

Agenda Item No.:
Area Plan: Reche Canyon/Badlands
Zoning District: Edgemont-Sunnymead
Supervisorial District: Fifth
Project Planner: Becky Brewington
Planning Commission: February 3, 2010

General Plan Amendment No. 1085
E.A. Number 42212
Applicant: Warrior ATV Golf LLC
Engineer/Rep.: Ron Ross

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:

The applicant proposes to amend the General Plan Land Use designation from Rural: Rural Mountainous (R:RM) (10 Acre Minimum Lot Size) to Rural: Rural Residential (R:RR) (5 Acre Minimum Lot Size) for a project site of approximately 318.67 acres. The project site is located northerly of Vista Suelto Road, southerly of Deerview Drive, easterly of Reche Canyon Road and westerly of Pettit Road in the Reche Canyon/Badlands Area Plan.

ISSUES OF POTENTIAL CONCERN:

The proposed site is located in the "Reche Canyon" community within the "Reche Canyon/Badlands Area Plan." Currently, the site is designated as Rural Mountainous which requires a 10 acre minimum lot size. Amending the land use designation to Rural Residential would reduce the minimum lot size required to 5 acres gross. The subject site is surrounded by the Rural Mountainous and Open Space-Rural designations to the north, the Rural Mountainous designation to the south and west, and the Rural Residential designation to the east.

As mentioned above, the Rural Mountainous land use designation requires a 10 acre minimum lot size and according to the General Plan is applied to those areas where a "minimum of 70% of the area has slopes of 25% or greater. It also applies to remote areas that are completely or partially surrounded by slopes greater than 25%, and that do not have both county-maintained access and access to community sewer and water systems." Currently, Smiley Boulevard is the only access point that runs north and south through the subject site, and is a non-county maintained roadway. Private roadways are proposed to provide for future vehicular circulation within the site. The site is also surrounded by areas with steep terrain. The results of a slope analysis conducted by the project engineer for the site shows that majority of the project site is within areas at 25% slope or greater as shown on Exhibit A. The site's characteristics are highly consistent with the existing Rural Mountainous designation given the steep slopes, lack of existing water and sewer, fire danger and limited access.

The subject site is located in an area of the General Plan identified as a "High Wildfire Zone". The Safety Element of the General Plan addresses the risks of a high wildfire zone in a number of ways; including restricting building in those "high risk" areas and providing secondary public access for the areas that are proposing developments.

The terrain is a fundamental feature of the character of the Reche Canyon/Badlands area plan and the visual aspects should be preserved. The parcels in question possess slopes that range from 15%-25% and potentially greater, which can create an increase in potential public safety issues (i.e. slope failures and landslides) when developing and or grading the area at a higher density. The proposed changes would again create an internal inconsistency between the Land Use Map/Element and the Safety Element of the General Plan.

Portions of the project site are located within a fault zone. There are several known fault zones within ½ mile of the project site including the Claremont Fault, the Reche Canyon/Casa Loma Fault and the San Jacinto Faults, which may pose a significant threat to life and property and create an increased potential for seismic hazards and fault rupture. According to the General Plan's Safety Element, the primary technique used to mitigate said hazards is to setback from and avoid active faults. If an active fault is present, any structure used for human occupancy shall be setback a minimum of 50' from the fault or fault zone, unless otherwise determined by the County Engineering Geologist. Five acre lot sizes have been proposed on the site; however, based upon the degree of potential faulting within the immediate area, an increase in density within the immediate vicinity has the potential to increase the threat to public safety.

The project site is located within several cell criteria areas of the Western Riverside Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRMSHCP). Preliminary consultation with the Environmental Programs Department indicates that although an active HANS (Habitat and Negotiation Strategy) application is not in process, the project site does contain areas that would most likely be described for conservation. A HANS application was previously submitted on the project site in 2006, but was withdrawn before an exhibit showing the areas described for conservation could be issued. The site will be required to conform to additional plan wide requirements of the WRMSHCP such as Riparian/Riverine Policies, Specific Species Surveys, Urban/Wildlands Interface Guidelines (UWIG) and Narrow Endemic Plant Species Policies and Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation Analysis (DBESP) as applicable.

No substantial evidence has been provided to show that new conditions or circumstances are present in the area to justify the proposed change. Tract Map No. 26837 has been approved and recorded directly to the north of the subject parcel with minimum lot sizes of 10 acres gross. The surrounding area remains rural in character which is in keeping with the General Plan's vision for the area.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Director recommends that the Planning Commission **decline** to adopt an order initiating proceedings for General Plan Amendment No. 1085 from Rural: Rural Mountainous (R:RM) to Rural: Rural Residential (R:RR). The initiation of proceedings by the Board of Supervisors for the amendment of the General Plan, or any element thereof, shall not imply any such amendment will be approved.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

1. This project was filed with the Planning Department on September 16, 2009.
2. Deposit Based Fees charged for this project as of the time of staff report preparation, total \$5,933.10.
3. The project site is currently designated as Assessor's Parcel Numbers 473-090-004, 473-090-005, 473-090-006, 473-090-007 and 473-100-013.