



San Dieguito River Valley
Regional Open Space Park
18372 Sycamore Creek Road
Escondido, CA 92025
(858) 674-2270 Fax (858) 674-2280
www.sdrp.org

**JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Citizens Advisory Committee

Darlyn Davenport, Ex Officio
22nd District Agricultural Assoc.

Dick Bobertz
Executive Director

**AGENDA
SAN DIEGUITO RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL OPEN SPACE PARK
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

**9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Friday, October 15, 2004
County Administrative Center
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302/303
San Diego**

PLEASE NOTE: THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 9:00 A.M. TODAY, HALF AN HOUR EARLIER THAN USUAL. THE MEETING WILL START PROMPTLY AT THAT TIME.

Speaker slips will be available. Please fill out a slip and give it to the Chair prior to the meeting if you wish to speak to an item on the agenda. The Board may take action on any item listed on the Consent or Action agenda.

Introductions and Announcements.

Approval of the Minutes of September 17, 2004

Executive Directors Report

Public Comment

This portion of the agenda provides an opportunity for members of the public to address the Board on items of interest within the jurisdiction of the Board and not appearing on today's agenda. Comments relating to items on today's agenda are to be taken at the time the item is heard. Pursuant to the Brown Act, no action shall be taken by the Board on public comment items.

CONSENT

1. Amend Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans to Extend Time Period of Lake Hodges Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge Grant
2. Public Hearing to Approve Purchase of Habib Property at Revised Price of \$2,500,000
3. LOSSAN EIR Comments
4. El Camino Real Widening Phase Two Comments

5. County Trails Program Comments

INFORMATION

6. Jurisdictional Status Reports

An opportunity for the Board members to report on actions taken within their jurisdictions to further the park planning process, or problems which have arisen.

7. Communications

Adjournment

Chair

THE NEXT REGULAR JPA MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2004.

If you have any questions, please call Dick Bobertz at (858) 674-2270.

****Due to the high cost of printing and mailing the JPA and CAC agendas, the JPA has converted to an email distribution of both agendas. If you do not have an e-mail address, other arrangements will be made. Please advise the office at 858 674-2270. Full packets will continue to be mailed free of charge to JPA and CAC members upon request. For others, the cost of the full agenda, with backup material, is \$45 per year, and the cost of the agenda without backup material is \$10 per year.

The agenda and minutes are available at no cost on the San Dieguito River Park web site at www.sdrp.org.

**Agenda Item 1
October 15, 2004**

TO: JPA Board

FROM: Staff

SUBJECT: Amendment to Lake Hodges Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge Cooperative Agreement

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt attached resolution approving Amendment 2 to the Lake Hodges Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge Cooperative Agreement between the JPA and Caltrans.

On September 26, 2000, the JPA and Caltrans entered into a cooperative agreement that laid out a process for the expenditure of \$3,061,000 in state and federal grant funds for the design and construction of the Lake Hodges Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge.

The current agreement will expire on June 30, 2005. Because construction of the bridge is not expected to begin until Fall of 2005, it is necessary to extend the agreement. The attached resolution would authorize an extension to June 30, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan A. Carter
Deputy Director

Attachment:

1. Draft Resolution

RESOLUTION _____

**APPROVING AMENDMENT NO. 2 TO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT, DOCUMENT
NO. 014893, FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE LAKE HODGES
BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE**

WHEREAS, the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority and the California Department of Transportation entered into an agreement, Document No. 014893, District Agreement No. 11-4283, on September 26, 2000 that defined terms and conditions for the design and construction of the Lake Hodges Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge;

WHEREAS, that agreement specified a termination date of June 30, 2005;

WHEREAS, it has been determined that construction will not be completed prior to that termination date;

WHEREAS, it would be appropriate to extend the termination date to June 30, 2007;

THEREFORE NOW BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Directors of the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority approves Amendment No. 2 to said agreement and authorizes the Executive Director to execute said Amendment in order to extend the termination date.

Approved this 15th day of October, 2004 by the following vote:

AYES _____

NOES _____

ABSTAIN _____

ABSENT _____

Pam Slater-Price, Chair

Dick Bobertz, Executive Director

Agenda Item 2
October 15, 2004

TO: JPA Board
FROM: Staff
SUBJECT: Habib Purchase

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the attached resolution approving the purchase of the Habib parcels as described below and in the publication notice, and authorizing the Executive Director to execute all related documents to complete the transaction.

