

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION*

Tuesday, January 20, 2015
5:00 p.m.

Century Conference Room
23920 Valencia Boulevard, First Floor
Santa Clarita, California

AGENDA

*** Study Sessions are for the purpose of allowing the Planning Commission and staff to informally discuss and better understand major issues currently before the City.**

CALL TO ORDER

ATTENDANCE

ITEM 1 2014 GENERAL PLAN REVIEW

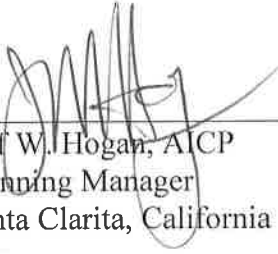
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (One Minute Limit)

ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Planning Division at (661) 255-4330. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title II)

CERTIFICATION


I, Jeff W. Hogan, do hereby certify that I am the duly appointed and qualified Planning Manager for the City of Santa Clarita, and that on January 16, 2015, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., the foregoing agenda was posted at City Hall, Santa Clarita Library, Valencia Branch, and the Santa Clarita Sheriff's Station.



Jeff W. Hogan, AICP
Planning Manager
Santa Clarita, California

**CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

TO: Chair Trautman and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Jeff Hogan, Planning Manager 

DATE: January 20, 2015

SUBJECT: 2014 GENERAL PLAN REVIEW

Approved by the City Council in June 2011, the City of Santa Clarita's General Plan serves as the guiding document for the goals, policies and objectives of the City. Attached is a copy of the 2014 General Plan Review. The purpose of this document is to provide a review of the General Plan for the 2014 calendar year from January 1, through December 31. The report focuses primarily on land use, construction, and economic development issues and includes:

- A summary of significant development patterns within the City of Santa Clarita including vacancy rates, entitlements, new construction, open space/parks acquisition and development, and annexations;
- A summary of all General Plan Amendments for the calendar year 2014 approved by the City Council; and
- A summary of accomplishments of the 2014 calendar year for specific elements of the General Plan as they relate to the major goals of the departments.

JWH:DGP:kl

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Attachment

**City of Santa Clarita
Planning Commission
2014 General Plan Review**

**Prepared:
January, 2015**

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- IV. Highlighted Accomplishments:
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 - b. Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department
 - c. Public Works Department

I. Introduction:

Approved by the City Council in June 2011, the City of Santa Clarita's General Plan serves as the guiding document for the goals, policies, and objectives of the City. The purpose of this document is to provide a review of the General Plan for the 2014 calendar year. The report focuses primarily on land use, construction, and economic development issues. The report will:

- Summarize significant development patterns within the City of Santa Clarita including vacancy rates, entitlements, new construction, open space/parks acquisition and development, and annexations;
- Summarize all General Plan Amendments approved by the City Council; and
- Summarize accomplishments for specific elements of the General Plan as they relate to the major goals of the departments.

II. Development Patterns:

Goal LU2 of the General Plan's Land Use Element calls for "*A mix of land uses to accommodate growth, supported by adequate resources and maintaining community assets.*" Furthermore, Goal CO1 of the General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element calls for "*A balance between the social and economic needs of Santa Clarita Valley Residents, and protection of the natural environment, so that these needs can be met in the present and future.*" The following is a summary of development patterns within the City during 2014 that reflect these goals:

a. Vacancy Rates:

Commercial and industrial vacancy rates in the City of Santa Clarita were as follows for the 2014 as compared to the same time period in 2013:

2014	2013
Retail: 6.6%	Retail: 7.5%
Office: 7.7%	Office: 9.0%
Industrial: 4.0%	Industrial: 5.8%

b. Entitlements:

The Planning Division and Planning Commission approve entitlements for projects prior to plan review by the Building and Safety Division of the Public Works Department. Requirements for the entitlement process are described in the City's Unified Development Code (UDC), which is contained within Title 17 of the City's Municipal Code. In 2014, the following entitlements were submitted to the City of Santa Clarita's Planning Division for review:

