

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
STAFF REPORT
VISTA CANYON/ANCILLARY ANNEXATION AREA
MASTER CASE NO. 07-127: ANNEXATION 07-002A & B (INCLUDES AMENDMENTS
TO THE CITY'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE), PRE-ZONE 07-001A & B, GENERAL PLAN
AMENDMENT 07-001A & B,
SPECIFIC PLAN 07-001, TENTATIVE TRACT MAP 69164, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT
07-009, OAK TREE PERMIT 07-019
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT SCH NO. 2007071039

DATE: December 21, 2010

TO: Chairperson Burkhart and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Paul D. Brotzman, Director of Community Development
Jeff Hogan, AICP, Interim Planning Manager

APPLICANT: Vista Canyon, LLC (Vista Canyon Project)

LOCATION: The 185-acre Vista Canyon site is located at the southwest intersection of Sand Canyon Road and State Route 14 (SR-14) in the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County.

The 3,065-acre ancillary annexation area (AAA), which is comprised of the existing Fair Oaks Ranch (approximately 1,082 acres), Jakes Way (approximately 260 acres) and Sand Canyon (approximately 1,723 acres) communities, also is located in the unincorporated County area.

REQUESTS: Annexation of the Vista Canyon site and AAA, which are located adjacent to the City boundary, including an amendment to the City's Sphere of Influence.

A Pre-zone to amend the City Zoning Map by pre-zoning the Vista Canyon site to Specific Plan (SP) and adoption of a Specific Plan Document that includes entitlements for 1,117 dwelling units (96 single-family detached, 1,021 multi-family attached), 646,000 square feet of commercial office, 164,000 square feet of retail, and a 200-room hotel. A residential overlay within the SP would permit the conversion of up to 250,000 square feet of the commercial office area to 233 additional multi-family attached dwelling units, permitting development of the project site with up to 1,350 dwelling units and 700,000 square feet of commercial area.

A pre-zone also would be required for the AAA.

An amendment to the General Plan Land Use Map and Circulation Element designating the Vista Canyon site as SP, revising the Significant Ecological Area (SEA) overlay to correspond to the area proposed as Specific Plan-Open Space (SP-OS), and establishing the alignment and roadway classification for Lost Canyon Road and Vista Canyon Road.

A general plan amendment also would be required for the AAA.

Vesting Tentative Tract Map 69164 to subdivide 185 acres into 162 lots. In addition, each individual dwelling or commercial unit will have the ability to be subdivided.

A Conditional Use Permit to allow for the import of up to 500,000 cubic yards of dirt to accommodate the development within the Vista Canyon site.

An Oak Tree Permit to allow for the removal of 10, four of which are heritage size, of the 41 oak trees located within the Specific Plan area and to encroach into the protected zone of 10 oak trees. The request would also permit the encroachment into the protected zone of 10 oak trees. Pruning or trimming of seven of these 10 oak trees would also be permitted. Implementation of three of the four Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon intersection options could require an additional oak tree removal and/or up to two additional oak tree encroachments.

Review and certification of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the Vista Canyon project and AAA.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The purpose of tonight's hearing is to provide the Planning Commission with the following:

- 1) Responses to questions raised by the Commission at the November 2, 2010 meeting;
- 2) Summarize comments received from the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission at their meeting of November 4, 2010;
- 3) Summarize comments received during the project's DEIR public review period that concluded on December 3, 2010;
- 4) Responses to any remaining Commission questions regarding the DEIR and project; and,
- 5) Receive direction from the Planning Commission on potential project modifications, including resolving outstanding issues.

Future Planning Commission/City Council Meetings

Tuesday, February 15, 2011 Final Project Issues and Recommendation to Council

March 2011 – August 2011 City Council Public Hearings

PROJECT NOTICING/OUTREACH

Several comment letters have raised concerns associated with the noticing of the public hearing for the project. Some of the comments suggest that residents have just become aware of the project. To reiterate, however, the project applicant has had over 50 community meetings on the project. These meetings have included multiple presentations to the La Veda Homeowners Association, Fair Oaks Ranch Homeowners Association, Sand Canyon Property Owners Association and Board, Canyon Country Advisory Committee, as well as numerous meetings with homeowners and community members in the Sand Canyon and Canyon Country area. The project applicant also contacted and met with each of the property owners at the intersection of Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road to discuss the four potential improvement options for this intersection and the impact of each on the their respective properties.

