

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
TWIN OAKS VALLEY COMMUNITY SPONSOR GROUP
NOTICE - PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, August 21, 2024 between 7:00 p.m. to 9 p.m.

San Marcos Senior Center located at 111 Richmar Ave, San Marcos, CA 92069
email at tovcsg.chair@gmail.com or go to the web-site: tovcsg.wordpress.com

AGENDA

- A. ROLL CALL:**
- B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**
- C. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION**
- D. ACTION ITEMS:**

1. San Diego County Cannabis Social Equity Program

Project Description: The purpose of the San Diego County Cannabis Social Equity Program is to address and rectify the disproportionate impact of historical cannabis prohibition laws on certain communities. Initiated to foster fairness and opportunity in the legal cannabis industry, the program aims to provide support and resources to those who were adversely affected by previous cannabis legislation. This includes offering access to business licenses, financial assistance, educational opportunities, and support services to eligible individuals, particularly from marginalized communities. The overarching goal is to empower these individuals, ensuring they have equitable opportunities to participate in and benefit from the burgeoning legal cannabis market. Through these efforts, the program seeks to reduce economic disparities and promote social justice, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of community healing and inclusive economic growth. Another important consequence of the program is to increase access to cannabis for communities and regions which have been without equitable and equally safe access since cannabis was legalized.

Twin Oaks Valley Community Sponsor Group has stated our position to this program in the form of a letter on October 31, 2023. We are considering restating our position in a form of a letter directly to the County Board of Supervisors once again.

Discussion/Action

2. Development Feasibility Analysis Program Updates and Letter

Project Description: The primary objective of the DFA project is to explore practical strategies for facilitating residential development in key vehicle miles traveled (VMT) efficient and infill areas. The outcome of the DFA's effort will be a resource for the Board of Supervisors to better understand development feasibility challenges and provide actionable strategies to help address the County's critical housing needs in alignment with the County's broader goal of building housing the right places in a sustainable way.

The Buena Creek community, along with three others is being analyzed for development feasibility. This meeting will be to document the group and public's responses to the previous County presentation so that the responses can be sent to the County and Board of Supervisors.

Discussion/Action (see map on page 4)

E. GROUP BUSINESS

- 1. Announcements and Correspondence:**
- 2. Discussion/Action Items:**
Membership updates:
- 3. Old Business**
- 4. Subcommittee Buena Creek Road Report:**

F. ADJOURNMENT

Purpose of Planning and Sponsor Groups:

Advise the County on discretionary projects as well as on planning and land use matters that are important to their community.

Public Disclosure

We strive to protect personally identifiable information by collecting only information necessary to deliver our services. All information that may be collected becomes public record that may be subject to inspection and copying by the public, unless an exemption in law exists. In the event of a conflict between this Privacy Notice and any County ordinance or other law governing the County's disclosure of records, the County ordinance or other applicable law will control.

Access and Correction of Personal Information

You can review any personal information collected about you. You may recommend changes to your personal information you believe is in error by submitting a written request that credibly shows the error. If you believe that your personal information is being used for a purpose other than what was intended when submitted, you may contact us. In all cases, we will take reasonable steps to verify your identity before granting access or making corrections.



CITIZENS NEEDED TO SERVE ON COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

The Twin Oaks Valley Community Sponsor Group, a County appointed citizens advisory group that advises the County of San Diego on land use matters in the Twin Oaks Valley Planning Area is seeking applications for membership.