- Over the Counter Permits: 2,359

Over the Counter (OTC) Permits are permits signed off at the Planning Counter by Planning Division staff. These permits are for simple tenant improvements to commercial and industrial properties as well as minor residential additions or alterations requiring a minimal level of administrative review, which can be reviewed while the customer waits. There is no entitlement fee for an OTC permit. OTC permits are the most common type of entitlement issued by the Planning Division. The number of OTC permits issued in 2014 increased by approximately 10% from 2013. Similar to 2013, photovoltaic solar projects represented nearly half of the total OTC permits issued during the reporting period. The following is a breakdown of OTC permits approved in 2014 by type of construction:

- Installation of solar panels: 957
- Patio Covers: 240
- Commercial Tenant Improvements: 234
- Residential Additions/Remodels: 197
- Signs: 142
- Zoning Referrals: 134
- Pools: 120
- Other: 97
- Walls/Retaining Walls: 83
- Temporary Banners: 58
- HVAC: 16
- Industrial Tenant Improvements: 2

- Home Occupation Permits: 79

Home Occupation Permits are permits signed off over the counter by staff and require slightly more administrative review than a standard OTC permit. Home Occupation Permits allow City residents to conduct specific kinds of small scale commercial businesses from their homes.

- Master Cases: 209

A Master Case is assigned to any entitlement, or group of entitlements related to the same proposed project, when that project cannot be approved over the counter due to the requirement of additional administrative or discretionary review, public noticing, and/or the scheduling of a public hearing. The total number of Master Cases submitted in 2014 (209) is approximately the same as the number of Master Cases submitted in 2013 (213).

During the 2014 calendar year, the Planning Division began tracking the average time of completion for entitlements. This was done in an effort to enhance customer service and processing efficiency. The average time to process a Master Case in 2014 was 32 days.

- One Stop Reviews: 13

Average Processing Time: 60 days

A One Stop Review is for projects taken in by Planning Division staff and informally reviewed by the various divisions within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. The purpose of the One Stop Review process is to provide applicants with preliminary feedback for projects at a reduced fee in order to provide applicants with an idea of issues that may exist with their proposal, prior to a formal entitlement submittal. This process does not result in any project approvals and is only informational in nature.

- Administrative Permits: 25

Average Processing Time: 43 days

Administrative Permits are permits taken in by Planning Division staff for discretionary review by the various divisions within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. These permits do not require public noticing prior to approval by the Director of Community Development. Examples of projects that can receive an Administrative Permit include the construction of a single family home, the construction of a second unit on a residential lot, and for residential Cottage Food Industries.

- Architectural Design Reviews: 8

Average Processing Time: 36 days

Architectural Design Reviews are permits taken in by Planning Division staff for discretionary review by the various divisions within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. These permits do not require public noticing prior to approval by the Director of Community Development. Examples of projects that can receive an Architectural Design review include commercial or residential projects that are proposing significant alterations to the exterior of a structure or structures on the subject property. These projects may require further review by the City's architectural consultant (RRM Design Group) on a case-by-case basis.

- Development Review Permits: 11

Average Processing Time: 84 days

Development Review Permits are permits taken in by Planning Division staff for discretionary review by the various divisions within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. These permits do not require public noticing prior to approval by the Director of Community Development and are generally for larger scale projects than contemplated by an Administrative Permit. Development Review Permits are typically issued for new commercial or industrial construction projects that are permitted by right in the Permitted Use Chart (Sections 17.42 through 17.49 of the UDC).

- Enhanced Sign Review Permits: 28

Average Processing Time: 21 days

Enhanced Sign Review Permits are permits taken in by Planning Division staff for discretionary review. These permits do not require public noticing prior to approval by the Director of Community Development. Enhanced Sign Review is required for signage proposals that exceed the City's "by-right" standards for signage, generally for sign size or number of signs on a commercial property, within specific constraints.

