

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

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January 30, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY AREA PLAN
PROJECT NO. 2020-000612
ADVANCE PLANNING CASE NO. RPPL2021013047
GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. RPPL2022003554
ZONE CHANGE NO. RPPL2022003557
ORDINANCE NO. RPPL2022014158
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. RPPL2022003550
(FIRST & FIFTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) (3-VOTES)**

SUBJECT

The recommended actions are to certify the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and approve the East San Gabriel Valley Area Plan (ESGVAP) and the associated amendments to: (1) the General Plan and its accompanying Land Use Policy Map; (2) Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the Los Angeles County Code, including the zoning map; and (3) rescind the Rowland Heights and Hacienda Heights Community Plans and incorporate updated community-level policies, goals, and Land Use Policy Map revisions into the ESGVAP, collectively known as the Project. The ESGVAP is a component of the General Plan that guides development in the twenty-four (24) unincorporated communities within the East San Gabriel Valley Planning Area (Planning Area), over the next 15 years.

The 24 unincorporated communities within the Planning Area include the following: Avocado Heights, Charter Oak, Covina Islands, East Azusa, East Irwindale, East San Dimas, Glendora Islands, Hacienda Heights, North Claremont, North Pomona, Northeast La Verne, Northeast San Dimas, Pellissier Village, Rowland Heights, South Diamond Bar, South San Jose Hills, South Walnut, Unincorporated North Whittier, Unincorporated South El Monte, Valinda, Walnut Islands, West Claremont, West Puente Valley, and West San Dimas.

The associated amendments to the General Plan and Title 22 implement the goals and policies of the ESGVAP and maintain consistency between the General Plan, ESGVAP, and ESGVAP's implementing documents. A project summary is included as Attachment 1. The proposed text amendments to the General Plan are included as Attachment 2. The proposed ESGVAP, including the appendices, is included as Attachment 3. The General Plan Amendments consisting of the Land Use Policy Maps and Significant Ridgelines are included as Attachment 4. The proposed Zone Change Maps and Zone Change Ordinance are included as Attachment 5. The proposed Title 22 amendments are included as Attachment 6.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING,

1. Certify that the Final PEIR (Environmental Assessment No. RPPL2022003550) for the Project has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the County; find that the Board has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final PEIR prior to approving the Project, adopt the mitigation monitoring program, finding that the mitigation monitoring program is adequately designed to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures during project implementation; and determine that the significant adverse effects of the project have either been reduced to an acceptable level or are outweighed by the specific overriding considerations of the Project, as outlined in the Environmental Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, which findings and statement are adopted and incorporated by reference;
2. Indicate its intent to approve the Project (Project No. 2020-000612, Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2021013047, General Plan Amendment No. RPPL2022003554, Zone Change No. RPPL2022003557, Ordinance No. RPPL2022014158) and rescind the Rowland Heights Community Plan and Hacienda Heights Community Plan, as recommended by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC); and
3. Instruct County Counsel to prepare the necessary final documents for the Project and bring them back to the Board for their consideration.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approval of the recommended actions will certify the Final PEIR and establish a policy framework for the Planning Area that conserves the character of the East San Gabriel Valley communities, while growing sustainably into a dynamic regional hub that provides diverse options for housing, goods and services, recreation, and mobility for its residents, workers, and visitors. The ESGVAP sets policies that: (1) promote sustainable growth patterns; (2) support diverse, walkable communities; (3) foster connected and active communities; (4) encourage a thriving economy and workforce; (5) support shared community identity and character; (6) ensure a sustainable built and natural environment; and (7) foster informed, empowered, and

environmentally just communities. Approval of the recommended actions will also support the implementation of the Green Zones Ordinance (GZO), which took effect on July 14, 2022. Furthermore, approval of the recommended actions will assist the County in meeting a portion of its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) in the Planning Area, and ensure the County is in compliance with the State Housing Element Law, Government Code sections 65580 – 65589.11.

On August 9, 2023, the RPC held a public hearing and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Project. A summary of RPC proceedings is included as Attachment 9. The RPC's resolution is included as Attachment 10.

Key Components

The Project includes the following key components:

East San Gabriel Valley Area Plan (ESGVAP)

As a policy document and a component of the General Plan, the ESGVAP directs future development and land use decisions for communities within the Planning Area. The vision of the ESGVAP, which was informed with extensive stakeholder input, is to conserve the character of the East San Gabriel Valley communities, while growing sustainably into a regional hub. The vision for the ESGVAP functions as the guiding mechanism for the goals and policies included in the six areawide elements (*Chapters 2-7, Land Use Element; Economic Development Element; Community Character and Design Element; Natural Resources, Conservation, and Open Space Element; Parks and Recreation Element; and Mobility Element*) and the *East San Gabriel Valley Unincorporated Communities* (Chapter 8), which includes goals and policies addressing the unique conditions and needs of the 24 individual communities in the Planning Area. Finally, ESGVAP includes Chapter 9, *Implementation Programs and Actions*.

