



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: August 11, 2011

PROJECT TITLE: Calabasas Peak Motorway Residences

PROJECT NO.: R2008-00116-(3)

CASE NOS.: RENV200800098

RCUPT200800013

RVART200800004

APPLICANT: Crown Park Holdings, LLC

APN: 4436-001-034

PROJECT NO.: R2008-00258-(3)

CASE NOS.: RENV200800097

RCUPT201000025

RVART200800008

APPLICANT: Elite Brands, LLC

APN: 4436-001-036

PROJECT NO.: R2008-00257-(3)

CASE NOS.: RENV200800099

RCUPT201000024

RVART200800007

APPLICANT: Red Label, LLC

APN: 4436-001-035

PROJECT NO.: R2008-00115-(3)

CASE NOS.: RENV200800096

RCUPT200800012

RVART200800003

ROAKT201000006

APPLICANT: Mar Vista Holding, LLC

APN: 4436-001-037

The County of Los Angeles will be the lead agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the four projects listed above. In compliance with Section 15082 of the **State CEQA Guidelines**, the County of Los Angeles is sending this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to responsible agencies, interested parties and federal agencies which may be involved in approving or permitting the project, and to trustee agencies responsible for natural resources affected by the project. Within 30 days after receiving the Notice of Preparation, each agency shall provide the County of Los Angeles with specific details about the scope and content of the environmental information to be contained in the EIR related to that agency's area of statutory responsibility.

The purpose of this NOP is to solicit the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS: The four proposed project sites are separate parcels, are located in unincorporated Los Angeles County within the Calabasas Highlands community, within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan and Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District area. The sites are located along the Calabasas Peak Motorway which serves as the access road, and along a designated significant ridgeline, with the entry point to the overall project area of the four parcels at 690 feet from Old Topanga Canyon Road. A riding and hiking trail traverses thorough the project area as well. The project area is located approximately one mile south of Mulholland Highway, southwest of the intersection of Calabasas Peak Motorway and Old Topanga

Canyon Road. The project area is bordered to the north and to the east by low density residential use, to the south and west by undeveloped land and open space. Open space area to the west consists of existing and additional riding and hiking trails and significant ridgelines, as well as several parcels reserved for conservation purposes. The city of Calabasas boundary lies less than 0.25 miles to the north and 0.5 miles to the west of the project area.

The four project sites are not currently developed, and consist of a significant ridgeline along the Calabasas Peak Motorway that runs east to west, with a second significant ridgeline that runs north to south from the first along the Motorway. Topography varies in the overall project area with moderate to steep slopes descending from the ridgelines. Vegetation on site consists primarily of native chaparral characteristic of the Santa Monica Mountains, with areas Coast Live Oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*) forming an oak woodland throughout the overall project area. The major plant community observed on the project site is mixed chaparral containing chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides*) and greenbark ceanothus (*Ceanothus spinosus*). Scattered Southern California Black Walnuts (*Juglans californica*) were also found. The sites do not contain any drainage courses.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed CEQA project consists of the development of four individual single-family residences on four separately owned parcels that are ten acres in size, the installation of a 277,000 gallon Waterworks District 29 tank atop the highest peak of the significant ridgeline in the project area for a common water distribution system, road widening improvements to Calabasas Peak Motorway, and realignment and improvement of the existing riding and hiking trail along the ridgeline and Motorway on a combined overall project area of 40.99 gross acres. Access to the four parcels will be served by Calabasas Peak Motorway with connection to Old Topanga Canyon Road. The four projects will create potentially significant impacts to the significant ridgelines, native flora and fauna, and raises issues of concern for safety which will be reviewed under one Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project area.

The overall project area is zoned A-1-10 (Light Agricultural, 10 Acres Min. Required Lot Area), with land use designated N10 - Mountain Lands 10 (1 dwelling unit/10 acres) under the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan. Also within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District, the four projects each require a Variance for impacts to designated significant ridgelines, and a Conditional Use Permit for grading quantities handled in excess of 5,000 cubic yards.

Common Action: Approximately 1,800 linear feet of the existing dirt Calabasas Peak Motorway, which is currently a major riding and hiking trail, will be paved and widened as required by the County Fire Department to 20 feet, beginning roughly 690 feet off of Old Topanga Canyon Road. Grading required for improvements to the Motorway will be 5,924 cubic yards of cut with 791 cubic yards retained for fill, the remainder to be exported. For the four residences proposed, as well as for emplacement of the 277,000 gallon water tank on parcel Project No. R2008-00115, the total grading quantity is 39,501 cubic yards of cut and 2,276 cubic yards of fill, the remainder to be exported. Combined residential development and Motorway improvement grading would be 45,425 cubic yards of cut and 3,067 cubic yards of fill.

The realignment and improvements to the exiting riding and hiking trail will require the trail to be vacated in certain sections and have new easements with varying widths between 6 to 20 feet dedicated to the County, and to the satisfaction of the County Parks and Recreation Department.

The proposed 277,000 gallon water tank (40' diameter x 35' high) will tie in to an existing Waterworks District 29 Tank (New Summit Tank) located north of the Calabasas Peak Motorway and Old Topanga

Canyon Road Intersection. The proposed water system would include installation of a new booster pump station off-site and south of the intersection, which would pump water through a new water service line to be placed underneath Calabasas Peak Motorway from the existing Summit Tank to the new on-site water tank proposed. The new water tank is necessary to meet fire flow/pressure requirements and to provide service to the four new residences proposed. Fire hydrants will be installed along the new water system spaced a maximum of 500 feet apart. There will be an 8 foot high block retaining wall installed for the pad to support the new on-site tank.

The proposed projects:

Project R2008-00116 (APN 4436-001-034) proposes development of a single-level (6,000 sq. ft.) single-family residence, with new driveway access, situated on the south side of Calabasas Peak Motorway. The proposed driveway and portion of the residence will be within 50 horizontal feet and 50 vertical feet of two significant ridgelines that traverse the site. The maximum height of the proposed residence will be 16 feet above grade with proposed improvements consisting of a private driveway with Fire Department turnaround, a swimming pool, drainage devices, retaining walls, and a private septic system. Proposed grading would be 13,787 cubic yards of cut and 562 cubic yards of fill, the remainder to be exported.

Project R2008-00257 (APN 4436-001-035) proposes development of a two-level (6,000 sq. ft.) single-family residence, with new driveway access, situated on the south side of Calabasas Peak Motorway. The proposed driveway and portion of the residence will be within 50 horizontal feet and 50 vertical feet of a significant ridgeline that traverses the site. The maximum height of the proposed residence will be 26 feet above grade with proposed improvements consisting of a private driveway with Fire Department turnaround, a swimming pool, drainage devices, retaining walls, and a private septic system. Proposed grading would be 12,180 cubic yards of cut and 1,100 cubic yards of fill, the remainder to be exported.

Project R2008-00258 (APN 4436-001-036) proposes development of a three-level (6,000 sq. ft.) single-family residence, with new driveway access, situated on the south side of Calabasas Peak Motorway. The proposed driveway and portion of the residence will be within 50 horizontal feet and 50 vertical feet of a significant ridgeline that traverses the site. The maximum height of the proposed residence will be 35 feet above grade with proposed improvements consisting of a private driveway with Fire Department turnaround, a swimming pool, drainage devices, retaining walls, and a private septic system. Proposed grading would be 3,334 cubic yards of cut and 614 cubic yards of fill, the remainder to be exported.

Project R2008-00115 (APN 4436-001-037) proposes development of a three-level (6,000 sq. ft.) single-family residence, with new driveway access, situated on the north side of Calabasas Peak Motorway. The proposed driveway and portion of the residence will be within 50 horizontal feet and 50 vertical feet of a significant ridgeline that traverse the site. The maximum height of the proposed residence will be 35 feet above grade with proposed improvements consisting of a private driveway with Fire Department turnaround, a swimming pool, drainage devices, retaining walls, and a private septic system. A 277,000 gallon Waterworks District 29 tank is proposed on site to serve the residence and surrounding three residences, as well as to meet required fire flow/pressure needs. Proposed grading would be 10,200 cubic yards of cut, all of which is to be exported. An oak tree permit has been filed for encroachment into the protected zone of three oaks on site for access road improvements.

ENTITLEMENT REQUIREMENTS & DISCRETIONARY APPROVALS

The following approvals are requested as part of the Project R2008-00116:

- 1) A Conditional Use Permit to allow grading in a Hillside Management Area and in excess of 5,000 cubic yards within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District.
- 2) A Variance for development on a significant ridgeline and grading within 50 horizontal feet and 50 vertical feet of the ridgeline, known as the ridgeline protection zone.

The following approvals are requested as part of the Project R2008-00257:

- 1) A Conditional Use Permit to allow grading in a Hillside Management Area and in excess of 5,000 cubic yards within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District.
- 2) A Variance for development on a significant ridgeline and grading within 50 horizontal feet and 50 vertical feet of the ridgeline, known as the ridgeline protection zone.

The following approvals are requested as part of the Project R2008-00258:

- 1) A Conditional Use Permit to allow grading in a Hillside Management Area and in excess of 5,000 cubic yards within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District.
- 2) A Variance for development on a significant ridgeline and grading within 50 horizontal feet and 50 vertical feet of the ridgeline, known as the ridgeline protection zone.

The following approvals are requested as part of the Project R2008-00115:

- 1) A Conditional Use Permit to allow grading in a Hillside Management Area and in excess of 5,000 cubic yards within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District.
- 2) A Variance for development on a significant ridgeline and grading within 50 horizontal feet and 50 vertical feet of the ridgeline, known as the ridgeline protection zone.
- 3) An Oak Tree Permit to encroach upon the protected zone for three oak trees to widen the existing Calabasas Peak Motorway to Fire Department standards.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES TO BE ANALYZED IN EIR

Upon review of the entitlement applications and completion of an Initial Study (attached), the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning (DRP) has determined that an EIR is required to address the potential impacts associated with the proposed development. A list of the environmental issues to be addressed in the Calabasas Peak Residences Project EIR with a brief discussion about why the issue is included is provided below.