- Adjustments: 3

Average Processing Time: 29 days

Adjustments are permits taken in by Planning Division staff for discretionary review. These permits require public noticing prior to approval by the Director of Community Development. These permits can be issued for residential and commercial projects as a form of relief from a development standard by up to

20% due to practical difficulties, or unnecessary hardships for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights possessed by the property owner.

- Oak Tree Permits: 11
Average Processing Time: 20 days

Oak Tree Permits are taken in by Planning Division staff for discretionary review. These permits may require public noticing prior to approval by the Director of Community Development or the Planning Commission. Oak tree permits are issued for either major encroachments or removals of oak trees.

- Hillside Development Review Permits: 1
Average Processing Time: N/A

Hillside Development Review Permits are discretionary permits for proposed development that occurs on subject properties where the natural average cross slope is 10% or greater. Hillside Development Review permits are taken in by Planning Division staff for review by the various divisions within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. These permits are not signed off over the counter and may require public noticing depending on the extent of the average cross slope on the subject property. Hillside Development Review permits require the approval of the Director of Community Development or the Planning Commission, depending on the extent of the average cross slope on the subject property. One Hillside Development Review Permit was processed in 2014. The timeline for processing a Hillside Development Review is tied to the entitlement it is associated with.

- Ridgeline Alteration Permits: 1
Average Processing Time: N/A

Ridgeline Alteration Permits are discretionary permits for proposed development that occur on properties within the Ridgeline Preservation Overlay Zone. Ridgeline Alteration Permits are taken in by Planning Division staff for review by the various departments within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. These permits are not signed off over the counter and require public noticing prior to approval by the City Council. One Ridgeline Alteration Permits was processed in 2014. The timeline for processing a Hillside Development Review is tied to the entitlement it is associated with.

- Tentative Parcel Map and Tentative Tract Maps: 3
Average Processing Time: N/A

A request for a Tentative Parcel Map (TPM) or Tentative Tract Map (TTM) is a discretionary permit for the subdivision of land in accordance with the Subdivision Map Act. All subdivisions of land are reviewed by the various divisions within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. Following approval by the Planning Commission, all subdivisions of land are reviewed by the Public Works Department prior to approval by the City Council and recordation by the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's Office. The processing time is currently unavailable because these projects are still under review.

- Environmental Documents: 10
Average Processing Time: N/A

Initial Studies and Environmental Impact Reports are environmental documents that must be prepared for all projects that are not exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act. The processing time for these documents is included in the processing time of the entitlement it is associated with. In 2014 there were nine Initial Studies and one Environmental Impact Report submitted for review.

- Temporary Use Permits: 43
Average Processing Time: 22 days

Temporary Use Permits (TUPs) are discretionary permits for uses that are temporary in nature. TUPs are taken in by Planning Division staff for review by the various divisions within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. TUPs are not signed off over the counter and do not require public noticing prior to approval by the Director of Community Development. Common examples of projects that require a TUP include special events, Christmas tree lots or pumpkin patches, and seasonal sales.

- Minor Use Permits: 33
Average Processing Time: 70 days

Minor Use Permits (MUPs) are discretionary permits for specific uses identified on the permitted use chart that are not permitted by right. MUPs are

taken in by Planning staff for review by the various divisions within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. These uses require a greater level of discretion than Administrative Permits or Development Review Permits. MUPs are not signed off over the counter and require public notice prior to approval by the Director of Community Development. Common uses that require an MUP are instructional schools, churches, pawnshops, self-service car washes, and light manufacturing.

