



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 15, 2022	
To: Denice Thomas, AICP (Community Development Director)	Organization: City of Agoura Hills
From: Lance Wierschem	Title: Senior Landscape Architect
Project Name: Agoura Village Specific Plan Update	Project Number: 1800-01-UR19
Topic: AVSP Update and Draft Revisions Summary	

Summary of Citizens Advisory Group and Recommended Draft Revisions

A Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) was established to provide input and guidance to the Agoura Village Specific Plan Update (AVSPU) planning team (City and RRM Design Group) using the Planning Principles established for the AVSPU. RRM Design Group met with the CAG between February 2021 and January 2022 for a total of 11 meetings. The following summarizes the input received for each Planning Principle. Refer to video dated May 16, 2022 (AVSP CAG Listening Session) located on the City website here - [Listening Session-AVSP-CAG](#)

Principle 1 - Revisit the existing vision of the AVSP to ensure it includes, among other things, primary goals of being pedestrian-friendly, bike-friendly, supportive of active transportation and alternate modes of transport, mindful of climate change impacts, COVID impacts, energy efficiency building standards, fire resiliency, and a village-concept that is connected with complimentary land uses.

- Summary of Input – The existing vision supports this primary goal, however, CAG members offered additional suggestions to reduce land use intensity along the south side of Agoura Road and increase setbacks along Kanan and Agoura Roads to preserve trees and viewsheds of Ladyface Mountain. The village-concept along Agoura Road is desired to be attractive 1 and 2 story buildings set back from the street with pedestrian-oriented spaces, patios, and outdoor dining. To allow for a commercial and mixed-use reduction on the south side of Agoura Road, the CAG supported allowing mixed-use and residential in Zone A North and C (storage facility site), Zone D East (Regency Theater and Whizins sites), to encourage a mixed-use fronting Agoura Road and Cornell Road with residential behind.

Principle 2 - Use the Vision and the updated market demand study for the Agoura Village Specific Plan to guide the AVSP update process.

- Summary of Input – A Market Demand Analysis was prepared in March 2021 and presented to the CAG. The analysis projects a healthy residential demand of 500+ units over the approx. 293 units allowed in the current Specific Plan. The increase in residential units could help support the viability of mixed-use development and support the vision of pedestrian-oriented streets with a village atmosphere. The increase in residential units also supports and aligns with the Housing Element projections and density of a min. 20 du/acre and max. 25 du/acre. Regarding the character of Agoura Road and respectful of the topography and viewsheds, the CAG recommended to reduce the height and intensity of development in Zone E to two stories and 12 du/acre to reduce the impact on hillsides and views.

Principle 3 - AVSP vision identifies commercial as primary and residential as secondary. With new market demand and economic trends, consider adjusting the overall amount of commercial and residential allowed to create a viable mixed use plan.

- Summary of Input - New updated market demand studies and real estate development trends show that the current AVSP land use mix is no longer in alignment with the commercial and residential markets. The AVSP allocates too much development density to commercial uses (retail/office/light industrial) and does not allocate enough housing relative to current and future demand. Recommended changes include allowing residential and mixed-use development on the north side of Agoura Road in Zones C and D east, as well as increase residential density to min. 20 du/acre and max. 25 du/acre in all zones except E and G. The height and intensity in Zone E should be reduced due to site constraints. A revision to lot coverage was also discussed to reduce the requirement of ground floor non-residential street frontage to 60% to provide developments with more flexibility with mixed-use projects and encourage uses like residential entrances/lobbies, gyms, and/or admin offices. In addition, reduced parking standards were supported by CAG to help make mixed-use and residential project more viable. The suggested change is from 2 covered and .5 guest/unit to 1 covered, 1 uncovered and .25 guest/unit. In addition, a suggested mixed-use parking reduction of up to 20% for projects with residential with Director approval.

Principle 4 - Consider allowing mixed-use redevelopment of certain existing commercial properties, and/or relocating certain land uses and development density from the south side of Agoura Road to the north side to fulfill the vision of AVSP.

- Summary of Input - AVSP Zones between Agoura Road and Roadside allow commercial (retail/restaurant/office/miscellaneous services) and some residential uses. With changes in market demand, high vacancies and owner interest, and concerns surrounding potential environmental constraints and viewsheds on the south side of Agoura Road, redeveloping and/or relocating certain land uses and densities from some of these properties with a revised mix of residential and commercial could solve multiple challenges. The CAG supported allowing residential and mixed-use on the north side of Agoura Road in Zone C, Zone A North, and D East to align with the market demand and Housing Element projections with densities of min. 20 du/acre and max. 25 du/acre. To respond to environmental and viewshed concerns, CAG supported reducing heights along Agoura Road on the north and south side to 1 and 2 stories. A maximum of 3 story residential was supported on internal areas located behind the mixed-use buildings fronting the street.

Principle 5 - Coordinate with the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element Update and ensure that AVSP provides the opportunity for the City to meet its Regional Housing Need Allocation established by the Department of HCD.

