



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: October 19, 2010

TO: Chairperson Burkhart and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Paul D. Brotzman, Director of Community Development  
Lisa M. Webber, AICP, Planning Manager

CASE PLANNER: Jeff Hogan, AICP, Senior Planner  
Patrick Leclair, Associate Planner

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 communities (approximately 1,723 acres), 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 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 prepared for the Vista Canyon project and the AAA.

## **PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

The intent of this meeting is to open the public hearing, provide the Planning Commission with an overview of the Vista Canyon project, including the Specific Plan, and establish a tentative meeting schedule for the project. In addition, the purpose of tonight's meeting is to provide the Planning Commission with a summary of several of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) sections (pages 23 – 38 of this report) that will be distributed to the Planning Commission during tonight's October 19, 2010, Planning Commission meeting.

Staff is proposing the following dates for the project:

Tuesday, July 20, 2010	Project Site Tour
Tuesday, October 19, 2010	Project Introduction, Specific Plan and overview/discussion of several sections of the DEIR (Geotechnical Hazards, Land Use, Solid Waste Disposal, Education, Library Services, Fire Services, Sheriff Services, Human-Made Hazards, Population, Housing and Employment, Cultural

Resources, Agricultural Resources, Utilities, Ancillary Annexation Areas)

Tuesday, November 2, 2010

Overview of and discussion on the remaining sections of the DEIR (Flood, Traffic and Access, Air Quality, Noise, Biological Resources, Water Services, Water Quality, Parks and Recreation, Visual Resources, Santa Clara River Corridor, Wastewater Disposal, Global Climate Change, Project Alternatives)

Tuesday, December 21, 2010

Response to Planning Commission and public issues/concerns, DEIR discussion

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

Response to Planning Commission and public issues/concerns, Final Project Issues and Recommendation to Council

March, 2011 – August, 2011

City Council Public Hearings

## **BACKGROUND**

### *VISTA CANYON APPLICATION*

On June 29, 2007, Vista Canyon (herein referred to as the “applicant”) submitted an application for an Annexation (includes amending the City’s Sphere of Influence), General Plan Amendment, Pre-zone, Specific Plan, Tentative Tract Map, Conditional Use Permit and an Oak Tree Permit to allow for the construction of a mixed-use/transit-oriented development consisting of residential, commercial, office, retail, theater, and hotel uses. The applicant of Vista Canyon controls approximately 142 acres of the 185-acre site. The City of Santa Clarita owns the remaining 43 acres, which is mostly in the Santa Clara River Corridor but also in portions of the proposed Planning Areas 3 and 4. The applicant is proposing to purchase a portion of the City’s property (approximately 12 acres), based upon its appraised value, and then dedicate approximately seven acres back to the City along with the applicant’s ownership within the Santa Clara River Corridor. Specifically, development of the City property which is outside of the River Corridor would include a River Education Center and parking spaces (which would be dedicated to the City), Lost Canyon Road, a private recreational area, and 10 residential units.

In addition to Vista Canyon’s application, the City is concurrently proceeding with the annexation of various properties surrounding the Vista Canyon site, which currently are located under the jurisdiction of the County of Los Angeles. In total, the AAA project includes approximately 3,065 acres, including Fair Oaks Ranch (approximately 1,082 acres), Jakes Way (approximately 260 acres), and Sand Canyon area (approximately 1,723 acres). The AAA would also include a Pre-zone, General Plan Amendment and an amendment to the City’s Sphere of Influence. This issue is discussed in detail under the Ancillary Annexation Area section of the Vista Canyon DEIR.

### *VISTA CANYON HISTORY*

The Vista Canyon site was originally a portion of Mitchell Ranch, which was first settled in 1860 by Thomas Mitchell. Thomas Mitchell was born in Virginia, subsequently moving to Texas where, in 1852, he served under Sam Houston in the Texas Mounted Volunteers. He went to California shortly thereafter, spending approximately eight years in the northern California mining districts. In 1860, he moved to the Santa Clarita Valley to start a cattle ranch. Initially, he transported a dismantled miner's cabin down from Tehachapi and erected it on the property, more specifically in the southeastern portion of the project site. A few years later he married Martha Taylor and built a more commodious adobe, about 40 feet from the original cabin. The adobe was 60 by 45 feet in size and redwood shingled.

Eventually, Mitchell increased his holdings to nearly a thousand acres, raising cattle, producing honey, and farming. With increasing population, and thus children, in the valley, the Sulphur Springs School District was founded, circa 1872. The school opened initially in the kitchen of the Mitchell's adobe, was taught by Mrs. Mitchell, and was the first school building in the Santa Clara Valley area. Circa 1885 the student population had outgrown the single room and a wooden schoolhouse was constructed at Sulphur Springs, on land donated by Mitchell. The Sulphur Springs school location is directly east of the project site. Mitchell built a two-story home on the project site in 1888, then using the adobe as a guesthouse. Bricks from the adobe were eventually removed from the property and the school/adobe was reassembled at Heritage Junction in Hart Park in Newhall.

In addition to the original miner's cabin, adobe, two-story wooden house, and likely a number of outbuildings, a family cemetery was also present on the Mitchell Ranch. This was used to inter the Mitchell family, and their friends and neighbors. None of the buildings referenced above remain on the Vista Canyon site. The cemetery is still present and would be preserved and enhanced by the project proposal.

### *VISTA CANYON'S SITE CHARACTERISTICS/EXISTING CONDITIONS*

The project site is irregularly shaped and consists of approximately 185 acres. The project site includes the sandy bottom of the ephemeral Santa Clara River, a small elevated terrace on the northeastern portion of the project site, and a larger elevated terrace that forms the southern half of the project site. These terraces drain towards the River. Elevations on the project site range from a high of 1,555 feet above sea level at the northeastern portion of the site, to a low of 1,465 feet above sea level in the middle of the Santa Clara River.

The project site is comprised primarily of undeveloped, disturbed land, except for an equipment storage yard and a single-family residence located on the western side of the project site, and the Mitchell family cemetery located on the small elevated terrace on the northeastern portion of the project site. Remains of the Mitchell family homestead also are located on the southeastern portion of the project site, within the proposed Oak Park. These remains consist primarily of building foundations and fencing associated with past ranching and agricultural operations.

Environmental conditions on the project site have been altered substantially by historical uses of

the property, including outdoor storage, agricultural cultivation, grading, and residential uses. Unauthorized dumping also has occurred on the project site. There is little remaining natural vegetation remaining with the exception of a vegetated area on the southeastern portion of the project site that includes oaks and introduced grasses.

### *ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW*

After project submittal, staff determined that an EIR would be required for this project. Subsequently, the City sent out "Request for Proposals" for an environmental consulting firm to prepare an EIR. After interviewing several firms, Impact Sciences was awarded the contract on January 22, 2008. The intent of the EIR is to identify and address all of the environmental impacts of the project and AAA.

In July 2007, staff circulated the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Vista Canyon EIR to approximately 80 agencies for written comments and, due to project modifications, then re-circulated a revised NOP in February 2008. A third NOP was circulated in October 2009 to account for the proposed the AAA. All of the agencies' comments and concerns have been addressed in the EIR. A Scoping Meeting was conducted on February 27, 2008.

The DEIR public review period commences October 19, 2010 and will end December 3, 2010. Presentations of the above mentioned DEIR sections will begin at tonight's meeting and are summarized later in this report.

### *SITE PLAN REVISIONS*

For months leading up to the applicant's formal application to the City and over the last three years, staff and the applicant have been working on finalizing the site plan for the project. This technical review of the site plan has, so far, resulted in a reduction of oak tree impacts, an improved internal roadway system, and an improved trail and park design. City staff and the applicant are continuing to work out the details related to Vista Canyon's proposed park site. City staff will be presenting park-related issues to the Parks and Recreation Commission on November 4, 2010. City staff will then present the Parks Commission recommendation to the Planning Commission for its consideration. Other outstanding staff related issues with the project include identification of one of the intersection improvement options for the Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road intersection and the locating of single-family homes along the railroad tracks in Planning Area 3.

### *PUBLIC OUTREACH*

Upon formal submittal in 2007, City staff encouraged the applicant to immediately begin meeting with the surrounding neighborhoods. The applicant to date has had nearly 50 community meetings on the project. These meetings have included meetings with the Sand Canyon HOA, Fair Oaks HOA and the residents on La Veda Avenue on numerous occasions over the past three years in order to solicit input and feedback that can be incorporated into the project. Some of the issues or concerns identified during these meetings include, but have not been limited to, the Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road intersection, overall traffic and

circulation (including reducing cut-through traffic), parking on Lost Canyon Road, noise and dust. All of the community concerns identified during these meetings have either been addressed, have been highlighted in the DEIR, or are continuing to be worked on by City staff and the applicant and will ultimately be discussed and addressed through the public hearing process.

### **GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION, ZONING, SURROUNDING LAND USE**

The approximately 185-acre site is presently located in unincorporated Los Angeles County, directly adjacent to the City of Santa Clarita. The Los Angeles County Land Use Map designates the property as M (Industry) and W (Floodplain/Floodway). The property is currently zoned M-1.5 (Light Industrial), A-1-1 (Light Agriculture – 1 acre minimum lot size), R-A-8,000 (Residential Agriculture – 8,000 square foot minimum lot size), and A-1-10,000 (Light Agriculture – 10,000 square foot minimum lot size). Under the existing County light industrial zoning designation of M-1.5 and taking into account parking and landscaping requirements, the industrial zoned portion of the project site could be developed with approximately 1.0 million square feet of light industrial up to 170 single-family residential units.

The project site also is included in the Planning Area of the City of Santa Clarita General Plan. The City's adopted Land Use Map designates the property as BP (Business Park) with a portion of the site covered by a Significant Ecological Area (SEA) overlay. The City's General Plan Land Use Concept identifies the project site as a "major sub-center" with Business Park/Office Uses. Under the Business Park designation and taking into account City parking and landscaping requirements, the property could be developed with approximately 4.35 million square feet of business park floor area.

The County of Los Angeles and City of Santa Clarita are presently completing One Valley One Vision (OVOV) – a joint effort, initiated in 2000, between the City and County to create guidelines for the future growth and development of the Santa Clarita Valley while also preserving natural resources. The jurisdictional planning boundaries established in OVOV include the City and its four communities (i.e., Canyon Country, Newhall, Saugus and Valencia), and the County communities of Stevenson Ranch, Castaic, Val Verde, Agua Dulce, and the future Newhall Ranch.

