

county of ventura

October 20, 2015

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: County-Initiated Proposal to Amend the Ventura County General Plan to Incorporate and Reference the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

The Planning Commission and Planning Division recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached Resolution (Exhibit 6) in order to take the following actions:

1. **CERTIFY** that your Board has reviewed and considered the Board letter dated December 9, 2014 (Exhibit 8), and all exhibits therein, and this Board letter dated October 20, 2015 and all exhibits herein, including the Planning Commission recommendations (Exhibit 5), and has considered all comments received during the public hearing process;
2. **FIND** on the basis of the entire record, including the analysis in Section B of the Planning Commission staff report (Exhibit 1) that, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA) Section 15061(b)(3), the proposed amendment is exempt from CEQA;
3. **FIND** based on the substantial evidence set forth in Sections A, B, and C of the Planning Commission staff report (Exhibit 1) and the entire record, that the proposed amendment to the Ventura County General Plan, as shown in Exhibit 7, is in the interest of public health, safety or general welfare and would be internally consistent with all existing elements of the Ventura County General Plan;
4. **ADOPT** the proposed amendment to the Ventura County General Plan (Exhibit 7); and
5. **SPECIFY** the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at 800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 as the custodian and location of the documents and materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. The Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan is not intended to serve as a development commitment and therefore does not include a funding program.



DISCUSSION:

Before your Board is a proposed amendment to the Ventura County General Plan that would incorporate language into the *Goals, Policies & Programs* as well as the *Public Facilities & Services Appendix* of the General Plan adopting the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan. It is important to note that the proposed amendment includes only changes related to the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan. Given the amount of time that has passed since the last General Plan Update, there is a need for additional revisions to the subject sections of the General Plan; however those are not addressed as part of this proposed amendment but will be addressed as part of the upcoming General Plan Update.

1. BACKGROUND:

- (1) In 2004, local Santa Rosa Valley residents formed a non-profit organization, Santa Rosa Valley Trails, Inc. to formally establish a valley-wide equestrian trail system.
- (2) In 2013, Santa Rosa Valley Trails Inc. collaborated with the County of Ventura to prepare the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan.
- (3) On December 9, 2014, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan (Exhibit 8, summarized in Exhibit 2) and directed the RMA Planning Division to prepare text amendments that would incorporate the trail plan, as appropriate, into the General Plan.
- (4) On July 30, 2015 the Ventura County Planning Commission unanimously adopted a resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors adopt the General Plan Amendment to reference the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan (Exhibit 5).

2. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The proposed General Plan amendment will formally recognize the Santa Rosa Valley Trails Master Plan as a recreational resource which must be considered during development review and policy development.

The proposed amendments are shown in Exhibit 3 and consist of revisions to the General Plan *Goals, Policies & Programs* document as well as the *Public Facilities & Services Appendix*. The revisions in the *Goals, Policies & Programs* document consist of the following: (1) Additions to the text in Section 4.10 Parks and Recreation, to refer to the County's work with Santa Rosa Valley Trails, Inc., a private non-profit entity within the Santa Rosa Valley, to prepare the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan; and (2) Minor revisions to the language in Goal 4.10.1.4 and Policy 4.10.2.2 (Exhibit 3).

The revisions to the *Public Facilities & Services Appendix* document consist of the following: (1) Additions to the text in Sections 4.2.1 Modes of Transportation, and Section

4.10.2 Provision of Recreation Facilities to refer to the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan and Santa Rosa Valley Trails, Inc.; and (2) Revisions to the table in Figure 4.10.2 and the map in Figure 4.10.3a to include the Santa Rosa Valley Trails (Exhibit 3).) Since the Planning Commission hearing, a clerical error was observed and corrected in Exhibit 3 as depicted in green.

3. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) COMPLIANCE AND FINDINGS

The proposed project consisting of the above-described General Plan Amendment is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Guidelines (CEQA) Section 15061(b)(3) because it would not cause any physical change and therefore could not have a significant effect on the environment. As noted, this General Plan Amendment is implementing the previously adopted Santa Rosa Valley Master Trail Plan which was previously analyzed under CEQA resulting in the adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration by the Board on December 9, 2014. (Exhibit 8.)

4. PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING

A public hearing was held by the Ventura County Planning Commission on July 30, 2015 to review the proposed General Plan amendment. The Planning Commission staff report, exhibits, public comment letters, staff presentation, and resolution are provided herein as Exhibits 1 through 5. Prior to the hearing, three written comment letters/emails were submitted in support of the proposed General Plan Amendment (Exhibits A, B, and C). There were no public comments during the hearing. The Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors adopt the General Plan Amendment to reference the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan (Exhibit 5).

During its deliberations, the Planning Commission asked why the project is exempt from CEQA. Staff explained it is exempt because the proposed General Plan Amendment would not cause any physical change, as stated in Section 3 above. The Planning Commission also asked if the plan allows the non-profit Santa Rosa Valley Trails, Inc. to exercise eminent domain to obtain trail easements. A nonprofit corporation cannot exercise eminent domain (or be delegated the power to do so). Moreover, the Trail Master Plan does not support the use of eminent domain to gain access to properties, but rather it supports interactions with willing sellers.

5. PUBLIC NOTICE

The Planning Division provided public notice regarding this Board of Supervisors' public hearing in accordance with the Government Code section 65090. Since the proposed project could affect more than 1,000 property owners, a legal advertisement was published in the Ventura County Star, which appeared on Saturday, October 10, 2015.

At the time of the writing of this letter, no comment letters have been received from interested parties.

This letter was reviewed by the County Executive Office and County Counsel's Office. If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact me at 654-2661, or Rosemary Rowan, Long Range Planning Manager, at 654-2461.



Chris Stephens, Director
Ventura County Resource Management Agency

Attachments:

General Plan Amendment to Incorporate and Reference the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan (PL15-0095):

Exhibits from the July 30, 2015 Planning Commission Hearing:

- Exhibit 1 Planning Commission Staff Report
- Exhibit 2 Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan – Executive Summary
- Exhibit 3 Proposed General Plan Amendments in Legislative Format with Staff Explanations and Clerical Corrections
 - Attachment A: Figure 4.10.2: Regional Recreation Facilities (Table)
- Exhibit 4 Staff PowerPoint
- Exhibit 5 Planning Commission Resolution
- Exhibit A E-mail from Mark Burley
- Exhibit B E-mail from Kevin Cannon
- Exhibit C E-mail in Support

Exhibits for October 20, 2015 Board of Supervisors Hearing:

- Exhibit 6 Board of Supervisors Resolution
- Exhibit 7 General Plan (GPP) Amendments
- Exhibit 8 December 9, 2014, Board Letter (Exhibit 1: Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan, Exhibit 2 Mitigated Negative Declaration)