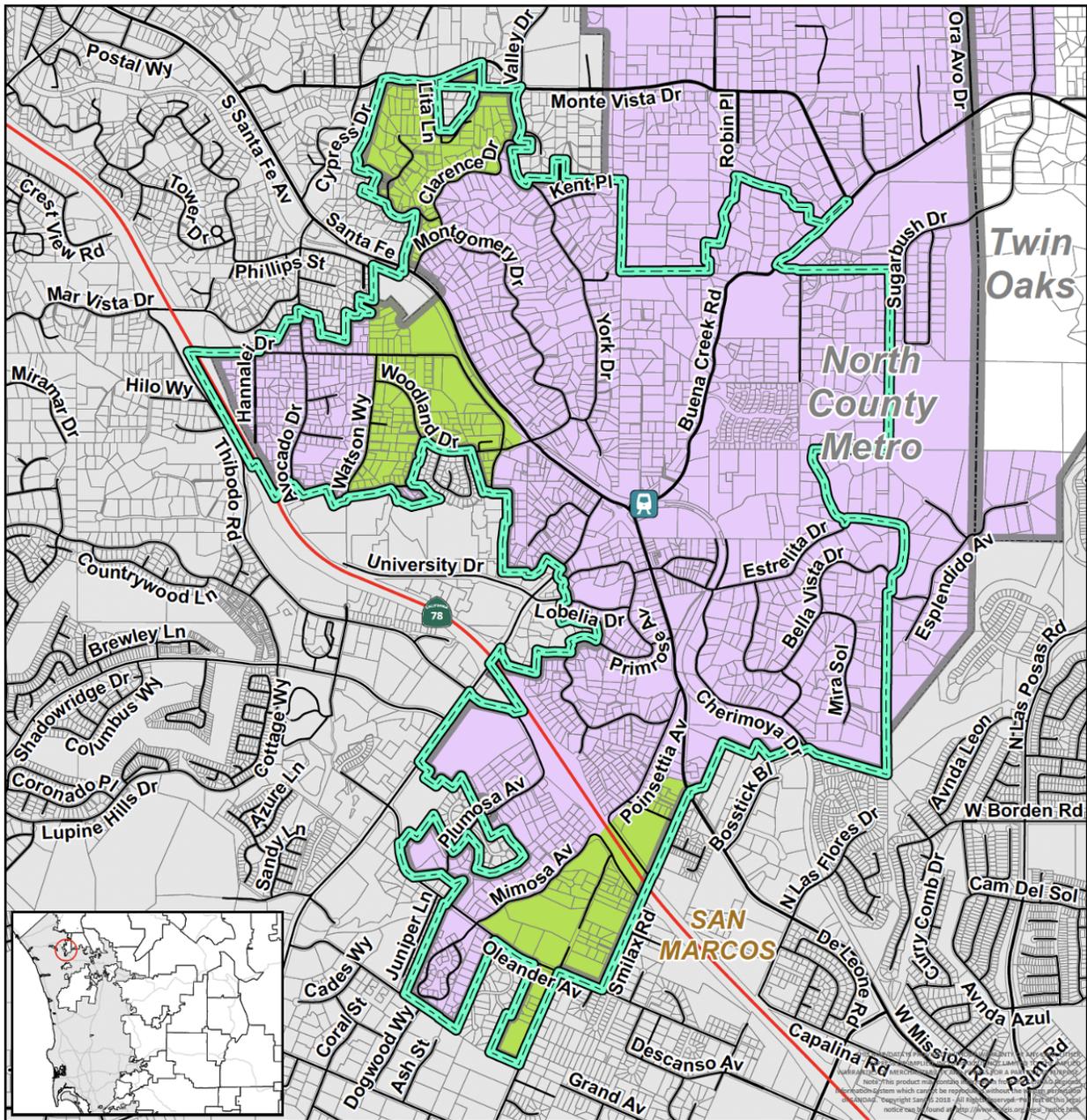
What is the Twin Oaks Valley Community Sponsor Group?

This Group is one of 28 planning and sponsor groups in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County. Its purpose is to be an information link between the community and the County of San Diego on planning and land use matters in the local community. The group provides a public forum for the discussion of issues which are important to the community and all meetings are open to the public, held in a public place, and the agenda published according to Brown Act provisions.

Members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and serve in an advisory capacity only to San Diego County Department of Planning and Development Services. Group members serve on a volunteer basis for a term of four years.

Members must be registered voters, and either be residents or own property in the Twin Oaks Valley Planning Area. Members to attend one evening meeting, held from 7-9pm, on the third Wednesday of each month. Members receive yearly training and take periodic online training as required for public officials.

For more information please see: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/CommunityGroups/>
Contact Joseph W. Bunn Chair at tovcsg.chair@gmail.com if you have any additional questions.



