

**LUCERNE VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
AND
LUCERNE VALLEY /JOHNSON VALLEY MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
LAND-USE COMMITTEE**

COUNTYWIDE PLAN - LUCERNE VALLEY REVISIONS – JANUARY 12, 2018

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Note: We absolutely need our basic 2007 Community Plan’s goals and policies incorporated into our updated Plan. We could have just updated them with a much simpler and less time consuming process. We are only going through this exercise at staff’s request. The CWP format doesn’t always fit with our specific community topics – but have tried to place them in the most appropriate category. **Bullet points where applicable are in bold and underlined.**
The text explains the need.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE:

Rural Standards: Rural standards language in our current Plan needs to be reinforced and expanded. We want to participate in injecting rural standards into the County Development Code. We have been advocating rural standards for unincorporated communities for years – a major policy in the 2007 community plans – yet we are still subject to urban requirements (ie: A left turn pocket that made a left turn in the other direction illegal – and a sidewalk to nowhere – for a Dollar Store in Lucerne Valley that we didn’t want and doesn’t comply with our 2007 C. Plan).

Simplify the permitting process. The Plan needs to reflect our past and pending efforts to streamline the permitting process for residential and commercial – discretionary and ministerial. High permit fees are making it extremely onerous to build a residence in this “Severely Economically Disadvantaged Community” (SDAC). Source: 2010 Census and the ACS (American Community Survey) 2010-14 data.

RENEWABLE ENERGY: (Note: Even though RE provisions will be in RECE – we need policies in our C. Plan since they are such important land-use issues).

Need specific language and action opposing any further industrial/commercial scale commercial solar PV in Lucerne Valley EXCEPT for the potential site we have proposed for our small scale ‘community based solar project’ likely within the “Tamarisk Flats” area.

Industrial scale wind power generation is totally unacceptable within our Plan area.

Need specific language and action re: **LV’s strong position supporting “point of use’ solar PV (rooftops/parking lots/backyards/etc.)** – which we have done at the shopping center – and which are pending at Pioneer Park/library/High School parking lots.

Work with SANBAG(successor agency)/County/Joint Power Authority/SCE/local solar firms, etc. to determine best options for local community benefit within said chosen area – and help **establish ie: Community Choice Aggregate (CCA)** and/or Micro Grid/etc. projects.

County actions need to reflect our **opposition to elements of BLM’s DRECP, its ACEC’s, DFA’s and State land exchanges** that adversely affect Lucerne Valley. Per the standing agreement between County and BLM – we work with County/BLM/State Lands Commission to determine ‘acceptable’ locations for RE (PV Solar only) projects and support land exchanges accordingly.

The current Plan’s statement of County support for land exchange along the rail spur with BLM and proposed Industrial zoning of said parcels when become privatized must remain in our Plan. County works with us, BLM, Cushenbury Mine Trust, private parties, etc. to implement this plan – help determine exchanges – provide tax write-offs for willing participants, etc.

Community preference for no ‘Big Box’ stores in rural communities and any franchise store be encouraged to be locally owned and operated to better conform to rural-based customs and cultures.

INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES:

Compensate communities like Lucerne Valley for road repairs resulting from tremendous amounts of truck traffic that hauls cement, limestone, and aggregate to within and outside the County – even the State – which because said loads are considered raw products and not a final sale – don't qualify for Measure I road/sales tax. We produce goods for other areas that get a sales tax when the commodities are turned into a final product – but suffer the high truck volumes and road impacts – and need to get alternative funding to compensate. This is an 'Environmental Justice' issue – especially for a “Disadvantaged Community”.

Desert rural road standards need to be implemented by both County and Caltrans.

County lobbyists need to engage more with the CPUC and CEC in their actions and decisions affecting our County.

County needs to work with SCE to lower the costs of power extensions – inhibiting the ability of land owners in rural areas to build a residence.

Advocate for County/community wide CCAs.

