

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: JUNE 22, 2022

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: NATHAN HAMBURGER, CITY MANAGER

BY: DENICE THOMAS, AICP, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT: AGOURA VILLAGE SPECIFIC PLAN PROPOSED AMENDMENT
REVIEW**

The purpose of this item is to present the feedback received from the Agoura Village Specific Plan Citizens Advisory Group (CAG), property owners within the Agoura Village Specific Plan area, and the Agoura Village Specific Plan Update Planning Team (staff). The Agoura Village Specific Plan was adopted October 22, 2008. On January 27, 2021, the City Council voted to establish the CAG to provide input and guidance to staff using the planning principles (Attachment A) as the basis for discussion.

Over the course of 13 months, staff met with the CAG members to discuss proposed amendments to the Agoura Village Specific Plan. The planning principles guided the discussion. Staff sought to provide educational opportunities (e.g.: market analysis, regulatory framework, design element information, etc.), which in turn, facilitated and informed the discussion. In addition to meetings with the CAG, staff met with some of the property owners within the Agoura Village Specific Plan area to discuss the planning principles and obtain feedback from the CAG. All of the feedback has been consolidated and is being presented to the City Council for direction on what should be addressed by the amendment. Attachment B – Feedback Matrix, consolidates the input we received along with staff's recommendations for your consideration.

Next steps include, determining which environmental document is appropriate based on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines and drafting the amendment to the Agoura Village Specific Plan based on feedback from the City Council. The draft is tentatively planned to be presented to the Planning Commission on November 3rd, for their consideration and recommendation. The City Council will hear the item after the Planning Commission, at which time, the City Council will be asked to take final action. The tentative date for the City Council meeting is December 14th for the first read and will likely become effective early 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff respectfully requests that the City Council review, discuss, deliberation, and provide guidance for staff to use when drafting the amended Agoura Village Specific Plan.

ATTACHMENTS: Agoura Village Specific Plan – City Council Adopted Planning Principles
Agoura Village Specific Plan Feedback Matrix and Recommendations

Planning Principles
Agoura Village Specific Plan Update
 November 10, 2020

Attachment A: Agoura Village Specific Plan - City Council Adopted Planning Principles

	Planning Principle	Reason	Supporting Documents
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.	Defining and/or clarifying the "vision" sets clear expectations for processing any and all proposed updates to the plan.	
2	Use the Vision and the updated market demand study for the Agoura Village Specific Plan to guide the AVSP update process.	Market Demand Studies show changes in market demand. The current AVSP land use mix is not aligned for current and/or anticipated future demands; however the AVSP vision and village character as a place where the community can/will gather are still viable with the appropriate mix of uses. Specifically, office-space demand should be analyzed to account for the effects of the COVID pandemic on the current and future need of that land use.	
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.	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.	
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.	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 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.	

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 November 10, 2020

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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.	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.	
6	Ensure that the AVSP is consistent with and enables implementation of the City/County Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan.	Recent fires and concerns related to fire safety and evacuation plans.	
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.	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". Clarifications are necessary to avoid confusion and disagreements, using the City zoning code definition would clarify matters greatly. Clarify and describe subterranean parking methodology in the AVSPU.	
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.	Resolve concerns about building character of Agoura Village along Agoura Rd. and Kanan Rd. Prevent construction of monolithic buildings.	
9	Eliminate or provide clarification on the "bonus density" in the residential category in all zones.	Reconsider if the AVSP Density Bonus is still desired. If the density bonus is continued, then clarification is needed of what amount of public amenities would be considered to be above and beyond normal development and define how much would be necessary to meet the expected threshold.	
10	Consider allocating specific number of housing units per parcel, as opposed to per zone.	Ensure 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.	

