



ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

P L A N N I N G D E P A R T M E N T

Sandra Rivera
Agency Director

Agenda Item 5 September 21, 2023

Albert Lopez
Planning Director

September 11, 2023

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Dear Board Members:

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**SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A REQUEST TO
THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO CHANGE
MAILING ADDRESS PLACE NAMES TO ALIGN WITH
PLANNING AREA NAMES AND BOUNDARIES**

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Adopt a Resolution authorizing the Community Development Agency to submit a request to the United States Postal Service (USPS) to change mailing address Place Names for unincorporated Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, Hayward Acres, and San Lorenzo to align with the Planning Area names and boundaries of those communities, as defined in the Alameda County General Plan; and
- B. Authorize the Community Development Agency Director, or designee, to sign any USPS documents related to this request.

BACKGROUND:

In the unincorporated Alameda County communities of Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, Hayward Acres, and San Lorenzo, Place Names and ZIP Codes assigned by USPS do not align with Planning Area community names or boundaries (see map in Attachment A).

“Planning Areas” are the official names and boundaries of the unincorporated communities, as defined in the County’s General Plan. USPS “Place Names” are USPS-assigned mailing address “city” names associated with local Post Office branches and mail delivery routes. There are four USPS Place Names in use in the urban unincorporated communities, associated with the four USPS branches serving the area: Castro Valley, Hayward, San Leandro, and San Lorenzo. USPS Place Names and ZIP Codes assigned by USPS to the urban unincorporated communities are listed below:

Planning Areas	USPS Place Name(s) and ZIP Code(s)
Ashland	Hayward (94541), San Leandro (94578), San Lorenzo (94580)
Castro Valley	Castro Valley (94546, 94552), Hayward (94542), San Leandro (94578)
Cherryland	Hayward (94541), San Lorenzo (94580)
Fairview	Castro Valley (94552), Hayward (94541, 94542)
Hayward Acres	Hayward (94541)
San Lorenzo	Hayward (94541), San Lorenzo (94580)

The inconsistency between Planning Area community names and USPS Place Names/ZIP Codes has unintended consequences for the unincorporated communities and the County, causing confusion, negatively impacting community identity, hindering data collection, and influencing resource allocation. ZIP Codes are used widely for geographic, economic, and demographic purposes. When ZIP Codes straddle jurisdictional boundaries, as in ZIP Codes 94578 and 94541, unincorporated community data collected based on ZIP Codes are obscured by city data, which has implications for resource allocation to these communities. Unincorporated USPS Place Names associated with neighboring cities can negatively impact unincorporated community identity by confusing residents about where they live, where they can access government and emergency services, and which local elected officials represent them.

In the urban unincorporated communities, 27,365 parcels are estimated to be impacted by inconsistent USPS Place Names. Each parcel may contain multiple addresses, and the number of affected addresses is expected to be closer to 75,000.

Recognizing the wide-reaching impacts of inconsistent USPS Place Names and ZIP Codes on the urban unincorporated communities, this issue arose as a key concern of the Eden Area Livability Initiative (EALI), a group launched by Supervisor Nate Miley to improve the quality of life and health of the residents of the Eden Area. In 2019, the EALI Phase II Governance Working Group began researching options and processes for changing USPS Place Names and/or ZIP Codes. In 2022, Supervisor Miley requested the Community Development Agency’s (CDA) assistance in moving the project forward.

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:

The County can request one of three changes from USPS. These three options are described below and compared in detail in the chart in Attachment B.

- Option 1: Place Name Change *Estimated cost without staff time: \$40,000*
 The unincorporated community Planning Area names would become the default USPS Place Names for each community. “Hayward” and “San Leandro” – city names – would no longer be default USPS Place Names in unincorporated Alameda County. ZIP Codes would not change, and residents would have the choice to continue to use an old Place Name, though it would be an alternate name and no longer be primary. Implementation timeline: 6 months +/- from County request.

- Option 2: Alternate Preferred Last Line *Estimated cost without staff time: \$30,000*
USPS would recognize the unincorporated community Planning Area names as optional alternatives to existing USPS Place Names. The default USPS Place Name and ZIP Code would not change. Implementation timeline: 1 month +/- from County request.
- Option 3: ZIP Code Boundary Realignment *Estimated cost without staff time: \$140,000*
The County could request to align ZIP Code boundaries and Place Names with unincorporated communities. For this option, USPS requires the County to send a survey to all impacted addresses. 50% of surveys must be returned, and 50% of returned surveys must support the change. Supportive survey responses do not guarantee approval, and USPS indicates that ZIP Code boundary realignments are rarely approved. Implementation timeline: 1 year or more from County request.