- Conditional Use Permits: 15
Average Processing Time: 89 days

Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) are discretionary permits for specific uses identified on the permitted use chart that are not permitted by right. CUPs are taken in by Planning staff for review by the various divisions within the City of Santa Clarita and other government agencies. These uses require a greater level of discretion than MUPs, Administrative Permits, or Development Review Permits. CUPs are not signed off over the counter and require public notice prior to approval by the Planning Commission. Common uses that require CUPs are bars, hookah and cigar clubs, liquor stores, and thrift shops.

c. New Construction:

A total of 273 single family units were constructed in 2014 as compared to 272 in 2013. Permits were issued for a total of 18,172 square feet of new commercial space. This is down significantly from the 150,674 square feet of commercial and industrial space permitted last year. The following reflects data for building permits issued during the reporting period for residential, commercial, and industrial development:

- Residential Construction:
 - Single Family: 273 Homes
Most residential construction occurred as part of the Villa Metro, River Village, Valle Di Oro, and Fair Oaks Ranch projects.
 - Attached Condominiums: 0
 - Multi-Family: 0
- Commercial Construction: 18,172 square feet. This includes square footage for new retail space, office space, structures used during filming, and additions to existing religious institutions.

- **Industrial Construction:** No industrial square footage was permitted during the reporting period.

d. Open Space/Parks Acquisition and Construction:

- **Open Space Acquisition:** The following is a summary of open space acquisitions that occurred during the reporting period:
 - Gateway Ranch: Formerly known as the Las Lomas property, Gateway Ranch was purchased through a partnership with the Trust for Public Land, leveraging funds from the City's Open Space Preservation District with grant funds from the California Department of Transportation's Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and Los Angeles County Proposition A. This 302-acre property is located near the intersection of Interstate 5 and State Route 14.
 - Taylor Property: The City purchased 114 acres of vacant land adjacent to the City's Rivendale Ranch Open Space at Towsley Canyon. The property will provide trail connections to Towsley Canyon and was funded entirely with Open Space Preservation District Funds. The property is located near the intersection of Calgrove Boulevard and The Old Road.
- Trail Construction: During 2014 the City increased Class I Trails by 1.5 miles. Multi-Use Trails were increased by 2.4 miles with the addition of Highland Loop at Wildwood Canyon Open Space.

e. Annexations:

Since June 2012, the City of Santa Clarita has completed eight annexations of land formerly under the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County. The North Saugus Annexation was approved by LAFCO on October 14, 2014. The annexation consists of 824 acres and includes the Blue Cloud Movie Ranch, 50's Town, and the Veluzat Movie Ranch.

III. General Plan Amendments

A General Plan Amendment is an amendment, addition, deletion or change to one or more of the elements and/or associated exhibits and maps contained within the City of Santa Clarita's General Plan. State Government Code Section 65358 allows municipalities to amend the General Plan no more than four times in a single calendar year. The following General Plan

Amendment was approved by the City Council or considered by the City Council during the reporting period:

- a. Norland Road Leasehold:
City Council Approval Date: February 25, 2014
Element Amended: Land Use

General Plan Amendment 13-003 was approved by the City Council on February 25, 2014, amending the Land Use Designation for the approximately 3488 square-foot proposed Norland Road leasehold area from an Open Space (OS) designation to a Business Park (BP). This was approved by the City Council in conjunction with the Metro Billboard Reduction Agreement in order to conform with the State Outdoor Advertising Act land use criteria for locating billboards in the vicinity of a State Highway.

IV. Highlighted Accomplishments

- a. Community Development Department:

The following highlighted accomplishments were completed by the Community Development Department during the reporting period. While each of these accomplishments may support multiple goals, objectives, or policies identified in the General Plan, staff has selected the area(s) that most closely relate to the highlighted accomplishment:

- General Plan Policy LU 2.1.2: On the Land Use Map, integrate land use designations in a manner that promotes healthy, walkable communities, by providing an appropriate mix of residential and service uses in proximity to one another.
 - Soledad Corridor Plan: The Soledad Canyon Road Corridor Plan creates a clear identity for the commercial core of Canyon Country east of Camp Plenty Road near the Santa Clara River and west of Solamint Road. The Soledad Canyon Road Corridor Plan serves as a document that will facilitate community enhancement into the future by creating development standards that are consistent with existing policies while providing flexibility in building placement, architectural standards, and sign standards that encourage property owners to propose projects that result in an enhanced design.