The County of Los Angeles in the draft OVOV Land Use Plan (dated October 2008) designates the project site as UR2 (Urban2 - five dwelling units per acre) with an SEA overlay over portions of the project site. Under this draft land use designation, the project site could be developed with up to 700 residential units. However, various goals and policies within OVOV encourage transit oriented development (TOD) through the permitting of higher densities and intensities, and would allow for mixed-use, compact development in close proximity to new or existing rail stations and/or multi-modal transit facilities. As proposed, Vista Canyon includes both a new rail station and multi-modal transit facility.

Surrounding land uses include primarily residentially developed land. Residential development, commercial development and SR-14, are located to the north of the project site. The Colony Townhomes, a multi-family residential community, is directly west of the project site. The Fair

Oaks Ranch community, which is comprised of single-family and multi-family residential units, an elementary school, and community park, lies to the south and west. The existing Metrolink rail line is located to the south of the project site. The La Veda and Lost Canyon residential areas, which consist of homes, and a public and private elementary school, lie to the east. The Santa Clara River bisects the project site.

The applicant is proposing a General Plan Amendment and Pre-zone to Specific Plan (SP). The Specific Plan land use designation would consist of (R) for Residential, (MU) for Mixed Use, (OS) for Open Space, and (O) for Other that would include roads, public facilities and private recreational areas.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### *VISTA CANYON PROJECT SUMMARY*

The project applicant proposes to develop the approximately 185-acre Vista Canyon project site with 1,117 dwelling units (96 single-family residential lots and 1,021 attached condominiums (up to 579 of these attached condominium units may be rented or leased)), and up to 950,000 square feet of commercial and medical office, retail, theater, restaurant, and hotel uses within four Planning Areas. A residential overlay over the corporate office campus site would allow for a conversion of up to 250,000 square feet of office floor area to 233 attached residential units. If implemented, this conversion would permit a maximum of 1,350 residential units and 700,000 square feet of commercial floor area.

The project would result in the construction of a new Metrolink station and bus transfer station. There would also be approximately 18 acres of parks/recreation facilities, including the Oak Park, Town Green, Community Garden, River Education/Community Center, private recreation facilities, and project trails. Up to six private recreational facilities would be constructed throughout the project. Further, there are approximately 10 acres of proposed public streets, including the extension of Lost Canyon Road from Fair Oaks Ranch to Vista Canyon Road and the construction of the Vista Canyon Road Bridge to connect Lost Canyon Road and Soledad Canyon Road.

### *VISTA CANYON*

#### **Planning Areas**

Vista Canyon is divided into the following four distinct planning areas:

Planning Area 1 (PA-1). PA-1 consists of approximately 12 acres located within the southwest portion of the site. This area would be built out to accommodate a maximum of 600 attached, multi-family condominiums. Up to 359 of these condominium units may be leased or rented. Three private recreational areas, trails, water quality improvements, surface and structure parking, and other open areas would be provided within PA-1. The water reclamation plant would also be located in PA-1. The maximum building height in PA-1 is 50 feet (excluding architectural elements, which can extend up to a maximum

height of 60 feet).

Planning Area 2 (PA-2). PA-2 consists of approximately 30 acres, located within the south central portion of the Specific Plan site. PA-2 would be built out to accommodate up to 220 attached residential condominium units (e.g., apartments, live/work units, residential flats, residential over retail), including two private recreation areas. All of the residential units in PA-2 may be leased or rented. In addition, PA-2 includes 596,000 square feet of office space; 158,000 square feet of retail space (including restaurants and a theater); a 200-room hotel (approximately 140,000 square feet in size); up to four parking structures and accessory surface and subterranean parking; the City/Metrolink transit center; Vista Square; Pedestrian Plaza; Community Garden; and associated parks, trails, swales, private drives, and public streets. Recreational areas, trails, water quality improvements and other open areas also would be provided within PA-2. The maximum height in PA-2 for retail/commercial buildings is 55 feet (excluding architectural elements which can extend up to a maximum height of 66 feet). Excluding architectural elements, the maximum heights for the office buildings in PA-2 located north of "C" Street is 95 feet, and 60 feet for office buildings located south of "C" Street. Architectural elements could extend up to 114 feet and 72 feet, respectively. All residential structures within PA-2 would have a maximum height of 50 feet (excluding architectural elements which could extend up to 60 feet).

PA-2 includes a mix of office, retail, and residential uses oriented around "Main Street" (Vista Square), "Plaza at Vista Square," and theater. Vista Square includes diagonal on-street parking, sidewalks, landscaping, public amenities (e.g., benches, bike racks, and outdoor dining), and other traffic calming features to balance the needs of pedestrians with those of cars, and to enable pedestrian-oriented shops, restaurants, and services. The approximately 1.6 acre Town Green is also in PA-2.

Within PA-2, there is a residential overlay that allows for the conversion of up to 250,000 square feet of office uses to a maximum of 233 attached residential units. If the conversion is implemented, the allowable development would be a maximum of 1,350 residential units and 700,000 square feet of commercial uses.

Planning Area 3 (PA-3). PA-3 consists of approximately 46 acres, located within the southeast portion of the Specific Plan site. PA-3 would be built out to accommodate up to 297 single-family or multi-family attached units. PA-3 as designed, includes 201 attached for-sale units and 96 detached single-family units. The maximum height of the residential structures within PA-3 is 35 feet. The 7-acre "Oak Park" within PA-3 would be improved and dedicated to the City, while the private park and recreation facilities would be utilized by future residents and maintained by a homeowners' association. Trails, water quality improvements and other open areas also would be provided within PA-3.

Planning Area 4 (PA-4). PA-4 consists of approximately 12.8 acres, located within the northeast portion of the Specific Plan site. PA-4 would be built out to accommodate up to 56,000 square feet of office, retail/commercial, restaurant, and recreation uses. Residential units are prohibited in PA-4. This area also would include the River

Education/Community Center overlooking the Santa Clara River Corridor. Additionally, trails, water quality improvements and other open areas would be provided within PA-4. The maximum height of buildings within PA-4 is 35 feet (excluding architectural elements which could extend up to 42 feet).

The existing Mitchell Family cemetery is located within PA-4, between SR-14 and the Santa Clara River. The applicant would preserve and restore the cemetery and integrate it with other development in PA-4.

The Specific Plan would permit flexibility in street design and location as well as residential and commercial product type and location. The proposed project includes other areas within its boundaries. These areas include the buried bank stabilization/protection along the north and south side of the Santa Clara River, the reach of the Santa Clara River Corridor and the public streets and private drives in and out of the project site.

#### Primary/Secondary Vehicular Circulation

Vista Canyon's roadway network is designed as an orderly extension of the regional circulation pattern in the Santa Clarita Valley. The proposed development patterns within the site, integrated with existing and proposed roadway alignments, form the basis for this network. The project is designed to integrate modes of travel, accommodate anticipated traffic demands generated by the Vista Canyon and surrounding development, and provide roadway extensions and improvements that ultimately would connect existing development and the proposed project to the SR-14 corridor and the rest of the Santa Clarita Valley.

Vehicular access to and from Vista Canyon is proposed from four existing roadways. Primary access to the site would be from: (a) Soledad Canyon Road, via the proposed Vista Canyon Road Bridge, to the north; (b) the westerly Lost Canyon Road within Fair Oaks Ranch, which would be extended to Vista Canyon, connecting with Jakes Way at a roundabout; (c) Jakes Way, which would be extended easterly from its present terminus to Lost Canyon Road; and (d) after the Lost Canyon Road/Jakes Way roundabout, Lost Canyon Road would traverse easterly through Vista Canyon and terminate at a roundabout with the new Vista Canyon Road. Secondary access to and from the Vista Canyon would be from the easterly terminus of Lost Canyon Road near existing La Veda Avenue; this access is designed with a roundabout, an internal traffic loop, and other traffic calming features to minimize "cut-through" traffic. A more detailed summary/discussion of circulation will be discussed during the November 2, 2010 Planning Commission meeting.

#### Grading

The total amount of soil to be cut from the project site is estimated at 590,000 cubic yards (cy). The total amount of fill is estimated at 830,000 cy. This cut and fill grading would be in addition to 1.7 million cubic yards of remedial grading required for the project. Approximately 500,000 cy of soil would be imported to the site; including the 240,000 cy difference between the project's cut and fill and the additional fill needed to compensate for soil shrinkage associated with soil compaction. Dirt would be hauled to the project site from the off-site locations via

## Lost Canyon Road through Fair Oaks Ranch.

Additionally, grading activities will require import of dirt from southern portions of the project site to northern portions of the project site for the construction of the buried bank stabilization improvements. To facilitate this action, a temporary at-grade internal haul route, at a width of 35 feet, would be constructed within the Vista Canyon Road bridge corridor and used for up to nine months.

## Transit

The project is designed to create a variety of alternatives to the use of automobiles. The project proposes relocation of the Via Princessa Metrolink Station to the Vista Canyon project site as part of this "Transit Oriented Community." This would be accomplished by providing the land and partnering financially with the City and Metrolink on facilities needed for the City/Metrolink transit center, located north of the existing Metrolink rail line along the southern boundary in PA-2. The transit center would consist of a Metrolink passenger rail station and a City transit station.

The Metrolink station component of the center would include construction of the platforms and accessory station improvements within the Metrolink right-of-way, including: construction of approximately 3,500 feet of a second main line; new turnout and a new signal; construction of approximately 1,000 linear feet of intertrack fencing; and, associated grading. The station will likely be constructed in two phases with the first phase including construction of the north platform, portions of the second main line, and adjacent surface parking. The second phase would include construction of the south platform, the pedestrian overpass and undercrossing and the adjacent parking structure and bus-transfer station.

At build-out, one 4-story, 5-level parking structure, providing 750 parking spaces, would be utilized for transit users during Metrolink's hours of operation and be part of the shared parking pool for PA-2 during evening and weekend hours. The parking structure also would include restroom facilities and a security/waiting room. Vehicular access to the Metrolink station would be primarily from Vista Canyon Road.. In addition, a pedestrian overpass from the third level of the parking structure to the north platform and a pedestrian underpass to the south platform would be constructed.

The City's transit station component of the center would include a bus transfer facility, similar to the station currently operated by the City at McBean Parkway and Valencia Boulevard. The bus transfer facility would consist of seven bus bays arranged around a loop road with covered passenger shelters. Vehicular access to the transit station is the same as the access to the Metrolink station.