The ESGVAP also includes the Land Use Policy Map, for which changes are proposed to increase housing diversity, increase diverse land uses along major corridors, and focus growth in areas with existing infrastructure and away from hazard and natural resource areas. Reductions in land use intensities are proposed for areas with hazards, scenic and biological resources, and where existing infrastructure does not meet the needs of the current land use designation. The reductions in land use intensity are consistent with and continue to allow the existing development currently on the properties. A total of 1,447 changes are proposed for Growth Areas, defined as within a mile of major transit stops, a half mile of high-quality transit corridors, and near major intersections with access to existing or proposed transit and commercial services. In addition, a total of 120 changes are proposed to implement the Housing Element. These land use changes are required to meet the RHNA as identified in the Housing Element. Furthermore, to maintain consistency with the General Plan Land Use Legend, each lot in Rowland Heights and Hacienda Heights is assigned a General Plan land use designation

that is equivalent to the existing land use designation from existing local plans, which are to be rescinded as part of the Project. In addition, a total of 4,766 properties with multiple land use categories have been updated to reflect the predominant land use and consistency with its context.

Zoning Map

Zone changes are proposed for 22,987 parcels to ensure consistency with the Land Use Policy Map and the Project's overall goals. These include a total of 1,489 changes for selected properties from (1) A-1 (Light Agriculture) to R-2 (Two-Family Residence), R-3 (Limited Multiple Residence), or C-1 (Restricted Business); (2) R-A (Residential Agriculture) to R-2 (Two-Family Residence) or R-3 (Limited Multiple Residence); (3) R-1 (Single-Family Residence) to R-2 (Two-Family Residence); and (4) C-1 (Restricted Business), C-2 (Neighborhood Business), C-3 (General Commercial), or C-H (Commercial Highway) to MXD (Mixed Use Development). In addition, zone changes for 135 properties are required by the Housing Element to implement and meet the RHNA. Furthermore, administrative changes, which represent the majority of zone changes, are proposed for properties to better reflect the existing, on-the-ground uses, correct mapping errors, and eliminate unnecessary split-zoning. Also included are updates to agricultural legacy zoning into consistency with the land use category and existing residential uses of the properties. The majority of proposed zone changes consist of A-1 to R-A (Residential Agricultural) or R-1 (Single-Family Residence). In areas where agricultural or equestrian uses are predominant, the A-1 zoning was maintained. Finally, the "-GZ" Combining Zone is added onto industrial lots that are within 500 feet from sensitive uses such as residences, schools, and parks. The mapping of the Combining Zone makes it easier to identify industrial lots that are subject to existing Green Zones regulations.

Title 22 (Planning and Zoning)

The proposed amendments to Title 22 are as follows:

Planning Area Standards District (PASD)

The PASD is established to enhance the character of the 24 unincorporated communities within the Planning Area. The PASD implements the goals and policies of the ESGVAP. For the full ordinance text, please refer to Attachment 6.

1. **PASD Area Wide Development Standards**

This section contains new standards applicable to the Planning Area. Standards include significant ridgelines protections, biological resource protections, expanded project notification requirements, and pedestrian-friendly parking standards.

2. **PASD Zone Specific Development Standards**

New standards to foster a vibrant public realm and pedestrian-friendly environment in commercial zones include lot coverage limits, requirements for pedestrian amenities, requirements to incorporate building design details and architectural elements, and building height limits.

3. Avocado Heights Community Standards District (CSD)

The existing standards in the Avocado Heights CSD are moved into the PASD with minor revisions to the CSD, including new language to clarify that a Type II (Minor Conditional Use Permit) is required for minor modifications to the CSD and to clarify that existing commercial zone standards apply to the MXD zone, including the 45-foot C-3 Zone height limit.

4. Rowland Heights Community Standards District (CSD)

This CSD is updated to address the design and orientation of commercial development, particularly along the Colima Road corridor and hillside grading. The revisions include requirements to improve the pedestrian experience of commercial areas, provisions for public gathering areas in commercial developments, requirements for specific wall and fencing materials, consistent signage and awning design, compact parking limits, lot coverage increases, and language updates for clarification purposes.

5. Setback and Equestrian Districts

The PASD incorporates the four equestrian districts within the Planning Area. The EQD 5 (Trailside Ranch) and EQD 7 (Avocado Heights) are proposed to be consolidated into one equestrian district, the Avocado Heights Equestrian District, with no changes to the current standards or outer boundaries. The Southwest Puente Setback District, located in Hacienda Heights, is also incorporated into the PASD with no changes to the standards.

