



San Diego County DPLU News

Winter 2011

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Important Building Division Telephone Numbers

Building Offices: (858) 694-2960
 Toll Free: (800) 411-0017
 2003, 2007 Wildfire Survivors:
 (858) 694-3876

From the Director

Hello everyone,

Welcome to the New Year and the winter edition of the Department of Planning and Land Use's quarterly newsletter. As 2011 begins, we have a lot to tell you about. The Board of Supervisors will continue to consider our proposed General Plan Update in February. We've brought several important projects to decision, and our department continues to improve our policies and ordinances, including the County Zoning Ordinance.

As always, DPLU is striving to be the best land use department it can be.

Until next time,

- Eric Gibson, Director, Department of Planning and Land Use

Building Division News

DPLU, Military Veterans Work Together

The Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) expanded its job internship program last summer to include two military veterans, a move that has proved so successful that the department has asked for six more to start this year.

Traditionally, DPLU has primarily offered its internship positions to planning and land use students because land use is such a highly-technical field that even simple tasks require some planning knowledge. Consequently, when the County's Department of Human Resources offered the department the chance to use military veterans as interns under the Veterans Work Experience Program, DPLU wanted to offer veterans the positions but worried that they might not have the background to be successful. Nevertheless, DPLU hired two interns and the results have been great. Both of the veterans who were hired worked exclusively with Project Processing Support, helping with both departmental work and customer service.

The men handled a range of duties, from acting as first-telephone contacts with the public, to helping with subpoena-funds-deposit research and response, copying documents, labeling cases, distributing mail and helping with records requests.



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Project Planning

Important Project Planning Links:

- [California Environmental Quality Act \(CEQA\) Flow Chart](#)
- [Conditions of Approval Manual](#)
- [Developer Deposits](#)
- [Discretionary Permits and Application Forms](#)
- [Environmental Impact Report Guidelines](#)
- [Fee Schedule](#)
- [How Much Discretionary Permits Cost; How Much Time they Take](#)

Planning Commission, DPLU OK San Miguel Joint Emergency Training Center

In October, DPLU's Project Planning Division successfully recommended that the County's Planning Commission approve a permit to let the San Miguel Fire Protection District and Otay Water District build a new regional emergency training center in Spring Valley. The facility will provide a place for fire and public utilities personnel to train, using modern equipment and techniques, to be able to respond to fires, emergency medical situations and other disasters. The center will also provide an alternative Emergency Operations Center for use during disasters. Emergency responders will be able to train in the highly-realistic simulations by using large-scale props that will be at the site, including a 60-foot-tall, five-story training tower, a model bridge overpass, and eventually, a mock strip mall. The training facility will also include props that will allow emergency responders to simulate rescues in confined spaces, and to create mock hazardous material situations.

The site will include a portable office building, two portable classrooms, apparatus and equipment storage, bathroom and shower facilities, computers, a teleconferencing system and other audio visual equipment.

DPLU Processes Major Detention Facility Change Ahead of Schedule

Project Planning helped complete a major change for a new South County detention facility seven months ahead of schedule in November.



San Diego County's Planning Commission originally approved plans for a new 37-acre, 408,522 square-foot detention facility in April 2009. But the project's backers, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), decided almost immediately that they wanted to swap a portion of their site's location with another project several hundred yards down the road. Among other things, that required processing a new application to modify the project's Major Use Permit and amending the project's environmental impact report. DPLU's standard schedule suggested that it would take until May 2011 to be able to bring the project back to the Planning Commission for its consideration. But the department was able to bring it to the commission for its eventual approval seven months ahead of schedule, in November 2010.

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Photo by Tom Chester: http://tchester.org/srp/plants/pix/Lakeside_ceanothus.html

**Featured Species: “Lakeside”
Ceanothus (California Lilac)**

Several hundred acres northwest of the East County community of Crest just may be the home of the last real populations of this month’s threatened species --- the “Lakeside” Ceanothus.

The showy tree-like shrub is one of a number of species of Ceanothus — the plant commonly known as “California Lilac.” It’s an evergreen with gray-green leaves and striking blue flowers. It’s also a native plant that provides important habitat for native insects and animals.

Lakeside Ceanothus can grow as tall as 15 feet and typically occurs in a dense chaparral with a mix of Chamise and other shrubs.

South County Plan

A County amendment that would add the endangered Quino Checkerspot butterfly to the list of 85 species protected by the South County Plan is currently being reviewed by state and federal wildlife agencies. The County expects to release the amendment for public review in late spring, and is currently working on the amendment’s draft environmental impact report.