Buena Creek
 DRAFT Development Feasibility Area

VMT Areas
 North County Metro Community Plan Area

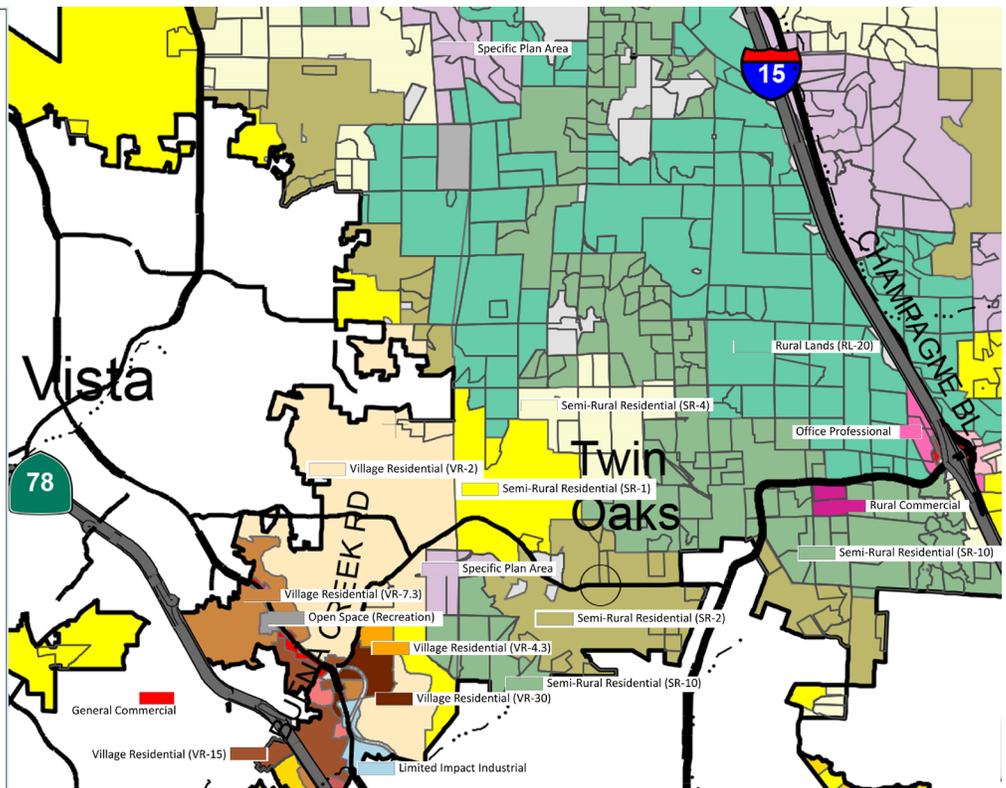
- Legend**
- Development Feasibility Area
 - Buena Creek Sprinter Station
 - Highways
 - Roads
 - Parcels
 - CPA
 - Incorporated
- VMT Areas**
- VMT Efficient
 - Infill Areas

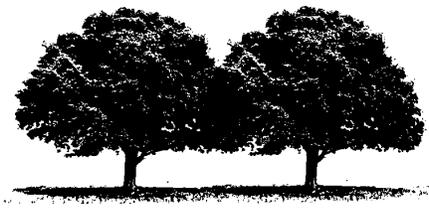


General Plan Land Use Designations

- Village Residential (VR-30)
- Village Residential (VR-24)
- Village Residential (VR-20)
- Village Residential (VR-15)
- Village Residential (VR-10.9)
- Village Residential (VR-7.3)
- Village Residential (VR-4.3)
- Village Residential (VR-2.9)
- Village Residential (VR-2)
- Semi-Rural Residential (SR-0.5)
- Semi-Rural Residential (SR-1)
- Semi-Rural Residential (SR-2)
- Semi-Rural Residential (SR-4)
- Semi-Rural Residential (SR-10)
- Rural Lands (RL-20)
- Rural Lands (RL-40)
- Rural Lands (RL-80)
- Specific Plan Area
- General Commercial
- Office Professional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Rural Commercial
- Village Core Mixed Use
- Limited Impact Industrial
- Medium Impact Industrial
- High Impact Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public Facilities
- Public/Semi-Public Lands (Solid Waste Facility)
- Public Agency Lands
- Tribal Lands
- Open Space (Recreation)
- Open Space (Conservation)
- Parcels (Greater than 10 Acres)
- County Water Authority Boundary
- Planning Boundary
- Jurisdictional Boundaries

Date: November 15, 2017
 Source: County of San Diego, SANDAG
 Document Path: S:\land_use\update_maps\official_maps\mad\new_general_plan_cw.mxd





Twin Oaks Valley Community Sponsor Group

date

San Diego County Board of Supervisors

Submitted via email to Agenda Item

Re: Socially Equitable Cannabis Program

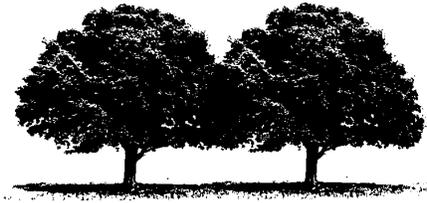
Dear Honorable Supervisors

Please see the attached comment letter we submitted October 31, 2023. Our position on this matter has not changed since then.

