

ATTACHMENT A: FINDINGS

1.0 CEQA FINDINGS

1.1 The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors have considered the Negative Declaration (07NGD-00000-00013) together with the comments received and considered during the public review process. The Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors; has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and County CEQA Guidelines; and is adequate for this proposal.

1.2 The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors finds that the Ordinance 661 Consistency Rezone project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

1.3 The documents and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based are in the custody of the Secretary of the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission, Ms. Dianne Black, Planning and Development, located at 123 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

2.0 ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS

2.1 Rezone Findings

Pursuant to Sec. 35.104.060 of the Land Use and Development Code of Chapter 35 of the County Code, the following findings are required for approval of a Rezone or Ordinance Amendment.

2.1.1 **That the Rezone request is in the interests of the general community welfare.**

The purpose of the consistency rezone is to rezone all remaining parcels zoned under Ordinance 661 in the Santa Maria Valley and San Antonio Creek Rural Regions to the equivalent Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) zoning designation. The consistency rezone will: 1) provide equitable treatment between similarly zoned properties with respect to eligible land uses and permit processing requirements; 2) increase land use options available to property owners; and 3) improve permit process efficiency by having a single zoning ordinance (LUDC) applicable for the entire rural region which will help reduce time and cost for permit processing and eliminate the need for individual consistency rezones from

Ordinance 661 to the LUDC. All allowed agricultural uses continue to be allowed after the rezone.

In this manner, the proposal does not impinge upon the community welfare. Therefore, the Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors find the Rezone request is in the interests of the general community welfare.

2.1.2 That the Rezone request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the requirements of the State planning and zoning laws, and the Land Use and Development Code.

Sections 5.2 and 5.3 of this staff report describe the project's consistency with Santa Barbara county Comprehensive Plan policies, as well as compliance with the Land Use and Development Code; each of which are consistent with State planning and zone law. Therefore, the Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors finds that the Rezone request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the requirements of State planning and zoning laws, and the Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code.

2.1.3 That the Rezone request is consistent with good zoning and planning practices.

The purpose of the consistency rezone is to rezone all remaining parcels zoned under Ordinance 661 in the Santa Maria Valley and San Antonio Creek Rural Regions to the equivalent Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) zoning designation. Having a singular zoning ordinance will help ensure consistency and equity in the application of LUDC zoning ordinance requirements and implementation of the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan.

2.2 PLANNING FINDINGS: Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The proposed Ordinance 661 Consistency Rezone project also involves a Comprehensive Plan amendment to replace the Agricultural (A) and Open and Grazing land use designations with the Agriculture I (A-I), Agriculture II (A-II), Agriculture Commercial (AC), and Residential Ranchette land use designations found in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element and Agricultural Element. The Agricultural (A) and Open and Grazing designations are older designations from the original 1965 Santa Barbara County General Plan which have been systematically replaced throughout the County.

Comprehensive Plan Designations

Agricultural I (A-I) Land Use Designation Definition: This designation applies to acreages of prime and non-prime farm lands and agricultural uses which are located within Urban, Inner Rural, and Rural Neighborhood areas.

Residential Ranchette Land Use Designation Definition: The designation Rural Ranchette is intended for use within Urban, Existing Developed Rural Neighborhoods, Inner Rural and Coastal Zone areas. These are areas adjacent to the more intensive urban uses. While the use of such parcels is residential, the intent of the designation is to preserve the character of an area and minimize the services required by smaller lot development. The Residential Ranchette designation permits all forms of cultivated agriculture, grazing, and related activities which would be allowed under an Agriculture I designation (e.g., intensive commercial animal husbandry would not be permitted).

Land Use Element EDRN Definition: A neighborhood area that has developed historically with lots smaller than those found in the surrounding Rural or Inner Rural lands. The purpose of the neighborhood boundary is to keep pockets of rural residential development from expanding onto adjacent agricultural lands. Within the Rural Neighborhood boundary, infilling of parcels at densities on the land use plan maps is permitted.

Potentially Consistent: Parcels located within existing and proposed EDRNs would be designated A-I or Residential Ranchette. The proposed land use designations reflect the characteristics and existing land uses within each EDRN. Parcel sizes are generally smaller than surrounding rural agricultural lands, and the predominant land use is rural residential development, although many also support small farms or limited grazing uses.

