



County of Inyo



Planning Department

WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTATIONS -

MEETING: March 2, 2021

FROM:

SUBJECT:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Request Board: A) conduct workshop on the Vacant Lands Inventory and Zoning/General Plan Evaluations for Possible Changes to Promote Housing Opportunities; and B) provide comments and direction to staff regarding the project description, parcel selection and alternatives for the EIR.

SUMMARY/JUSTIFICATION:

Staff applied for and received a SB2 grant and with the help of HELIX Environmental Consultants has been working on a vacant lands inventory and zoning and General Plan review of properties located in the County. This information will be used identify land that might be appropriate for zone and General Plan designation changes to promote affordable housing opportunities primarily by increasing the allowable residential density. The Senate Bill 2 grant funding is directed at planning assistance that helps to achieve affordable housing. The reasons for the project are found in the County's current lack of family-wage housing opportunities. There are many factors that contribute to this including:

- A lack of available private property for development.
- Difficulties in the provision of infrastructure and services.
- Little interest from builders to provide "family-wage" and/or "affordable" housing choices.
- State subdivision regulations that prohibit subdivision of areas outside Community Service District Boundaries (Fire).
- Outdated zoning.

The project's strategy is to:

- Conduct a vacant lands inventory and General Plan/zoning designations review of private properties located throughout the County (GIS exercise).
- Identify land that may be appropriate for designation changes to promote housing opportunities, primarily by increasing allowable residential density.
- May include increasing the amount of multi-family zoning available in the County and/or additional zoning areas with principal permitting for mobile home parks.
- Review of the County's current zoning with a focus on commercial zones for opportunities for infill (residential) development as well as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).
- Areas near public transportation and other services will be considered prime, but properties located in remote communities without these services may also be identified for potential zone changes.
- Public outreach meetings and communication with property owners.

The CEQA evaluation (EIR) is being conducted on properties proposed for General Plan and zoning designation changes and on changes to the current zoning ordinance for infill opportunities.

The project began in fall 2020 with a CEQA Notice of Preparation being submitted to the State Clearinghouse on November 4, 2020. This was followed by a scoping meeting held on November 18, 2020. The scoping meeting was held to:

- Provide information on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process.
- Identify the environmental issues the EIR will address.
- Solicit community input on the environmental issues that may be involved with the proposed project.
- Collect comments on the environmental analysis of the proposed project, especially for:
 - o The range of alternatives to be considered to avoid or reduce impacts;
 - o Potential environmental impacts of greatest concern to public agencies, organizations and individuals; and,
 - o Avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures.

The scoping meeting was not heavily attended, however, staff was still able to get very good comments. These included:

- There is an environmental constraints document that was produced by the City of Bishop around 2012 that might have relevant information to this proposed project.
- Better define which LADWP parcels to include, perhaps defining a sphere of influence for each neighborhood or town within which to include parcels.
- Support for mixed use commercial and residential zoning.
- Include LADWP lands, particularly lots on Main Street in Lone Pine, even if they are not on divestment lists because it may be possible to request divestment.
- Consider bringing in a large septic tank to support additional housing in areas such as Charleston View or Cartago even if these areas would otherwise fall outside the boundaries of the parcels under review because they are not within a sewer or water district.
- Include vacant or lightly developed County-owned lands for consideration.
- Several suggestions for increasing residential density, including easing restrictions for renting rooms in existing housing and changing existing zoning to allow for duplexes and additional accessory dwelling units (ADU) in certain zones.

County and consultant staff used the ideas collected at the scoping meeting to complete the vacant lands analysis and zone/General Plan designations review. This information is being used to generate a project description and baseline for the Environmental Impact Report and final draft parcel list for proposed designation changes. The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis was conducted with a set of parameters to find the best parcel candidates for designation changes that met the project's objectives and be inclusive of the scoping comments. The GIS process employed classified parcel data with overlays to determine the best fit for County purposes, starting with countywide parcel dataset, the following parameters were used to identify parcels:

1. Classified as vacant according to County assessor data.
2. Located within a local fire protection district.
3. Located within or adjacent to a water and/or sewer sanitary service district.
4. Designated as private property or County or LADWP ownership.
5. Identified parcels with Residential designations that were greater than 0.5 acres, and/or parcels in the Central Business District (CBD) designation.
6. Compiled a list of parcels that were identified and added parcels identified as priorities in the current Housing Element update.
7. For each parcel included in the recommendation, evaluations of the current minimum and maximum housing density and minimum and maximum number of dwelling units supported by the target parcels was generated.

The preliminary results found 41-parcels, 27 of these are located in the CBD designation and 14 are in others. The parcel list was then further refined by information in the City of Bishop Constraints report (maps attached).

The project objectives drafted per Section 15124 of the CEQA Guidelines are:

- Provide for increased housing opportunities in Inyo County primarily through increasing allowable residential

density within existing and established communities, especially within the Central Business District land use designation.

- Allow for increased housing opportunities (primarily multi-family) in certain commercial zones ministerially (no additional discretionary action needed).
- Focus future housing opportunities to vacant land located adjacent to existing public transit stops and public utilities/services.
- Minimize direct and indirect impact from increased housing opportunities on the physical, biological, cultural, political, and socioeconomic environments.
- Identify zone changes to be consistent with General Plan land use designations to maximize density.

Project alternatives drafted per Section 15126.6 of CEQA Guidelines.

1. Proposed Project: Increased housing opportunities resulting in a net increase of approximately 219-475 Dwelling Units
2. No Project Alternative: No change to General Plan land use designations or zoning ordinance.
3. Reduced Housing Opportunity Alternative: Allowing only 146-356 dwelling units.

The next steps will be to prepare the EIR and identify exactly which parcels will move forward with General Plan and zoning designation proposed changes. These will go to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for approval.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

FINANCING:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Maps of Parcels Identified

APPROVALS:

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Approved - 2/23/2021
Final Approval - 2/24/2021