## Park and Recreation

The project provides opportunities for active and passive recreational opportunities. The three primary recreational amenities associated with Vista Canyon include the 7-acre Oak Park, 1-acre Town Green, Community Garden and River Education Center. Up to six private recreational facilities would be provided in the project.

The project includes the following active and passive parks that would be accessible to the public:

- The proposed 7-acre Oak Park would be located in the southeast portion of the project site, in PA-3. The park would include an approximately 2-acre oak tree preserve for passive uses, and the remaining 5-acres would be developed with improvements similar to a neighborhood park. The park would be dedicated to the City.
- The proposed 1-acre River Education Center would be located north of the Santa Clara River, within PA-4. The center would consist of a building ranging in size from 1,000 to 2,500 square feet of building space and would be dedicated to the City.

Vista Canyon would include the following private recreation facilities, totally approximately 4.18 acres:

- The Community Recreation Area would be located within PA-3, and would consist of a pool, clubhouse, and three tennis courts. Multifamily recreation areas and courtyards are located adjacent to multifamily uses on the western portion of the project site, in PA-1 and PA-2.
- The proposed .4-acre Community Garden would be located within PA-2, and would be centrally located for residents on the site. The garden and amenities would be available for residents and would be owned and maintained by a property owners association.
- The proposed 1.6-acre Town Green would be adjacent to the Metrolink transit center on the southern portion of the project site. The Town Green could be developed with a small amphitheater, picnic area, and sitting area. The area would be accessible to the public, though it would be owned and maintained by a property owners association.

The project's trail system links all of the planning areas to each other and the Santa Clara River Regional Trail. The project proposes over 4 miles of bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails throughout the site. The primary trails include extensions of the Santa Clara River Trail and the Oak Park Trail, which would extend from Oak Park in PA-3 westerly to the town center in PA-2. Another trail, the Loop Trail would begin at Lost Canyon Road near the existing La Veda Avenue and extend along the Vista Canyon's easterly and southerly boundaries terminating in PA-1. The trail system also would include direct connections to the City's existing regional trail system and the Santa Clara River Regional Trail, providing recreation opportunities for local residents and the region. The trails would provide connectivity to the living, shopping, work, entertainment, office, park, and recreation facilities throughout the site. It should be noted that

most of the project's residential units would be located within ¼ mile of commercial, transit and employment uses.

- Santa Clara River Regional Trail

The Santa Clara River Regional Trail is located on both the north and south sides of the Santa Clara River, and would provide a recreational amenity and open space within the project site for local residents and residents from surrounding communities. The project's extension of this regional trail would represent an important recreational feature of the project, allowing both active and passive enjoyment along the Santa Clara River. The project's trail design would accommodate combined pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian uses.

The extension of the Santa Clara River Regional Trail also would provide a direct connection to Vista Canyon Road, providing access into Vista Square and PA-2. This trail extension would be 34-feet wide, located along the Santa Clara River, and provide access for the maintenance of bank stabilization, water quality improvements, utilities, and other flood control improvements.

- Community Trails

The project would include numerous pedestrian and bicycle community trails, internal to the project, providing trail access to the Santa Clara River Regional Trail, Oak Park Trail and Loop Trail. These trails would provide access to the project's amenities and serve to link the various land uses within the project site.

### Santa Clara River

Vista Canyon includes a reach of the Santa Clara River between the terminus of existing Jakes Way to the west and existing La Veda Avenue to the east. This reach, which is under the jurisdiction of the Army Corp of Engineers (Corps) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), is dry except after periods of heavy rainfall, generally occurring during the winter months.

The Santa Clara River is a regionally significant biological resource due to the riparian habitat in the River and its function as a regional east-west wildlife corridor within the Santa Clara River watershed. As part of the project, a River Corridor has been delineated corresponding to the area designated SP-OS. This River Corridor is designed to be sufficiently wide to handle flooding while retaining and enhancing the majority of the riparian habitat that exists in the River on the project site. This reach of the Santa Clara River has been highly disturbed. The project includes dedication of the River Corridor (74.5 acres) to the City, requires mitigation of project impacts within the River Corridor through restoration and enhancement, provides for transition areas between the River Corridor and development, restricts recreational uses, and includes long-term monitoring and maintenance of the River Corridor.

The proposed soil cement bank protection on the north bank of the Santa Clara River is located

south of SR-14. The bank protection alignment begins at the westerly edge of PA-4 at Mitchell Hill. Mitchell Hill is an exposed bedrock formation that is approximately 40-feet above the elevation of the River and, based upon its geologic formation, does not require river bank erosion protection. The proposed "north bank" extends approximately 3,000 linear feet from Mitchell Hill downstream and terminates near the project's northwest boundary, adjacent to SR-14. The bank protection is designed to protect the north bank against potential erosion and flooding, and also is necessary to protect the Vista Canyon Road Bridge north abutment from erosion and flooding. Portions of the north bank stabilization would replace existing rip-rap flood control improvements, generally located west of the existing Lost Canyon Road/SR 14 undercrossing. The proposed soil cement bank protection on the south bank of the Santa Clara River is located between the easterly project boundary near existing La Veda Avenue and the westerly project boundary near the existing Colony Townhomes. The proposed "south bank" is approximately 4,500 linear feet with the horizontal alignment extending from approximately 1,400 feet downstream of Sand Canyon Bridge to 1,100 feet upstream of SR-14 Bridge. The bank protection is designed to protect the proposed project and the southerly abutment of the Vista Canyon Road Bridge from potential erosion and flooding. A more detailed summary/discussion of the River Corridor will be discussed during the November 2, 2010 Planning Commission meeting.

### Sustainability

The Vista Canyon project includes project design features to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with site development, and promote a sustainable community.

For example, because mobile source emissions (i.e., emissions resulting from the fossil fuel combustion associated with motor vehicle travel) account for roughly half of GHG emissions from residential developments, the proposed project includes a number of design features intended to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled by future residents and occupants of Vista Canyon. Project-related traffic reduction measures include the creation of a mixed-use community (with jobs, transit and services in close proximity to homes), the placement of retail land uses within 0.5 mile of commercial/residential/office/recreation areas, the accommodation and implementation of public transit options (Metrolink station and bus transfer station), and the provision of trails, bicycle lanes and sidewalks to encourage non-vehicular options.

The other primary contributor of GHG emissions within the project would be the energy use required for residential and non-residential buildings. All proposed future residential and non-residential buildings would exceed the 2008 Title 24 standards, which are effective January 1, 2010, by a minimum of 20 percent. Additionally, the applicant will install 80,000 square feet of solar on rooftops (or equivalent) or parking structures within the project. The project will also provide ENERGY STAR appliances and the use of solar heating for pools within the project.

The applicant's provision of property and a portion of the funding for a new multi-modal transit center to facilitate transit, reduce automobile trips, and direct pedestrian access to and from such facilities through trails and sidewalks that connect to the project's residential, retail/commercial, and office areas also serve to promote sustainable development. In addition, the project would provide opportunities for new employment in the eastern Santa Clarita Valley, with office, retail,

and live/work uses integrated within a street system oriented around a "Main Street" (Vista Square Drive). A diversity of housing types are also provided, in conjunction with a proposed trail system and public and private parks connecting to the town center design and the new City/Metrolink transit center.

For the Planning Commission's reference here is a list of those specific Vista Canyon components that make it a sustainable community:

- 1) Mix of Land Uses. Vista Canyon would include a broad range of housing types, along with retail/commercial/office and associated facilities. To minimize and shorten vehicular trips, all residential units would be within walking distances to Vista Canyon's mixed-use, retail/commercial, and office uses. Vista Canyon also would create opportunities for non-vehicular travel and encourage pedestrian mobility by providing an internal trail/sidewalk circulation system that links residential neighborhoods to nearby schools, area parks, and adjacent park and recreation areas.
- 2) Provision of Jobs. The project is projected to provide up to 4,000 new jobs in its retail/commercial and office areas. When combined with other job centers in the Santa Clarita Valley, Vista Canyon would help the Santa Clarita Valley's jobs-housing base, which is critical to establishing a sustainable community because it allows people to work close to home and minimize vehicle miles traveled.
- 3) Locating Residential in Close Proximity to Commercial/Retail/Public Spaces. All of the residential units in the project would be located within walking distance of retail/commercial and office areas. Residents within Vista Canyon would be able to utilize trails, sidewalks, and the Santa Clara River Regional Trail to walk to retail/commercial centers, offices, public and private recreation facilities, parks, and nearby schools. As stated above, this traditional neighborhood approach, designed around a mix of other land uses, would minimize vehicle trips.
- 4) Transit-Oriented Development. Vista Canyon would be situated in proximity to Metrolink rail lines, affords the opportunity to plan a new City/Metrolink transit center that would facilitate transit and reduce automobile trips, and creates a place to live, work, play, and shop.
- 5) Open Space, Recreation, and Parks. The project includes open space, recreation opportunities, and public/private parks to serve the neighborhoods within Vista Canyon. These areas are linked by the project's trail system, which promotes walking and biking while minimizing vehicle trips.
- 6) Reducing Impermeable Surfaces. To curtail urban runoff and maximize groundwater recharge, Vista Canyon will utilize smaller street sections, native landscape areas, permeable pavement in various parking areas and non-structural water quality treatments. This design reduces impermeable surfaces and minimizes urban "heat island" effects.
- 7) Water Conservation and Reuse. Vista Canyon includes the construction of a water reclamation plant that would provide for the project's irrigation needs and also provide additional recycled water for off-site use. As proposed and based on demand estimates, Vista Canyon would create a water demand of approximately 333.7 acre-feet per year. The proposed Vista Canyon Water Reclamation Plant

would generate approximately 442.9 acre-feet per year of recycled water, completely offsetting the demand of the project. Additionally, Vista Canyon would require compliance with numerous water efficiency strategies, including the minimization of turf, use of drought-tolerant landscaping, automated irrigation systems, and water-efficient appliances and fixtures.