Sincerely,

Joe Bunn, Chair

Twin Oaks Valley Community Sponsor Group



Twin Oaks Valley Community Sponsor Group

October 31, 2023

San Diego County PDS

*RE: Response to the Socially Equitable Cannabis Program
NOP & Scoping for the EIR*

Submitted as an attachment to email to pds.longrangeplanning@sdcounty.ca.gov

Thank you for allowing us this opportunity to comment on the Socially Equitable Cannabis Program EIR Notice of Preparation and Scoping. The Twin Oaks Valley Planning Area is home to many commercial agricultural operations with most plants grown in green house conditions. Our community is sandwiched in between the cities of Vista, San Marcos and Escondido.

We understand that the purpose of this Socially Equitable Cannabis Program is to provide compensation in the form of streamlined permits and possible aid so that those who have been harmed by the war on drugs and provide them with a path to thrive in the cannabis industry. Although we strongly support correcting injustices, we are unsure how the Socially Equitable Cannabis Program will accomplish that. We can appreciate the State and County's desire to capture revenue by the growing and sales of cannabis. However, the public needs evidence that beyond tax revenue, the populations targeted by the Socially Equitable Cannabis Program and the communities they serve, will actually receive a benefit by the County's program.

Although page 70 of the Women's Work Report notes, "...legal cannabis in unincorporated areas "could generate between \$2.9 million and \$5.6 million in annual cannabis tax revenue", the DEIR needs to identify all costs and compare them to the potential profit from tax revenue. They must balance out or the public will be forced to pay the difference.

Like gambling, alcohol, and other substances and or activities that either cause or contribute to addiction, it is often the disadvantaged communities and taxpayers who end up paying that cost of addiction. The companies who profit from addiction, benefit while the taxes gathered from these enterprises fail to cover the cost of added enforcement, healthcare needed for addiction treatment or government programs, funded by taxpayers, to help mitigate problems.

We believe the DEIR needs to address the following comments and questions.

Comment 1: How will the Socially Equitable Cannabis Program be funded? Will taxpayers pay for the program by providing money via grants, or pay to reduce loan costs, provide land, reality discounts or credits, property tax relief, or provide other financial incentives to aid those who qualify under the Socially Equitable Cannabis Program?

Comment 2: After providing the financial and permitting incentives designed to allow people who qualify under Socially Equitable Cannabis Program, how does the County ensure the licensees don't turn around and sell their business and licenses to another party who would not qualify under the social equity program?

Comment 3: How profitable is growing cannabis? Would the growth of cannabis convert existing agriculture to cannabis agriculture? If so, would the growth of the Cannabis industry convert land that could be used for low-income housing to cannabis operations? Because the costs of land is so high in San Diego County and because there is a needed for housing, the DEIR needs to discuss the economic impact of cannabis cultivation and land needs on the County's need to provide more housing.

Comment 4: If cannabis is grown or sold near residential areas or schools, will there be any negative impacts?

Comment 5: The DEIR needs to establish an economic need for dispensaries to ensure those the County wants to benefit from the Socially Equitable Cannabis program can succeed. According to the County's website there are five existing cannabis facilities authorized to operate in the unincorporated area of San Diego County. The DEIR needs to address the true need of such facilities beyond the money the County and State stand to make selling cannabis. For instance, according to Google maps, within a few miles of the Twin Oaks Valley Planning Area, and most of North County Metro that is along the SR78 corridor and near Vista, there are eleven cannabis dispensaries. These include:

Speedy Weedy,

March and Ash,

Hello Cannabis,

Coastal Cannabis Dispensary,

Serene Tree Hemp,

Urban Leaf Vista Cannabis Dispensary,

Stillzy Vista,

the Cake House Vista Dispensary

Dr Green RX

And, Off the Charts Dispensary

What is the real need for more cannabis dispensaries in the unincorporated County given the profusion of locations in cities such as Vista? The DEIR needs to show why these facilities are not able to handle the existing need requiring the County to license some of its own in the unincorporated area. The SR78 that was once the Craft Beer Highway is becoming the Weed Highway.