The project applicant has also met several times with the Sulphur Springs School District in regards to the proposed improvements on Lost Canyon Road and other project-related items. The applicant and staff have also reached out to Pinecrest School. Only recently did a representative from Pinecrest School contact the applicant. The representative asked several questions about the project and schedule, and indicated that there would be no need for a presentation from the applicant at this point.

In addition to the public scoping meeting and three EIR Notice of Preparation notices, the City sent a public hearing notice to over 4,300 property owners in the Sand Canyon, Fair Oaks Ranch and Jakes Way areas. Eleven public hearing signs were placed on the property and in the Jakes Way, Sand Canyon and Fair Oaks Ranch areas (three signs were placed on the Vista Canyon project site). A larger than normal public hearing notice was also placed in the Signal. In conclusion, the public outreach and noticing associated with this project have been very extensive.

NOVEMBER 2, 2010 PLANNING COMMISSION QUESTIONS

At the November 2, 2010 Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to complete additional technical work and raised several questions regarding the project. Responses to each of these items are listed below in italics.

1. The Commission directed staff to conduct meetings with property owners within Sand Canyon in order to address concerns with annexation into the City of Santa Clarita.

City staff conducted a community meeting at City Hall on November 17, 2010 for the property owners located south of Placerita Canyon Road in the Sand Canyon portion of

the proposed annexation area. The intent of this community meeting was to discuss concerns and issues raised by the property owners with the proposed annexation of these properties into the City of Santa Clarita. In advance of this meeting, City staff mailed notices to all of the property owners in this area. A total of three property owners attended the meeting. In addition, staff met with several of these property owners individually prior to the community meeting.

Several of these property owners still remain concerned with annexation and as a result, City staff has determined that it would be in the best interest of the City and these property owners to have these properties separated from the Fair Oaks Ranch/Jakes Way/Sand Canyon Area Annexation. City staff will continue to work with these property owners in order to address their concerns. A separate annexation proposal has commenced that would include all of the properties south of the Placerita Canyon Road.

It should be noted that the City's Walker Ranch Open Space property, located south of Placerita Canyon Road, would still be included in the Fair Oaks Ranch/Jakes Way/Sand Canyon Annexation.

2. Provide an overview of the methodology used for the Vista Canyon Traffic Study and the evaluation of project area intersections. Describe the various "Levels of Service" (LOS) in laymen's terms.

For the Vista Canyon Traffic Study, the City of Santa Clarita Traffic Division required that signalized intersections in the City or directly adjacent to the City be analyzed using Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) procedures through a traffic simulation program (Synchro or SimTraffic). HCM procedures include: cycle length, green splits, pedestrian crossings, lane widths, grade, truck traffic, signal coordination, turn lane blockages, and effects caused by upstream or downstream intersections. These factors are considered in the Synchro/SimTraffic software programs, which employ procedures described in the HCM, Transportation Research Board, 2000. HCM methodology assigns an LOS based upon an average delay.

The Intersection Capacity Utilization (ICU) method was selected for the other signalized intersections, all of which are located in Los Angeles County, consistent with County requirements. ICU is a planning-level tool that assigns LOS to an intersection based on its volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio.

It should also be noted that impacts are assessed at intersections based upon operating conditions during a.m. and p.m. peak times, or the most congested times. The following provides a laymen summary of the LOS designations under HCM or ICU methodology and the corresponding traffic conditions for signalized intersections.

- LOS C or better: Short traffic signal cycle lengths with motorists stopped for an average of about 30 seconds or less. Some vehicles are able to pass through intersection without stopping.

- *LOS D: Longer traffic signal cycle lengths (between 35 and 55 seconds). Most vehicles stop at the intersection, but make it through intersection when light turns green.*
- *LOS E: Noticeable traffic congestion, with average delays of 55 to 80 seconds per vehicle. Motorists occasionally wait through two green lights to pass through the intersection.*
- *LOS F: Heavy congestion, with average delays of over 80 seconds per vehicle. Motorists frequently wait through multiple green lights to pass through the intersection.*

For unsignalized intersections (all-way stop), such as Sand Canyon Road and Lost Canyon Road, the following summary applies.

- *LOS C or better: Delayed for a short period of time (takes between 10 and 25 seconds per vehicle to move through the intersection).*
- *LOS D: Takes up to 35 seconds to move through the intersection.*
- *LOS E: Takes up to 50 seconds to move through the intersection.*
- *LOS F: Takes more than 50 seconds to move through the intersection.*

3. Does the project's traffic study include a scenario that analyzes traffic impacts of the project combined with future growth?