Geotechnical Hazards: The overall project area is located within an earthquake-induced landslide area (California Seismic Hazard Zone Map – Malibu Beach Quadrangle). Grading would occur within 50 horizontal feet and 50 vertical feet of a designated significant ridgeline. In addition, the project entails grading of slightly less than 50,000 cubic yards total, involving slopes in excess of 25%, some in excess of 50%.

Flood Hazards: Although the project site does not contain any drainage courses, the proposed grading of 45,425 cubic yards of cut and 3,067 cubic yards of fill would occur on steep slopes and could contribute to high erosion and runoff. The placement of the 277,000 gallon water tank atop the highest peak of the ridgeline poses a dangerous flood hazard should it rupture during an earthquake.

Fire Hazards: The project site is located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and the proposed residences would require fuel modification. An out of control fire up the ridgelines could engulf the residences and hamper evacuation and emergency access.

Traffic Hazards: The projects improvements to the riding and hiking trail, which involve its realignment in one section to the south of the Motorway, may create a hazardous situation with riding and hiking traffic crossing the Motorway, and with vehicles backing out across the trail on the parcel with pad location proposed north of the Motorway. Visitors during gatherings at the residences may be inclined to park on the Motorway which could create access issues during an emergency for emergency vehicles.

Water Quality: The proposed project would require installation of four new septic systems and approval by Public Health of an Onsite Waste Water Treatment System (OWTS). Grading activities in hillside areas would require a Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) and compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) for runoff and erosion.

Biota: The majority of the site consists of undisturbed vegetation consisting of mixed chaparral containing chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides*), scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*), Southern California black walnut (*Juglans californica*), and greenbark ceanothus (*Ceanothus spinosus*). Coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) forming an oak woodland exist throughout the overall project area on both north-facing and south facing slopes. The site does not contain any drainage courses. Several special-status plant and animal species have the potential to occur on the project site such as Santa Susana tarplant, Lyon's pentachaeta, Plummer's mariposa lily and Coast Horned Lizard.

Archaeological/Historical/Paleontological Resources: The project site is located in an area containing known paleontological resources and the project site contains coast live oak trees with the potential for archaeological resources. Significant ridgelines are located upon the site.

Visual Qualities: The project area is located off of Old Topanga Canyon Road which is considered a scenic route, second priority designated, and the project area contains two designated significant ridgelines, the main ridgeline which is concomitant with the Calabasas Peak Motorway. In addition, a County-designated hiking and riding trail parallels Calabasas Peak Motorway. Grading and construction proposed will impact the ridgeline protection zone considered an impact to a scenic resource, clearly visible from the Motorway and riding and hiking trail, and from various vantage points along Old Topanga Canyon Road.

Fire/Sheriff Services: The location of additional residents along Calabasas Peak Motorway may have an impact on response times for both the County Fire and Sheriff Departments that would serve the site. The nearest fire station is 2.1 miles to the northwest in the City of Calabasas, the second 4.5 miles away to the southeast in Topanga. Getting to the project area requires traversing up narrow windy roads that will slow response time. Access to the Calabasas Peak Motorway is now currently gated off-site of the project area.

Population/Housing/Recreation: The proposed roadway improvements to Calabasas Peak Motorway, emplacement of the 277,000 gallon water tank, and construction of four new residences most likely will be growth inducing for further development upon the ridgeline and Motorway as they extend off-site to the west.

In addition to evaluating the potential effects of the proposed project, the EIR will address a reasonable range of project alternatives. The EIR will also include all other sections required under the State CEQA Guidelines, including Growth Inducing Impacts, Effects Found Not to be Significant, and a list of organizations and persons involved in the preparation of the EIR. Appendices containing technical reports prepared in support of the EIR and all other required appendices (e.g. NOP, comments on NOP, Initial Study) will be included.

SCOPING MEETING

To assist in local participation, a **Scoping Meeting** will be held to present the proposed projects and to solicit suggestions from the public and responsible agencies on the content of the Draft EIR.

The Scoping Meeting will be held Wednesday, August 31, 2011, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the following location:

The Topanga Community House
1440 N. Topanga Canyon Boulevard
Topanga, CA 90290-3831
(310) 455-1980

NOTICE OF PREPARATION REVIEW AND COMMENTS

The Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning is soliciting input concerning the scope of the EIR for the proposed project. To facilitate your review, the following materials are attached to support the information provided in this NOP:

- Los Angeles County Initial Study
- Regional and Project Location Map
- Site Plans
- 500' Radius Land Use Map

The review period for the Notice of Preparation will be from **August 15, 2011 to September 15, 2011 (30 days)**. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than **September 15, 2011**. In your written response, please include the name of a contact person in your agency, if applicable. Please direct all written comments to the following address.

Rudy Silvas
County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
Zoning Permits West Section
320 West Temple Street, Room 1348
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213) 974-6462
Fax: (213) 626-0434
rsilvas@planning.lacounty.gov