Approval process

This project involves the following steps:

1. Staff gathers community input and makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors
2. The Board of Supervisors approves a resolution directing staff to pursue one of the options
3. The County purchases a third-party mailing list that includes all impacted addresses
4. Staff analyzes mailing address data and makes a formal request to USPS with a complete list of addresses that will reflect the changes.
5. USPS reviews request, makes a determination, and implements approved changes

Outreach

The outreach process for this project involved the following:

- Staff established a website, an email listserv, and an online survey with information in English, Spanish and Chinese: www.acgov.org/cda/USPSproject
- Staff presented at the following meetings and gathered community input:
 - Board Unincorporated Services Committee, December 7, 2022
 - Castro Valley Eden Area Chamber of Commerce, January 25, 2023
 - Castro Valley MAC, February 21, 2023
 - Fairview MAC, March 7, 2023
 - Eden Area MAC, April 11, 2023

Transportation and Planning Committee

At its August 10, 2023, meeting, the Committee heard a presentation about the project and considered community input. The Committee unanimously recommended pursuing Option 1: Place Name Change and directed staff to schedule a hearing before the Board of Supervisors.

NEXT STEPS:

Upon adoption of the attached Resolution, the County will purchase a third-party mailing address list for the communities of Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, Hayward Acres, and San Lorenzo. CDA staff will analyze the address list and submit a formal Place Name change request to USPS. Once USPS approves the changes, CDA staff will work with District 4 staff to design an outreach campaign to inform community about the changes, including a mailing to all impacted addresses. Staff recommends that the Board adopt the resolution authorizing CDA to submit the described Place Name (Option 1) change request to USPS.

FINANCING:

Funding for this project is included in CDA's FY 2023-2024 Approved Budget. There is no increase in Net County Cost as a result of this action.

Very truly yours,

DocuSigned by:

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Sandra Rivera, Director
Community Development Agency

Attachments:

- A. Map of Planning Area Community Names and Boundaries with USPS Place Names and ZIP Codes
- B. "Frequently Asked Questions" chart comparing Options 1, 2, and 3

RESOLUTION NUMBER R-2023-_____

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO SUBMIT A REQUEST TO THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO CHANGE MAILING ADDRESS PLACE NAMES FOR UNINCORPORATED ASHLAND, CASTRO VALLEY, CHERRYLAND, FAIRVIEW, HAYWARD ACRES, AND SAN LORENZO TO ALIGN WITH PLANNING AREA NAMES AND BOUNDARIES, AS DEFINED IN THE ALAMEDA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

WHEREAS, a “Place Name” (also known as a “Preferred Last Line”) is the mailing address “city” name that the United States Postal Service (USPS) assigns by default to addresses in a ZIP Code based on the location of the USPS branch that delivers mail to that ZIP Code; and

WHEREAS, “Planning Areas” are the official names and boundaries of the unincorporated communities of Alameda County, as defined in the Alameda County General Plan; and

WHEREAS, Place Names assigned by the USPS do not accurately reflect Planning Area community names or boundaries in the unincorporated Alameda County communities of Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, Hayward Acres, and San Lorenzo; and

WHEREAS, Ashland addresses have USPS Place Names of Hayward (94541), San Leandro (94578, or San Lorenzo (94580); and

WHEREAS, Castro Valley addresses have USPS Place Names of Castro Valley (94546, 94552), Hayward (94542), or San Leandro (94578); and

WHEREAS, Cherryland addresses have USPS Place Names of Hayward (94541) or San Lorenzo (94580); and

WHEREAS, Fairview addresses have USPS Place Names of Castro Valley (94552) or Hayward (94541, 94542); and

WHEREAS, Hayward Acres addresses have a USPS Place Name of Hayward (94541); and

WHEREAS, San Lorenzo addresses have USPS Place Names of San Lorenzo (94580) or Hayward (94541); and

WHEREAS, the mismatch between USPS Place Names and Planning Area names causes confusion and negatively impacts unincorporated community identity by confusing residents about where they live, where they can access government and emergency services, and which local elected officials represent them; and

WHEREAS, approximately 27,365 parcels (or approximately 75,000 addresses) in the urban unincorporated communities are impacted by mismatched USPS Place Names; and

WHEREAS, the issue of mismatched unincorporated Place Names and Planning Areas and misaligned ZIP Codes arose as a key concern of the Eden Area Livability Initiative (EALI), a group launched by Supervisor Nate Miley to improve the quality of life and health of the residents of the Eden Area; and

WHEREAS, the EALI Phase II Governance Working Group began researching ZIP Code realignment options and processes in 2019; and

WHEREAS, in March of 2022, Supervisor Nate Miley requested the Community Development Agency's assistance with completing the project; and

WHEREAS, Community Development Agency staff learned from the USPS that the County could request one of three options from the USPS: Option 1, a Place Name (Preferred Last Line) Change; Option 2: an Alternative Preferred Last Line Change; and Option 3: a ZIP Code Boundary Realignment; and

WHEREAS, in Option 1: Place Name (Preferred Last Line) Change, the unincorporated community Planning Area names of Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, Hayward Acres, and San Lorenzo would become the default USPS Place Names for each community; and

WHEREAS, in Option 2: Alternate Preferred Last Line Change, the USPS would recognize the unincorporated community Planning Area names as optional alternatives to existing USPS Place Names; and

WHEREAS, in Option 3: ZIP Code Boundary Realignment, an option that the USPS has indicated it is unlikely to approve, the County could request to align ZIP Code boundaries and Place Names with unincorporated Planning Areas; and

WHEREAS, on December 7, 2022, Community Development Agency staff presented the three options as an informational item to the Board of Supervisors' Unincorporated Services Committee, and the Committee indicated initial support for Option 1: Place Name Change, directing Staff to gather information about estimated costs and present the options to the community for comment; and

WHEREAS, on January 25, 2023, Community Development Agency staff presented the three options as an informational item to the Castro Valley Eden Area Chamber of Commerce, which expressed general support for Option 1; and

WHEREAS, on February 21, 2023, Community Development Agency staff presented the three options as an informational item to the Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council, which expressed general support for Option 1 or Option 2; and

WHEREAS, on March 7, 2023, Community Development Agency staff presented the three options as an informational item to the Fairview Municipal Advisory Council, which expressed general support for Option 1 or Option 2; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2023, Community Development Agency staff presented the three options as an informational item to the Eden Area Municipal Advisory Council, which

expressed general support for pursuing Option 1 immediately while making preparations to pursue Option 3 in the near future; and

WHEREAS, Community Development Agency staff released a communitywide electronic survey from March to July, 2023, receiving 136 responses, 65 percent of which indicated Option 1 (Place Name Change) as their first choice; and

WHEREAS, on August 10, 2023, Community Development Agency staff presented the results of these community engagement efforts as an action item to the Board of Supervisors' Transportation and Planning Committee with a recommendation the County pursue Option 1 (Place Name Change) in the short term and consider pursuing Option 3 (ZIP Code Boundary Realignment) after there is time to assess the implementation of Option 1; and

WHEREAS, Board of Supervisors' Transportation and Planning Committee voted unanimously in favor of pursuing Option 1 (Place Name Change) and directed staff to schedule a hearing before the Board of Supervisors for approval; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors did hold a public hearing at 10:00 am on Thursday, September 21, 2023 in the Board of Supervisors' Chambers, Fifth Floor, 1221 Oak Street, Oakland, California, to consider the proposal and any objections thereto; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors did hear and consider all reports, recommendations, and testimony presented; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors does hereby authorize the Community Development Agency to submit a request to the United States Postal Service to change mailing address Place Names for unincorporated Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, Hayward Acres, and San Lorenzo to align with Planning Area names and boundaries, as defined in the Alameda County General Plan.

THE FOREGOING was **PASSED** and **ADOPTED** by a majority vote of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda this ____ day of _____, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

EXCUSED:

ABSTAIN:

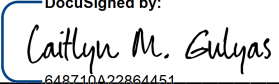
Nate Miley, President
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: _____