Yes. The project's traffic study analyzed seven scenarios. They included:

- *Existing Conditions*
- *2012 No Project Conditions*
- *2012 Plus Phase 1 Project Conditions*
- *Interim (2015) No Project Conditions*
- *Interim (2015) Plus Project Buildout Conditions*
- *Cumulative (2030) No Project Conditions*
- *Cumulative (2030) Plus Project Buildout Conditions*

To evaluate impacts in the future scenarios, the project's traffic study utilizes the Santa Clarita Valley Consolidated Traffic Demand Model (SCVCTDM). Future growth as well as future General Plan roadway improvements are built into the model and utilized to assess Phase 1, interim and cumulative year impacts.

4. Provide additional information on the project’s traffic impacts and mitigation measures and resulting LOS.

The following table identifies the eight impacted intersections (out of 23 study intersections) and describes the LOS under “No Project” and “With Project and Mitigation” conditions. The project would mitigate its impacts to these intersections consistent with City requirements.

Intersection	No Project Conditions - AM (PM) Peak Hour	With Project and Mitigation – AM (PM) Peak Hour	Operating Condition – Post Project vs. No Project Condition
<i>Sand Canyon Road/Soledad Canyon Road</i>	<i>36-D (68-E)</i>	<i>37-D (57-E)</i>	<i>similar in the AM; improved in the PM</i>
<i>Soledad Canyon Road / SR 14 SB Ramps</i>	<i>151-F (132-F)</i>	<i>57-E (80-E)</i>	<i>improved in both AM and PM</i>
<i>Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road</i>	<i>209-F (64-F)</i>	<i>22-C (12-B) *roundabout</i>	<i>substantial improvement in both AM and PM</i>
<i>Soledad Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road (Vista Canyon Road)</i>	<i>42-E (59-F)</i>	<i>14-B (20-B)</i>	<i>substantial improvement in both AM and PM</i>
<i>Sierra Highway/Soledad Canyon Road</i>	<i>44-D (73-E)</i>	<i>52-D (72-E)</i>	<i>similar in AM and PM</i>
<i>Via Princessa/SR 14 SB Ramps</i>	<i>19-B (25-C)</i>	<i>15-B (40-D)</i>	<i>improved in AM; reduced in PM</i>
<i>Via Princessa/SR 14 NB Ramps</i>	<i>34-C (30-C)</i>	<i>19-B (28-C)</i>	<i>improved in AM; similar in PM</i>
<i>Via Princessa/Lost Canyon Road</i>	<i>0.65-B (0.80-C)</i>	<i>0.60-A (0.81-D)</i>	<i>improved in AM; similar in PM</i>

5. Provide additional information on the project’s cumulative traffic impacts to SR-14.

As indicated in the project’s traffic study, the project would significantly impact one segment of SR-14 (SB/NB north of Sand Canyon Road to Soledad Canyon Road). The project’s future trips on this impacted segment are approximately 3.8% of the future traffic growth. A majority of the future trips on SR-14 comes from areas east and north of the Santa Clarita Valley (i.e., Antelope Valley).

There are presently no improvements for SR-14 planned and programmed by Caltrans that would mitigate project impacts, nor is there an established funding program in place to collect developer fees to implement any such planned improvements, resulting in a significant unavoidable impact.

However, the project applicant and Caltrans have worked together and negotiated a Traffic Mitigation Agreement that requires the applicant to pay an in-lieu fee (\$874,000)

to Caltrans for future improvements to SR-14 based upon the project's fair share. These funds will likely be used by Caltrans in conjunction with other public and private funds to plan, design and construct future improvements to SR-14.

6. Provide additional information on the project's cumulative traffic impacts to Soledad Canyon Road.

The project would result in a significant impact to Soledad Canyon Road, between Sierra Highway and Golden Valley Road under cumulative conditions (2030). No feasible improvements are available as this arterial is already constructed to its ultimate width. The project would result in a net increase of 1,500 to 1,800 vehicles per day on this impacted segment, which is expected to carry between 52,000 to 55,000 vehicles per day under cumulative conditions (i.e., project trips would be about 3% of the total volume).