MOBILITY:

ADT numbers need to be revised – are increasing. Need new survey. Per Karen's request – this is what we previously sent her:

Recommendations for Lucerne Valley traffic counts for our Plan:

Hwy 18 just west of intersection with Rabbit Springs Rd. (Service Level “D” for Highway 18 is absolutely not acceptable – and must start a program of increasing lanes and turn pockets. Same for other road improvements mentioned in the current Plan).

Rabbit Springs Rd. east of Kendall Rd. (it's County – but gets tremendous weekend OHV-related traffic – heavy rigs that tear up pavement - accessing the BLM Johnson Valley OHV area – plus heavy loads of mulch going to farms).

Hwy 18 – south of town on way to cement/limestone/aggregate plants and Big Bear.

Hwy 247 (Old Woman Springs Rd.) just east of 4 way stop.

Hwy 247 (Barstow Rd.) north of 4 way stop.

RE: Rabbit Springs Rd. Due to being heavily used on weekends as access to the western part of the BLM Johnson Valley OHV Area - need goal and policy re: **designating Rabbit Springs Rd. “local use only” – and route OHV-related traffic through Hwy 18 commercial area in town** – generate more business - with left turn lane on east bound Hwy 247 onto Camprock Rd. County Trans. apply for State OHV Commission grants – funded by its OHV license fees - for certain road work to accommodate OHV related traffic.

Must retain “County support” for including us in the High Desert Corridor (HDC) project/budget so we get funding for road improvements through our community to accommodate the definite increase in traffic resulting from the HDC on Hwys 18 and 247 – especially long-haul trucking – expanding use of this major trade route, etc.

Add to “Scenic Routes” section – our current drive for State ‘Scenic’ status for Hwy 247 (both Old Woman Springs Rd. and Barstow Rd. sections).

SPECIFIC PROJECTS: (Note: We have documents explaining these projects in much more detail if you need them. Some of these projects are on County and Caltrans’ lists – some are in our “Road Fee Plan” – but not budgeted due to lack of revenue).

HWY 18 - 4 LANE PASSING SEGMENT BETWEEN Lucerne and Apple Valleys.

More “no passing” striping at curves, etc. west of BV turnoff”.

“No passing” striping from Buena Vista Rd. on the west part of town to past CDF station on the east.

Town’s commercial strip needs continuous L/T center lane. Ultimately 4 lanes plus said turning lane.

RESURFACE HWY 18 BETWEEN LV AND AV.

L/T POCKET AT KENDALL.

PAVE MIDWAY RD. BETWEEN HWYs 247 AND 18: County Trans. re-apply for MDAQMD air quality grant to reduce ambient dust (includes PM 10) from increasing road use.

OBTAIN EASEMENTS AND PAVE FOOTHILL RD. BETWEEN TRADEPOST AND BAKER.

Long-term project should be paving further west into Apple Valley and east to Hwy 18 or to Camrock Rd. – as alternative route due to emergencies and for routing increasing truck traffic away from the town center (Hwy 18). (Especially important if and when the Apple Valley section of the High Desert Corridor is constructed and linked to Hwy 18 at Bear Valley Rd.).

PAVE LADERA RD. BETWEEN 247 AND 18. Short segment and relatively simple project which would greatly shorten Fire Dept's response times to emergencies on the Hwy 18 segment to Mitsubishi Cement and Big Bear.

R/L TURN POCKETS ON MILPAS RD.

ALONG WITH NO PASSING STRIPING FROM EAST OF 4 WAY STOP PAST FIRE STATIONS/CHANGE TO 45 MPH LIMIT.

EASTBOUND HWY 247 L/T POCKETS AT POST OFFICE – MIDWAY - MEDANOS RDS.

EASTBOUND HWY 247 R/T LANE AT VISALIA.

INSTALL FLASHERS ON WEST AND SOUTHBOUND APPROACHES TO HWY 247/247 4 WAY STOP.

R/L TURN POCKETS – NORTH AND SOUTHBOUND LANES AT HWY 247 (Barstow Rd.) AND RABBIT SPRINGS RD. INTERSECTION. (Northbound right turn most important now).

ELIMINATE "RIGHT TURN ONLY" AT EXISTING STORAGE FACILITY ENTERING HWY 18 – ALLOW LEFT TURNS.

UPDATE STATUS OF COUNTY/LV “TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES FEE PLAN”.

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Covered in our 2007 C. Plan. Include in this Plan.

HOUSING

The Housing Element (with specific mention in our Plan) needs to reflect our work in developing an affordable, senior housing project (emphasis on veterans) on donated land adjacent to the shopping center, Community Center, Senior Center, Park, fire stations, etc. Include a policy of direct County assistance (political/economic/grants/etc.).

Need to factor in reduction of Rancho Lucerne Planned Development’s potential # of homes.

This is also a land-use issue – providing housing for the expected population. Housing that is relatively affordable can help our current and future residents – but what is too affordable (ie: in some of our rural communities) allows the influx of undesirable demographics – which in turn require significant amounts of government services – especially law and code enforcement. Rent control results in fewer rentals being built.

The County – mostly cities – need to come up with some level of housing for our homeless. Partnerships with the Salvation Army, churches, etc. might be the best option - they know what to do. Homeless in the Mojave River have started fires in the river’s bottom lands that have caused significant damage to riparian vegetation and listed bird species – and will continue unless resolved.

HISTORIC REOURCES:

Covered in our 2007 Plan.

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESOURCES

Lucerne Valley's general opposition to industrial scale RE projects includes lack of any local, economic benefit. Non-local union workers are employed – no local motels to accommodate them – minimal if any local purchases - operation requires minimal full-time employment and usually not local – under current policies the solar 'improvements' can't be added to assessed value – thus no increase in property tax revenue (except maybe for the fence) – PLUS – said projects can consume tremendous amount of acreage that could be put to more economically beneficial uses (ie: local industry and jobs).

County help LVEDA create some type of "Enterprise Zone" – or equivalent – to protect us (to the max extent possible) from continued federal/State/County dictates/rules that significantly dilute our independence and ability to function as a rural community – especially with our status as a "Disadvantaged Community". One of our disadvantages is having to deal with the onslaught of onerous and senseless requirements that don't work in our environment – diluting our custom and culture - that the County should help protect us and other communities from. The County has federal and state consultants/lobbyists – so use them more effectively for your constituents.

County join the Small Business Council (SBC) is dealing with the State on economically damaging legislation – get exemptions for hospitality and retail businesses. County also implement "Regionalization", which would carve out areas where the effect of those laws would be deleterious to particular areas. We expect the County would be aware of the necessity of regionalization in harmful legislation coming out of Sacramento that would damage the County's, the High Desert's and Lucerne Valley's economies. We expect the County to be our advocate and protector to maintain economic health of the community and region.

County Economic Development Agency/Departments take a greater role in helping our "Severely Economically Disadvantaged Community" write and obtain grants for community improvements, etc.

Cottage industries. Well suited to LV. The County needs to not only remove road-blocks, but also to encourage and facilitate cottage industries to increase the attractiveness of living/working here. **Same for home-based businesses which are important for our economy.**

CULTURAL/TRIBAL RESOURCES:

Cultural resources aren't just related to historic Native American or pioneer artifacts and structures – but also community customs and cultures that need to be protected from intrusive developments that dilute their integrity and ruin community values. Each community plan needs to include lists provided by the residents of the features and elements they want preserved.

Tribal consultations are basic requirements – but the County needs to adopt stronger time limits for responses. Most projects have little or no effects on said resources.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES:

The “trail” language in the 2007 Plan is good – but need to put **more emphasis on mountain bike trails – both on private and BLM lands.**

County assist us in working with BLM re: the West Mojave Plan Route Network for our region.

The County needs to make more effort in working with USFS and BLM to keep trails open and maintain better public access.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

LVEDA and the JV/LV MAC will continue to do its best in implementing the ‘action plans’ we addressed and agreed with.

CIVIC INVOLVEMENT:

We know of no other community that spends more time working with the County than we do!

SAFETY, SECURITY, HEALTH & WELFARE

PERSONAL & PROPERTY PROTECTION:

Major focus on parcels/structures along Hwy 18 in the commercial area, plus other main roads for rehab. or removal of unused, vacant, deteriorated buildings, etc.

Lucerne Valley (via LVEDA or the Chamber) to continue to **work with County Code Enforcement and Cal Recycle re: cleaning up illegal dumps** (tires, trash, etc.) throughout the area.

County Code Enforcement and the community establish a map/list of the most significant project locations – timeframes for action – local volunteer work forces to assist, etc.

Initiate/support **Cal Recycle and other programs and grants that will provide for an increase in CE desert staffing** – an absolute necessity.

County CE assist community in periodic town clean-ups – where residents bring tires, etc. – including volunteers cleaning up illegal dumps -

Retain current Plan’s language eliminating the SRA from our Plan area – no real fire-prone vegetation on the north slope of the SB Mts. until reach BLM and USFS boundaries to the south. The SRA is not just USFS land “area served”. It currently includes private lands as well – but which we want to eliminate from the SRA.

Work with County Sheriff’s Department to assure there are sufficient deputies on duty to cover our large area – and establish “Neighborhood Watch” programs. For Sherriff staffing, a **full time Sergeant and 4 full time Deputies specifically for LV and AV SOI (sphere of influence).** We had 10,000+ calls last

year with only 2 Deputies and a part time Sergeant – with deputies spending much of their shifts outside Lucerne Valley.

HEALTH & WELLNESS:

Work with St. Mary's Hospital, Victor Valley Transit Authority, local foundations, etc. to implement the health and medical transportation needs

determined from our local Health Survey (ie: local clinic – St. Mary's medical van visits at the Shopping Center – pay local drivers to take people to doctor appointments, shopping, etc.).

Years ago we started our volunteer Lucerne Valley **household hazardous waste collection program. The County needs to help organize and support more such efforts in desert communities** to help keep said materials out of the landfills – and of course reduce illegal dumping. County Fire (Haz. Mat. Division) does the best job it can – but needs more support.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN:

Our churches, the Roadrunner Club, School District etc. etc. provide significant services – per our responses to the “Action Plan”.

EDUCATION:

The Mitsubishi Education Foundation and the newly formed L. V. School District Foundation support our School District. “County Schools” has been a good partner.

JOB TRAINING:

Performed by our industrial plants and other local businesses, our School District and VV College. Trade job training is critical for our demographics.

NATURAL RESOURCES & CONSERVATION

AIR:

Work with MDAQMD to regulate and control stationary source emissions – but oppose any further State GHG onerous requirements – especially for mineral production.

The County will obviously try to do what it is supposed to via State and Fed. GHG regs. – some of which have marginal benefit related to the local, economic cost. This is a world-wide issue and problem and the County doesn't need to get too excited about thinking it can solve the problem alone. We need to factor in the long-term reductions of greenhouse gasses due to renewable energy projects in the County and throughout the southwest – but need to account for emissions from manufacture and installation of solar panels, etc. No free lunch.

Desert soils and vegetation have high rates of carbon retention – which is released when disturbed – not restored in human timeframes – preservation of which is probably one of the County's best ways to participate in said GHS reductions.

MDAQMD installs an automated PM monitoring station that reports to the internet in near real-time at LV high school. Request a yearly report to MAC and LVEDA.

Enforce current Development Code stipulations re: illegal and legal land scraping – brush removal – etc. to avoid blowing dirt/dust off parcels onto another – plus reduce PM10 and smaller dust particles into the ambient air stream for miles downwind (major current problem the County is not dealing with). **A dedicated full time Code Enforcement officer specifically for JV, LV, and AV SOI. Monthly reports to MACs and to LVEDA for accountability.**

WATER SUPPLY AND QUALITY:

The updated Plan needs to **reflect increases in annual water production.**

Definitely need the County to support legislation/legal actions reversing the State's prohibition of hauled water to any new single family residence not able to be served by a central water system - where no or non-potable groundwater exists – or where the cost of a well is beyond the ability of our residents in “Economically Disadvantaged Communities” to afford. The County EHS’s internal department policy was never codified in an ordinance or the Dev. Code. When and if said prohibition is reversed: **Add to the Dev. Code and our Plan: “Hauled water is allowed to any parcel or resident not able to be served by a centralized water purveyor – by a licensed hauler from an approved source”**. We are working on amending state legislation dealing with hauled water and need the County’s support. There was never any evidence of a water quality problem from hauled water from a licensed source and hauler.

Need reference to the Mojave Basin Groundwater Adjudication (Judgment) – with increasing influx of agriculture (mostly orchards) pumping more than the “Minimal Producer’s” allowance of 10 acre’/year – thus ‘pumping outside the Judgment’ - not obtaining water rights which the adjudication requires. Need policies for educating realtors, well drillers, land-owners, etc. re: requirements of the Judgment – and where and how to obtain pumping/water rights. Need policy requiring the County to record the Judgment on certain larger parcels within the Mojave Basin Adjudication not served by a water purveyor.

County EHS notify well drillers when they pull permits for locations in the adjudicated portion of the desert of the need to inform their clients to contact the Mojave Basin Watermaster (Mojave Water Agency) re: the requirement to obtain water rights if pump over 10 ac’/year – no matter the size of the parcel.

Work with Mojave Water Agency to construct a recharge basin to percolate State Water from the Morongo Pipeline on the north side of the Helendale Fault (area with the most significant groundwater decline).

Promote the consolidation of certain town mutual water companies to provide more reliable service to their commercial and residential customers.

Acknowledge the “Lucerne Valley Water/Sewer Study” funded by County and Mojave Water Agency. **Promote the wastewater project included in said study in order to preempt high nitrate concentrations from septic tanks upstream**

from the high groundwater levels created by the damming effect of the Helendale Fault. County Dept. of EHS and Mojave Water Agency continue testing specific wells for groundwater levels of nitrate and other harmful constituents.

An **existing entity administers water/wastewater grants** – obtained with County assistance.

Continue to work with Mojave Water Agency – possibly with County Flood Control District if necessary – re: long-standing request for retention/detention basins to collect natural runoff along the upper reaches of the Cushenbury Wash to allow percolation to groundwater in that coarse alluvium area that otherwise flows downstream, flooding out houses, Hwy 247 – numerous County roads – and evaporates in Lucerne Dry Lake. Said project would benefit recharge to the over-drafted, major groundwater aquifer north of the Helendale Fault. **Pursue transfer of the BLM parcel within this critical flow area to the County under BLM’s “Public Purpose Act” – the best locations for said basins/low berms/etc. to be placed.**

Incorporate goals and policies for retention basins for groundwater recharge in association with FC projects – not just moving water faster toward the dry lakes to evaporate.

Major new subdivisions and large water-consuming projects need to purchase water entitlements from holders of State Project Water rights in amounts equivalent to their usage – and transfer them to their local State Water Contractors for import. Current residents should not have to subsidize new development with any future water use reductions.

ENERGY:

No industrial scale renewable energy projects in community plan areas in the RECE.

OPEN SPACE:

The Open Space Element needs to include our new County (Russell) Park on Visalia Ave. – administered by CSA 29 – and support funding for future park improvements.

Maintain the natural view sheds of desert communities along roads designated “County Scenic” – and especially Hwy 247 being applied for as “State Scenic”.
Refer to Caltrans all project applications along roads listed by the State as “eligible” for scenic status for analysis of impacts and intrusions adversely affecting said status.

Use zoning and development standards to reduce the potential for aesthetic disruptions.

Beef up Code Enforcement’s budget and staff to deal with abandoned structures, illegal dumps, etc.

Important geological features need to be protected from certain developments that intrude on them and disrupt their scenic qualities.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

Implement a County-wide HCP to simplify and expedite permitting where a project could result in a ‘taking’ of a listed species.