- 8) Traffic/Transportation Improvements. The project's circulation plan minimizes vehicle trips and reduces GHG emissions through the design of internal roads that place homes, schools, retail/commercial areas, offices, and trail system in close proximity. Transit also is incorporated into the traditional neighborhood and town center design. Trails and bike paths leading to close-to-home jobs, neighborhood-serving retail, offices, and nearby schools encourage residents to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- 9) Energy Efficiency. All future residential and non-residential buildings would exceed the 2008 Title 24 standards, which are effective January 1, 2010, by a minimum of 20 percent. In addition, Vista Canyon will provide ENERGY STAR appliances and equipment for any standard items (e.g., clothes dryers, dishwashers, and refrigerators) included within the residential units at the project site. ENERGY STAR equipment (e.g., monitors, printers, copiers) also would be provided in the office buildings.
- 10) Renewable Energy. Vista Canyon will be required to install 80,000 square feet of solar panels on rooftops or parking structures within the project site or equivalent.
- 11) Solar Energy System Option. Consistent with Governor Schwarzenegger's Million Solar Roofs Plan, Vista Canyon, acting as the seller of the single-family residences constructed as part of the development, will offer a solar energy system option to all customers that enter negotiations to purchase a new home; such offer would include the total installed cost of the solar energy system option and the customer's estimated cost savings.

A more detailed summary/discussion of Greenhouse Gases and the Vista Canyon Sustainability Plan will be discussed during the November 2, 2010 Planning Commission meeting.

### **ENTITLEMENT SUMMARY**

General Plan Amendment No. 07-001a. The City's General Plan currently designates the site for business park uses, with an SEA overlay over portions of the site. The applicant proposes to amend the City's Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan.

Specifically, the applicant requests that the City approve a General Plan Land Use Element Amendment to revise the land use designation for the property from BP (Business Park) to SP (Specific Plan) and revising the SEA overlay boundaries to correspond to the area designated SP-OS (Santa Clara River Corridor). The SP designation is requested because the land uses proposed for the project site support a transit oriented development and allow for a mixed use project, which would not be permitted under the business park designation. The applicant also requests City approval of a General Plan Circulation Element Amendment to (a) establish the alignment for Lost Canyon Road/Vista Canyon Road, (b) reduce Lost Canyon Road from a six-lane roadway (Major Highway) to a four-lane roadway (Secondary Highway) from its westerly

terminus in Fair Oaks Ranch to the future intersection of Lost Canyon Road and Vista Canyon Road, (c) designate the proposed Vista Canyon Road Bridge across the Santa Clara River as a limited secondary highway permitting a total of two travel lanes and one auxiliary lane with a sidewalk and a bike path on one side, and (d) remove from the City's General Plan Circulation Element as a Major Highway Lost Canyon Road from Vista Canyon Road to Sand Canyon Road.

Pre-Zone No. 07-001a. The applicant is proposing to pre-zone the project site to Specific Plan site to (SP). The City Council must approve the pre-zone/zone change prior to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) consideration of the applicant's proposed annexation request. The SP zoning would take effect upon approval of the annexation by LAFCO.

Specific Plan No. 07-001. The proposed Specific Plan would establish the zoning; development plan, infrastructure plan, development regulations, design guidelines and implementation provisions within Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan document serves as a guide to implement the goals, policies, and objectives of the City's General Plan. An overview of the Specific Plan is discussed later in this report.

Annexation No. 07-002a. The project site is currently located in unincorporated Los Angeles County, directly adjacent to the City of Santa Clarita. The applicant is requesting annexation of the project site into the City. The proposed Specific Plan site is not currently within the City's Sphere of Influence as defined by LAFCO. The Los Angeles County LAFCO will act as a responsible agency under CEQA and consider the City's Sphere of Influence amendment and the applicant's annexation request.

Tentative Tract Map No. 69164. The applicant is proposing to subdivide the property into a total of 162 lots to facilitate construction of 1,117 residential units (96 single-family units and 1,021 attached, multi-family, condominium units), up to 950,000 square feet of commercial and office, retail, theater, restaurant, and hotel uses, and other lots for parks, landscape/open space, River Corridor, bank protection, parking structures, and private drives. The applicant's tract map application includes a request for approval of a proposed large lot parcel map for conveyance purposes. In addition, a residential overlay is included within PA-2 (Lots 32-35). This overlay allows for the conversion of up to 250,000 square feet of commercial/office uses to a maximum of 233 attached residential units. If this conversion is implemented, the allowable development would be a maximum of 1,350 residential units and 700,000 square feet of non-residential uses.

Conditional Use Permit No. 07-009. The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow for the import of up to 500,000 cubic yards of dirt to accommodate development within the project site. Import materials are to be from one or both of the following borrow sites: (a) the George Carvalho Santa Clarita Sports Complex Expansion, and (b) the Center Pointe Business Park. Development on both of the borrow sites has been previously approved by the City.

Oak Tree Permit No. 07-002. Implementation of the project would result in the impact of oak trees on and off the project site. On-site, the applicant is requesting an oak tree permit to allow for removal of 10 (four of which are heritage size) of the 41 oak trees located on the project site.

One of the non-heritage trees proposed for removal would be relocated within the project site. 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 under the oak tree permit. A total of 31 oak trees located on the project site, including 17 heritage-sized oak trees, would not be removed by the project.

Impacts to the two oak trees located off-site would differ depending upon the intersection design option selected for Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road. Under the Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road intersection design options 1-3, the requested oak tree permit would allow for encroachment into the protected zone of two oak trees. Encroachment for one tree is needed for the construction of a trail along Lost Canyon Road, east of the project site, and encroachment for the Sand Canyon Road tree is required by improvements to the intersection of Lost Canyon Road and Sand Canyon Road. Trimming or pruning would also be requested on the tree along Lost Canyon Road to provide for trail clearance requirements.

Under the fourth intersection design option (standard signalized intersection), the heritage oak tree located along Sand Canyon Road would be removed. Removal of the tree would permit the construction of a signalized intersection conforming to all of the City's standard design criteria. Trimming of the oak tree along Lost Canyon Road would be requested under this design option as well.

In total, the project's oak tree permit includes the removal of up to 11 oak trees (four of which are heritage), the encroachment into the protected zone of up to 12 oak trees, including the trimming or pruning of up to eight of the 12 oak trees.

## **SPECIFIC PLAN**

The Specific Plan establishes the development plans, infrastructure plans, development regulations, design guidelines, and implementation program for the development of Vista Canyon. The Specific Plan facilitates quality residential, mixed-use, and non-residential transit-oriented development within the City, consistent with the goals and policies of the City's General Plan and draft General Plan Update (One Valley One Vision), by retaining or enhancing important river resources and other environmental amenities and concurrently establishing a community that is superior to the development otherwise allowable under conventional zoning regulations. The Specific Plan site, uniquely situated in proximity to the Metrolink rail line, also affords the opportunity to plan a new City/Metrolink transit center and accessory improvements to facilitate transit, reduce automobile trips, and create a place to live, work, play, and shop. The Specific Plan consists of several components that are outlined below.

### **Development Plan**

This section identifies and describes in detail the Specific Plan objectives and development plans consisting of the land use plan, mobility plan (includes parking plan), Santa Clara River Corridor plan, sustainability plan, landscape plan, and parks and recreation plan. These plans have been summarized and/or will be summarized in this report and the November 2, 2010 Planning Commission report.

### Parking

The Specific Plan will create a shared and non-shared parking program for PA-1 and PA-2, and promote a "park once" strategy. Parking requirements are typically based on the peak parking demand predicted for each single land use, each use accompanied by parking lots, with parking spaces dedicated for each visit to each individual use. Ordinances usually require that each site provide enough parking to exceed the maximum demand, not accounting for "park once" users that patronize several different uses within a commercial site, or that utilize different peak demand periods in a mixed-use site, or that present non-automobile options such as transit, walking, and bicycling. Under these traditional parking ordinance requirements, the result is unused parking spaces during times of the day when there is less activity and other negative consequences such as over-parking or devoting excessive land or resources to parking.

By contrast, the Specific Plan's mixed-use design will lend itself to reduced daily trips and less required parking spaces by utilizing "park once" parking strategies in PA-1 and PA-2. The Specific Plan's "Parking Demand Analysis," prepared by Richard Willson, Ph.D., FAICP, dated April 2010, is included in Appendix 2.0-1. The City conducted an independent peer review (conducted by Donald Shoup, Ph.D.) of this Parking Demand Analysis. Dr. Shoup agreed with the methodology and conclusions of the Parking Demand Analysis.

This parking plan analyzes parking demand and establishes parking requirements for PA-1 and PA-2. To ensure consistency, the Specific Plan requires updates to the program as PA-1 and PA-2 build-out. PA-3 and PA-4 are self-contained and will comply with SCMC parking standards, as amended.

Under the Specific Plan's parking program for PA-1 and PA-2, the proposed residential parking supply is 1,277 spaces (867 spaces for 578 rental units; and 410 spaces for 241 ownership units), based on the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Shared Parking Recommended Parking Ratios of 1.5 spaces per unit for rental units and 1.7 spaces per unit for ownership units. This parking will be reserved for residents and is not part of the shared parking pool. Guest parking is not included in this total (1,277 spaces), but is included in the shared parking calculations presented below for non-residential uses.

As to non-residential uses and guest parking, the proposed parking supply is 2,939 spaces. This supply was calculated as follows: 2,721 spaces to accommodate peak weekday demand for PA-1 and PA-2, plus an 8% parking vacancy factor, which adds 218 parking spaces, resulting in 2,939 spaces.

Combining the proposed non-shared residential parking (1,277 spaces) and the non-residential and guest parking (2,939 spaces) yields a recommended Specific Plan parking supply for PA-1 and PA-2 of a total 4,216 spaces.

The amount of Specific Plan parking shown in PA-1 and PA-2 is 4,390 spaces; therefore, PA-1 and PA-2 will exceed the parking level recommended in the Specific Plan's parking program by 174 spaces. The Table below provides a comparison of the SCMC parking space requirements and the parking space requirements recommended by the Specific Plan for PA-1 and PA-2. The

ULI model and associated adjustment procedures are included in the Specific Plan, and will replace the SCMC parking requirements for PA-1 and PA-2.

Comparison of Parking Levels			
	SCMC Parking Requirements	Vista Canyon Parking Reduction/Shared Parking Demand Analysis	Vista Canyon Parking Supply
Residential Spaces, Excluding Visitor; Not Shared	1,516	1,277	1,277
Visitor Parking (Residential Uses)	410	Part of shared parking pool	Part of shared parking pool
Commercial, Metrolink, and Residential Visitor Spaces; Shared	4,761	2,939*	3,073
<b>Total Spaces</b>	<b>6,687</b>	<b>4,216</b>	<b>4,390</b>
* The peak weekday parking demand is 2,721 parking spaces, plus an 8% parking vacancy factor (2,721 + 218 = 2,939).			

