



NOTICE OF PREPARATION
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE UPDATE OF THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO GENERAL PLAN,
ADOPTION OF COMMUNITY PLANS AND
ADOPTION OF AN UPDATE OF THE COUNTY'S DEVELOPMENT CODE

Date: October 5, 2005

To: Interested Agencies, Organizations and Individuals

From: County of San Bernardino – Land Use Services Department, Advance Planning Division

Introduction – The Proposed Project

The County of San Bernardino (County) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the update of the County's General Plan, the preparation of 13 community plans and the update of the County's Development Code. These three actions --- the General Plan update, the community plans and the updated Development Code --- are the "proposed project." The project description, location and the potential environmental effects are contained in this Notice and in the attached materials.

Purpose of the Notice of Preparation

The County is sending you this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to:

- provide a description of the proposed update and related planning efforts;
- provide information on the environmental issues the County has identified for analysis in the Draft EIR; and
- seek your input and comments on the environmental analysis that will be conducted by the County.

As required by CEQA, the County prepared an Initial Study/Environmental Checklist for an initial assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the County's proposed comprehensive update of the General Plan. The Environmental Checklist, which serves as a scoping document to identify the potential impacts that will be addressed in the Draft EIR, is attached to this Notice.

Description of the Proposed Project – Project Title, Location and Description

As already noted, the "proposed project" ---- the update of the County of San Bernardino General Plan ---- consists of three components. First, the County proposes the update of the seven state-required General Plan elements: Land Use, Circulation and Infrastructure, Housing, Noise, Open Space, Conservation, and Safety. As part of the update of these required elements, the County is proposing the adoption of an elective element of the General Plan, an Economic Development Element. Second, the County is proposing the adoption of community plans for 13 areas of the County: Lake Arrowhead, Hilltop, Bear Valley, Crest Forest, Lucerne Valley, Muscoy, Lytle Creek, Bloomington, Oak Glen, Phelan/Pinon Hills, Homestead Valley, Morongo Valley and Joshua Tree. A focus zoning level analysis has also been prepared for the unincorporated portion of West Fontana and the Mentone area. Finally, the County is proposing to update the Development Code to reflect the updated

General Plan and the community plans. The attached map shows the location of the County and the location within the County of the location of the 13 community plans.

The following provides a brief overview of the three components that will be addressed in the EIR by the County:

General Plan - The State of California requires each city and county to prepare and adopt a general plan to identify goals, policies and programs to guide future development of that jurisdiction. Each general plan in the state is to address a variety of issues through the preparation of elements, or chapters organized by topics, relating to the seven state-mandated elements: land use, circulation, housing, safety, noise, open space and conservation. The County of San Bernardino last prepared an update of the County's General Plan in 1989.

The update to the General Plan provides a projection of growth in the County through the year 2030. Text, tables and maps in the draft Plan and its elements identify goals and policies that will guide the development of residential, commercial, industrial, public facilities, transportation facilities and other uses that are desired by the public and decision-makers. The goals and policies in the draft General Plan are based on a review of the 1989 Plan and extensive public input through workshops held over a two-year period in 2002 and 2003. A "Vision Statement" was developed based on public input and drafted by a County-appointed citizen's General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). The Vision Statement was then reviewed by the Planning Commission and subsequently adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in June 2004. The current draft goals and policies are intended to provide a basis for achieving the public's objectives while reducing potential impacts on the environment that may result from development during the 25-year planning horizon incorporated in the update.

Community Plans - The Phase I Scoping of the 2006 General Plan update recommended that the Community Plan program be reinstated to help fulfill the need for development guidance within certain unique communities within the County. Thirteen areas were selected to have a community plan prepared in conjunction with Phase II of the San Bernardino County General Plan update.

Community plans focus on a particular region or community within the overall County's General Plan. As an integral part of the overall General Plan, community plans must be consistent with the General Plan. To facilitate consistency, the community plans build upon the goals and policies of each element of the General Plan. The goals and policies that are included within the community plans are regarded as refinements of the broader General Plan goals and policies that have been customized to meet the specific needs or unique circumstances raised by the individual communities.

As a result, the land use elements within each of the community plans, often the core around which other elements develop, do not propose significant land use changes. Instead goals and policies guide development in a manner that maintains the existing balance of land uses, preserves the character of the community, and complements existing development. To preserve the existing community character many of the land use goals and policies in the Community Plans direct the location and concentration of future development areas consistent with the land use map and the scale and arrangement of future development such that it complements the existing community character.

Development Code - The proposed San Bernardino Development Code (Title 8 of the County Code) would replace the existing Development Code in its entirety. The Development Code implements the policies of the San Bernardino County General Plan by classifying and regulating the uses of land and structures within the County. The purpose of the Development Code is to promote and protect the public health, safety and general welfare of County residents. The purpose of updating the Development Code is to implement policies of the County General Plan, including policies contained in the various Community Plans. In addition, the Development Code will be reorganized and portions will be rewritten to be more understandable and user friendly.

County Seeks Input from Agencies, Organizations and Individuals

We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed General Plan update, the community plans and the Development Code. We also need to know the views and concerns of interested organizations and individuals in order to properly analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed project. Potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the proposed project include impacts to the following:

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

The County will prepare a *Draft EIR* to evaluate these sixteen issues. A brief assessment of the potential impacts on these environmental issues is provided in the Initial Study/Environmental Checklist attached for your review. The Environmental Checklist is also available for review at the following locations:

Land Use Services Office
385 North Arrowhead Avenue
San Bernardino

Land Use Services Office
26010 State Highway 189
Twin Peaks

Land Use Services Office
477 Summit Blvd
Big Bear

Land Use Services Office
15456 W. Sage Street
Victorville

Land Use Services Office
57407 Twentynine Palms Outer
Yucca Valley

The County will also be conducting a series of public scoping meetings to receive public input relative to the Draft EIR. These meetings will be held as follows:

October 18, 2005
Town of Yucca Valley
Senior Center
57090 29 Palms Highway
Yucca Valley
7 pm - 9 pm

October 19, 2005
Victor Valley College
18422 Bear Valley Road
Student Activities Center
Victorville
Free Parking Lot 8 or 9

October 20, 2005
County Government Center
385 North Arrowhead Ave.
Board Chambers -1st Floor
San Bernardino 7 pm - 9 pm

You may attend the meeting of your choice. All three meetings have the same purpose and will follow the same format.

The Environmental Checklist can also be viewed online via the Internet at:

www.sbcountygeneralplan.net or at www.sbcounty.gov/landuseservices

Where to Respond with Comments

Due to the time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to:

Jim Squire, AICP, Supervising Planner
Land Use Services Division, Advance Planning Division
County of San Bernardino
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, 1st Floor
San Bernardino, California 92415-0182
909-387-4147

Attachments:

Project Location Map
Environmental Checklist