

**STREAMLINE LOS ANGELES COUNTY WATERWORKS DISTRICTS ENTITLEMENT PROCESSES TO ADDRESS THE NORTH COUNTY HOUSING CRISIS AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS**

The Los Angeles County has been working for a number of years to identify opportunities to improve and expedite its permitting and development process. Solving the housing shortage crisis in Los Angeles County has many layers, and no one entity can fill the housing gap. It takes willing partners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors coming together to create efficient housing development plans, along with community input.

The Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 40, Antelope Valley (District) plays a critical role in ensuring that developments are compliant with safe, clean drinking water and fire protection regulations. Initial District projections for population growth could not factor in the potential influx of new residents, driven largely by a growing need for affordable housing. The Antelope Valley stands out as one of the last bastions of affordable housing in the County. Concurrent growth in the defense sector, including aerospace manufacturing, along with a greater demand for warehousing, logistics, and transportation services will serve as a catalyst that will generate sustained growth in the region. The Cities of Palmdale and Lancaster have noted significant applications for new housing and development that will transform the region.

Public Works assembled a team with expertise in water management and infrastructure development to begin development of the Antelope Valley Water Plan. Initial collaboration meetings have discussed substantial development projections for the Cities of Palmdale and Lancaster as well as the unincorporated areas over the next 3-5 years that include housing units and commercial space.

As individual development projects are planned, within the District boundaries and in its sphere of influence, and designed by private landowners and their developers, the projects are reviewed by Public Works during the entitlements process. Conditions of approval are imposed to ensure that each project mitigates its impacts on the existing public water system infrastructure. Individual developments may have relatively small incremental impacts on the infrastructure, but cumulative impacts from multiple projects can be substantial.

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MOTION

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MITCHELL \_\_\_\_\_

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HORVATH \_\_\_\_\_

With impacts to the existing infrastructure, future water facilities are needed to provide regional water storage and conveyance infrastructure to meet fire flow needs and provide water service.

To effectively plan for regional growth and streamline approval processes, delegating to the Director of Public Works or his designee the authority to negotiate and execute future developer agreements will allow for an expedited financial participation process. The developer agreements will be in the form to be reviewed and approved as to form by County Counsel. In order to implement the developer agreements, authority is further delegated to the Director of Public Works to negotiate and execute related agreements and take other actions to enable financial participation or construction of needed improvements. Pursuant to this authority, the Director of Public Works may take any actions necessary or convenient to initiate any legal processes or other proceedings in support of financial participation that may require ultimate action from this Board.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, acting as the governing body of the Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 40, Antelope Valley,

1. Find that the delegation of authority to the Director of Public Works or his designee to negotiate and execute developer agreements on behalf of the Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts, and to make necessary findings under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as specified herein, is exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b) since it can be seen with certainty that the delegation of activity will not have a significant effect on the environment and is not a project under Section 21065 of the Public Resources Code and Section 15378 (b) of the CEQA Guidelines since the activity is excluded from the definition of a project and is an organizational and administrative activity of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. No project is approved as part of the current actions. Waterworks will ensure that appropriate findings under CEQA, as necessary, will be made prior to approving any future activity under this delegated authority that would constitute a project.
2. Authorize and direct the Director of Public Works, or his designee, for a period of 2 years, to negotiate and execute developer agreements, within established budgeted amounts in the District's Accumulative Capital Outlay funds, for financial participation or construction of necessary infrastructure improvements that addresses water supply reliability, water quality impacts, infrastructure hardening, and climate resilience investments needed to support the continued growth of the region as a condition for obtaining water service, which delegation shall extend to the initiation of any legal processes for financial participation, as well as to the negotiation and execution of other agreements as necessary or convenient to achieve the stated purposes and implement such development agreements; and

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3. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Works or his designee to take the following actions to comply with CEQA for projects, in connection with the exercise of the delegated authority to execute developer agreements when one or more of the Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts is acting as a responsible agency for the proposed agreements, revisions, or amendments described herein:
  - a) determine whether execution of the proposed developer agreements, revisions, or amendments are exempt from the CEQA or within the scope of a previous finding of exemption;
  - b) review and consider previously approved environmental impact reports, mitigated negative declarations, and negative declarations;
  - c) determine whether or not a project is within the scope of a previously certified environmental impact report and any approved addenda, or previously adopted mitigated negative declaration, or negative declaration;
  - d) determine whether or not a project described in an environmental impact report, mitigated negative declaration, or negative declaration would have a significant effect on the environment;
  - e) make findings pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091;
  - f) adopt a mitigation monitoring program pursuant to the CEQA, Sections 15091 and 15096; and
  - g) file and post notices pursuant to Section 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

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