### Infrastructure Plan

This section describes the infrastructure and utilities needed to serve the Specific Plan area. Specifically, the section describes the backbone infrastructure systems (sewer, water, recycled water, water quality, and storm drainage), and utilities (gas, electricity, etc.), needed to support the Specific Plan. These systems will be discussed in the Environmental Document section of this report and the November 2, 2010 Planning Commission report.

### Development Regulations

This section provides regulations for the development and land uses within the Specific Plan, and describes how these development regulations will be used as part of the City's development review process. Proposed development, subdivisions, and new land uses within the Specific Plan area must comply with all applicable requirements of this Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan, including the development regulations, are intended to provide a comprehensive set of regulations governing the use and development of the land within the Specific Plan area. These Development Regulations replace the requirements of the City's Unified Development Code, Titles 16 and 17 of the Santa Clarita Municipal Code (SCMC). Any matter or issue not specifically and directly covered by this Specific Plan shall be subject to the non-conflicting regulations and procedures of the SCMC. If a conflict arises between the Specific Plan and the City's Unified Development Code, the provisions of this Specific Plan shall control.

### *Specific Plan Zones*

The following land use designation zones are established by the Specific Plan, and are applied to the property within the Specific Plan area:

1. Residential (R). The R land use designation zone is applied to areas appropriate for a variety of attached and detached residential units, including condominiums, apartments, residential flats, attached residential with surface parking, and attached residential with parking structure. The R designation includes for rent and for sale units. The designation also allows recreation, trails, landscaped areas and parking areas to support the residential areas.
2. Mixed-Use (MU). The MU land use designation zone is applied to areas appropriate for a wide-range of land uses, and allows multi-family residential, office, retail, and general commercial uses, and office over retail, hotel/lodging, theatre, cinema or performing arts, studios, health/fitness facilities, churches, child care facilities, community assembly, and outdoor dining. Civic uses also are encouraged in this zone. Street frontages in the MU zone are pedestrian-oriented, and parking structures, surface parking and subterranean parking are allowed. Further, this zone contemplates a variety of office uses, including areas appropriate for business, financial, professional, business support service, processing, administrative, bank, medical services, and other office and supporting uses. This zone will accommodate local and regional employment needs and enhance the Specific Plan's housing/employment balance objectives. This zone also contemplates a variety of retail uses, including areas appropriate for restaurant, café, coffee shop, market, general retail, food service (including drive-through facilities), and entertainment.
3. Open Space (OS). The OS land use designation zone is applied to the Santa Clara River Corridor, including buried bank stabilization areas and the Santa Clara River Trail.
4. Other (O). The O land use designation zone is applied to areas containing public facilities, streets, and recreation areas. Areas covered by the O designation include the water reclamation plant, Oak Park, public streets, Metrolink Transfer Station, Bus Transfer Station, Community Garden and the Town Green.

### *Development Standards*

This sub-section sets forth the Development Standards governing each of the land use designation zones described above. The Specific Plan's Development Standards provides the standards for minimum lot area; maximum site coverage; front, side, and rear yard setbacks, and maximum non-residential building heights, as appropriate to each land use designation zone.

### *Uses/Permit Requirements*

This sub-section sets forth the allowed land uses (i.e., permitted uses) and permit requirements within each of the land use designation zones described above.

## Design Guidelines

The Specific Plan's Design Guidelines describes the visual character that is desired for development within Vista Canyon, and the manner in which developed areas should relate to other land use designation zones within the Specific Plan. The Design Guidelines address design themes, site planning and architecture.

Specific to Vista Canyon, the desired architectural style will be "Rustic Californian." Based on the City's 2009 Community Character and Design Guidelines, this style represents a mix of the architectural elements found in Mission Revival, Arts and Crafts, Craftsmen, and Ranch styles. Commonly recognized elements authentic to each of these architectural styles will be utilized within Vista Canyon, including the introduction of natural materials such as stone veneer, exposed timbers, and selective accents.

The "Rustic Californian" architectural style incorporates numerous elements, including wall articulation, roof elements, attached elements, openings, accents, exterior building materials, and colors, all of which are described in Chapter 3 of the 2009 Community Character and Design Guidelines.

The comprehensive nature of the City's 2009 Community Character and Design Guidelines allows Vista Canyon to incorporate the community character and design elements associated with the Specific Plan's Residential (single-family and multi-family) and Mixed-Use land use designations. Specific to those land use designations, Chapter 4 (Single-Family Residential), Chapter 5 (Multi-Family Residential), Chapter 6 (Commercial), and Chapter 7 (Mixed-Use) of the 2009 Community Character and Design Guidelines will provide direction for new development within the Specific Plan.

Consistent with the 2009 Community Character and Design Guidelines, the Specific Plan's incorporation of these guidelines are intended to provide a general framework for design.

## Implementation/Phasing

The Specific Plan will be implemented primarily through the process of subdivision maps. All land subdivision maps of any type (e.g., tentative or final, vesting or non-vesting, tract or parcel) shall be submitted, reviewed, and approved in accordance with the SCMC and Subdivision Map Act. Where the provisions or procedures of the SCMC conflict with the provisions of this Specific Plan, the Specific Plan shall apply.

The Specific Plan will be completed in multiple phases in order to correlate infrastructure and amenities with site development. The sequence of development would be influenced by the following factors: (a) market conditions and changes; (b) economic conditions; and (c) rate of growth in the immediate vicinity and region. As these factors change during build-out of the project, adjustments in corresponding infrastructure requirements may be needed. However, it is anticipated that there would be four phases of development with the initial phase being occupied in 2012 and the last phase being completed in 2015. Each phase would have specific infrastructure and amenity requirements to ensure that the project is adequately served and City

standards are met. The phasing is projected as follows:

Phase 1 – Construction of 600 residential units within PA-1, and 80 residential units and 25,000 square feet of retail within PA-2. Access would be provided by an extension of Lost Canyon Road from its present terminus in Fair Oaks Ranch to the project site, and an extension of Jakes Way to the project site. Construction of the water reclamation plant, all flood protection improvements and the Santa Clara River trail would be constructed in Phase 1. The entire site would be graded in conjunction with development of Phase 1. The property for the City bus transfer station and the Oak Park would also be offered for dedication to the City in conjunction with development of Phase 1. Phase 1 would not include the construction of the Vista Canyon Bridge over the Santa Clara River or an extension of Lost Canyon Road easterly to its present terminus near La Veda Avenue.

Phase 2 – Construction of 297 residential units and the Oak Park within PA-3, and 140 residential units and the Community Garden within PA-2. The Vista Canyon Road Bridge would be constructed and operational by the 150th occupancy within PA-3, and Lost Canyon Road would be extended to its easterly terminus near La Veda Avenue. Street improvements to the segment of Lost Canyon Road between the project site and Sand Canyon Road and intersection improvements to Lost Canyon Road and Sand Canyon Road would be completed prior to the opening of the connection of Lost Canyon Road to La Veda Avenue.

Phase 3 – Construction of 56,000 square feet of commercial (office and retail) in PA-4, and 50,000 square feet of commercial retail, 100,000 square feet of commercial office, and the initial phase of the Metrolink Station/Bus Transfer Station and accessory parking within PA-2.

Phase 4 – All remaining land uses within the Specific Plan (e.g., 719,000 square feet of commercial floor area and accessory parking within PA-2, and the Town Green).

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT**

### *DEIR SUMMARY*

The DEIR analyzes the environmental impacts of Vista Canyon and AAA and identifies issues for which there is a potential for significant impacts. The DEIR addresses these issues in Section 4.0 of the DEIR, Environmental Impact Analysis, and analyzes impacts to each area. Each of the environmental topics is listed below and is summarized in this report and in the future November 2, 2010 Planning Commission staff report, under Environmental Impact Analysis.

- Geotechnical Hazards
- Flood
- Traffic and Access
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Biological Resources
- Land Use
- Water Services
- Water Quality
- Solid Waste Disposal
- Education
- Library Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Fire Services
- Sheriff Services
- Human-Made Hazards
- Visual Resources
- Population ,Housing and Employment
- Cultural Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- River Corridor
- Wastewater Disposal
- Global Climate Change
- Utilities
- Ancillary Annexation Areas
- Project Alternatives

The DEIR concludes that Significant Unavoidable Impacts with implementation of the project would occur in Traffic, Air Quality, Noise and Solid Waste. The DEIR also contains the following six alternatives that will be discussed at the November 2, 2010 Planning Commission meeting: the No Project Alternative; the Proposed County Land Use Designation (OVOV) Alternative; the Existing City of Santa Clarita General Plan Designation Alternative; the Reduced Development Footprint (Relocation of Southerly Bank Stabilization) Alternative; the Open Space Corridor Alternative; and the Lost Canyon Road Alignment Alternative (parallel and adjacent to the southerly bank stabilization).

### *ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS*

The following sections below are brief general summaries of half of the sections in the Vista Canyon DEIR. For a full discussion of each of the issues analyzed below and all of the conclusions reached, please refer to the individual sections of the DEIR. The remaining sections will be discussed/summarized at the November 2, 2010, Planning Commission meeting.

#### Geotechnical Hazards

The Geotechnical Hazards section (beginning on page 4.1-1) of the DEIR breaks down the

general geotechnical discussion into subtopics. The information and analysis in this section are based on the technical reports included in Appendix 4.1 of the DEIR. Below is a brief summary of the topography/subsurface features of Vista Canyon and a some of the highlighted construction/operational related impacts.

### *Topography and Subsurface Features*

The project site is mostly flat, with upland areas sloping towards the active channel of the Santa Clara River. Elevations across the project site range from approximately 1,470 feet to 1,580 feet above mean sea level, an elevation differential of 110 feet. Isolated bedrock ridges are located along the southeast project boundary. Bedrock is exposed on the north bank of the River, where it forms a resistant promontory. Two small knolls, which are fragments of the San Gabriel Mountains, are located south of the River on the project site.

### *Construction/Operational Related Impacts*

*Grading* - The total amount of soil to be cut from the project site is estimated at 590,000 cubic yards (cy). The total amount of fill is estimated at 830,000 cy. This cut and fill grading would be in addition to 1.7 million cubic yards of remedial grading required for the project. Approximately 500,000 cy of soil would be imported to the site; including the 240,000 cy difference between the project's cut and fill and the additional fill needed to compensate for soil shrinkage associated with soil compaction. Mitigation measures for the Vista Canyon would reduce earth movement impacts to a less-than-significant level.

*Ground Shaking* - No known active faults project into or cross the Vista Canyon. Additionally, Vista Canyon is not located in a State of California Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Zone. The closest active fault zone is the San Gabriel Fault Zone, located approximately 1.5 miles southwest of the project area. Thus, impacts due to rupture of a known earthquake fault would be less than significant.