Agricultural II (A-II) Land Use Designation Definition: This designation applies to acreages of farm lands and agricultural uses located outside Urban, Inner Rural, and Rural Neighborhood areas. General agriculture is permitted, including but not limited to livestock operations, grazing, and beef production as well as more intensive agricultural uses.

Potentially Consistent: The proposed Ordinance 661 Consistency Rezone project also involves a Comprehensive Plan amendment to replace the Agricultural (A) and Open and Grazing land use designations with Agriculture II (A-II) and Agriculture Commercial (AC) land use designations found in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element and Agricultural Element. The Agricultural (A) and Open and Grazing designations are older designations from the original 1965 Santa Barbara County General Plan which have been systematically replaced throughout the County.

Agricultural Resources

***Land Use Element - Agricultural Goal:** In rural areas, cultivated agriculture shall be preserved and, where conditions allow, expansion and intensification should be supported. Lands with both prime and nonprime soils shall be reserved for agricultural uses.*

***Agricultural Element Goal I:** Santa Barbara County shall assure and enhance the continuation of agriculture as a major viable production industry in Santa Barbara County. Agriculture shall be encouraged. Where conditions allow (taking into account environmental impacts) expansion and intensification shall be supported.*

Potentially Consistent: The proposed consistency rezone project would enhance the ability of agricultural land owners to continue, improve and expand agricultural operations. The LUDC zone districts that would replace the existing Ordinance 661 zones allow a broader range of agricultural support uses since many of the agricultural support uses requiring a discretionary permit (e.g. Tier 2 & 3 wineries, vegetable coolers, etc.) are not available under Ordinance 661. Additionally, uniform application of the AG-II and AC land use designations throughout the rural area is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Agricultural Element and would simplify the permit process and provide better regulatory consistency and equity for property owners throughout the project area.

***Land Use Element – Development Policy 3:** No urban development shall be permitted beyond boundaries of land designated for urban uses except in neighborhoods in rural areas.*

***Agricultural Element Goal II:** Agricultural lands shall be protected from adverse urban influence.*

Potentially Consistent: The County of Santa Barbara Land Use Element - Existing Developed Rural Neighborhood (EDRN) boundary line is a planning tool for defining rural neighborhoods which historically developed over time with smaller parcel sizes than the surrounding rural agricultural areas. The proposed project would define new EDRN's within the eastern Santa Maria Valley and retract the existing Tepusquet EDRN to exclude seven parcels which are more characteristic of the rural agricultural lands. These project components would enhance and protect surrounding farmland by prohibiting expansion of pockets of rural residential development.

***Agricultural Element Policy II.D:** Conversion of highly productive agricultural lands whether urban or rural, shall be discouraged. The County shall support programs which encourage the retention of highly productive agricultural lands.*

Agricultural Element Goal III: *Where it is necessary for agricultural lands to be converted to other uses, this use shall not interfere with remaining agricultural operations.*

Agricultural Element Policy III.A: *Expansion of urban development into active agricultural areas outside of urban limits is to be discouraged, as long as infill development is available.*

Potentially Consistent: The proposed project involves regulatory changes that would not adversely affect agricultural land or resources. Limited development of up to 150 additional single family dwellings and residential second units could be facilitated by the proposed new zoning designation. The relatively small size, scale and broad distribution of residential development would not result in adverse impacts to agricultural productivity or facilitate conversion of highly productive agricultural lands.

Housing

Housing Element Goal I: *Promote the development of new housing with a diversity of types, sizes, tenures, densities, and locations in the necessary quantities to meet the needs of all economic segments of the community.*

Housing Element Policy 2.2: *The County shall promote and facilitate development of farm employee housing on agriculturally zoned land (including single family dwellings, mobile homes, and group quarters such as bunk houses or dormitories). Developers of such projects shall not be limited to farm worker employers.*

Potentially Consistent: The project would facilitate development of a modest number of housing units throughout the 369,000 acre project area, as a result of adopting new zoning designations with different allowances for primary single family residences on some rural parcels and Residential Second Units on parcels zoned AG-I and RR. Landowners would be afforded new housing opportunities that mirror the uses allowed within EDRNS throughout the County. Further, they would enhance the ability for farm owners and, in some cases, workers to live near the lands they manage.