SITUATION:

A. Summary

At your October 17, 2003 meeting, your Board held an advertised public hearing to consider the approval of the purchase of the 387-acre Habib property in the unincorporated area of the County. At that meeting your Board approved the purchase price of \$2,320,000, and authorized the Executive Director to execute all related documents to complete the transaction.

That purchase has not yet closed escrow for two reasons. First, the Phase I environmental reconnaissance that The Trust for Public Land commissioned uncovered that there were significant hazardous materials on the property that had to be removed before the JPA could take title to the property. Second, the initial cost of \$2,320,000 was provided by the appraiser as the result of a preliminary appraisal. When the appraiser completed the final appraisal he updated the comparables and determined the actual appraised value to be \$2,500,000.

The cleanup of the hazardous materials is now complete. The seller is paying all of the hazardous materials clean-up costs, which amounted to approximately \$200,000.

Staff recommends that your Board increase the approved purchase price to \$2,500,000 per the certified appraisal. In order to take that action it was necessary to set a new hearing date and advertise it again pursuant to State law. At your September 17 meeting your Board directed staff to set a public hearing of October 15, and post the required advertisements in a general circulation newspaper, which was done.

- A. Citizens Advisory Committee Recommendation: This item has not been reviewed by the CAC.
- B. Issues: No issues have been identified.

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- C. Fiscal Impact Funding for this acquisition would come from the Proposition 13 River Parkway funds that were granted to the JPA by the Wildlife Conservation Board (\$1,500,000) and funds transferred to the JPA by the County of San Diego (\$1,000,000).

- D. Environmental Review: This action is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines: Transfer of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Open Space, Class 25, Section 21084:15325(a).

ALTERNATE ACTIONS

- 1. Approve Purchase of Habib Property at Revised Price of \$2,500,000
- 2. Do not approve the Habib acquisition at the increased price and give staff other direction.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the attached resolution approving the purchase of the Habib parcels as described below and in the publication notice, and authorizing the Executive Director to execute all related documents to complete the transaction.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Bobertz
Executive Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SAN DIEGUITO RIVER
VALLEY REGIONAL OPEN SPACE PARK JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF THE HABIB PROPERTY FOR PARK AND OPEN
SPACE PURPOSES**

WHEREAS, The San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park Joint Powers Authority (“JPA”) is empowered by its Joint Powers Agreement and by the State Joint Powers Law (Government Code Section 6500 et seq.) to acquire property to further its purposes; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition for park and open space purposes of certain real property consisting of 6 contiguous parcels (APN #s 246-030-07-00, 247-080-03-00, 247-140-01-00, 247-140-11-00, 247-140-18-00, 247-140-19-00) totaling approximately 387.37 acres that is currently owned by Dr. Jamal N. Habib (the "Property") is a high priority of the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA) because of the important wildlife and habitat resources on the property, and for watershed protection purposes; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Jamal Habib has offered to sell the Property for the appraised value of \$2,500,000, \$6,460 per acre; and

WHEREAS, the Property is within the JPA's Focused Planning Area, is a priority parcel for purchase as described in the JPA's Conceptual Area Protection Plan and would be a desirable addition to the River Valley Park; and

WHEREAS, the JPA received funds for the purchase of high priority parcels in the San Dieguito River Corridor, including \$1,500,000 in funds administered by the State Wildlife Conservation Board and \$1,000,000 from the County of San Diego;

WHEREAS, the Property proposed to be acquired is essential to the JPA’s park planning and implementation efforts; and

WHEREAS, The Trust for Public Land has been assisting the JPA by negotiating with Dr. Habib on the JPA’s behalf, and has secured an agreement for purchase of the Property at its appraised value, and is ready to transfer the Property to JPA in the same escrow as it would purchase the Property from Dr. Habib; and

WHEREAS, the Property has been appraised by a qualified appraiser; and

WHEREAS, this action is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines: Transfer of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Open Space, Class 25, Section 15325(a); and

WHEREAS, the JPA Board finds and determines that acquisition of the Property for its appraised value as set forth above is appropriate and in the public interest;

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NOW, THEREFORE, be it hereby resolved as follows:

1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct.
2. The Board of Directors of the San Dieguito River Park JPA hereby approves the purchase of said 387-acre Property at the price set forth above, subject to the following contingencies:
 - A. Receipt of funds from the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board in the amount of the Purchase Price;
 - B. Review and approval of a title report for the Property;
 - C. Physical inspection of the Property and/or investigation by JPA that reveals no unacceptable hazardous waste or other harmful materials; and
 - D. Additional contingencies or assurances as the Executive Director, in consultation with JPA's counsel, may deem reasonably necessary and appropriate in the interest of the JPA prior to acquisition.
3. The Board of the JPA recommends to the State of California that it expeditiously comply with all administrative requirements of the grants and fund the purchase, recognizing the importance of this acquisition and that time is of the essence.
4. The Board of the JPA authorizes its Executive Director, Dick Bobertz, to enter into escrow on behalf of the JPA and fully empowers Dick Bobertz as its agent to take any and all such further actions, including the execution of a purchase agreement and approval of further documents, which may be required to carry out the escrow without the need for further approval of this Board. It is the express intent of this Board in adopting this Resolution that no further action of this Board is required and that the JPA's Executive Director is fully authorized to implement complete purchase of the Property in conformance with its terms of this Resolution.

Passed and Adopted this Fifteenth Day of October, 2004 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Pam Slater-Price, Chair

ATTEST: Jan Lines, Clerk

TO: JPA Board
FROM: Staff
SUBJECT: LOSSAN EIR/EIS

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to send the attached comment letter in response to the LOSSAN EIR/EIS.

SITUATION:

A. Background

An electric-powered high speed rail (HSR) system is being proposed in California from Sacramento to San Diego. A general-level Program EIR/EIS was considered by your Board at the June 18, 2004 meeting and a comment letter was sent (Attachment 1). The LOSSAN project is the segment that is proposed along the coast of San Diego. A program-level Draft EIR/EIS has now been released for the LOSSAN project. The public comment period ends on October 27, 2004. A draft comment letter in response to the LOSSAN EIR/EIS is attached (Attachment 2).

B. Issues

The LOSSAN EIR/EIS evaluates two alternative coastal alignments through the San Dieguito River Park FPA in Del Mar, one is the Camino Del Mar Tunnel Alignment and the other is the I-5/Penasquitos Lagoon Bypass Alignment (Attachment 3). The tunnel alternative would double track the existing rail alignment across the San Dieguito Lagoon and then tunnel under Camino del Mar through Del Mar reconnecting to the existing rail alignment south of Del Mar. The existing track along the Del Mar bluffs would be removed. The I-5/Penasquitos Bypass alternative involves a new double-track rail alignment that would cross the San Dieguito River/Lagoon and follow the southern slopes of the lagoon with an elevated rail line to I-5 (Attachment 3). This alignment would bypass the Penasquitos Lagoon via I-5 but would put a new double-tracked rail alignment along the San Dieguito Lagoon.

The issues of concern for the LOSSAN project are addressed in the attached letter (Attachment 2). As addressed in the letter, no specifics are available on project details such as double tracking, specifics on the proposed alignments, even conceptual designs for elevated tracks along the southern bluffs of the lagoon, the exact location of a tunnel, construction details, or detailed environmental evaluations. It is of concern that the project proponents would be selecting an alignment affecting the coastal lagoons without these project-level details. The letter requests that a project-specific environmental document be prepared for each alternative alignment so that environmental and community impacts are publicly disclosed and evaluated.

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CAC RECOMMENDATION

The CAC reviewed the LOSSAN project and the draft letter at their October 1, 2004 meeting. They recommended that language be added to the letter requesting that the EIR/EIS also address other forms of transit technologies that may provide a solution to impacting the lagoons. This suggestion has been incorporated into Attachment 2. The CAC voted unanimously to recommend that the JPA Board send a comment letter in response to the LOSSAN EIR/EIS.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Direct staff to send the attached comment letter in response to the LOSSAN EIR/EIS.
2. Provide direction on additional issues/items to include in a letter.
3. Give staff other direction.

RECOMMENDATION

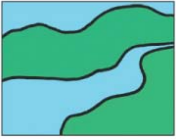
Direct staff to send the attached comment letter in response to the LOSSAN EIR/EIS.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawna Anderson
Principal Environmental Planner

Attachments:

1. JPA Comment Letter on California High Speed Rail EIR/EIS
2. Draft LOSSAN EIR/EIS Comment Letter
3. LOSSAN Alignments



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Agenda Item 3 October 15, 2004 ATTACHMENT 1

JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair Pam Slater-Price
Supervisor, County of San Diego

Vice-Chair Scott Peters
San Diego City Council

Jerry Finnell
Del Mar City Council

Ed Gallo
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Betty Rexford
Poway City Council

Tom Golich
Solana Beach City Council

Brian Maienschein
San Diego City Council

Dianne Jacob
Supervisor, County of San Diego

Dr. Philip Pryde
Citizens Advisory Committee

Darlyn Davenport, Ex Officio
22nd District Agricultural Assoc.