*Landslides* - Landslides and rock falls occur most often on steep or compromised slopes. Factors controlling the stability of slopes include slope height and steepness, characteristics of the earth materials comprising the slope, and intensity of ground shaking. Vista Canyon is located within a State of California Seismic Hazard Zone for Earthquake Induced Landsliding. However, the project site is located on relatively level ground and regional geologic maps do not depict landslides on the project site, nor were any discovered during on-site borings and geotechnical exploration. Therefore, the project site is presently not susceptible to any forms of slope instability. Debris flows which are forms of landslides are also not considered a significant hazard on the project site due to the absence of tall slopes. Therefore, impacts due to landslides would be less than significant.

*Artificial Fill* - Existing non-compacted artificial fill was placed on portions of the project site for railroad bed construction. Artificial fill was also placed on the southwest portion of the project site. Fill soils mainly consist of loose, clast supported mixtures of angular concrete blocks with a silty sand matrix that are four to eight feet thick. All of the artificial fill will be removed as part of the project's mitigation.

*Liquefaction* - Groundwater was encountered at depths of 12 to 52 feet below ground surface during exploratory boring on the project site. The geotechnical report concludes sandy soil layers beneath the project site that could liquefy in the event of a large earthquake on a nearby fault. However, implementation of the mitigation measures would require potentially liquefiable soil layers to be overlain by non-liquefiable soils of sufficient thicknesses such that surface expression of liquefaction (such as sand boils or ground cracks) would not occur. Therefore, impacts due to liquefaction would be less than significant.

*Lateral Spreading* - Lateral spreading can occur during a seismic event when a site is sloped or is adjacent to a steep slope. The project site is mostly flat, with upland areas sloping to the active channel of the Santa Clara River. Except at the eastern end of the site, where the potential for liquefaction of the underlying soils is low, the bank of the River does not constitute a steep slope. Development of the proposed project would result in a slope inclined at a 3:1 to 4:1 grade along the River. The proposed slope would consist entirely of compacted fill, and soil cement bank protection would be buried under the slope. With the mitigation measures, soils that could potentially liquefy and result in lateral spreading would be removed and replaced with compacted fill. A geotechnical engineer will be present during grading operations to determine if soils would need to be replaced and compacted in order to avoid lateral spreading. Therefore, impacts associated with lateral spreading would be less than significant.

The Draft EIR concludes that all of the geotechnical related impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.

### Land Use

This section (beginning on page 4.7-1) of the DEIR discusses the proposed project's consistency with (1) the City's adopted and draft Land Use Maps, (2) the goals, objectives and policies of the City's adopted and draft General Plans, (3) the City of Santa Clarita Unified Development Code and (4) applicable policies from Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Compass Growth Visioning (CGV). Although the project site is currently located within unincorporated Los Angeles County, the site would be annexed to the City of Santa Clarita as part of the proposed project. Furthermore, the project site is within the City's planning area. Therefore, the project's consistency with the City of Santa Clarita Land Use Map and General Plan (and not those of the County) is analyzed.

As previously mentioned in this report, Vista Canyon is designated for BP (Business Park) and SEA overlay uses by the City's adopted Land Use Map, and designated for UR2 (Urban Residential) and SEA overlay uses by the draft Land Use Map. Development of the project would introduce new residential and commercial uses to the site and 18 acres of parks and recreational amenities. The current BP designation does not allow for the development of a mixed-use, transit-oriented community. Therefore, the proposed project is inconsistent with the existing land use designation. As a result, the applicant is proposing a General Plan amendment to change the General Plan land use designation for the project site from BP (Business Park) to SP (Specific Plan), while maintaining the SEA overlay within the River Corridor. The applicant also proposes to prezone the site to Specific Plan. Approval of this prezone by the City Council

is required prior to approval of the proposed annexation by LAFCO.

The OVOV draft Land Use Plan designates the project site for Urban Residential uses. Allowed uses include homes at a density not to exceed 5 dwelling units per acre. The project involves development of a variety of single-family, multi-family, and mixed-use residential uses, as well as various commercial uses. If the draft Land Use Plan is adopted prior to approval of the proposed project, a General Plan Amendment would still be required to change the land use designation for the project site from UR2 (Urban Residential) to SP (Specific Plan). A prezone determination would also still be required.

As part of the Specific Plan, a River Corridor has been delineated, which is designed to be sufficiently wide to handle flooding while retaining and enhancing the majority of the riparian habitat that exists in the River. In areas where riparian habitat must be disturbed, the Specific Plan would require such areas to be mitigated through restoration and enhancement activities.

Should it be adopted, the proposed Specific Plan designation would replace the current land use and zoning designations for the project site. Pursuant to Government Code section 65454, the proposed Specific Plan must be consistent with the General Plan by furthering the goals, objectives and policies of the General Plan, and not obstruct their attainment. A comprehensive Vista Canyon Consistency Analysis is contained in Appendix 4.7. In summary, the consistency analysis determines that the proposed project is consistent with the goals and policies of both the existing General Plan and proposed OVOV General Plan. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. The proposed Specific Plan would detail and foster the General Plan's development policies, systematically implement the General Plan, and contain defined standards and development criteria that supplement those of the General Plan. Therefore, the proposed Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan and establishment of the proposed Specific Plan, therefore, would result in a less than significant land use impact.

The proposed project is designed to be consistent with the City of Santa Clarita Unified Development Code. As discussed in this report, development standards for the various Planning Areas within the project site are provided in the Vista Canyon Specific Plan. Should the City Council approve and adopt the Specific Plan, the development standards outlined in the Plan would supersede those in the City's Unified Development Code.

The section of the DEIR also provides an analysis of Vista Canyon's consistency with SCAG's goals, policies and principles. The DEIR concludes that the project is consistent with these goals and policies.

In conclusion, the DEIR concludes that the project related land use impacts would be less than significant.

#### Solid Waste Disposal [GDB1]

As discussed in the DEIR (beginning on page 4.9-1), all solid waste collected and taken out of the City of Santa Clarita is presently hauled to the Chiquita Canyon Landfill in the County of Los Angeles, which has been approved for expansion to extend the life of the landfill to 2019.

Assuming no recycling (a worst-case scenario), Vista Canyon would generate a total of 47,500 pounds of solid waste per day, or approximately 8,668 tons of solid waste per year. Although the Vista Canyon would generate 8,668 tons of solid waste per year, it can be assumed that the proposed project would meet the current recycling goals of the community and, therefore, generate approximately 4,334 tons of solid waste per year. This is based on the current City diversion rate of 54 percent of waste disposal. Vista Canyon with the residential overlay option would generate a total of 11,820 pounds of solid waste per day, or approximately 2,157 tons of solid waste per year. Although the proposed project with the residential overlay option would generate 2,157 tons of solid waste per year, it can be assumed that the proposed project with the residential overlay option would meet the current recycling goals of the community and, therefore, generate approximately 1,078 tons of solid waste per year. Vista Canyon would cumulatively contribute 2.0 percent of the total amount of solid waste that is expected to be generated by buildout under the proposed OVOV General Plan. Vista Canyon with the residential overlay option would also cumulatively contribute by generating approximately 0.5 percent of the total amount of solid waste that is expected to be generated.

There is potential for alternative solid waste disposal technologies to be developed and legislatively approved in the future given the market forces that drive the solid waste industry, which could substantially reduce landfill disposal. However, until other disposal alternatives adequate to serve existing and future uses for the foreseeable future are employed, the potential project and cumulative solid and hazardous waste impacts are considered significant and unavoidable.

### Education

This section (beginning on page 4.10-1) of the DEIR evaluates impacts of the project on those affected school districts that currently provide public elementary, junior high, and high school education in the project area. The project site is within the Sulphur Springs Union School District (Sulphur Springs District) and the William S. Hart Union High School District (Hart School District) which currently provides public elementary, junior/middle school, and senior high school education in the Vista Canyon project area.

The Vista Canyon project would generate an estimated 375 new elementary school students, 56 junior high students, and 112 high school students. With implementation of the residential overlay, the proposed project would generate up to 454 elementary school students, 66 junior high school students, and 132 high school students.

### *Sulphur Springs District*

As of the 2009-2010 school year the Sulphur Springs District had a total enrollment of 5,743 students and a total student capacity of 6,500 students. Accordingly, the Sulphur Springs District currently operates at 88.4 percent of its capacity. Vista Canyon's elementary students would likely attend Sulphur Springs Elementary School which is located on Lost Canyon Road just west of Planning Area 3. Sulphur Springs Elementary School has a capacity of 750 seats. Student enrollment for the 2009/2010 school year was 709 students with a significant amount of students being bused in from the north; therefore, this school is currently operating under

capacity with remaining room for 41 students. This available capacity is less than needed for Vista Canyon, which would generate up to 454 students.

On May 27, 2009, the Sulphur Springs District entered into a School Facilities Mitigation Agreement with the project applicant. Under this agreement, the applicant would pay for the construction of the Spring Canyon Elementary School or other future elementary school in the northeastern portion of Santa Clarita. Presently approximately 50% of the students presently attending Sulphur Springs Elementary School come from residential neighborhoods north of SR-14, exacerbating peak hour traffic congestion at the intersection of Lost/Sand Canyon Road and Lost Canyon Road west of Sand Canyon. Following construction of the new elementary school paid for by the project applicant, the District would likely realign attendance boundaries to accommodate Vista Canyon students (who would replace students attending the school from north of SR-14), thus the agreement will mitigate the impacts on the District.

#### *Hart District*

As of the 2010-2011 school year, the Hart District is projected to have a total enrollment of 23,269 students and a total student capacity of 23,044 students. Accordingly, the Hart District would be projected to operate at 101 percent of its capacity. The District is currently operating at over-capacity conditions by 225 students. In order to accommodate existing and future students, the Hart District plans to open Castaic High School, which is scheduled to open in fall 2013 or fall 2014. The design capacity of Castaic High School will be similar to other District high schools.

The proposed Vista Canyon project would generate additional junior high students that would likely attend Sierra Vista Junior High, located approximately two miles west of the project site. Sierra Vista has capacity for approximately 1,280 students. Student enrollment for the 2010 to 2011 school year is approximately 1,248 students, and is currently operating below capacity by 32 students. Therefore, the proposed project would require the Hart District to provide additional facilities, such as additional classrooms, to accommodate the students it would generate.