- General Plan Policy LU 1.2.1: In Newhall, provide opportunities for new business and housing by implementing the Downtown Newhall Specific Plan, provide incentives to promote infill development and re-use of underutilized sites, and continue to plan for the future development of North Newhall.
 - Old Town Newhall Specific Plan Amendments: Based on community input, staff completed the first comprehensive update of the Old Town Newhall Specific Plan. The update included the first revision of the land use (zoning) map, incorporated recommendations and suggestions from the community, and a revised glossary that referenced back to the Unified Development Code. The changes will make the plan easier to use. The document was resized to a standard 8.5 x 11 format and the name was changed to the “Old Town Newhall Specific Plan” to reflect the identity of the emerging Old Town arts and entertainment district.
- General Plan Objective LU 4.1: Promote creation of strong regional and local economies.
 - Film: Through November 2014, the City issued 502 film permits resulting in 1,339 film days and over \$30 million in economic impact. These statistics are the highest in the City’s history. Growth can be partially attributed to the annexation of movie ranches and the corresponding expansion of the Movie Ranch Overlay Zone, as well as the impact of the State and local Film Incentive Program.
 - Tourism: The average monthly occupancy for Santa Clarita hotels was 80.0%, up more than three percentage points over the same period last year. This increase, along with a corresponding increase in hotel room rates, led to the City collecting \$2.8 million in Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) in FY2013-14; a 9% increase over the previous fiscal year.
- General Plan Objective LU 3.1: Provide for a diversity of housing types available to provide safe and suitable homes for all economic levels, household sizes, age groups, and special needs within the community.
 - Oakmont Senior Living Facility: In July 2014, the Oakmont Senior Living Facility was approved by the Planning Commission. The Facility will provide 81 units for active senior citizens. A portion of the units will be dedicated for individuals with Alzheimer’s Disease. Construction of off-site improvements has commenced and the facility should be complete in 2015.

b. Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department:

The following highlighted accomplishments were completed by the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department during the reporting period. While each of these accomplishments may support multiple goals, objectives, or policies identified in the General Plan, staff has selected the area(s) that most closely relate to the highlighted accomplishment:

- General Plan Policy CO 9.1.6: Continue to upgrade and expand existing facilities to enhance service to residents, including extension of hours through lighted facilities where appropriate.
 - Central Park Sports Fields, Phase III: Approximately 12 acres of park and parking lot improvements were designed and constructed at Central Park. Improvements included two lighted multi-use sports fields, 170 new parking stalls, lighted walkways connecting to existing park facilities, an improved direct running path, landscaping, and irrigation.
 - Annual Play Area Shade Program, FY 2013-14: Shade structures were designed and constructed over the play areas at North Oaks, Fair Oaks, and Circle J Ranch Parks to provide a comfortable playground environment.
 - Chesebrough Park Play Equipment Replacement: The existing playground equipment, used by 2 to 5 year-old children and 9 to 12 year-old children, and play surfacing, was removed and new structures and play surfacing were installed.
- General Plan Objective CO 8.2: Reduce energy and materials consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in public uses and facilities:
 - Energy Efficiency Projects: The Department embarked on two projects this year for energy efficiency: 1) The Santa Clarita Sports Complex Air Conditioning Replacement Program, Phase I and II, are part of a four-year program to remove and replace a total of 26 original units at the gym, Activities Center, and Aquatics Center. Six units have been removed and replaced with high-efficiency units to date; and 2) Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) Controllers were installed at three City Park pools—North Oaks, Santa Clarita, and Newhall. The VFD controllers allow the City to save on electrical costs by reducing the pump speed at each of the park's pools.

- General Plan Goal CO 10: Preservation of open space to meet the community's multiple objectives for resource preservation.

