

## ORDINANCE NO. 4404

# AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF VENTURA REGARDING THE TIERRA REJADA GREENBELT

**Section 1. PURPOSE AND INTENT** -- The purpose of this Ordinance is to express the County of Ventura's commitment to agricultural and open space land conservation goals and policies contained in the Ventura County General Plan with a greenbelt program designed to protect unincorporated County agricultural and open space lands that are contiguous to the incorporated cities of Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley and Moorpark.

**Section 2. BOUNDARIES OF THE TIERRA REJADA GREENBELT** -- The Tierra Rejada Greenbelt is comprised of 2,331 acres of unincorporated County territory, and is located between the Cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks. The Tierra Rejada Greenbelt is shown on the attached Exhibit 1, which is incorporated herein by reference. As a general description, the Greenbelt's boundaries are as follows:

- On the west by the Arroyo Santa Rosa and the Las Posas Hills;
- On the north by Tierra Rejada Road, the Tierra Rejada Valley Watershed, and the Cities of Moorpark and Simi Valley;
- On the east by the City of Simi Valley; and
- On the south by the Cities of Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks.

**Section 3. NON-ANNEXATION AND NON-URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY** -- This ordinance manifests the County of Ventura's intent to maintain agricultural and open space uses within the Tierra Rejada Greenbelt. The City Council of the Cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, have agreed to a policy of non-urban development, non-annexation and the retention of agricultural and open space uses on the land within the Tierra Rejada Greenbelt.

**Section 4. FINDINGS** -- The Cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, and the Ventura County Board of Supervisors adoption of: 1) general plan policies and zoning regulations; 2) the Guidelines for Orderly Development; and 3) greenbelt programs, together with the County-administered Land Conservation Act (LCA) Program, has demonstrated a long term commitment to agricultural and open space land conservation. The Board hereby reaffirms the following findings:

1. Maintaining lands in agricultural and open space uses within the Greenbelt area is in the overall best interest of the Cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, the County of Ventura and the State;
2. The Greenbelt area is not currently served with sewers, water, or other municipal services from the cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley or Thousand Oaks;
3. California is losing farmland and natural open space at a rapid rate and some of Ventura County's most developable land is also its most productive agricultural land;

4. Acre-for-acre, Ventura County's agricultural lands are among the most productive in California, nearing three times the production level of the Statewide average;
5. Encroaching urban development poses a threat to the continued viability of Ventura County's open space lands, especially for parcels located adjacent to urban areas;
6. The protection and conservation of agricultural land, especially in areas that are presently farmed or feature *Prime* or *Statewide Importance* soils as defined by the Important Farmlands Inventory (IFI), represents a primary objective;
7. The continuation of agricultural operations and open space uses protects Ventura County's landscape and environmental resources;
8. Protecting open space, maintaining the integrity of separate distinct cities and preventing inappropriate urban development from locating between city boundaries represent important "quality of life" goals; and
9. The retention of open space lands protects scenic resources and natural habitats and provides opportunities for passive and active recreational activities, parks and trail systems.

**Section 5. DEFINITIONS** -- As used in this Greenbelt Ordinance, the following terms shall have the meanings set forth in this section:

**GENERAL PLAN** -- A long term plan for the physical development of a city or county and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning needs. The California Government Code requires that each planning agency prepare, and its legislative body adopt, seven mandatory elements of the *General Plan* (including Open Space and Conservation Elements). An Agriculture Element is optional.

**GREENBELT** -- An area consisting of irrigated agricultural land or other Important Farmlands Inventory (IFI) and/or designated open space lands as defined in Sections 56064 and 65560 of the Government Code.

**GUIDELINES FOR ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT (GUIDELINES)** -- The *Guidelines* provide that urban development should be located within incorporated cities whenever and wherever practical. All city councils within Ventura County, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) have adopted the *Guidelines*.

**IMPORTANT FARMLANDS INVENTORY (IFI)** -- The *IFI* are maps for California which are compiled from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil surveys and current land use information using eight mapping categories. Ventura County uses five of the eight IFI classifications including *Prime Farmland*, *Farmland of Statewide Importance*, *Unique Farmland*, *Farmland of Local Importance* and *Grazing Land*.

**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION (LAFCo)** -- County *LAFCo*'s are State-mandated agencies that are responsible for orderly growth, logical boundaries, efficient services and the preservation of agriculture and open space. *LAFCo*'s are required to guide urban development away from prime farmland and open space unless such actions would not promote planned, orderly and efficient development.

**MEASURE A** – An advisory measure, initiated by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in 1998, that recommended the County and the ten cities adopt by ordinance the six existing and five proposed Greenbelts, prohibit changes to the external growth boundaries unless approved by the voters and form an Agriculture/Open Space Conservation District. Sixty-eight percent of Ventura County's voters approved the measure.