Dick Bobertz
Executive Director

June 28, 2004

Attn: California High Speed Train
Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Comments on HSR EIR/EIS

To California High Speed Rail Authority:

Thank you for providing the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority an opportunity to comment on the California High Speed Rail (HSR) EIR/EIS. The JPA considered the HSR EIR/EIS at their June 18, 2004 meeting. The San Dieguito River Park is a 55-mile long regional open space corridor that extends from the ocean in Del Mar to Volcan Mountain near Julian. The JPA is the designated park planning agency for the San Dieguito River Park. The proposed HSR project would cross the San Dieguito Lagoon, the centerpiece and gateway to the San Dieguito River Park in Del Mar, thus the JPA is extremely concerned about this project. The JPA's comments focus on the proposed LOSSAN extension into San Diego. Specifically, our comments are:

- The limited number of alternative alignments along the LOSSAN coastal route is inadequate given the sensitive nature of this area. Limiting the alignments to just two does not provide adequate public exploration and investigation into the alignment options that may be available. The EIR/EIS does not provide adequate public disclosure on alternatives that avoid impacts to the San Dieguito Lagoon. The EIR/EIS should include an alternative that follows I-5 and bypasses both the San Dieguito and Los Penasquitos lagoons to avoid further harm and rather promote enhancement of two of San Diego's most precious resources, its coastal lagoons.
- The I-5/Penasquitos Bypass alternative is unacceptable as proposed and would bring irreversible harm to the San Dieguito Lagoon. Although this alternative would avoid the Penasquitos Lagoon it would be at the expense of the San Dieguito Lagoon. The I-5/Penasquitos Bypass alternative would put double-tracked rails along the entire southern slopes that define the edge of the San Dieguito Lagoon. Significant impacts to the San Dieguito Lagoon and Los Penasquitos Lagoon would include habitat destruction, visual blight, noise, and wildlife movement, and would

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substantially increase rail traffic along the entire southern slopes of the San Dieguito Lagoon. The lagoon will be undergoing a \$50-\$100 million wetland restoration by Southern California Edison and the JPA starting in 2005 as mitigation for SCE's San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant. The proposed HSR line would pose a significant threat to the success of this restoration effort. The EIR/EIS should evaluate the proposed project in the context of this restoration project.

- The existing rail crossing should not be increased in size if it would further block tidal flushing and increase noise, pollution, habitat destruction, and visual impacts to this sensitive resource.
- Because the San Dieguito River Park is a regional open space and recreational public preserve, all impacts under 4(f) must be fully mitigated.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the EIR/EIS and we hope that our suggestions are incorporated into a new draft document that will be recirculated for additional public review and debate. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Pam Slater-Price, County Supervisor
JPA Board Chair

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ATTACHMENT 2

****DRAFT****

October __, 2004

Patrick Merrill
Manager, Capitol Projects, South
Division of Rail
California Department of Transportation
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Comments on LOSSAN Draft Program EIR/EIS

Dear Mr. Merrill:

Thank you for providing the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority an opportunity to comment on the LOSSAN Draft Program EIR/EIS. The JPA considered the LOSSAN project at their October 15, 2004 meeting. The San Dieguito River Park is a 55-mile long regional open space corridor that extends from the ocean in Del Mar to Volcan Mountain near Julian. The JPA is the designated park planning agency for the San Dieguito River Park. The proposed LOSSAN project represents a serious threat to the centerpiece and gateway to the San Dieguito River Park in Del Mar, the San Dieguito Lagoon, thus the JPA is extremely concerned about this project. Specifically, our comments are:

1. The limited number of alternative alignments presented in the Draft EIR/EIS is inadequate given the sensitive nature of Del Mar's coastal area. Limiting the alignments to the "I-5 Tunnel" and "Camino Del Mar Tunnel" does not provide adequate public exploration and investigation into the alignment options that may be available. The two choices evaluated in the EIR/EIS only exchanges impacts from one lagoon to the other. For example, why wasn't there consideration of an alignment south of Del Mar that follows Carmel Valley Road instead of through Penasquitos Lagoon?
2. The JPA strongly urges the Department of Transportation and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to produce a project-specific EIR that addresses project level design details and environmental impacts associated with each alternative alignment in this critical lagoon corridor. Without project-specific information an educated analysis cannot be made. No specifics are provided on project details such as double tracking, exact alignment routes, even conceptual designs for elevated tracks along the southern bluffs of the lagoon, the exact location of a tunnel, construction details, or detailed environmental evaluations. The JPA urges the California Department of Transportation and FRA not to base a decision on such a critical matter as a high speed rail alignment that could severely impact the San Dieguito Lagoon on the vague information included in this Program Draft EIR/EIS. If an alignment is selected now and a more detailed project-

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level EIR/EIS is later prepared for only one alignment it will be too late to consider another alternative.

3. The Program EIR/EIS should address other technological alternatives to high speed rail. Other transit technologies may provide a feasible solution that avoids impacts to our coastal lagoons.
4. Although the JPA would urge the Department of Transportation and FRA to seriously consider an alignment along I-5 that avoids both the San Dieguito and Los Penasquitos lagoons, we strongly oppose the "I-5 Tunnel" alternative presented in the EIR/EIS because it would introduce a new double-tracked rail line along the entire southern bluffs that define the edge of the San Dieguito Lagoon. The I-5 Tunnel alternative is unacceptable as proposed and would bring irreversible harm to the San Dieguito Lagoon. Although this alternative would avoid the Penasquitos Lagoon it would be at the expense of the San Dieguito Lagoon. The San Dieguito Lagoon is undergoing a \$60 million wetland restoration by Southern California Edison and the JPA as mitigation for SCE's San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. The proposed I-5 Tunnel alignment would pose a significant threat to the success of this restoration effort. The EIR/EIS should evaluate the proposed project in the context of the JPA's restoration project.
5. The project descriptions and figures in the EIR/EIS are misleading and do not clearly portray the proposed rail alignments. For example, labeling the alignment through the San Dieguito Lagoon as the "I-5 Tunnel" implies that the tracks would be in a tunnel the entire distance. In fact, it appears that the tracks are proposed to be elevated or at grade (cut and fill) along the San Dieguito Lagoon bluffs. The description of the I-5 Tunnel alternative in Section 2.5 does not clearly state that the alignment would entail double tracks along the southern bluffs of the San Dieguito Lagoon. It only states on page 2.0-53 "tracks would reconnect with the existing LOSSAN rail corridor at-grade near the Del Mar race track" without specifying what this "reconnection" would entail.
6. Because the EIR/EIS fails to fully disclose the environmental impacts associated with the two Del Mar alternatives, it requires that the Department of Transportation and FRA select an alignment without being fully informed on all the environmental issues and mitigation that might be involved. Even removing or rebuilding the existing lagoon crossings apparently is not part of the proposed project according to the EIR/EIS (page 3.7-21, first bullet). More detailed design information for each alignment should be available to the decision makers and public before an alignment is selected.
7. It appears that the I-5 Tunnel crossing over the San Dieguito River would be longer than the existing rail crossing. More detail should be provided in the EIR/EIS to more fully describe the project so that impacts can be more accurately evaluated and disclosed.

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8. No supporting evidence exists in the Draft EIR/EIS for the statement on page S-24 that “design options could provide a net environmental benefit over the existing conditions”. Although removing the existing tracks along the Del Mar bluffs would be beneficial, the impacts associated with double tracking, adding several hundred feet of new rail line, and introducing high speed rail along this sensitive coastal corridor may greatly outweigh that benefit. Removing or rebuilding existing lagoon crossings is not even part of the proposed project according to page 3.7-21, first bullet, so this should not be included as a benefit.
9. Page 3.7-18 under “Del Mar” should specifically call out the San Dieguito Lagoon as the predominant land feature in this area.
10. The JPA Board disagrees with the conclusion reached in the Draft EIR/EIS that the visual impacts from the I-5 Tunnel alternative would be “medium”. The I-5 Tunnel alternative meets the criteria listed on page 3.7-2 for a high visual impact because introducing an elevated double rail structure feature would be obvious and dominate the landscape of this scenic area.
11. The JPA Board disagrees that constructing a well-designed elevated structure would mitigate for the visual impacts that would occur with the I-5 Tunnel option as stated on page 3.7-20. Impacts would be unmitigable because it would be introducing a major urban transportation facility in an otherwise natural setting. The Draft EIR/EIS fails to define a “well-designed” elevated structure.
12. The statement on page 3.12-20 regarding improved water quality is subjective and speculative.
13. The analysis on page 3.12-20 fails to identify the potential impacts associated with the portion of the I-5 Tunnel along the southern San Dieguito lagoon bluffs that could cause erosion and sedimentation into the lagoon.
14. We agree with the statement in the Draft EIR/EIS that “the Camino del Mar tunnel would likely have fewer potential impacts on biological resources associated with the lagoons” because it “would not introduce new structures to the southern edge of San Dieguito Lagoon” (page 3.13-28).