Although these impacts are considered significant and unavoidable, the project trips are a small percentage of the total vehicle trips utilizing this roadway and this roadway segment will operate at an unacceptable LOS under cumulative conditions with or without the project. Additionally, many of the project-related trips would be replacement trips (i.e., commuter trips presently heading to employment opportunities in the San Fernando Valley or downtown LA), and the project would be paying Bridge and Thoroughfare fees or constructing eligible improvements to mitigate and minimize impacts. Finally, the City's General Plan acknowledges that in some cases existing street improvements can not be modified due to right-of-way limitations and that the costs and time associated with acquiring this right-of-way may result in social costs (relocation of businesses and residents) that exceed the value of the improvements.

7. Would a southbound on/off ramp from Vista Canyon Road to SR-14 meet Caltrans requirements? What impacts would a southbound on/off ramp from Vista Canyon Road to SR-14 cause on Vista Canyon Road and Soledad Canyon Road? What is the benefit of a new on/off ramp with Vista Canyon to the on/off ramps at the SR-14/Soledad Canyon Road and SR-14/Via Princessa interchanges?

As indicated at the November 2nd Planning Commission meeting, an interchange in the general location of Lost Canyon Road/Vista Canyon Road undercrossing would not comply with Caltrans requirements due to spacing and other technical requirements. Nevertheless, traffic operations associated with a partial interchange at this location were analyzed under interim (2015) plus proposed project conditions. To complete this task, a three-step process was followed:

Step 1 – Estimate Travel Demand

The interim plus proposed project forecasts were obtained from the Vista Canyon Draft EIR (2010). The amount of traffic entering/exiting southbound SR-14 at the Sand Canyon Road and Via Princessa interchanges was examined and adjustments were made to

reflect anticipated changes in travel associated with new SB off- and on-ramps at Vista Canyon Road. The following changes in travel demand would be expected:

- *Soledad Canyon Road/SR-14 SB Ramps and Soledad Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road intersections – Traffic at these closely spaced intersections would be reduced by 16% during the AM peak hour and 11% during the PM peak hour as a result of a SB on/off ramps at Vista Canyon Road.*
- *Via Princessa/SR-14 SB and SR-14 NB Ramps intersections – Traffic at these intersections would be reduced by 5% during the AM peak hour and 9% during the PM peak hour as a result of a SB on/off ramps at Vista Canyon Road.*
- *Vista Canyon Road under SR-14 – Traffic on this two-lane undercrossing is expected to increase from 9,100 to 12,500 average daily trips (ADT). This increase is due to redistribution of trips to SB on/off ramps at Vista Canyon Road.*

Step 2 – Develop Conceptual Interchange Plans

Within the vicinity of Vista Canyon Road, Soledad Canyon Road parallels SR-14 about 300 feet to the north. This spacing creates challenges to developing geometric alternatives for a new interchange that would comply with Caltrans requirements. The following alternatives were developed:

- *Alternative 1 (Diagonal Off/On Ramps) – features off/on ramps that intersect Vista Canyon Road directly south of Soledad Canyon Road. This alternative would require the acquisition of developed property north of Vista Canyon Road and undeveloped property south of Vista Canyon Road.*
- *Alternative 2 (Roundabout) – consists of a multi-lane roundabout with entry/exit points for motorists to use Soledad Canyon Road, the SR-14 off/on ramps, and Vista Canyon Road.*
- *Alternative 3 (Braided Ramps) – features a SB off-ramp that intersects with Soledad Canyon Road south of Vista Canyon Road. This off-ramp would be “braided” (i.e., grade-separated) with the on-ramp that would begin at Vista Canyon Road and connect with southbound SR-14.*

Step 3 – Evaluate Geometrics and Analyze Traffic Operations

The following describes the evaluation of each alternative from geometric and/or traffic operations perspectives:

- *Alternative 1 (Diagonal Off/On Ramps) – would need to operate as a coordinated traffic signal system given its lane configurations and geometrics. Operations were analyzed using the SimTraffic micro-simulation computer program, which considers the effects of vehicle spillbacks, lane utilization, signal timing, and other parameters on traffic operations. This intersection would operate at LOS F under interim plus project conditions during the AM and PM peak hours. Traffic would spill back under SR-14 to the roundabout at the Vista Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road.*
- *Alternative 2 (Roundabout) – would operate at LOS F during the AM and PM peak hours (see Attachment A). Heavy traffic volumes within the roundabout would result in a lack of available gaps and lengthy delays/queuing on the southbound SR-14 off-ramp and Vista Canyon Road approaches.*
- *Alternative 3 (Braided Ramps) – would consist of a SB hook off-ramp that terminates at Soledad Canyon Road south of Vista Canyon Road. The Caltrans Highway Design Manual requires that such ramps have a radius of at least 150 feet followed by a tangent of at least 150 feet prior to the ramp terminal. These geometric conditions cannot be satisfied given the proximity of Soledad Canyon Road and, therefore, traffic operations were not analyzed for this option.*

