



City of Del Mar



February 4, 2010

Mr. Barry Nussbaum, President
22nd District Agricultural Association
2260 Jimmy Durante Boulevard
Del Mar, CA 92014-2216

Re: Letter of Comment on the Fairgrounds Master Plan and Draft EIR

Dear Mr. Nussbaum, et al,

The City of Del Mar is providing comments on the Fairgrounds Master Plan and associated Draft EIR. The attached comment letter is specifically in response to the Master Plan and Draft EIR documents prepared and released by the District this past October. The attached comment letter is simultaneously being submitted, as requested, to Dustin Fuller of the 22nd District Agricultural Association. As spokespeople for the City of Del Mar, and its citizens, the City Council provides policy and leadership in response to significant development proposals as are identified in the Master Plan and Draft EIR. As such, the City has deep concerns with the content of these documents.

While the letter focuses on those aspects of the Draft EIR that the City finds to be inadequate, I do want to acknowledge the Agricultural District for their environmental stewardship as it relates to their recycling program and use of solar panels; the replacement of the Fairgrounds sewer main under the San Dieguito Lagoon; and the installation of the horse-rack wash area to separate storm water from wash water. It is our hope that with more work, a new Draft EIR for the Master Plan will come to match these accomplishments.

Briefly, with regard to the Master Plan, we feel that the design and scope of the project would cause many adverse impacts, especially with respect to the three issues that are of paramount importance to Del Mar and its citizens: 1) health and safety; 2) preservation of the quality of life in this small, beach community; and 3) protection of the natural resources of the San Dieguito Lagoon and our fragile coastal environment.

With regard to the Draft EIR that accompanies the Master Plan, the City firmly believes that the information in the document is flawed and inadequate to assess or address significant environmental concerns. Based on these flaws, we believe the Draft EIR does not comply with the California Environmental Quality Act and that it must be redrafted and re-circulated for public review. These points are addressed in detail in the attached comment letter and in its Appendix.

Some of our concerns about the Draft EIR that are identified in the attached comment letter are as follows:

- Impacts on the flora and fauna of the San Dieguito Lagoon due to the size and proximity of proposed structures;



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- The proposal to pave over historic wetland areas;
- The increase in traffic on City streets without exploration of alternatives to minimize traffic increases and without appropriate or adequate mitigation;
- The siting of structures in flood-prone locations and the reliance on mitigation measures that may exacerbate flood conditions in other nearby areas (as seen this week with the heavy rains);
- The lack of adequate and complete mitigation for the Del Mar Fire Station;
- Use of an improper baseline against which the environmental impacts of the proposed expanded uses were measured;
- The lack of efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions;
- An inadequate analysis of water quality impacts; and
- The aesthetic impacts of the proposed [freeway] Reader Board sign

The City must also express its disappointment that many of the comments included in the attached letter are exactly the same as those included in previous correspondence sent by the City to the District over the past two decades. And yet those comments, suggestions, and concerns seem to have been ignored in the preparation of the Master Plan and Draft EIR. We urge the District to review our comments carefully and to consult with us in a thorough and comprehensive manner.

The Fairgrounds property, with its size, location, and resources, presents a wonderful opportunity for preparation of a Master Plan that meets the Agricultural District's mission while also protecting and enhancing the environment and character of the community. The City would like the chance to work with the District Board, its staff, and consultants on the preparation of such a plan. We believe that working together we can create a plan that is more appropriate for upgrading the Fairgrounds' facilities than what has been presented with the Draft EIR and that meets the vision of our Community Plan.

Sincerely,



Richard Earnest, Mayor
City of Del Mar

Attachment – Del Mar Comment Letter to DEIR without Appendix

cc: Board of Directors, 22nd District Agricultural Association [Transmittal Letter Only]
Tim Fennell, 22nd District Agricultural Association, CEO [Transmittal Letter Only]
Becky Bartling, 22nd District Agricultural Association, COO [Transmittal Letter Only]
Dustin Fuller, 22nd District Agricultural Association, Senior Environmental Planner
[Transmittal Letter, Del Mar Comment Letter to DEIR with Appendix]