- Summary of Input - Per Kosmont analysis, multi-family apts/condos have the highest value and strongest market demand, which allows the City to meet its affordable housing goals with inclusionary requirements. CAG supported increasing the residential units to align with the Market Demand of 500+ units and the Housing Element residential projections of 20 to 25 du/acre.

Principle 6 - Ensure that the AVSP is consistent with and enables implementation of the City/County Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan.

- Summary of Input – With recent fires and concerns related to fire safety and evacuation plans, it is important that the AVSP update discusses the Emergency Evacuation Plan. CAG supported that the Plan ensures coordination with surrounding jurisdictions (LA County, unincorporated areas, Malibu) regarding fire and emergency evacuation plans, implements and facilitates the City/County Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan, and has consistency with the Las Virgenes – Malibu Council of Governments Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Principle 7 - Clarify how building height is measured and amend the AVSP to follow the City zoning regulation regarding building height being measured from finished grade, instead of natural grade.

- Summary of Input – There has been continuous challenges with the way AVSP measures building heights. AVSP uses "natural grade" as the starting point whereas the City zoning code uses "finished grade". During discussions with CAG, it was supported to keep the current "Natural Grade" measurement for development south of Agoura Road to require development to follow the natural topography. It was supported to use "Finished Grade" measurement for areas north of Agoura Road as much of the area is existing and would not have major disturbance to the natural topography.

Principle 8 - Reconsider allowable building heights along Agoura Rd. and Kanan Rd. frontages to maximize and/or preserve viewsheds to the surrounding hills and open space.

- Summary of Input – Concerns from CAG and the community were primarily regarding the building character of Agoura Village along Agoura Rd. and Kanan Rd. and to prevent construction of monolithic buildings. CAG supported preserving views of the surrounding hills and open space from Agoura Road. This resulted in revising the land use intensity along the south side of Agoura Road to include a mix of 1 and 2 story buildings fronting Agoura Road and increasing the setbacks along Agoura Road south and Kanan Road. It was also encouraged to provide building separation standards along Agoura Road to provide viewsheds of the mountains. It is also important to preserve existing oak trees to the extent feasible in compliance with the City's Oak Tree Ordinance. In addition, CAG determined that development should be setback 50' minimum from riparian vegetation.

Principle 9 - Eliminate or provide clarification on the “bonus density” in the residential category in all zones.

- Summary of Input – The amended AVSP will take into account state housing law and the Housing Element update for Cycle 6 to clarify language in the AVSP.

Principle 10 - Consider allocating specific number of housing units per parcel, as opposed to per zone.

- Summary of Input – CAG supported that the intended distribution of housing stock throughout the village, and to protect against "housing grabs" wherein developers that are "first-in" grab 100% of the housing unit allowance, leaving no stock available for other developments within the same zone. The Plan will be amended to clarify density per parcel rather than per zone and follow allowable density per acre rather than per zone.

Principle 11 - Ensure that the AVSP supports Active Transportation and prioritizes appropriate circulation and connectivity consistent with the General Plan.

- Summary of Input – CAG supported the existing AVSP recommendation for a HWY 101 underpass as a pedestrian and bike crossing in Zone G and to naturalize Medea Creek with a trail system. In addition, CAG supported naturalizing or capping the drainage channel as a linear park and trail system. There was also support to provide connectivity between Zone A North/C and Zone D East across Medea Creek. CAG also supported utilizing Zone G for connectivity, as well as providing connectivity along Chesebro Creek at the existing equestrian trail. CAG supported the standard that development project abutting a creek shall construct the segment of trail that traverses their property.

Principle 12 - Collaborate with existing development applicants to accommodate these principles to the extent feasible. Consider incentive options to encourage developers to modify current plans to align with the updated AVSP.

- Summary of Input – Staff will continue communicating with current applicants to coordinate/align proposed developments with the AVSP update.

Principle 13 - Incorporate clear and specific signage and lighting standards within the AVSP update.

- Summary of Input – RRM will update these sections and work with Staff on developing updated signage and lighting standards consistent with current standards. These will consider how lighting standards on the private property dovetail with those in the public ROW. Signage/branding will be consistent with the vision for place-making, visitors and tourism. CAG provided support to integrate informational and/or directional signage along the creeks and to consider night pollution concerns related to lighting.

Principle 14 - Consistency with Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)

- Summary of Input – In order to achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction targets by the 2030 and 2045 compliance dates, construction for existing sites with potential for redevelopment, and all new development construction must conform to the City's current and future policies in line with the approved CAAP. The AVSP update will support and implement the CAAP policies. CAG provided additional input to consider electric vehicle requirements in parking standards addressed in the CAAP and to ensure all new development construction must conform to the City's current and future policies in line with the approved CAAP.

Principle 15 - Consider incorporating design standards that support a sustainable wildlife urban interface.

- Summary of Input – Sustainable wildland urban interface design reduces the impacts on local wildlife both during construction of the project and throughout the life of the development. CAG supported the objective design standard to prohibit solid barrier fencing around open space and adjacent to riparian areas. CAG also supported additional standards that would look for ways to balance viewsheds and creek protection and support for additional wildlife signage.