Conclusions

Each of the conceptual design alternatives for a SR-14 southbound on/off ramps on Vista Canyon Road has fatal flaws:

- *Resulting interchange spacing would not meet Caltrans requirements.*
- *Ramp terminal intersection would operate at LOS F under Alternatives 1 and 2.*
- *Geometric conditions under Alternative 3 would require design exceptions that would not be approved by Caltrans.*
- *Traffic volume on two-lane segment of Vista Canyon Road under SR-14 would increase from 9,100 to 12,500 ADT, necessitating widening of the roadway.*
- *Acquisition of one or both properties between Soledad Canyon Road and SR 14 would be necessary.*

It should be noted that the mitigation measures contemplated in the Vista Canyon DEIR at the SR-14/Sand Canyon Road and SR-14/Via Princessa interchanges are the project's responsibility and would restore operations at these interchanges to acceptable levels under interim plus project buildout conditions.

8. Revise the Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road signal and roundabout intersection design options to include pedestrian/equestrian crossings.

The exhibits have been revised and incorporate the cross-walk locations for the proposed design options for the Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road intersection. The exhibits are attached to this report (Attachment 1).

9. Provide a LOS comparison of the four intersection design options for the Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road intersection.

<i>Intersection Design Option</i>	<i>AM Peak Hour (Interim Year) – Level of Service (LOS)</i>	<i>PM Peak Hour (Interim Year) – Level of Service (LOS)</i>	<i>Average Delay</i>
<i>Option No. 1 (Four-Way Stop)</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>>50 seconds</i>
<i>Option No. 2 (Look Ahead Signal)</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>>35 seconds</i>
<i>Option No. 3 (Roundabout)</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>B</i>	<i><30 seconds</i>
<i>Option No. 4 (Signalized Intersection – Standard Configuration)</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>>35 seconds</i>

10. Where are the users of the existing Via Princessa Metrolink Station coming from?

The Vista Canyon Traffic Study includes a ridership survey that was conducted at the Via Princessa Metrolink Station. Riders were asked for their home and work ZIP codes. Over 80% of the surveyed riders come from areas north and east of the station, with over 50% of the surveyed riders coming from 91387 (Fair Oaks, Sand Canyon areas).

In addition, Metrolink and the City have identified various constraints associated with the existing Via Princessa Station, which was constructed as a temporary station following the Northridge Earthquake.

- *Parking – A total of 392 parking spaces exist at the Via Princessa Station. The vast majority of parking spaces at this station are filled Monday through Friday. Additional parking is needed in the future to accommodate increased ridership and the Via Princessa site is built-out from a surface parking standpoint. A parking structure could be added to the site; however, the site is oddly configured resulting in a far more expensive structure as compared to the Vista Canyon Station. Further increasing the costs of this structure would be the inclusion of a bus-transfer station within the structure.*

- *Location - The station is located in close proximity to the Santa Clarita Station and both Metrolink and the City believe the overall community would be best served with the station moved farther to the east in closer proximity to the population it is serving.*
- *Safety – The station is located along a curved portion of the tracks, which is in conflict with present Metrolink requirements. Additionally, passengers presently cross the tracks at surface level to access the loading platform. The Vista Canyon Station would be located on a straight portion of the tracks and pedestrian access to the platforms would be from an elevated crossing above the tracks and an undercrossing below the tracks.*

11. Provide additional information on the project's on-site storm drain system to ensure that localized flooding within the project would not occur.

At project buildout, runoff from seven drainage areas would drain from the project site into the Santa Clara River Corridor. Runoff from developed portions of the project site would be directed into water quality treatment improvements and then to a stormwater conveyance system. Consistent with City and County requirements, all on-site drainage systems carrying runoff would be designed for the 25-year design storm (Urban Flood), while storm drains under Lost Canyon Road would be designed for the 50-year storm. Two off-site debris basins would accommodate debris flows from adjacent properties. In light of the above design requirements, the DEIR found the project's on-site drainage impacts to be less than significant.

12. Provide an exhibit illustrating the post-project FEMA 100-yr and 500-yr floodplain. How many times in recent history has a 100-yr flood occurred?

