CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
STAFF REPORT
MASTER CASE NO. 10-128
GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 10-002
DRAFT PROGRAM EIR SCH# 2008071133

DATE: March 1, 2011

TO: Chairperson Burkhart and Members of the Planning Commission

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

CASE PLANNER: Jason Smisko, Senior Planner

APPLICANT: City of Santa Clarita

LOCATION: The proposed One Valley One Vision (OVOV) General Plan boundary encompasses the entire incorporated City of Santa Clarita and its adopted sphere of influence in the unincorporated Los Angeles County areas in the Santa Clarita Valley, approximately 53,000 acres.

REQUEST: The City has prepared a comprehensive update to its General Plan and an associated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Planning Area. Development within the City and County shall be consistent with the OVOV Vision and Guiding Principles, developed by the public during community meetings, and which are intended to sustain and enhance environmental resources, economic vitality, and the social well being of its residents. The Draft General Plan sets out a long-range vision and comprehensive policy framework for how the City should grow and develop, provide enhanced public services, and maintain the qualities that define Santa Clarita over the next 20 years and beyond (except where specific policies target other dates as set forth in the plan documents). OVOV serves as a foundation for making land use decisions based on goals and policies related to land use, transportation, population growth and distribution, open space, resource preservation and utilization, air and water quality, noise impacts, public safety, infrastructure, and other related physical, social, and economic factors. OVOV establishes a clear set of development guidelines for citizens, developers, neighboring jurisdictions and agencies, and provides the community with an opportunity to participate in the planning process. The purpose of this General Plan is to comply with State requirements and to provide the City with a comprehensive, long-range policy guideline for future development.

OVOV PLANNING COMMISSION SCHEDULE

Staff is proposing the following schedule for the Planning Commission public hearing process for OVOV:

- *March 1, 2011* – Responses to final project issues; receive public testimony; close public hearing; direct staff to prepare Response to Comments, Final EIR and resolutions of recommendations to the City Council and continue item to April 19, 2011;

- *April 19, 2011* – Final Planning Commission action of considering resolutions of recommendations; and

- *County Schedule* - The County recirculated its revised DEIR the week of November 15th and provided a 60-day comment period to close on January 24, 2011. A December 8th, 2010, Regional Planning Commission (RPC) public hearing was held. At this December 8th RPC hearing, County staff was directed to return on March 23, 2011, with a Final EIR and a resolution recommending approval by the Board of Supervisors. On March 23, 2011, County staff will request a continuance to May 25, 2011.

JANUARY 11th PLANNING COMMISSION QUESTIONS

At the January 18th Commission meeting, Commission members raised several issues regarding OVOV. The questions are listed below with corresponding responses:

1. *Staff was asked to return with the OVOV capacity projections that were previously presented during Planning Commission public hearings on OVOV. These PowerPoint slides are attached to this staff report and will be part of the staff presentation this evening.*

2. *Staff was asked to present examples of regional mixed use projects akin to what OVOV anticipates could be developed in the City of Santa Clarita. This will be part of staff's presentation this evening.*

3. *Staff was requested to provide additional Air Quality data. Attached to this staff report are the air quality exhibits that show the historical pollutant concentrations for the criteria pollutants of concern (ozone, NO_2, CO, and PM_{10}) in the Santa Clarita Valley. Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$) is not monitored in the Santa Clarita Valley so there is no corresponding chart. The gaps in the NO_2 and CO charts are because no monitoring was conducted during those particular years.*

4. *Staff was asked how Level of Service D, E or F is acceptable in terms of traffic/circulation.*

Draft OVOV Circulation Policy C 2.2.4 reads: "Strive to maintain a Level of Service (LOS) D or better on most roadway segments and intersections to the extent practical; in some locations, a LOS E may be acceptable, or LOS F may be necessary, for limited durations during peak traffic periods."

The reason that it may be acceptable to have an intersection operating at LOS E for limited durations during peak periods is because the vehicle driver is not the only constituent or issue to consider for an intersection's effectiveness. Other factors include pedestrians, signal timing, greenhouse gas emissions, bicyclists, noise, air pollution and the securing of right-of-way. In order for these issues to be manageable and balanced, the City has determined that it is acceptable to have intersections operate at LOS E for limited durations and that LOS F may be necessary or unavoidable at times. This is a result of designing an intersection that operates effectively for most hours of the day with reduced environmental impacts compared to building an intersection that operates at LOS D or better 24 hours a day but with significant impacts to the environment and quality of life characteristics.

EIR AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

For CEQA process requirements, and as a result of requests made during Planning Commission public comment, an extended 150-day comment that closed on February 22, 2011, was allocated for this project by the Planning Commission, representing a more than a tripling of the length of time as legally required. Given the complexity and size of OVOV and the desire and willingness to facilitate additional public participation, a 150-day comment period is appropriate.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters the City has received on the OVOV project and/or EIR since the last Planning Commission meeting packet was prepared are attached on a compact disc. These letters and required responses will be included in the OVOV Final EIR.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission receive the staff report, receive public testimony; close public hearing; direct staff to prepare Response to Comments, Final EIR and resolutions of recommendations to the City Council; and continue this item until April 19, 2011.

ATTACHMENTS

Capacity Projections
Air Quality – Santa Clarita Valley Pollutant Graphs
Compact Disc of Agency and Public Correspondence on OVOV and DEIR