



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

"Parks Make Life Better!"

John Wicker, Director

Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director

October 25, 2016

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**ADOPT THE CASTAIC AREA MULTI-USE TRAILS PLAN AND
INITIAL STUDY/FINAL MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
(SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 5) (3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

Recommendation to adopt the Castaic Area Multi-Use Trails Plan, a master plan intended to guide future multi-use (hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian) trail planning and development in the unincorporated Castaic area, completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The Castaic Project Area encompasses approximately 75 square miles of the unincorporated Castaic area of the Santa Clarita Valley in the northwestern portion of Los Angeles County. The proposed project includes approximately 100 miles of proposed multi-use trails and trail related or support facilities, such as multi-use staging areas, equestrian amenities, bike skills parks amenities, and trailheads in the Castaic Area of the Santa Clarita Valley Planning Area.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Consider the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Castaic Area Multi-Use Trails Plan together with any comments received during the public review process; find that the Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the Board, and adopt the Mitigated Monitoring and Reporting Programs, finding that it is adequately designed to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures during the project implementation; find on the basis of the whole record before the Board, that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have significant effect on the environment; and adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration.
2. Adopt the Department of Parks and Recreation's Final Castaic Area Multi-Use Trails Plan.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation and/or his designee

to approve any revisions or amendments to the Castaic Area Multi-Use Trails Plan and execute any documents or agreements necessary in connection with such revisions or amendments.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approval of the recommended actions will adopt the Castaic Area Multi-Use Trails Plan (Master Plan); delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation (Director), or his designee, to approve and execute amendments related to the Master Plan; and adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Master Plan, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (Department) is implementing a countywide multi-use (hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian) trails planning effort consistent with the County General Plan, Parks and Recreation Element. This effort supports the development of a comprehensive trails database that is utilized by a number of County departments and informs the public through the County's new trails website. Demand for recreational trails throughout Los Angeles County has grown exponentially and can be connected to public health benefits for County residents.

The Master Plan is the result of strong interest expressed by the communities in the Castaic area for a comprehensive multi-use trails plan for the unincorporated Castaic area. The Department engaged a multi-disciplinary consulting team with expertise in landscape architecture, environmental review and trails-planning to complete the draft trails plan, technical studies, community engagement process and CEQA compliance. With support and funding from the Fifth Supervisorial District, the Department initiated an extensive community, key stakeholder, and agency outreach process in August 2015.

The Department received 55 categories of comments, which included 26 written public comment letters and six written agency comment letters.

The Department hosted a series of four public workshops at several locations in the planning area. Although the general public was invited to attend any or all of the workshops, several user-specific meetings for the hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian advocates allowed for in-depth dialogue and data collection to inform the Master Plan.

In addition to hosting the public workshops, the Department met separately with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in December 2015 and received valuable input from law enforcement representatives at the Santa Clarita Station and the Pitchess Detention Center. As a result of this meeting, the proposed Castaic Creek Trail approved in 2007 was realigned, and the proposed realignment is reflected in the Master Plan.

The Department worked closely with the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning to ensure that the County's advanced planning efforts and related land development projects were integrated into the subject Master Plan to ensure a comprehensive plan and effective delivery.

The Castaic Project Area encompasses approximately 75 square miles of the unincorporated Castaic area of the Santa Clarita Valley in the northwestern portion of Los Angeles County. The Project Area is bounded by the Angeles National Forest to the north, the City of Santa Clarita to the southeast, the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan to the south and the County of Ventura to the west.

The western boundary of Plan Area is co-aligned with the Ventura-Los Angeles County lines. In order to maximize opportunities for regional trail connections and linkages, the Department coordinated with and engaged in a detailed planning process with the Rancho Simi Open Space District and several Ventura County local representatives, including the Third Supervisorial District.

The Master Plan encourages and promotes new multi-use trails and recommends improvements to existing trails, providing an alignment to incorporate a transition throughout the Castaic Project Area to additional areas, jurisdictions, and prime destinations within and adjacent to the Castaic Project Area. The Master Plan would recommend conditions for improvement of unmet local recreation demands in the Fifth Supervisorial District. The proposed Master Plan would develop a complete multi-use trail system connecting user groups and local populations to desired recreation destinations and experiences, including unified transition to the trails of adjacent jurisdictions, compatibility with adjacent land uses and environmental resources, and incorporation of a sustainable design that is consistent with the County Trails Manual.