The proposed project also would generate additional high school students that would likely attend Canyon High School, located two miles northwest of the project site. Canyon High School has capacity for approximately 2,600 students. Student enrollment for the 2010 to 2010 school year is 2,614 students, such that this school is currently operating over capacity by 14 students. Therefore, the proposed project would require the Hart District to provide additional facilities, such as additional classrooms, to accommodate the students it would generate.

The Hart District entered into an Agreement for Fair Share Funding of School Facilities with the project applicant on October 6, 2010. This agreement, in order to mitigate potential environmental and fiscal impacts, obligates the applicant to provide funding to the Hart District to ensure that adequate school capacity is available to serve the students generated by the proposed project. As a result, with the mitigation agreement, no project impacts to the Hart District would occur.

Both agreements satisfy the provisions of SB 50, and takes precedence over any fee limitations

imposed by SB 50.

### Library Services

As discussed in the DEIR (beginning on page 4.11-1), library services for Vista Canyon are within the service area of, the Canyon Country Jo Anne Darcy Library, County of Los Angeles Public Library (County Library) system. In addition to the Canyon Country Jo Anne Darcy Library, Santa Clarita Valley is currently served by three other County libraries (i.e., Newhall Library, Valencia Library, and Castaic Library) and the Santa Clarita Valley Bookmobile. Existing library space in the Santa Clarita Valley does not meet the County Library's service level guidelines.

Development of the proposed project would result in increased demands on library facilities and would create a demand for 9,489 items, 1,725 square feet of library facilities, and 3.5 public access computers. With implementation of the residential overlay, Vista Canyon would demand a total of 11,468 items, 2,085 square feet of library facilities, and 4 public access computers.

Funding sources for the County Library consist of, in descending proportions, property taxes, County General Fund allocation, a special tax, and revenue from fines, fees and other miscellaneous sources. For several years, the County Board of Supervisors has made an allocation from the County General Fund to the County Library. However, the funding in the County Library's operating budget does not provide for the replacement or expansion of library facilities. Funding for such improvements, instead, is generated by the County's developer fee program. The County Board of Supervisors established a permanent library facilities mitigation fee on all new residential development to mitigate impacts to County Library services.

The City of Santa Clarita subsequently adopted this fee which is comparable to that established by the County, such that the fee amount is reviewed annually and adjusted, as necessary. No tract map, parcel map, conditional use permit, other land use permit, or other entitlement can be approved unless payment of the library facilities fee is made a condition of approval for any such entitlement. The City's current library facilities fee is \$718.00 per dwelling unit. Since the proposed project would be annexed into the City of Santa Clarita upon buildout, Vista Canyon would be required to pay the City's current library facilities fee. If 1,350 residential units were built, Vista would generate a total of \$969,300.00 for library services

Project payment of the mitigation fee would reduce the project and cumulative impacts to a less-than-significant level. In addition, revenues generated from project property taxes collected by the City of Santa Clarita would also fund library service in the City of Santa Clarita.

### Fire Services

As discussed in the DEIR (beginning on page 4.13-1), fire protection and emergency medical response services for the project site and the surrounding area are provided by the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Specifically, 14 fire stations with 12 engine companies, one assessment engine company, five paramedic squads, one hazardous materials squad, and two ladder trucks serve the Santa Clarita Valley. Fire Station 107, located on Soledad Canyon Road, is the

jurisdictional engine company that would respond to emergencies on the project site. Fire Station 107 is currently 1.8 miles (six minutes) from the project site. Fire Station 132, located at 29310 Sand Canyon Road, is also approximately 1.8 miles (six minutes) from the project site.

The project site is located within an area described by the Forester and Fire Warden for Los Angeles County as a Fire Zone 4, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, which denotes the County Forester's highest fire hazard potential. All applicable fire code and ordinance requirements for construction, access, water mains, fire hydrants, water fire flows, brush clearance and fuel modification plans would need to be met by the proposed project.

The project applicant also would pay fire facility fees, which would be used to help fund the construction of new facilities and purchase of additional equipment. In addition, tax revenues generated by the project would assist in securing additional equipment and hiring of firefighter personnel for the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Vista Canyon would be required to comply with City codes and requirements relative to the provision of adequate fire protection services to the site during both the construction and operational stages of the project. As a result, Vista Canyon would not diminish the staffing or the response times of existing fire stations in the City of Santa Clarita, nor would it create a special fire protection requirement on the site that would result in a decline in existing service levels in the City. In summary, with mitigation, Vista Canyon would not have a significant project-specific or cumulative impact on fire protection services in the City of Santa Clarita.

### Sheriff Services

As discussed in the DEIR (beginning on page 4.14-1), primary law enforcement service for the project site and the surrounding unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley area is provided by the County of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, Santa Clarita Valley Station. The Sheriff Department also provides law enforcement services for the City of Santa Clarita on a contract basis. Additionally, the Department of California Highway Patrol (CHP) provides traffic regulation enforcement; emergency incident management; and service and assistance on Interstate 5 (I-5), State Route 126 (SR-126), State Route 14 (SR-14), and other major roadways in the unincorporated portions of the Santa Clarita Valley. The existing level of Sheriff Department protection service, without the proposed project, in the City of Santa Clarita is one deputy per 1,532 residents, which is below the desired level of one deputy per 1,000 residents.

Implementation of the proposed project would increase the demand for law enforcement and traffic-related services both on the project site and within the local vicinity in terms of the number of personnel and the amount of equipment needed to adequately serve the project site at buildout. Based on the Sheriff Department's standard deputy-to-resident ratio, the proposed project (including the residential overlay component) would require the services of four additional sworn Sheriff Department officers. Payment of the law enforcement facilities fees and new tax revenues would mitigate impacts to the Sheriff Department to a less-than-significant level. Thus, the proposed project would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable impacts to Sheriff services.

The proposed project also would increase demands for CHP services in the project area. Through

increased revenues generated by the proposed project (via motor vehicle registration and drivers license fees paid by new on-site residents and businesses), the project would generate more than sufficient funding for the additional staffing and equipment would needed to serve the project area, including future demands. This funding could be allocated to the CHP by the State CHP for the Santa Clarita Valley station to meet project demands. Therefore, project impacts to the CHP would be less than significant, and would not contribute to any cumulatively considerable impacts to CHP services.

Construction of the proposed project would increase both the incidence of petty crimes on the site and construction traffic on SR-14 and surrounding roadways, which may potentially delay emergency vehicles traveling through the area. However, by retaining the services of a private security company to patrol the project construction site, and by implementing a construction traffic control plan, any potentially significant construction-related impacts to law enforcement services would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Finally, new resident and daytime populations (employees and visitors) at the project site would be subject to the same potential hazards as existing City residents. It is expected that the City's Emergency Evacuation Plans will be amended periodically to provide for the safe evacuation of all City residents and employees. Therefore, no significant impacts would occur relative to emergency evacuation in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

#### Human-Made Hazards

This section of the DEIR (beginning on page 4.15-1) discloses that the Vista Canyon project would not include any uniquely hazardous land uses as the proposed residential and commercial uses are expected to use and store chemicals and/or substances that are typically found in similar settings. Similarly, humans would not be subject to either acute overexposure or chronic exposure to pesticides if used and handled according to state and federal regulations.

Two underground storage tanks (USTs) were previously used on the project site. However, a records search and on-site field investigations, the USTs were removed in accordance with applicable regulations. While electrical transmission lines and transformers are located to the north of the project site, there currently is not a scientific consensus regarding whether electromagnetic fields (EMFs) related to transmission/distribution lines pose a health threat. Consequently, neither the State of California nor the City of Santa Clarita has adopted a threshold of significance for EMFs. Additionally, no federal or state government agencies, including the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the California Department of Health Services (DHS), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), have established land setbacks based on EMFs.

Three Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) were prepared for the proposed project to determine if there are any environmental conditions at the project site that would include the presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products under conditions that indicate an existing release, a past release, or a material threat of a release of any hazardous substances or petroleum products into structures on the property or into the ground, groundwater or surface water. One of the Phase I ESAs prepared for the PA-2 and PA-3 portions of the project site

concluded that there is a potential for the presence of metals, total petroleum hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, and pesticides on the site; it recommended that, prior to grading activities, soil samples be collected from the following:

- debris piles and from the locations of the removed debris piles;
- areas that have historically been used for agricultural development; and
- the location of the former Southern Pacific Railroad at the southern boundary of the site.

Consequently, with mitigation, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact to human made hazards.

### Population, Housing and Employment

This section of the DEIR (beginning on page 4.17-1) analyzes project and cumulative impacts to the City's population, housing, and employment.

The 1,117 residential units proposed for the project would house approximately 3,452 persons. With the residential overlay, the project would generate approximately 4,172 persons. Relative to the year 2010 City and Santa Clarita Valley population, population generation by the project is approximately two percent of the City's population for 2010. Vista Canyon would supply a portion of the housing needed for the City to accommodate the projected population increase, thus would not induce substantial population growth and impact would be less than significant.

Vista Canyon would add 1,117 residential units to the City's housing inventory. This increase represents 1.9 percent of project housing units within the City for 2010. If implementation of the residential overlay were to occur, an additional 233 multi-family units would be constructed resulting in a total of 1,350 units. This increase represents two percent of the project housing unit within the City for year 2010. The proposed project would result in the elimination of one single-family home to make way for up to 1,350 residential units. As a result, Vista Canyon would neither displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people, nor necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Impacts would be less than significant.

The project proposes 164,000 square feet of commercial retail uses, 646,000 square feet of office uses, and 140,000 square feet of hospitality uses (200 room hotel/s) which would generate a total of 3,288 employees according to the DEIR. With implementation of the residential overlay option, 250,000 square feet of office space would be removed resulting in a reduced project employment generation of 1,963 employees. In summary, the proposed project, with or without application of the residential overlay, would result in a substantial increase in jobs. Vista Canyon is consistent with the SCAG jobs/housing goal through its inclusion of up to 950,000 square feet of commercial and office uses. Thus, Vista Canyon would not create employment loss but would rather substantially increase employment opportunities in the eastern Santa Clarita Valley.

## Cultural Resources

A cultural resource investigation was prepared and incorporated into the DEIR's Cultural Resources section (beginning on page 4.18-1). The section discusses potential project impacts and the Phase I and II archaeological surveys that were conducted on the project site.

The Phase I archaeological surveys resulted in the discovery and recording of two archaeological sites. One of the two sites contains both prehistoric and historic components, whereas the other site contains a historic component. Phase II archaeological studies (archeological test excavations) were also conducted.

