



Planning Commission Staff Report – Hearing on July 30, 2015

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division

800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009-1740 • (805) 654-2478 • ventura.org/rma/planning

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

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

1. **Applicant:** County of Ventura, 800 S. Victoria Ave, Ventura, CA 93009
2. **Request:** The Planning Division requests that your Commission review this staff report and its attachments and recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the staff recommendations stated on pages 3 and 4 below, including approving the proposed amendments to the Ventura County General Plan in Exhibit 3.
3. **Review/Decision-Making Authority:** Pursuant to Government Code §65853, your Commission must review and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the proposed General Plan Amendment, and the Board of Supervisors must then consider your Commission's recommendations and decide whether to approve, deny or modify the proposed General Plan amendment.
4. **Background:** On December 9, 2014, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan (Exhibit 2) and directed the RMA Planning Division to prepare text amendments for the General Plan that would incorporate the trail plan, as appropriate, into the General Plan. The complete Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan is available at:
https://www.ventura.org/rma/rma/pdf/SRV-Master-Plan_Final.pdf.

Before your Commission 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. The General Plan was last updated comprehensively in 1988; a focused amendment was adopted in 2005. Thus, the current General Plan does not reflect the 2014 adoption of the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan.

5. **Proposed Amendment:** 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.

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

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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.

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.

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

The proposed project consists of an amendment to the Ventura County General Plan (Exhibit 3), which is stated above and constitutes a “project” as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code §15000 et seq.). CEQA Section 15061 (b) (3) states:

(b) A project is exempt from CEQA if:

(3) The activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies to projects, which have the potential for causing significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.

Because the proposed General Plan amendment will not result in any physical change to the environment, it has no potential to cause a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, pursuant to Section 15061 (b) (3), the amendment is exempt from CEQA.

C. GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FINDINGS AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Certain findings must be made in order to determine the proposed General Plan Amendment (GPA) is consistent with the Government Code [§65358, §65302.3, §65359]. Two proposed findings and supporting evidence are as follows:

1. The legislative body must deem that the proposed GPA is in the public interest [Gov. Code §65358].

Section 65302(b)(2)(A) of the Government Code states the following:

“Commencing January 1, 2011, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element, the legislative body shall modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan.”

The California General Plan Guidelines issued by the State Office of Planning and Research states the following:

“...active recreation opportunities are important contributors to a community’s quality of life.”

While the proposed and recommended project does not constitute a substantive revision of the circulation element as described in Section 65302(b)(2)(A) of the Government Code, it does include amendments to the Ventura County General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* and the *Public Facilities & Services Appendix* that are specifically directed at developing a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs and desires of the residents of the Santa Rosa Valley, and contributes to the quality of life within that community as well as the greater Ventura County area.

Therefore, based upon the evidence in the record, the proposed GPA is in the public interest.

2. Upon adoption of the General Plan Amendment (GPA), the General Plan must be internally consistent [Gov. Code §65302, §65359].

Proposed amendments to the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* and the *Public Facilities & Services Appendix* include updated information and revisions as they relate to the Board of Supervisor’s adoption of the Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan in December, 2014. The proposed amendment does not introduce internal inconsistencies but simply adds language to ensure the General Plan clearly reflects and includes the adopted Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan in its goals, policies and background information.

Therefore, based upon the evidence in the record, the proposed GPA is consistent with the goals, policies and programs of the General Plan as amended.

D. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. **CERTIFY** that your Commission has reviewed and considered this staff report and all exhibits hereto and has considered all comments received during the public comment process; and
2. **ADOPT** a resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions related to proposed amendment to Ventura County General Plan (Exhibit 3):
 - a. **CERTIFY** that your Board has reviewed and considered the Board letter, the Planning Commission staff report and all exhibits thereto and has considered all comments received during the public comment process;
 - b. **FIND** on the basis of the entire record as set forth in Section B of the Planning Commission staff report that, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA) Section 15061(b)(3), the proposed amendment is categorically exempt from CEQA;
 - c. **FIND** based on the substantial evidence set forth in Sections A, B, and C of the Planning Commission staff report and the entire record, that the proposed

amendment to the Ventura County General Plan is in interest of public health, safety or general welfare and would be internally consistent with all existing elements of the General Plan;

- d. **ADOPT** an Amendment to the Ventura County General Plan (Exhibit 3); and
- e. **SPECIFY** the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at 800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 as the location and custodian of the documents and materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based.

The Board of Supervisors hearing to consider the proposed General Plan amendment is tentatively scheduled on October 20, 2015, in the Board of Supervisor's hearing room.

If you have any questions concerning the information presented above, please contact Chris Stephens at (805) 654-2661 or via e-mail at chris.stephens@ventura.org.

Prepared by:



Chris Stephens, Project Planner

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 2 – Santa Rosa Valley Trail Master Plan Executive Summary
- Exhibit 3 – Proposed Ventura County General Plan Text Amendments