Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead

Richard J. Bruckner
Director

April 7, 2010

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Richard J. Bruckner
Director

SUBJECT: QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT ON BOARD MOTION REGARDING PROGRESS OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY OAK WOODLANDS CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (October 7, 2008, Item 95-C)

On October 7, 2008 your Board requested appropriate County staff to participate in the California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program and instructed the Director of Planning to facilitate actions to assist the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (Resource Conservation District) in its preparation of the Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan (Oak Woodlands Plan). The Resource Conservation District convened a working group called the Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Strategic Alliance (Strategic Alliance) to write the Plan. The Los Angeles County Fire Department and Department of Regional Planning has provided technical advice to the Strategic Alliance. This sixth quarterly status report summarizes the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan which was released as a draft for public comment on October 27, 2009.

The draft Oak Woodlands Plan can be accessed at www.lacountyoakwoodlandplan.org and questions and comments about the Plan can be sent to lacoakplan@gmail.com. The Plan has been modeled on the adopted Yolo County Oak Woodland and Conservation Enhancement Plan, which meets the requirements of the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to implement the 2001 California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. The 2001 California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program recognizes the critical role that private landowners have in the conservation of oaks and supports and encourages voluntary, long-term private stewardship and conservation of California oak woodlands by offering landowners financial incentives to protect and promote biologically functional oak woodlands. Specifically, the WCB is authorized to

purchase oak woodland conservation easements and provide grants for land improvements and restoration efforts in counties with an adopted Oak Woodlands Management Plan.

Since the last quarterly report on the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan was delivered to your Board on January 7, 2010 the Strategic Alliance has continued its outreach efforts by making informational presentations to the Board of Directors of the Resource Conservation District on February 22 and to the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission on March 17.

Rosi Dagit, Senior Biologist for the Resource Conservation District and member of the Strategic Alliance made the March 17 presentation to the Regional Planning Commission about the draft Oak Woodlands Plan which included the following points:

- With an adopted plan, Los Angeles County becomes eligible for the State Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund to help acquire and restore oak woodlands
- State legislation requires that oak woodlands be treated as a significant resource and that oak woodlands conversion be assessed for its impact on the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions
- Any oak stand consisting of any of the oak associations included in the Oak Species of Los Angeles County that has greater than 10 percent canopy cover or can be shown to historically have had a greater than 10 percent canopy cover shall be considered an oak woodland

The PowerPoint presentation made by Ms. Dagit to the Regional Planning Commission was well received. It prompted from the Commissioners requests to reformat the Plan so that matters such as oak woodland economic valuation strategies, pros and cons of oak relocation, and oak woodland loss mitigation strategies are readily accessible. The PowerPoint presentation is available at:

http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/case/oak_woodland_20100317-rpc-presentation.pdf

A representative from the Building Industry Association (BIA) in attendance at the Regional Planning Commission meeting expressed BIA's appreciation for being included in the development of the draft Oak Woodlands Plan and willingness to participate in the revision of the Plan. The Commission also expressed its intention to submit a letter to the Board of Supervisors thanking them for supporting the efforts of the Resource Conservation District and the Strategic Alliance to prepare the Plan and noting the value it can have as a resource for staff and the Commission.

The March 17 Regional Planning Commission presentation was preceded by a Strategic Alliance working meeting on March 11 whose attendees included representatives from Supervisorial Districts 3 and 5 and from BIA. At this meeting the

Strategic Alliance decided to issue an RFP to secure an independent planner to review the draft Oak Woodlands Plan to assess its viability as a planning document. Input from the independent planner as well as the input gathered since the release of the Plan on October 27, 2009 will be considered and incorporated into the Plan with a target for completion in May 2010. The Strategic Alliance will hold a working meeting on May 20, 2010 with the intent of finalizing the Oak Woodlands Plan. During summer 2010 the Strategic Alliance intends to present the Oak Woodlands Plan to the County for review and consideration of adoption.

The Strategic Alliance has not been deterred by the State budget crisis that has prevented receipt of grant funding from the WBC to match the $50,000 your Board provided to assist in the preparation of the Oak Woodlands Plan. The Strategic Alliance has drawn extensively upon the expertise of its membership to augment the funding provided by your Board. The Strategic Alliance has expended $40,640 to date in the preparation of the Oak Woodlands Plan.

The next quarterly report on the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan will be delivered July 7, 2010.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or Mark Herwick of my staff at (213) 974-6423 or by email at mherwick@planning.lacounty.gov. Our office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. We are closed on Fridays.

RJB:RCH:MSH

c: Chief Executive Officer, Attn. Lari Sheehan
County Counsel
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief of Forestry, Los Angeles County Fire Department
Rosi Dagit, Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains