fire station, 1.2-acre bus transfer station, and approximately 693 acres of open space (including parks, recreation areas, Santa Clara River area, and three spineflower preserves located on 85.8 acres). Mission Village also would include supporting facilities and infrastructure, including roads, the Commerce Center Drive Bridge, trails, drainage improvements, flood protection, potable and recycled water systems, a sanitary sewer system, and dry utilities systems.

To facilitate development of the Mission Village tract map site, Project-related improvements are proposed for construction on an additional 592.8 acres of land outside the tract map boundary. These off-site improvements include a utility corridor, the extension of Magic Mountain Parkway roadway and related improvements, a water quality basin, three water tanks, a Southern California Edison electrical substation, and two debris basins. Additional off-site development would include work associated with the Lion Canyon drainage, grading associated with construction of the northerly extension of Westridge Parkway and the southerly extension of Commerce Center Drive, and miscellaneous grading to tie proposed grades into natural grades; the total amount of grading (for the tract map and off-site improvements) is estimated at 28.9 million cubic yards.

PROJECT APPROVALS

The Project would require approval of the County entitlements listed below to the extent directed by the court pursuant to the above-referenced Mission Village litigation. However, with the exception of modified construction methods for bridges, the County has not made any changes to Mission Village's prior Project approvals, nor any changes to the Mission Village land use plan, development footprint, or Project boundary. The Mission Village project approvals are listed and summarized below:

- (a) **Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 61105.** Vesting Tentative Tract Map to subdivide the Mission Village site into 351 single-family lots, 43 condominium lots for 3,704 multifamily units, 11 mixed-use lots, and lots for, among other uses, the Spineflower Preserves, recreation, fire station, bus transfer station, library, parks, school site, and open space. The proposed map would subdivide the site into a total of 621 lots.
- (b) **SEA Conditional Use Permit No. RCUP200500080.** On May 27, 2003, the County's Board of Supervisors approved a program-level SEA Conditional Use Permit, SEA CUP No. 94-087-(5), as part of the Board's project approvals for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan. SEA CUP No. 94-087-(5) approved: (a) adjustments to the existing boundaries of SEA 23, consistent with County of Los Angeles General Plan policies requiring protection of natural resources within SEAs; and (b) Specific Plan development within the SEA boundaries, including bridge crossings (i.e., Commerce Center Drive Bridge), trails, bank stabilization and other improvements. The approved SEA boundary adjustments were found to be consistent with the adopted Specific Plan, which established a Specific Plan "Special Management Area" (SMA) designation over the adjusted SEA 23 boundaries. Although the adjusted SEA 23 boundaries were designated as the River Corridor SMA in the adopted Specific Plan, the County's underlying SEA 23 designation remains in effect.

As part of the Mission Village Project Approvals, a project-level SEA Conditional Use Permit would provide the County with a regulatory framework for determining if the Mission Village development within the approved River Corridor SMA/SEA 23 boundaries is consistent with both the adopted Specific Plan and previously approved program-level SEA CUP No. 94-087-(5). Specifically, the proposed project-level improvements within the River Corridor SMA/SEA 23 include the Commerce Center Drive Bridge, neighborhood park, access roads, and easements, grading, trails, water quality basins, bank stabilization, water and sewer utility crossings, utility corridor, storm drain outlets, and potential riparian mitigation sites.

The County of Los Angeles General Plan requires that any development proposal within an SEA be reviewed for compliance with certain "design compatibility criteria." The Los Angeles County Zoning Code implements this General Plan requirement. In addition, the General Plan requires that an application for an SEA CUP must undergo an "SEA Performance Review." This process involves review of the application by the appointed Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC). SEATAC reviews the application and accompanying biological resources report for adequacy, and makes recommendations for final project design. Such recommendations are then considered by the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission.

- (c) **Oak Tree Permit No. ROAK200500032.** The County Zoning Code contains provisions protecting trees of the oak genus. As a result, the removal or damage of certain "protected" oak trees is unlawful without a permit (Los Angeles County Zoning Code, Section 22.56.2050). An Oak Tree Permit would authorize the removal of 143 of the 501 oak trees and encroachment of 50 oak trees located on the Project site. Of the 143 removals, 6 trees are also covered by ROAK00-196 for

Landmark Village. Project conditions will require replacement trees to be provided at a ratio of 2 to 1 for each oak tree removed and at a 10 to 1 ratio for each Heritage Oak tree removed.