General Plan Objective CO 10.1: Identify areas throughout the Santa Clarita Valley that should be preserved as open space in order to conserve significant resources for long-term community benefit.

- Open Space Acquisition: The department continues to pursue acquisition of property under the City's Open Space Preservation District. The City currently owns, or has joint ownership of, approximately 8,500 acres of dedicated open space land.
- Rivendale Park and Open Space Master Plan: The Master Plan process for Rivendale, one of the City's most important and visible gateway property holdings, was completed with the master plan approved by City Council.

c. Public Works Department:

The following highlighted accomplishments were completed by the Public Works Department during the reporting period. While each of these accomplishments may support multiple goals, objectives, or policies identified in the General Plan, staff has selected the area(s) that most closely relate to the highlighted accomplishment:

- General Plan Goal LU 9: Adequate public facilities and services, provided in a timely manner and in appropriate locations to serve existing and future residents and businesses.
 - City Hall Seismic Retrofit Project: This project added steel reinforcements to the City Hall building to meet code requirements for housing the City's Emergency Operations Center in the event of a significant seismic occurrence.
 - Business Incubator: The former Newhall library had tenant improvements completed to create a business incubator. The Business Incubator totals 3,000 square feet with space for up to seven new businesses.
- General Plan Goal C 1: An inter-connected network of circulation facilities that integrates all travel modes, provides viable alternatives to automobile use, and conforms with regional plans.

- General Plan Goal C 2: A unified and well-maintained network of streets and highways, which provide safe and efficient movement of people and goods between neighborhoods, districts, and regional centers, while maintaining community character.
 - Old Town Newhall Roundabout: A roundabout was constructed at the intersection of 5th Street and Newhall Avenue. The roundabout allows for smoother traffic flow in the Old Town Newhall area, creates a focal point for the entrance to Main Street, and provides a pedestrian connection to Hart Park.
 - McBean Parkway Bridge Widening: A project was completed widening the McBean Parkway Bridge over the Santa Clara River to eight lanes and included a Class I bike path connecting McBean Parkway and the Santa Clara River Trail. A new landscaped median was also constructed from Avenue Scott to Magic Mountain Parkway.
 - Median and Signal Modifications: Medians were modified and signals were changed to provide protected left turn signal phasing at three locations including Central Park at Bouquet Canyon Road, Via Princessa at Vista Del Canon, and Golden Valley Road at Robert C. Lee Parkway.
 - Update to Non-Motorized Plan: The City adopted a non-motorized plan in 2008. In 2014, updates were developed to build upon the bicycle network proposed in the original plan, fill in gaps within the current network, continue expansion of the existing trail network, formalize existing routes used by cyclists, and improve access between residential neighborhoods and the current bikeway network. Potential projects were identified to reflect the City's existing and future roadway and trail plans.

The plan was also updated to include a chapter on complete streets. A complete street provides for safe, convenient, and comfortable travel by foot, bicycle, public transit, and personal vehicle. Complete streets are designed for access, mobility, and safety for all users, regardless of travel mode. The complete streets chapter of the Non-Motorized Plan considers all the same factors of the Circulation Element in one focused document.

- Road, Facility, and Bridge Maintenance: Several maintenance projects were completed at various public facilities. New overlay was added to the Newhall Avenue Park and Ride lot and along Lyons Avenue. Repairs were completed

at two Metrolink Station parking lots. Also, a wooden paseo bridge was replaced at Del Monte with a steel truss bridge.

- General Plan Objective S 2.1: Plan for flood protection as part of a multi-objective watershed management approach for the Santa Clara River and tributaries.

General Plan Objective CO 3.2: Identify and protect areas which have exceptional biological resource value due to a specific type of vegetation, habitat, ecosystem or location.

- Arrundo Removal: A project to remove invasive plants from City owned portions of the Santa Clara River was completed. The project removed plants from 297 acres between Bouquet Canyon Road/Saugus Water Reclamation plan and Interstate 5.