Three floodway exhibits have been prepared that address this comment. The exhibits are attached to the staff report ("Attachment 2").

The first exhibit illustrates the FEMA 100-year Post-Project Sand Clara River Floodplain. As indicated by the exhibit, areas proposed for development on the project site would be outside of the FEMA 100-year, 500-year, and County Q-cap floodways upon completion of the bank stabilization improvements.

The second exhibit provides cross-sections at two locations on the project site. The upstream cross-section shows the top of the buried bank stabilization at an elevation of 1,500 feet. The water surface elevation in a FEMA 100-year storm event would be approximately 1,493 feet. In the FEMA 500-year storm event, the water surface elevation would be approximately 1,495 feet. Under the County Q-cap storm event (estimated to be a 1400-year event), the water surface elevation would be approximately 1,496 feet or four feet below the proposed top of the buried bank stabilization.

The downstream cross-section indicates that the top of the buried bank stabilization would be approximately 1,487 feet. The water surface elevation in a FEMA 100-year

storm event would be approximately 1,480 feet. In the FEMA 500-year storm event, the water surface elevation would be approximately 1,481 feet. In a County Q-cap storm event (1400-year event), the water surface elevation would be approximately 1,483 feet, or again four feet below the top of the buried bank stabilization. As depicted in the exhibit, flood flows would be contained within the project's buried bank stabilization.

Finally, the third exhibit (Flood Histogram) looks at yearly peak flows in the Santa Clara River at Vista Canyon since 1930. In only one year (1969) did peak flows exceed a 50-year storm event. Peak flows in three additional years exceeded a 25-year storm event. Peak flows in all other years varied between a one-year and 25-year event.

13. Provide a timeline for the construction of the future Spring Canyon School.

Consistent with the requirements of the agreement between the applicant and Sulphur Springs School District, the new elementary school shall be completed and ready for occupancy within twenty four months after building permits have been issued for the 400th residential units in Vista Canyon.

The Spring Canyon elementary school site is located within the already approved Spring Canyon project. The Spring Canyon property owner will provide the District with a graded pad and the Vista Canyon applicant (if the Vista Canyon project receives approval) would provide the District with the funding for construction of the school.

14. Summarize the noise impacts associated with the project's proposed Metrolink Station to off-site residential uses.

As indicated in the DEIR, the project also would result in the generation of stationary point noise sources. The new retail, restaurant, office, and residential uses, as well as the Metrolink station, on the proposed project site could introduce various stationary noise sources, including electrical and mechanical air conditioning. These same noise sources currently occur near the project site and contribute to the ambient noise levels that are experienced in all similarly developed areas in the vicinity. Noise levels generated by these sources would not exceed the normally acceptable noise levels identified in the City Guidelines due to their intermittent nature. Therefore, the DEIR concludes that impacts from point noise sources would be less than significant.

Furthermore, the DEIR concludes that off-site residential uses (including homes in Fair Oaks Ranch) and the project's proposed residential and non-residential uses are located at a sufficient distance from the railroad tracks and Metrolink Station to ensure that residential units would not be located in areas with exterior noise levels in excess of 70 dB(A), and non-residential units would not be located in areas with exterior noise levels in excess of 75 dB(A) CNEL.

Concerns were raised by a resident in Fair Oaks Ranch at the last Planning Commission meeting concerning increased noise due to the project and more specifically the

Metrolink Station. As indicated at the last meeting, the DEIR assessed post project noise impacts utilizing real sound level measurements at on-site locations as well as one at the Jan Heidt Metrolink Station. Ambient noise levels at these locations were less than 70 db(A) CNEL. All of these locations were approximately 60 feet from the railroad tracks.

However, to further assess the post-project ambient noise levels, staff directed the environmental consultant to complete additional analysis utilizing measurements from the on-site monitoring location closest to Fair Oaks Ranch. Additionally, since the November 2nd meeting the project applicant has committed to constructing an eight foot tall berm/wall along the southern boundary of the future Metrolink Station to further reduce noise impacts. This berm/wall design is shown in Attachment 3. In light of this additional requirement, the additional analysis includes an evaluation of ambient noise levels with and without the wall/berm in place.