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 November 10, 2020

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11	Ensure that the AVSP supports Active Transportation and prioritizes appropriate circulation and connectivity consistent with the General Plan.	Lower density and constructing mixed-use development reduces the number of vehicle trips and vehicle trip length. The project should offer multiple access points to evenly distribute traffic on adjacent roadway facilities to maintain acceptable intersection and roadway operations, connectivity, and support the village vision in Agoura Hills.	City of Agoura Hills, General Plan (2010)
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.	Continue communicating with current applicants to coordinate/align proposed developments with the AVSP update.	
13	Incorporate clear and specific signage and lighting standards within the AVSP update.	Sections need updating. Consider how lighting standards on the private property dovetail with those in the public ROW. Revise signage/branding to be consistent with the vision for place-making, visitors and tourism.	
14	Consistency with Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)	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.	Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
15	Consider incorporating design standards that support a sustainable wildlife urban interface.	Sustainable wildland urban interface design reduces the impacts on local wildlife both during construction of the project and throughout the life of the development. Sustainable design standards could include, but are not limited to, such things as providing wildlife corridor access through walls and fences and restricting the use of rodenticides.	

TABLE 1: AGOURA VILLAGE SPECIFIC PLAN (AVSP) – OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PRINCIPLES

#	Planning Principle	Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) Input	Property Owners' Input	Staff's Recommendation
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce land use intensity along the south side of Agoura Road. 		There are limitations to a reduction of intensity for properties with residential density. It is possible, however, to reduce the intensity of non-residential uses on the south side of Agoura Road.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase setbacks along Kanan and Agoura Roads to preserve trees and viewsheds of Ladyface Mountain. 		Staff concurs with the recommendation of the CAG.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village-concept along Agoura Road is desired to be attractive 1 and 2 story buildings set back from the street. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian-oriented spaces, patios, and outdoor dining. 		Staff concurs with the recommendation of the CAG. Specifically, increased setbacks along Kanan and Agoura Road with the intent of activating the street frontage to allow patios and outdoor dining.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for a commercial and mixed-use reduction on the south side of Agoura Road. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed-use and residential in Zone A North and C, and Zone D Mixed-use fronting Agoura Road and Cornell Road with residential behind. 		There are limitations to a reduction of mixed use within the AVSP. Staff recommends exploring the feasibility of a reduction of mixed use residential.
2	Use the Vision and the updated market demand study for the Agoura Village Specific Plan to guide the AVSP update process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Market Demand Analysis was prepared in March 2021 and presented to the CAG. 		Staff concurs with the recommendations of the CAG.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis projects a residential demand of 500+ units over the approximately 293 units allowed in the current Specific Plan. The increase in residential units could help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the viability of mixed-use development Support the vision of pedestrian-oriented streets with a village atmosphere. 		
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current AVSP land use mix is not in alignment with current market demand and trends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AVSP allocates too much development density to commercial uses and not enough to housing (current & future demand). 		Staff concurs with the feedback from the CAG.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended changes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow residential and mixed-use development north side of Agoura Road in Zones C and D east. Increase residential density (20 du/acre to maximum 25 du/acre) in all zones, except E & G. Reduce height and intensity in Zone E due to site constraints. 		Staff concurs with the recommendation to add a default density of 20 – 25 dwelling units per acre. There are limitations to reducing height and intensity for properties with residential zoning. Staff recommends exploring the feasibility of reducing intensity in Zones E and G.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested revision to lot coverage to reduce the ground floor non-residential street frontage requirement to 60%. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides flexibility for mixed-use projects Encourages uses like residential entrances, lobbies, gyms, and/or admin offices. 		Staff concurs with the CAG recommendation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced parking standards to help mixed-use and residential projects be more viable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 2 covered and .5 guest/unit to 1 covered, 1 uncovered and .25 guest/unit. Mixed-use parking reduction of up to 20% for projects with residential (with Director approval). 		Staff concurs with the CAG recommendation.