**OPEN SPACE LANDS** -- Land or water area that either remains in its natural state or is used for agriculture or is otherwise essentially undeveloped as defined in 65560 of the Government Code.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE** – A committee consisting of one staff person from the City of Moorpark, the City of Simi Valley, the City of Thousand Oaks, the County of Ventura and LAFCo, appointed or otherwise authorized by the jurisdiction's decision-making body to meet and review proposed amendments to this Ordinance.

**SPHERES OF INFLUENCE** -- Plans adopted by a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) which designates the probable ultimate boundary of a city or special district.

**ZONING ORDINANCE** – The Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance is the principal tool in which the County General Plan and other policies are implemented. The Ordinance establishes building standards (height limits, lot coverage, setbacks, etc.) and allowable land uses.

**Section 6. PERMITTED USES** – The Ventura County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance shall control land uses within the Greenbelt.

1. The Greenbelt's General Plan designations include Agriculture and Open Space.
2. The Zoning Ordinance designations include *Agriculture-Exclusive (A-E)* and *Open Space (O-S)*.
3. Only permitted land uses that are consistent with these general plan and zoning ordinance designations, subject to permit conditions, use standards, performance standards and permit findings, will be permitted within the Greenbelt.

**Section 7. SPHERES OF INFLUENCE** -- The boundaries of this Greenbelt should be consistent with the Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks spheres of influence, where applicable. The coterminous greenbelt/sphere of influence boundary, consistent with LAFCo's policies and procedures, should serve as the limit for the extension of urban services and infrastructure.

Because spheres of influence represent the probable ultimate boundaries of incorporated cities, the Greenbelt should not extend into the sphere of influence of any of the three Cities until there is a comparable adjustment to the sphere of influence (urban growth boundary). If a future expansion or reduction of the spheres of influence is approved by the Ventura LAFCO, then the Greenbelt boundaries should be adjusted accordingly, so as to assure consistency. This ordinance does not establish any regulatory authority over spheres of influence or annexations.

**Section 8. AMENDMENT PROCEDURES** -- Proposals for amending the boundaries or features of the Greenbelt could be initiated by the Cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley and/or Thousand Oaks, or the County of Ventura. Proposed amendments shall be reviewed by an Administrative Review Committee, as defined in Section 5, prior to being considered by the City or County decision-making bodies.

Any changes to Exhibit "1" of this Greenbelt Ordinance (except changes to match LAFCo-approved sphere of influence revisions or expansion to the Greenbelt boundaries) shall require a super-majority vote of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. A super-majority vote is defined as a 4/5<sup>th</sup> vote of the Board of Supervisors.

**Section 9. LAFCO ACTION** – The Board of Supervisors, by this Greenbelt Ordinance, and the City Councils of the Cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks by separate resolution or ordinance, request that the Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) endorse and certify this Greenbelt Ordinance and each cities' corresponding Greenbelt resolution or ordinance and continue to take action consistent with the preservation of agricultural and open space land with the Greenbelt.

**Section 10. SEVERABILITY** -- If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this ordinance. The Ventura County Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have passed this ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases be declared invalid.

**Section 11. SUPERSEDE**-- This Greenbelt Ordinance shall supersede any previous Resolution adopted by the County with respect to the Tierra Rejada Greenbelt.

**Section 12. UNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS**

**Subsection A. Additional Goals**

The Cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks, and the County of Ventura recognize that land use decisions should balance many goals, including the provision of housing and urban services as well as the preservation and development of natural resources. To reach a balance among these goals, jurisdictions must consider the specific circumstances of each case.

The primary purpose of this Ordinance is to establish that within the boundaries of the Tierra Rejada Greenbelt, the goals of protection of agricultural land, the maintenance of a healthy agricultural economy and the preservation of open space land shall be of critical importance.

The above recognition is based on the Findings set forth in Section 4 of this Ordinance. In addition, it is in conformance with the purpose and goals of the Cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks General Plans, and the Ventura County General Plan.

**Subsection B. Land Use Issues of Concern**

When making land use decisions, the Ventura County Planning Director, the Ventura County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors shall give careful consideration to whether the proposed action would impair the open space values that this Greenbelt is designed to protect. Of particular concern is the use of night lighting within the Greenbelt. Night lighting, particularly unshielded, upward facing and/or high intensity lighting, compromises open space values in terms of visual impact and effect on animal mobility, among others.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 10<sup>TH</sup> day of NOVEMBER, 2009, by the following vote:

AYES:

Supervisors PARKS, LONG, FOY, ZAVAGLIA AND BENNETT

NOES:

NONE

ABSENT:

NONE

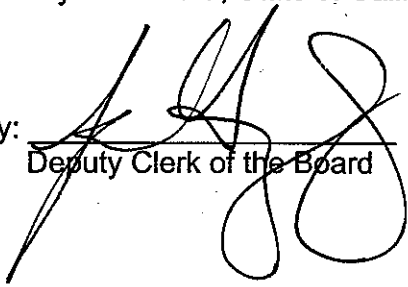
  
CHAIR, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ATTEST:

MARTY ROBINSON  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
County of Ventura, State of California



By:

  
Deputy Clerk of the Board

**Exhibit 1**  
**Tierra Rejada Greenbelt**