Additional Amendments to Title 22

Non-substantive revisions within the proposed PASD ordinance include reorganization within some sections for continuity and adding content and cross references for clarity. Additionally, there are “plain language” edits, as well as edits to correct typographical and formatting errors.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The Project supports the County’s *Strategic Plan Goal I: Make Investments That Transform Lives; Objective I.1.5: Increase Affordable Housing Throughout L.A. County* by allowing higher density housing development in certain areas where appropriate and increasing housing options.

In addition, the Project supports the County's Strategic Plan *Goal II: Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities* by supporting improved transit and walkability of neighborhoods with increased proximity to recreation, retail options, and services. The Project also supports *Strategy II.2.2: Expand Access to Recreational and Cultural Opportunities* by establishing a goal to increase access to neighborhood recreation areas, particularly for identified neighborhoods with high park needs. As the Project supports the implementation of the GZO and commits the County to further explore the feasibility of various strategies that will facilitate industrial land uses and operations that are compatible with neighboring sensitive land uses, it also supports *Strategy II.2.3: Prioritize Environmental Health Oversight and Monitoring*. The Project also supports *Objective II.2.4: Promote Healthy and Active Lifestyles* through policies and zoning that encourage mixed use developments and active transportation such as walking, biking, and other mobility modes to access local services. Moreover, the Project supports *Strategy II.3.5: Support a Clean, Flexible, and Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation System that Improves Mobility* through its multi-modal mobility and active transportation goals, policies, and implementation programs.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Approval of the Project will not result in any significant new direct costs to the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) or other County departments and agencies.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Project supports the General Plan in that it will improve housing choice and affordability for residents of various incomes, promote infill development, support a mix of land uses that promote bicycling and walking, encourage compatible land uses that also foster economic development while addressing environmental justice, improve access to recreational spaces, support conservation of sensitive natural and biological resource areas, and ensure limited impacts to sensitive natural and scenic resources.

In addition to the public hearing conducted by the RPC on August 9, 2023, a public hearing before the Board is required pursuant to County Code section 22.232.040.B.1. Required notice (Attachment 11) has been given pursuant to the procedures and requirements set forth in County Code section 22.222.180. Additionally, the public hearing package has been sent to all local libraries within the East San Gabriel Valley Planning Area and courtesy public hearing notices were emailed to a contact list of stakeholders. A summary of the engagement strategies and activities is included as Attachment 7.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The Final PEIR has been prepared in compliance with CEQA and County environmental guidelines to identify and mitigate any environmental impacts from the Project.

The Notice of Preparation was available for public review from April 28, 2022 to June 1, 2022. DRP held a scoping meeting on May 10, 2022, to provide project information and receive public comments.

The PEIR concludes that the Project would result in less than significant impacts to the following 13 areas: Agriculture and Forestry Resources; Energy; Geology and Soils; Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Mineral Resources; Population and Housing; Public Services; Recreation; Utilities and Service Systems; and Wildfire. The PEIR concludes that the Project would have potentially significant impacts that could be reduced, avoided, or substantially lessened through implementation of mitigation measures to the following areas, requiring a Mitigation Monitoring Program: Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Noise, and Tribal Cultural Resources. However, impacts to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Noise, and Transportation were determined to be significant and unavoidable, requiring a Statement of Overriding Considerations. The Final PEIR and CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations is included in Attachment 8.

The Final PEIR addresses the comments received during the February 27, 2023 to April 12, 2023 public comment period. DRP held a virtual public meeting on March 9, 2023, to discuss the findings of the Draft PEIR. The Project has economic, social, legal, and other considerable benefits that outweigh the significant and unavoidable environmental effects. The Project creates opportunities for housing development, encourages reduction of vehicle miles traveled by placing services near residential uses and promoting other forms of mobility aside from single occupancy vehicles, prioritizes conservation of sensitive natural and scenic resources, supports attainment of state, regional, and County goals for GHG emission reductions, encourages economic development opportunities, supports social equity, and promotes environmental justice.

A mitigation monitoring and reporting program is included in the Final PEIR and is adequately designed to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures during Project implementation.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Approval of the Project will not significantly impact County services.

Should you have any questions, please contact Mi Kim of the Community Studies East Section at mkim@planning.lacounty.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Bodek', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

AMY J. BODEK, AICP
Director of Regional Planning

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Attachments:

1. Project Summary
2. Proposed Amendments to the General Plan
3. Proposed East San Gabriel Valley Area Plan
4. Proposed Land Use Policy and Significant Ridgelines Maps
5. Proposed Zone Change Ordinance and Maps
6. Proposed Title 22 Amendments
7. Engagement Strategies and Outreach Summary
8. CEQA Final PEIR and Attachments
9. Regional Planning Commission Hearing Proceedings
10. Regional Planning Commission Resolution
11. Hearing Notice

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Chief Executive Office
Los Angeles County Development Authority
Fire Department
Public Works