Attachment B: Agoura Village Specific Plan Feedback Matrix and Recommendations

#	Planning Principle	CAG's Input	Property Owners' Input	Staff's Recommendation
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AVSP Zones between Agoura Road and Roadside allow commercial (retail/restaurant/ office/miscellaneous services) and some residential uses. 		Staff concurs with the CAG recommendation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A revised mix of uses could help solve multiple challenges to development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in market demand, high vacancies and owner interest. Concerns surrounding potential environmental constraints and viewsheds on the south side of Agoura Road. 		Staff concurs with the CAG recommendation to revise the mix of uses.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow residential and mixed-use on the north side of Agoura Road in Zone C, Zone A North, and D East (20 to 25 du/acre) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To align with the market demand and Housing Element projections. 		Staff concurs with the CAG recommendation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce heights along Agoura Road on the north and south side to 1 and 2 stories (to respond to environmental and viewshed concerns). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A maximum of 3 story residential on internal areas located behind the mixed-use buildings fronting the street. 		Staff concurs with the recommendation to identify viewsheds to the Santa Monica Mountains and to draft language to protect the viewsheds identified by the CAG. Reductions to building heights have to be studied to ensure reduced height will not work against the provisions proposed to provide for the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation.
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per Market Demand Analysis, multi-family apartments/condos have the highest value and strongest market demand. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would allow the City to meet its affordable housing goals with inclusionary requirements. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 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. 		Staff concurs with this CAG recommendation.
6	Ensure that the AVSP is consistent with and enables implementation of the City/County Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With recent fires and concerns related to fire safety and evacuation plans, it is important that the AVSP update discusses the Emergency Evacuation Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure coordination with surrounding jurisdictions regarding fire and emergency evacuation plans. Ensure that the AVSPU implements and facilitates the City/County Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan. Ensure consistency with the Las Virgenes – Malibu Council of Governments Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. 		Staff supports ensuring the COG Hazard Mitigation Plan is implemented.
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been continuous challenges with the way AVSP measures building heights. 	Measure height from the finished floor throughout the AVSP.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current AVSP uses "natural grade" as the starting point whereas the City zoning code uses "finished grade". 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAG supports to use "Finished Grade" measurement for areas north of Agoura Road. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of the area is existing and would not have major disturbance to the natural topography. 		Staff concurs with this CAG recommendation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAG supports to keep the current "Natural Grade" measurement for development south of Agoura Road. This would require development to follow the natural topography. 		Staff supports this CAG Recommendation.

#	Planning Principle	CAG's Input	Property Owners' Input	Staff's Recommendation
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns regarding the building character of Agoura Village along Agoura Rd. and Kanan Rd. and to prevent construction of monolithic buildings. 		Staff supports amendments that limit the ability for monolithic buildings to be constructed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support preserving views of the surrounding hills and open space from Agoura Road. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to land use intensity along the south side of Agoura Road. Include a mix of 1 and 2 story buildings fronting Agoura Road. Increase the setbacks along Agoura Road south and Kanan Road. 		There are limitations to a reduction of intensity for properties with residential density. Reductions to building heights have to be studied to ensure reduced height will not work against the provisions proposed to provide for the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage to provide building separation standards along Agoura Road to provide viewsheds of the mountains. 		Staff concurs with this recommendation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve existing oak trees to the extent feasible in compliance with the City's Oak Tree Ordinance. 		Staff is supportive of Oak Tree preservation in a manner consistent with the proposed provisions to ensure the RHNA allocation is met.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development should be setback 50' minimum from riparian vegetation. 		This is a mitigation measure identified as part of the environmental document prepared for the AVSP. Staff concurs this recommendation.
9	Eliminate or provide clarification on the "bonus density" in the residential category in all zones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amended AVSP will take into account state housing law and the Housing Element update for Cycle 6 to clarify language in the AVSP. 	Monetary incentives should be considered to induce the provision of affordable units.	Staff concurs with the feedback from the CAG.
10	Consider allocating specific number of housing units per parcel, as opposed to per zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the intended distribution of housing stock throughout the village. 		Staff concurs.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect against developers that are "first-in" utilizing 100% of the housing unit allowance leaving no stock available for other developments within the same zone. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan will be amended to clarify density per parcel rather than per zone and follow allowable density per acre rather than per zone. 		Staff concurs.
11	Ensure that the AVSP supports Active Transportation and prioritizes appropriate circulation and connectivity consistent with the General Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naturalize or cap the drainage channel as a linear park and trail system. Provide connectivity between Zone A North/C and Zone D East across Medea Creek. 		Staff supports a feasibility study to determine if the drainage channel can be naturalized.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize Zone G for connectivity, as well as providing connectivity along Chesebro Creek at the existing equestrian trail. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the standard that development abutting a creek shall construct the segment of trail that traverses their property. 		Staff concurs with provision of the trail segment or payment for the provision of the trail segment.
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will continue communicating with current applicants to coordinate/align proposed developments with the AVSP update. 	Incentive options should include monetary incentives.	