Existing noise levels at the on-site measurement location (approximately 60 feet from the railroad tracks) are 62 db(A) CNEL. The project would increase those noise levels at that location to 67 db(A) CNEL due to project operation (vehicle traffic, Metrolink Station, stationary noise sources, etc.). The closest homes in Fair Oaks Ranch to the Metrolink Station are approximately 300 feet away. At 300 feet the post-project db(A) CNEL would be 63.5 without a noise barrier. Construction of an eight foot tall berm/wall along the southern boundary of the railroad right-of-way adjacent to the Metrolink Station would reduce ambient noise at off-site locations including Fair Oaks Ranch. With the berm/wall the db(A) CNEL would be reduced to 57.5 at 300 feet which is well within the City's Guidelines.

15. Please provide a summary of the project's entitlement/public hearing process, including the annexation process.

The Vista Canyon project includes various entitlements including a pre-zone, annexation, specific plan, conditional use permit, tentative tract map and an oak tree permit. The project is presently at the Planning Commission hearing stage. A DEIR has been prepared and is being considered, along with the project, by the Planning Commission. Based upon the tentative hearing schedule, it is anticipated that the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the project and EIR at its February 15, 2011 meeting. The project would then be scheduled for a public hearing before the City Council. The Council will likely conduct hearings on the project beginning in March/April and concluding in August 2011. If the Council approves the project and certifies the FEIR, the formal application for annexation would be submitted to the Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for consideration. LAFCO would conduct a hearing(s) on the annexation, which is tentatively expected in fall/winter 2011. Upon approval of the annexation by LAFCO, the City project approval would take effect.

PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING

The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission received a presentation on the Vista Canyon project at their November 4, 2010 meeting. The presentation focused on the project’s parks and recreation amenities, including project trail improvements.

Overall, the Commission reacted favorably to the project’s park and recreation amenities. The Commission did offer the following parks-related comments:

- Ensure that the selected intersection design for Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road takes into account pedestrian and equestrians. (Several of the Commissioners believed that a traffic signal design would be preferable in this respect to a roundabout design.)
- Ensure that the proposed trail system provides connection opportunities to future identified trails to the south. (As designed, the project would accomplish this.)
- Conversion of the existing Via Princessa Metrolink Station to a park would create an “opportunity” for a large park on the east side of the City. The County owns an adjacent 25-acre parcel that could be purchased and combined with the City property to create a future community park. Parkland fees from the Vista Canyon project could be used to acquire the County property and install initial improvements.

DEIR COMMENTS

The public review period on the Vista Canyon DEIR closed on December 3, 2010. The City received a total of 25 written comment letters on the project (some parties listed below wrote more than one letter), which are included on a CD (Attachment 4) provided to the Commission. The primary issues or concerns that were raised are summarized in the table below.

AGENCY/PERSON	SUMMARIZED COMMENTS
California Department of Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water reclamation plant requires Regional Water Quality Control Board Permit • recommendations from Department will be incorporated into the referenced Permit
California Regional Water Quality Control Board – Los Angeles Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agrees with EIR's water quality conclusions – no significant impact • water reclamation plant subject to Waste Discharge and Water Recycling requirements
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disagrees with EIR's conclusions related to biology – believes impacts would be significant and unavoidable • off-site mitigation should be incorporated to mitigate biological impacts • create a wider river corridor • City should consider a combination of Alternative 4 (Reduced Development Footprint) and Alternative 5 (Open Space Corridor)
County Sanitation District of Los Angeles County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project is required to annex into service

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> boundaries connection fees will be required
California Department of Fish and Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department appreciates the thorough biological assessments and mitigation measures north/south corridor should be maintained establish multiple areas for on-site lily restoration widen the river corridor based on current project design, a permit would likely include an off-site mitigation requirement to mitigate jurisdiction impacts
Sierra Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project will worsen infrastructure deficiencies narrowing of the river corridor will impact animals project will worsen traffic congestion and air quality green building standards should be incorporated into the project project should be water neutral
Kerry Tabak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> noticing concerns comment period should be extended 90 days project will result in traffic problems at Lost Canyon / Sand Canyon intersection
Carmen and Robert Mooney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90-day extension of comment period noticing concerns 3-way stop, rather than roundabout, at the intersection of La Veda/Lost Canyon Road prefer option 2 for the intersection of Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road concerns about damage to homes on La Veda during construction
Diane Trautman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> traffic and safety concerns loss of aquifer recharge and river habitat area extension of comment period by 60 days
Mike Naoum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional traffic congestion on Lost Canyon Road in front of the schools opposed to the residential overlay and requests affordable housing concerns with development in the SEA and river more parkland is needed, wrong project for the site
County of Los Angeles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> north/south animal movement corridor Specific Plan is consistent with OVOV
South Coast Air Quality Management District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend incorporation of additional mitigation measures related to construction activities
Friends of the Santa Clara River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-day extension of comment period mitigation plan needs to address wetlands loss river corridor needs to be wider