The first site contains a prehistoric component consisting of a small, low-density campsite with subsurface deposits that is located in the northeastern portion of the site (PA-4). The site appears to be a non-unique archeological resource, representing a terminal Early Millingstone/Early Intermediate Period settlement dating from c. 4000 to 2000 years before present (B.P.). The campsite further appears to have been seasonally occupied by a small group of people whose subsistence practices emphasized plant foods, and most probably hard seeds. A Phase III data recovery program will be conducted on the site in order to salvage any materials found. In accordance with State law, the project applicant has entered into a consultation agreement with the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians for the proposed project.

The historical component of this first site is located approximately in the middle of the prehistoric site, and is unrelated to it. The component consists of the Mitchell family cemetery and is surrounded by a chain link fence, creating an enclosure that is 20 by 18 meters in size. Evidence of 20 internments, with 14 containing visible headstones, was observed. (Additional burials may be present, but not visible from surface evidence.) The dated graves range from 1905 to 1959. The marked graves have small concrete headstones with hand-stamped aluminum name-plates. This site shall be preserved in perpetuity.

The second site recorded within the study area is the Mitchell family homestead, founded in 1860 and located in the southeast corner of the study area. However, because the proposed project would preserve most of the features of this site within the proposed Oak Park, a Phase II survey was not conducted on this site. The homestead covers an area estimated at 300 by 185 meters in size. Although no structures are still standing in this site area, eight archaeological features were observed, at least some of which may date to the period of the early homestead. All of it is considered historic trash including bottle ceramic fragments, window glass, hole-in-top can fragments, tin can fragments, barbed wire, galvanized steel water pipes, milled lumber fragments and assorted fragments of sheet metal and iron.

Inadvertent direct and/or indirect disturbance during construction of the proposed project to any on-site sensitive cultural resource would be considered a significant impact. Accordingly, mitigation measures, are proposed that would reduce the magnitude of potential impacts to cultural resources to less-than-significant levels. It should also be noted that the applicant has completed consultation and subsequently entered into an agreement with the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians.

### Agricultural Resources

This section of the DEIR (beginning on page 4.19-1) discusses impacts related to the conversion of agricultural land to urban uses.

Prior to 1994, the 185-acre project site periodically was utilized for agricultural purposes, and portions of the site likely were irrigated depending on the crop. However, for at least the last 16 years (since 1994), the project site has not been irrigated. The site is not designated as prime agricultural farmland, thus implementation of the proposed project would not convert any land designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural uses.

The project site's current zoning, under the County of Los Angeles General Plan as M-1.5, A-1-1, R-A-8,000, and A-1-10,000, allows some light agricultural activities to take place on the project site. However, the project site is not currently utilized for active agriculture uses, nor has it been used for such in the recent past. Additionally, prior to implementation of the proposed project, the project site would be annexed into the City of Santa Clarita and zoned for Specific Plan uses, including residential and commercial land uses. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

With respect to forest resources, development of the project site would not conflict with forestland or timberland zoning as the project site has never been zoned as forestland.

The project site contains approximately 3.86 acres (2.1 percent of the 185-acre project site) of native trees; specifically, the site contains 2.83 acres of coast live oak and 1.03 acres of cottonwood trees, which are considered "Forestland." Of the 3.86 acres of on-site native trees, 0.81 acre would be permanently disturbed (i.e., removed) by the project; the remaining 3.05 acres would not be impacted by the project. The proposed project would be required to mitigate the removal of oak trees through the planting of oak trees within the project site, resulting in an increase in on-site oak trees. As such, the proposed project would not result in the permanent loss or conversion of forest land.

The project site is surrounded on its western, southern, and eastern boundaries by urbanized land, and the northern boundary is adjacent to State Route 14 (SR-14) and, beyond that, more urbanized land uses. Accordingly, there are no agricultural land uses or forestland uses adjacent to or near the proposed project that could be converted to nonagricultural land or non-forestland uses if the proposed project were implemented. Therefore, no significant project or cumulative impacts on agricultural resources are anticipated with the project.

### Utilities

This section of the DEIR (beginning on page 4.23-1) discusses impacts related to utilities (electricity, natural gas and communications). The project site is located within the service area of Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas, AT&T and Time Warner. Existing utility lines surround the proposed project site and would be upgraded, if applicable, and be connected to Vista Canyon per proposed infrastructure plans. Therefore, impacts to utilities

would be less than significant. Demand for utilities, such as electricity and natural gas, would also be addressed by project design features designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The project's design features will reduce electricity and natural gas demand by 11% and 16%, respectively.

### Ancillary Annexation Area

The City is proposing to annex the unincorporated areas (3,065 acres) surrounding Vista Canyon into the City's boundaries in order to logically extend the City's physical boundary and municipal service area within an area presently bounded on the north, east and west by the City.

The DEIR describes the AAA and general processes regulating the City of Santa Clarita and Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) proceedings that would facilitate incorporation of the area into the City. This section also identifies the existing environmental conditions within the AAA, potential project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures to reduce impacts associated with the proposed AAA. When assessing potential environmental impacts, the analysis considers the change in zoning (i.e. from County to City), the change between the existing development and potential maximum buildout scenario in the AAA, as well as the change to the City's service area.

Additional environmental review would be required before most of the currently undeveloped portions of the AAA could be built out; the subsequent environmental review processes would evaluate impacts and identify mitigation measures in further detail than provided in this section due to the preparation of specific development plans. At this point, it is not known whether, when or how the undeveloped portions of the AAA would be built out, thereby rendering a programmatic level of environmental review more appropriate.

### *Existing Conditions/Site Characteristics*

The AAA is mostly developed and primarily surrounded by developed land uses, which include residential and commercial uses. Golden Valley Ranch (a residential and commercial development) and portions of the Angeles National Forest are located to the south; the Metrolink right-of-way, SR-14 and Vista Canyon property are located to the north; the existing Sand Canyon community is located to the east; and, the Sierra Highway and various residential and commercial uses are located to the west.

The AAA is irregularly shaped and consists of approximately 3,065 acres. The AAA is mostly developed, includes a portion of the Santa Clara River (in the northwest portion), and includes hillsides and undeveloped land (in southern and easterly portions). Elevations across the AAA vary from approximately 1,400 feet above sea level in the middle of the Santa Clara River to over 2,000 feet in elevation in the southerly portion of the AAA.

Environmental conditions on much of the AAA vary from disturbed, developed land in northern, western and eastern portions of the AAA to undeveloped, natural, open space areas in southern portions of the AAA.

### *Existing Neighborhoods*

*Fair Oaks Ranch* - The Fair Oaks Ranch residential community is located east of SR-14 and is predominately built out. This master-planned residential community, with varying residential product types (including single- and multi-family attached units), presently includes a total of 1,670 residential units on approximately 1,082 acres. The area also includes an elementary school and several private recreational facilities. There are approximately 500 approved residential units left to be constructed in Fair Oaks Ranch, and construction is ongoing.

*Jakes Way* - The Jakes Way portion of the AAA presently consists of 3,225 multi-family residential units on approximately 260 acres. The majority of the Jakes Way area is built out. However, there is undeveloped property directly south of the western portion of the Vista Canyon project site that could be developed with up to 436,000 square feet of business park uses under the City's existing General Plan land use designation.

*Sand Canyon* - The Sand Canyon portion of the AAA is predominately rural and consists of 96 large-lot, single-family homes on approximately 1,723 acres. A majority of the Sand Canyon portion of the AAA is built out; however, it is estimated that up to 150 additional, single-family units could be constructed on vacant or underutilized properties within this area under the City's General Plan land use designation.

### *General Plan Amendment/Prezone/Sphere of Influence*

This 3,065-acre Annexation would require a Sphere of Influence Amendment, general plan amendment, and prezone. Currently, the AAA is within the Planning Area addressed by the City of Santa Clarita's General Plan. Prezoning of the AAA site would be consistent with: (i) existing development in the AAA, where existing, and (ii) land use designations in the City's existing General Plan for undeveloped areas. On the next page is a table showing the existing and proposed designation for the annexation areas.

**Ancillary Annexation Area Summary**

	Acres	Current City of Santa Clarita General Plan Designation	Proposed City of Santa Clarita General Plan Designation	Proposed City of Santa Clarita Pre-Zone (Zoning)
<b>Fair Oaks Ranch</b>	490.57	Residential Estate (RE)	Specific Plan (SP)	Specific Plan (SP)
	284.19	Residential Moderate (RM)		
	254.48	Business Park (BP)		
	26.21	Community Commercial (CC)		
	26.92			
	<b>1,082.37 total</b>	Commercial Office (CO)		
<b>Jakes Way</b>	237.94	Residential Moderate (RM)	Residential Moderate (RM) Business Park (BP)	Residential Moderate (RM) Business Park (BP)
	22.06	Business Park (BP)		
	<b>260.00 total</b>			
<b>Sand Canyon Area 1</b>	645.28	Residential Estate (RE)	Residential Estate (RE) Open Space (OS)	Residential Estate (RE) Open Space (OS)
	17.42	Business Park (BP)		
	1,004.55	Open Space (OS)		
	<b>1,667.25 total</b>			
<b>Sand Canyon Area 2</b>	56.08	Residential Estate (RE)	Residential Estate (RE)	Residential Estate (RE)
	<b>56.08 total</b>			

*Impacts And Mitigation Measures*

As indicated previously, most of the AAA is built out. As such, the proposed changes to the land use designations in the built out portion of the AAA, and the re-assignment of those areas to a City land use jurisdiction, would not result in any potentially significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the analysis primarily focuses on the potential environmental impacts that may result from further build out within the Sand Canyon and Jakes Way areas (the only areas within the AAA with remaining, unapproved development potential). These unbuilt areas within the AAA would require project-level environmental review under CEQA. Because such additional development, should it occur, cannot be accurately predicted, particularly as to rate, timing, location, and extent, it is not reasonably possible to undertake an in-depth analysis in this DEIR for the AAA that is comparable to that provided for the Vista Canyon project. Accordingly, the DEIR provides the lead agency's good faith efforts to assess and disclose the environmental impacts associated with the buildout of those areas with remaining development potential in the AAA, which concluded that there would be less than or no significant impacts.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

- 1) Receive the staff presentation;
- 2) Receive testimony from the applicant and the public;
- 3) Provide direction to staff on the hearing schedule and project issues; and
- 4) Continue the public hearing to November 2, 2010.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Specific Plan  
Tentative Tract Map