#	Planning Principle	CAG's Input	Property Owners' Input	Staff's Recommendation
13	Incorporate clear and specific signage and lighting standards within the AVSP update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RRM will work with Staff on developing updated signage and lighting standards consistent with current standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 		Staff concurs with the feedback.
14	Consistency with Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support achieving greenhouse gas emission reduction targets by the 2030 and 2045 compliance dates. 		Staff concurs with the feedback.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure redevelopment and new construction will be in conformance with approved CAAP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AVSP update will support and implement the CAAP policies. Consider electric vehicle requirements in parking standards addressed in the CAAP. 		Staff concurs with application of the CAAP policies to meet CAAP goals.
15	Consider incorporating design standards that support a sustainable wildlife urban interface.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable wildland urban interface design reduces the impacts on local wildlife both during construction of the project and throughout the life of the development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the objective design standard to prohibit solid barrier fencing around open space and adjacent to riparian areas. Support additional standards that would look for ways to balance viewsheds and creek protection and support for additional wildlife signage. 		The two recommendations were identified in the AVSP environmental document as mitigation measures. Staff concurs with the prohibition of solid barrier fencing and support looking for ways to balance viewsheds and creek protection.

TABLE 2: ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC PLAN REVISIONS

Additional Specific Plan Revisions		Considerations
A	Sections included in the current Specific Plan that are intended to provide background information are proposed to be included in an Appendix/links.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces the length of the document. Allows for ease of access to information relevant to the implementation of the plan.
	Consider re-locating existing conditions, public involvement summary, market demand analysis, and others.	
B	Sections included in the current Specific Plan found both in text and table format are proposed to be briefly introduced (text) and fully addressed in tables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces duplicative content. Allows for a concise location of information.
C	AVSPU to incorporate a section to address Objective Design Standards (ODS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ODS allow for streamlined housing approval by establishing a path for ministerial approval multifamily development.
D	Update Circulation chapter per Public Works' recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include revisions that address clarity and relevance. Remove references to roundabout. Adjust recommendations to the right-of-way per traffic analysis

E	Update a series of graphics of AVSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include revisions that address clarity and relevance. - Incorporate the input and direction received.
F	Review and refine the Implementation Chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify status of funding sources listed. - Remove those that are no longer applicable. - Introduce new available funding sources.
G	Update Specific Plan Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include a flowchart of the specific plan administration process. - Enable users to understand the requirements and process for development within the AVSP area. - Allow flexibility to development standards or allow for variances to the regulations.
H	Update references to other programs, planning efforts, and/or ordinances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure applicability/relevance of content - Remove references that are not applicable
I	Update minimum building height requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The minimum building height requirements should be removed. Buildings that are lower than the identified height should be permissible.
J	Maximum Setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximum setbacks should be removed from the AVSP.
K	Consistency with Housing Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes to the AVSP that bring the document into compliance with State law are needed.