Native American Heritage Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consult with local native American tribe(s)
Carolyn Ingram Seitz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> concern with annexation of properties south of Placerita Canyon Road
Suzanne Silva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extend comment period 90 days
Richard and Carolyn McCool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> traffic concerns – Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road extend comment period 90 days
Penny Upton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> noticing concerns need more time to review EIR and comment project east of Sand Canyon Road are not included in cumulative traffic analysis health issues associated with project grading traffic concerns along Lost Canyon Road in front of the schools off-site parking issues not addressed do not make the easterly Lost Canyon Road connection
WRA Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> concerned with annexation of property south of Placerita Canyon Road

It should be noted that City staff's policy is to accept and respond to all comments received on a project during public hearings, regardless of closure of an EIR comment period.

SAND CANYON ROAD/LOST CANYON ROAD INTERSECTION

As indicated previously, the Planning Commission needs to provide direction to staff on the selection of one of the four intersection design options identified for the Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road intersection. Resulting levels of service for each of the options were referenced previously in this report in response to Planning Commission question no. 9.

The four intersection design options are as follows:

1. Option 1 (Four-Way Stop) – This design option is presently in place at the intersection. The intersection is presently congested in the morning and afternoon (drop off/pick up) when Pinecrest School and Sulphur Springs Elementary School are in session.
2. Option 2 (Signalized Intersection “Look Ahead Signal”) – This design option would result in a signalized intersection, with a “look ahead” signal at the southwest corner to address northbound “line of sight” requirements. Option 2 would preserve the heritage oak tree located east of Sand Canyon Road. This option would not meet all of the City’s signalized intersection design criteria.
3. Option 3 (Roundabout) – This design option would include the installation of a “roundabout” or traffic circle at the intersection. From a traffic operational standpoint, this design option would be the best of the four.
4. Option 4 (Signalized Intersection - Standard Configuration) – This design option improves the intersection of Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road with a fully signalized intersection complying with all of the City’s standard intersection design criteria. This option would result in the removal of the heritage oak tree located east of

Sand Canyon Road.

Based on community comments to date, the signalized intersection design options seem to be preferred, primarily due to concerns with pedestrian and equestrian safety with the roundabout design.

RECOMMENDED PROJECT MODIFICATIONS

Based upon community input and several of the DEIR comments summarized above, staff is recommending that the following modifications be incorporated into the project.

- Eliminate the 26 single-family lots located in the area adjacent to the La Veda neighborhood. The elimination of development in this area would increase the size of the Oak Park to approximately 10 acres, eliminate the removal of one oak tree, and allow for the preservation and enhancement of the north/south animal movement corridor from the River through the project site to undeveloped land to the south. This was one of the design changes included in DEIR Alternative 5 (Open Space Corridor).
- Require, as a condition of approval, the project applicant to retain a qualified biologist to prepare an animal movement/corridor plan, which would include corridor design, specifications for an undercrossing under Lost Canyon Road, and plant materials for the corridor.
- Require the project applicant to construct an eight-foot tall wall/berm in locations along the south Metrolink Station platform consistent with Attachment 3 to reduce train-related noise to off-site properties.
- The applicant and staff are working with an adjacent property owner in the La Veda neighborhood on conditions related to potential dust and vibration impacts due to project development.
- Separation of the properties south of Placerita Canyon Road from the proposed Fair Oaks/Jakes Way/Sand Canyon Annexation with the exception of the City's Walker Ranch Open Space property. In order to continue to work towards addressing property owner concerns related to annexation, this area of the annexation will be separated out into a new annexation.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

- 1) Receive the staff presentation;
- 2) Receive testimony from the public;
- 3) Provide direction to staff on the recommended intersection design option for Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road and the staff recommended project modifications; and
- 4) Continue the public hearing to February 15, 2011, directing staff to return to the Planning Commission with the Final EIR (including Responses to Comments) and resolutions recommending approval of the project and certification of the Final EIR to the City Council.

ATTACHMENTS

Revised Sand/Lost Canyon Road intersection exhibits with cross-walk locations (Attachment 1)
Floodway Exhibits (Attachment 2)
Metrolink Station 8' berm/wall (Attachment 3)
CD of DEIR Comment Letters (Attachment 4)