- (d) **Oak Tree Permit No. 200500043.** The County Zoning Code contains provisions protecting trees of the oak genus. As a result, the removal or damage of certain “protected” oak trees is unlawful without a permit (Los Angeles County Zoning Code, Section 22.56.2050). This Oak Tree Permit would authorize the removal of 11 of the 63 oak trees and encroachment of 2 oak trees located within the easterly extension of Magic Mountain Parkway east of the Project site. Project conditions will require replacement trees to be provided at a ratio of 2 to 1 for each oak tree removed and at a 10 to 1 ratio for each Heritage Oak tree removed.
- (e) **Conditional Use Permit No. RCUP200500081.** This CUP authorizes development of 73 second dwelling units, care facilities associated with the proposed continued care retirement community, onsite grading and development of project related infrastructure (including water tanks and utilities; necessary off-site grading associated with the extension of Westridge Parkway and Commerce Center Drive; the construction and grading for off-site improvements, including the extension of Magic Mountain Parkway; and the development of a utility corridor, a water quality basin, an electrical substation, and water tanks).
- (f) **Parking Permit RPK200500011.** The parking permit allows for off-site and reciprocal parking across lot lines.
- (g) **Substantial Conformance Review Determinations.** The adopted Newhall Ranch Specific Plan contains “substantial conformance” provisions. The purpose of the substantial conformance provisions is to determine whether proposed developments or uses substantially comply with the standards, regulations, and guidelines of the Specific Plan and other applicable Los Angeles County ordinances that do not conflict with the Specific Plan. Substantial conformance determinations are sought as to the following: (a) that grading conforms with the Grading and Hillside Management Guidelines in the Specific Plan; and (b) that modifications to certain setback requirements in the Village Center substantially conform with the Specific Plan’s site development standards.

The County also will require additional ministerial actions, such as building plan review, grading permits, and building permits prior to actual grading and construction of the proposed improvements. Numerous federal, state, and regional public agencies previously have considered permits and authorizations needed to implement the County-approved Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, which includes the Project site.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following is a summary of the impacts associated with the Project with regard to (i) global climate change/greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and (ii) “take” avoidance of the unarmored threespine stickleback. Based on the analysis provided in the County-EIR, Project impacts with regard to these two issues would be mitigated to a less than significant level. Specifically, the recommended mitigation measures will reduce, mitigate, and offset 100 percent of the Project’s GHG emissions, allowing the Project to achieve net zero GHG emissions. In addition, while the Mission Village litigation did not contain any briefing or court rulings with regard to “take” of stickleback, in light of the Supreme Court’s *CBD*

decision, Mission Village mitigation measures, specifically MV 4.3-8 and MV 4.3-9¹, have been eliminated based on the Project's modified construction methods and new mitigation measures applicable to the Mission Village project.

LOCAL PUBLIC MEETING

A local public meeting to receive comments concerning environmental issues addressed in the County-EIR has been scheduled in the Santa Clarita Valley for January 12, 2017, starting at 6:00 p.m. and ending after the last testifier or 9:00 p.m., whichever comes first, at Rancho Pico Junior High School, 26250 W. Valencia Boulevard, Westridge, California 91381. Oral comments made at the public meeting will be transcribed so written responses can be provided as part of the FRP-EIR.

REVIEWING LOCATIONS

To ensure public access to the County-EIR, copies are available for review at the following County and City of Santa Clarita libraries:

- Valencia Library, 23743 W. Valencia Boulevard, Santa Clarita
- Castaic Library, 27971 Sloan Canyon Road, Castaic
- Stevenson Ranch Library, 25950 The Old Road, Stevenson Ranch
- Old Town Newhall Library, 24500 Main Street, Santa Clarita
- Canyon Country Jo Anne Darcy Library, 18601 Soledad Canyon Road, Santa Clarita

A copy of the County-EIR also will be available for public review Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at:

County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
Special Projects Section, 13th floor, Room 1362
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

An electronic version of the County-EIR also is available on the Department's website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/case/view/mvdaa>.

Please submit written comments on the County-EIR to Mr. Samuel Dea of the Department of Regional Planning at the above address. You may also fax your written comments to (213) 626-0434, or email to specialprojects@planning.lacounty.gov. Should you have any questions, please call (213) 974-4808.

Signature of Lead Agency Representative  Date 11/11/16

¹ Because Mission Village EIR mitigation measures MV 4.3-2, 4.3-10, 4.3-11, and 4.3-12 also contemplated Santa Clara River stream diversion and/or other river-related activities that could relocate and thereby affect unarmored threespine stickleback, those measures have been eliminated from the Mission Village EIR as well, as no longer necessary due to modified bridge design and construction methods.