Maintain the integrity of biological/wildlife corridors by not allowing intrusive projects within them.

No removal or disturbance of native vegetation for renewable energy projects.

Enforce existing Codes re: illegal grading and de-brushing not associated with agriculture or legal developments.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

Current regs. sufficiently protect them.

MINERALS/SOILS:

Include our cement/limestone/aggregate plants in a “Mineral District” to protect them and our mineral resources from conflicting land-uses. Determine suitable boundaries for said District.

We can only mine where the minerals are – it’s the stuff we all absolutely need and we can’t lock it up or make it difficult to obtain a permit whether a SMARA project or not. We have minerals that can be efficiently and economically mined – obviously with short-term impacts – certainly need to require Best Management Practices for reclamation. Gold mines in the E. Mojave that were operated in the 70’s and 80’s have been reclaimed almost to the level of not even recognizing where they were.

County BOS needs to work with USFS and BLM to expedite mining projects on public lands – not let the Feds. de-rail valid projects or just stall because they don’t like them. We cannot allow major dependency on critical minerals from foreign sources.

Also under Air Quality:::**The Plan and Dev. Code need to be updated re: what soil types can accommodate specific development types w/o creating wind-blown erosion – and which need specific mitigation measures.** Soil disturbance from illegal land scraping and de-brushing – solar projects – fallowed agricultural fields result in constant blowing dirt onto adjacent parcels and becomes ambient for long distances. PM 10 and finer particles are the most prevalent – a definite health impact and violations of both the current County Dev. Code and in some instances MDAQMD regulations. This is becoming one of the primary complaints from various communities that the County needs to deal with in the Plan and Code updates. No solar plant currently in place and operating has complied with even the projects’ mitigation requirements – none of which are adequate based on the extent of the disturbance – the fine/sandy soils – the lack of suitable soil stabilization measures – not sufficient water for spraying, etc. Complaints to County Code Enf. and the MDAQMD have not been adequately dealt with or resolved – even when CE staff can get to the site and witness the problem. This will probably be one of the biggest impacts from the types and extent of land-uses and population increases that the Countywide Plan will allow.

AGRICULTURE: (See also Water supply)

Our current Plan's Conservation Element language is good – citing Development Code sections - but the Element needs to be updated to emphasize the need for education and enforcement re: illegal land clearing/scraping/disturbance – the need to have a well and irrigation system on-site before any ag. practice is initiated, etc. Wind erosion of disturbed soil is becoming a major problem for our community and downwind residents.

County Dept. of Ag. work with the Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District and USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service re: **Best Management Practices for starting a new farm to avoid blowing dirt – upset neighbors** – etc.

Code Enforcement to better monitor/respond to complaints re: blowing dirt/dust off an agriculture field or other land disturbance – with beefed up regulations in the Development Code.

County Ag. Dept./Code Enforcement/EHS need to adopt a “soil amendment ordinance” including not just bio solids – but green waste mulch and compost – what is “acceptable” and how to apply it to tree and other crop farms that are rapidly increasing here and throughout other desert communities. Work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the USDA and the Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District to determine the best ingredients for good soil health and agronomic application rates of said material – whether disked in or ground cover for tree crops.

Lucerne Valley and Newberry Springs help County draft and resurrect a raven dispersal/propane cannon/noise impact ordinance that the County initiated and dropped. Cannon noise has been a long-term major problem for residents and which doesn't deter raven predation on crops.

Continue current policy of 'no permit required' for general agricultural practices – except large-scale chicken/egg ranches – specified animal concentrations – **marijuana farms**, etc.

County and Cal Fire, etc. actively support and perform dead tree and biomass removal – and tree thinning in overgrown forests both on private and public lands to reduce fire potential and to maintain a healthier forest and protect watersheds.

GOVERNANCE

There will never be enough tax revenue to fund public services as much as we need or want. If there was – we would be complaining about high taxes.

However law and code enforcement are the most needed services for our desert communities – both lacking and need more focus and \$. Road maintenance is probably next in line.