Comment 6: According to the County website the purpose is to According to the County website the purpose is to create a "Program that facilitates greater equity in business ownership and employment in the regulated cannabis market by reducing the barriers to entry for those who have been negatively or disproportionately impacted by cannabis criminalization." Are there other ways this goal can be addressed? Can those that have been negatively impacted by cannabis criminalization have their criminal records expunged so they are no longer seen as felons because they were caught engaging in an illegal activity that is now legal? What about providing those negatively impacted by the "War on Drugs" other business opportunities to start a business that would not have the potential for contributing to an underserved community and not adding to a substance abuse problem the community may already have? Underserved communities need, full-service grocery stores, places for youth, gathering spaces for the community to meet and share experiences, affordable medical services, affordable housing, etc. Why is cannabis growth and sales considered as the best equity program to correct past unjust actions?

Comment 7: The DEIR needs to look at the impact of conversion of farmland and open space as well as water use on the cultivation of cannabis as it relates to global warming and provide mitigation measures. San Diego County has some of the highest water and electricity rates in the United States. As our needs grow for both energy and water the public needs to understand how the cultivation of cannabis could impact both the availability of water and energy. Does Cannabis growth require more or less water than used by existing agricultural uses?

Comment 8: If cannabis is grown above ground, what runoff will it generate and how will it be managed? In addition, how will the growing of cannabis impact traffic and security needs in the unincorporated County and who will pay for the impacts? The DEIR should address these impacts cannabis could have on unincorporated communities as well as the adjacent cities.

Comment 9: Avocados were once a money crop in San Diego County. The high cost of water and competition from Mexico reduced the profitability and over the past few years, groves have been left to die, leaving hillsides once covered in green avocado trees bare and eroding. The DEIR needs to discuss what could happen if, like avocados, cannabis is imported from outside the area where costs of production are lower and what impact this importation could have on disadvantaged communities. In addition, if cannabis is not a sustainable business in the future, what mitigation measures will be needed to revegetate open space and return lands back to their pre-cannabis use? The DEIR should look at funds to be set aside to pay for mitigation measures.

Comment 10: The DEIR should discuss a broader mechanism for equity including an alternative to letting everyone in the unincorporated area grow and consume their own limited production of cannabis. With grow lights, cannabis could be grown in any apartment just like any other house plant and one plant could be ample for a family to ingest. No sales would be allowed. This is especially helpful for those who rely on medical grade cannabis and would allow everyone equal access without the need of going to a dispensary or paying high retail costs that are difficult for some people to cover. It would create equity for all, eliminate illegal dispensaries, and the costs associated with regulation! If needed it could be regulated in the same manner as making home brewed beer!

Comment 11: Some websites list Cannabis as a stepping stone drug. Users start using it as a recreational drug and it then escalates to using harder, more addictive drugs. Several areas, such as Vista already have a high unhoused population with substance abuse issues. Vista's homeless are so numerous that Vista now needs to place some of them in the unincorporated County. Although homelessness is caused by many factors, one of the factors is drug use which can lead people to become unhoused. The DEIR needs to provide studies to show if there is any correlation between Cannabis use leading to the use of harder drugs and homelessness to ensure the County's cannabis policy, equitable or not, does not end up indirectly increasing the homeless or substance abuse problem in the unincorporated County. If it does, what mitigation measures can be used to offset the impacts to residents living in the unincorporated County?

Comment 12: The DEIR needs to be very detailed in how reporting, compliance monitoring, and enforcement will be addressed to ensure public safety. Will this be done by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department or Code Enforcement? Both agencies currently are underfunded and lack resources to deal with existing issues. The DEIR needs to show a nexus between Cannabis cultivation, distribution, and sales with compliance and enforcement or provide real world funded mitigation measures.

In Summation, we appreciate the Women's Work document. There needs to be equity to eliminate the injustice caused over many years. However, cannabis is not the genie inside a magic lamp. It cannot erase the prejudice and injustice to one group of people perpetrated by another group of people. It is just one plant and the problems of social injustice go much deeper. Each of us must all work to make a more inclusive, just, humane, and climate friendly world for all God's creatures.

This concludes are comments and questions currently. We may have additional ones and will provide those as soon as we have them. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Sandra Farrell, Chair

Twin Oaks Valley Community Sponsor Group