Deputy

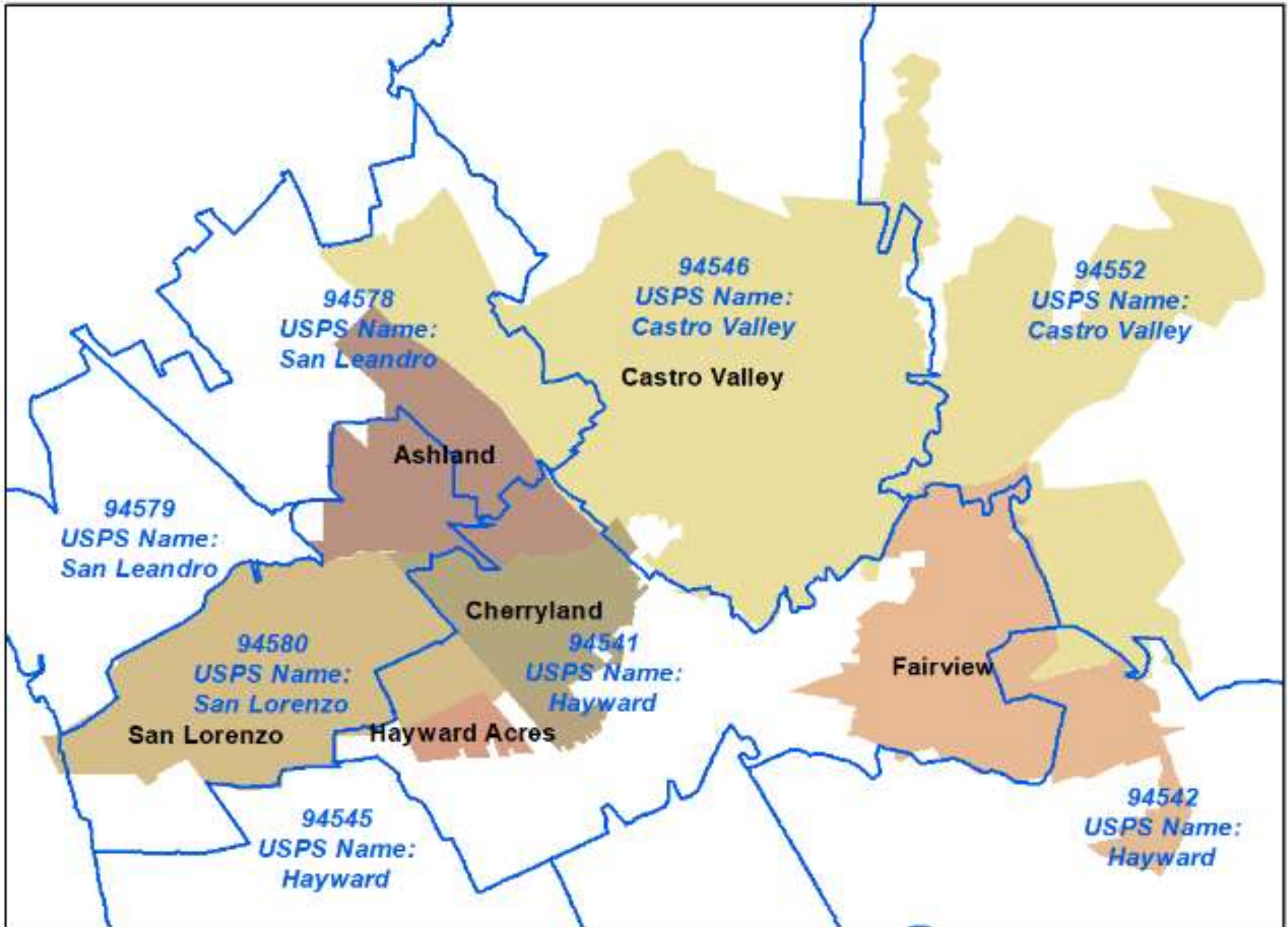
APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Donna R. Ziegler, County Counsel

By:  _____
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Caitlyn Gulyas
Deputy County Counsel

Attachment A

Map of Planning Area Community Names and Boundaries with USPS Place Names and ZIP Codes



ATTACHMENT B: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

USPS Mailing Addresses and Unincorporated Community Identity in Alameda County

FAQs:	<u>Option 1:</u> Place Name Change	<u>Option 2:</u> Alternate Preferred Last Line	<u>Option 3:</u> ZIP Code Boundary Review
How long will it take?	Approximately 6 months from time of request	Approximately 1 month from time of request	1 year or more from time of request
Will USPS approve it?	Very likely	Extremely likely	Very unlikely
Would it be the default on USPS.com?	Yes, unincorporated community names would become the default USPS Place Names	No, the default USPS Place Names would not change. San Leandro and Hayward would still be USPS Place Names in unincorporated	Yes, this change would become the default if approved
Would this change be optional for residents?	Yes. Residents can choose to use either the new or old Place Name as long as they use the correct street address and ZIP. Residents can continue to use old mailing labels.	Yes. Residents can use either the default or Alternate Place Name as long as they use the correct street address and ZIP. Residents can continue to use old mailing labels.	Not optional. Residents within a new ZIP boundary would need to use new ZIP code (and associated Place Name). Mailing labels with an old ZIP would need to be discarded.
Would it improve community identity or data collection?	This would help build community identity by aligning USPS Place Names with community names and boundaries	This is unlikely to improve unincorporated community identity because it does not remove City names as default Place Names	This would significantly improve unincorporated community identity, data collection, and resource allocation
Would it impact mail delivery?	No, mail delivery would not be impacted if correct ZIP is used	No, mail delivery would not be impacted if correct ZIP is used	Yes, mail delivery could be negatively impacted for a year or more
Are there other potential impacts of this change?	Possible improvements to data collection that uses Place Name (e.g., Census). Unknown impacts outside of County and USPS uses.	None anticipated.	Other impacts are possible impacts where ZIP is used (e.g. insurance rates, district boundaries, annexations)
What is the estimated cost to County (not including staff time)?	Total: \$40,000 Address list purchase: \$3000 - \$10,000 Mailing to inform addresses of change (optional): \$30,000	Total: \$30,000 Mailing to inform residents of change (optional): \$30,000	Total: \$140,000 Address list purchase: \$3000 - \$10,000 Survey mailing to all addresses: \$30,000 Door-to-door outreach: \$100,000 +