Based on the 2015 Los Angeles County General Plan, Regional Trail System, there are three existing trails in the Castaic Project Area. These three existing trails include portions of Hasley Canyon Trail, Cliffie Stone Trail, and North Park Trail. The Master Plan proposes a total of approximately 100 miles of multi-use trails, nine proposed multi-use staging areas locations, four proposed equestrian amenities locations, three proposed bike skills park amenities, and five proposed trailheads in the Master Plan area. Table 4-3, "Trails by Segments" in the Master Plan lists the existing and proposed trails segments by name, length, source, and existing condition of trail segments.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The proposed recommendations further the Board-approved County Strategic Plan Goals of Operational Effectiveness/Fiscal Sustainability (Goal 1), Community Support and Responsiveness (Goal 2), and Integrated Service Delivery (Goal 3), by providing an opportunity to enhance and increase trails and trail-related facilities and recreational opportunities for County residents and visitors, implementation of new trail facilities and amenities for multi-use (hiking, equestrian, and mountain biking), and provide well-designed, sustainable trails.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

No immediate fiscal impact to the Department's operating budget will result from approval of the recommendations. However, should the Department pursue or initiate a new trail planning, design, and/or construction project, the Department would need to work with the Chief Executive Office to determine the appropriate level of funding for operating costs and address them in a New Facility Program request.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Master Plan process included a tribal consultation in conformance with the California Assembly Bill (AB) 52. The Department received a letter on February 9, 2016 requesting consultation by the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians. In their letter, the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians expressed that they believe the proposed project has potential impacts to cultural and tribal resources and requested a consultation with the County concerning the proposed project. The Department met with the designated tribal representatives to gather more information and formulate mitigation measures with the objective of having mitigation measures in place as early as possible in the planning process. The tribal consultation process will be concluded by October 24,

2016.

The key stakeholder engagement began in August 2015 with an agency stakeholder meeting for interested public agencies in order to provide information about the proposed project area and purpose of the proposed Master Plan. Eleven agency representatives attended the meeting, including local, state, and federal government agencies, such as U.S. Forest Service, California State Parks, California Department of Transportation; other County of Los Angeles departments, such as the Los Angeles County Fire Department, Department of Public Works, Department of Regional Planning, and Sanitation Districts; and utility companies, such as Southern California Gas Company. Agencies in attendance expressed a range of concerns, from proximity of proposed trails to active training centers and gas well operations and related facilities on government-owned and privately-owned land to concerns regarding trail user safety at street crossings and driveways. In an effort to broadly advertise the community meetings, the Department published the meeting flyer on the Department's website and on the project website (<http://www.castaicmultiusetrails.org/>), and posted meeting flyers at parks, public locations, and at the Castaic Library. As a result of further community feedback, the Department mailed meeting notices to 16,092 individual property owners in Los Angeles County and Ventura County.

The public workshops and community meetings consisted of a presentation on the project overview, process, and timeline with a question-and-answer period, and concluded with breakout sessions into community input stations. The community input stations covered the following topics: project overview map, project goals and objectives, equestrian amenities, staging areas and trail features, bike skills amenities, and types of Los Angeles County Multi-Use Trails. Meeting attendees were invited to provide feedback and comments at each of these community input stations. Other methods of providing written comments included submitting a comment card, submitting an email, and via the project website (<http://www.castaicmultiusetrails.org/>), which featured an Interactive Trail Map and provided the opportunity for the public at-large to engage in online discussions and digitally record their individual preferences for desired trail routes, destination points, and points of concern.

The Department received and responded to 55 categories of comments, which included 26 written comments and six agency written comment letters. The six agency written comment letters included in a letter from the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, which resulted in adjustments and changes to the proposed trails in the vicinity of the Elderberry Forebay and the Castaic Power Plant consistent with the provisions of the Castaic Lake State Recreation Area Operating Agreement. The responses to these written comments can be found in Appendix L of the Final MND. A reasonable effort has been made to address and integrate all of the requested adjustments and changes received during public agency meetings, public workshops, and written comments into the Final Master Plan for your consideration and adoption.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

As required by CEQA, an Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for this project and circulated for 30 days for agency and public review from May 13, 2016 to June 13, 2016. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 21092 and 21092.3, public notice was published in the Santa Clarita Valley Signal and posted at various locations including the Castaic Library (27971 Sloan Canyon Road, Castaic, CA 91384), County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (510 S. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90020), and online at Department's website (<http://parks.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dpr/Newsroom/EnvironmentalDocuments/>).

All comments received and responses to the comments are attached in the MND and sent to these

agencies pursuant to Section 21092.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Upon the Board's adoption of the Final MND, including the mitigation measures required, a notice of determination will be filed with the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk in compliance with CEQA requirements.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

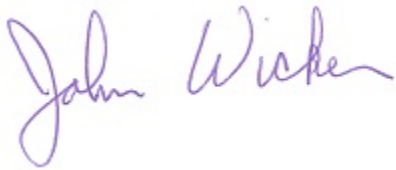
The recommended actions will have no impact on any other County services or projects.

CONCLUSION

Upon approval by the Board, please instruct the Executive Office-Clerk of the Board, to forward one adopted copy to the Chief Executive Office, and one adopted copy to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Should you have any questions, please contact Olga Ruano at (213) 351-5141 or oruano@parks.lacounty.gov, Norma E. Garcia at (213) 351-5198 or negarcia@parks.lacounty.gov, Kasey Dizon at (213) 738-2986 or kdizon@parks.lacounty.gov, or Kaye Michelson at (213) 738-2955 or kmichelson@parks.lacounty.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



JOHN WICKER

Director

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R:ner

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors