

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
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(323) 221-8900



February 24, 2020

Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Planning Division
Attn: Susan Curtis, Manager, General Plan Update Section
800 South Victoria Avenue, L #1740
Ventura, California 93009-1740

**Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the Ventura
County Draft 2040 General Plan (PL17-0141)**

Dear Ms. Curtis:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) supports much of the Ventura County (County) proposed Draft 2040 General Plan Update as analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (draft EIR).

Specifically, the Conservancy supports the County's inclusion of new policies established by the County's Wildlife Corridor Policy as related to Conservation and Open Space Elements COS-1.3 *Wildlife Corridor Crossing Structures*, COS-1.4 *Consideration of Impacts to Wildlife Movement*, and COS-1.5 *Development Within Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridors*.

The Conservancy also commends the County for proposing COS-1.6 *Discretionary Development on Hillsides and Slopes* that would require development on slopes greater than 20-percent to be sited and designed in a manner to avoid significant impacts to sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible and COS-1.8 *Bridge Crossing Design* to require new or modified road crossings over streams, wetlands, and/or riparian habitat to site bridge columns outside the riparian habitat areas, when feasible.

The inclusion of COS-1.15 *Countywide Tree Planting* to establish and support a countywide target to plan two million trees throughout the County by 2040 is commendable and an opportunity for community engagement and cooperation among public agencies, private organizations, and local businesses to help mitigate against concurrent impacts of climate change.

Further, the Conservancy fully supports the Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element PFS-10: To develop and maintain a comprehensive system of parklands and recreational facilities that meet the active and passive recreational needs of residents and visitors, as funding is available. The Conservancy has been dedicated to this goal since its

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inception in 1980 and looks forward to coordinating with the County to help expand trails, parklands, and accessible amenities in the western Santa Monica Mountains and within the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor.

The Conservancy also recognizes the constraints that specific zoning classifications impose on “using” open space lands as parks and recreational opportunities. Thus, the Conservancy also supports the proposed *Implementation Program N* to establish a new Open Space zone for public lands that will be limited to parks and recreational uses.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please contact Paul Edelman, Deputy Director Natural Resources and Planning, at (310) 589-3200 ext. 128, edelman@smmc.ca.gov, or at the above letterhead address.

Sincerely,

IRMA MUÑOZ
Chairperson