If ultimately adopted, the amendment would help preserve the endangered butterfly by: proposing conservation levels; describing how the County could estimate and monitor butterfly populations and manage its habitat; and recommending how the County and developers could set aside and protect butterfly habitat when building occurs. More information about the Quino Checkerspot butterfly amendment can be seen at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/mscp/quino.html>.

North County Plan

The MSCP Division now plans to release its revised draft North County Plan and the plan’s draft environmental documents for public review this summer. The division is continuing to work on the environmental documents with consultants, state and federal wildlife agencies, and stakeholders. The public can review the draft plan, including its appendices and the public comments that were received when the draft plan was released for public review in early 2009, at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/mscp/nc.html>.

East County Plan

Work on the East County Plan has been slowed indefinitely because of County budget constraints and staffing reductions that resulted from the recession. The work is intended to resume after budget and staffing constraints are resolved. Information about the draft East County Plan, including the preliminary draft preserve map, is available at: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/mscp/ec.html>.

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See More Code Enforcement [Success Stories!](#)

[Aug. 2010: Working with a Fallbrook Owner to Clean up Construction Junk.](#)

[Aug. 2010: Working with a Vista Homeowner to Clear Away Junk.](#)

[June 2010: Working with a Property Owner in Ranchita to Clear a Scrap Yard](#)

[May 2010: Clearing a Public Health Hazard in Pala](#)

[April 2010: Cleaning and Securing an abandoned home in Spring Valley](#)

[March 2010: Removing an Illegal RV Storage Lot in Ramona](#)

[Jan. 2010: Cleaning up a foreclosure](#)

[Jan. 2010: Making a Neighborhood Safer](#)

[Dec. 2009: Tearing Down a Nuisance](#)

[Oct. 2009: Cleanup in La Mesa](#)

[March 2009: Debris Removal in Ramona](#)

Helping an elderly homeowner clean violations

DPLU's Code Enforcement Division helped an elderly homeowner in Alpine and his neighbors by not citing the man but instead working out a deal to clean his property free of charge.

Code Enforcement officers responded to complaints that the property was littered with junk, a non-working car, and firewood being sold illegally. When they arrived, they found that the elderly owner was also the caretaker of his 90-year-old mother and didn't have the time or energy to manage the property. Officers chose not to cite the man, but instead tried to work with him to get the property cleaned. However, the homeowner still wasn't able to correct the violations. Code Enforcement officers solved the problem after noticing that the junk that needed clearing included a large amount of scrap metal. The officers contacted a contractor that the County had worked with before and helped arrange a deal where the contractor would clean the property for the homeowner — at no charge — in return for being able to sell the metal.

Before



After



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Advance Planning

Calendar

Feb. 9 Board of Supervisors Hearing:
General Plan Update

For more information and additional up-coming meetings, please visit the Calendar on the General Plan Update [Web site](#).

View the Advance Planning website to get more information at:

www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/advance/index.html or
www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate

General Plan Update

Next Hearing: Feb. 9

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to resume its hearing of the General Plan Update Feb. 9. The Board has held three separate days of public hearings Update so far, on Oct. 20, Nov. 10 and Dec. 8. Video of each of the hearings is available from the [Clerk of the Board](#). DPLU staff is expected to present additional information and research at the Feb. 9 meeting about a number of issues that were raised during the previous meetings, including about property-specific requests. The list of [Issues for Staff Response](#) remains available on the General Plan Update Website.

All of the General Plan Update materials can be found on the General Plan Update website at:

www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/bos_oct2010.html.

List of General Plan Update Property-Specific Requests for Reconsideration Now Available

During the recent public hearings on the proposed General Plan Update, a number of people asked the County to reconsider changes in the plan that would affect their specific properties. Staff has created a list of approximately 230 property-specific requests for reconsideration that were submitted either verbally or in writing, or which were referred to staff by the Board of Supervisors. A list of those requests is now available under [Property Specific Requests](#). Staff is preparing an analysis of each request and will present that analysis to the Board at its Feb. 9 meeting. Property owners who submitted a request should confirm that they are on the list by sending an email to the General Plan staff at: gpupdate.DPLU@sdcounty.ca.gov, or by calling 858-694-2488 with any questions.

Policy and Ordinance Development

Board Adopts Zoning Ordinance Update: Dec. 8

The Board of Supervisors adopted amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance Dec. 8. The improvements included adding definitions and making minor revisions to some sections of the ordinance. The amendments also included minor changes to the County Regulatory Code, related to Surface Mining Operations, and the County Administrative Code, related to Rules of Conduct and Procedure. The ordinance can be viewed at the [Advance Planning website](#). (Staff Contact: [Heather Steven](#)).

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