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the EIR/EIS. We urge you to seriously consider the detrimental impacts that the LOSSAN project could have on our region’s natural assets. We hope that you will work with the JPA and avoid all impacts to the San Dieguito Lagoon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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ATTACHMENT 2

Pam Slater-Price, County Supervisor
JPA Board Chair

Cc: David Valenstein, FRA
San Diego City Councilmember Scott Peters, District 1
Senator Dede Alpert
Assemblymember Christine Kehoe
Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham
Joe Kellejian, Mayor, Solana Beach
Richard Earnest, Mayor, Del Mar

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**Agenda Item 4
October 15, 2004**

TO: JPA Board
FROM: Staff
SUBJECT: El Camino Real Widening Issues

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to send the attached comment letter in response to the El Camino Real Widening Project.

SITUATION:

Several projects are currently being processed through the City of San Diego in the vicinity of the JPA's wetland restoration project. The City of San Diego plans to widen El Camino Real from Derby Downs Road to Via de la Valle. The project is divided into two projects: Phase 1, from Via de la Valle to San Dieguito Drive and includes replacing the El Camino Real Bridge over the San Dieguito River, and Phase 2, from San Dieguito Drive to Derby Downs Road (Attachment 1 map). Phase 1 is a City project funded by a federal grant. Phase 2 is funded through a Black Mountain Ranch housing developer (Western Pacific Housing) as mitigation and is currently being processed through the City for a Site Development Permit (SDP). In addition, the City is also processing a separate project for the widening of Via de la Valle and a proposed housing project called Rancho Valley Farms on the Boudreau property (east of El Camino Real, Attachment 1).

ISSUES:

There are several issues detailed in the draft letter (Attachment 2) that have not been resolved thus far including the lack of comprehensive coordination among the three road widening projects and consideration of the river valley's character. In response to the site development permit application for the widening of El Camino Real, JPA staff sent a letter to the City detailing concerns about the project (Attachment 3). In addition, JPA staff and members of the CAC's Project Review Committee (PRC) and Carmel Valley Planning Group met with City staff on November 6, 2003 to discuss issues raised in the letter (Attachment 4). City planning staff has also provided input to the site development permit process regarding pedestrian design along El Camino Real. However, none of the issues has been resolved and City engineering has not been supportive of trails along the roadways.

The issues detailed in Attachment 2 include:

- Trail connection from Pacific Highlands Ranch (a neighborhood of Black Mountain Ranch) to the future Coast to Crest Trail. This would connect the Coast to Crest Trail to the Trans County Trail and Penasquitos Preserve through Black Mountain Ranch and Carmel Valley (Attachment 1 map).

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- Design of a wildlife crossing under El Camino Real to preserve the wildlife corridor between Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River Valley (Attachment 1 map).
- Preserve community character and aesthetics by designing the roadway to be rural in character compatible with the surrounding setting and sensitive to its location in the San Dieguito River Valley in compliance with the City's North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan.

CAC RECOMMENDATION:

The CAC considered the issues detailed in this staff report and draft letter at their October 1, 2004 meeting and voted unanimously to recommend that the JPA Board send a letter to the City. The CAC's comments have been incorporated into the draft letter.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Direct staff to send the attached comment letter.
2. Provide direction on additional issues/items to include in a letter.
3. Give staff other direction.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawna Anderson
Principal Environmental Planner

Attachments:

1. Location Map
2. Draft JPA Comment Letter
3. El Camino Real JPA Staff Comment Letter, 9/17/03
4. Meeting minutes from 11/06/03 meeting.

LOCATION MAP



Agenda Item 4
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ATTACHMENT 2

****DRAFT****

October __, 2004

Mr. John Fisher
City of San Diego
Development Services Department
1222 First Avenue, MS 302
San Diego, CA 92101

Subject: El Camino Real Street Widening/PTS. No. 9960

Dear Mr. Fisher:

It has been brought to the attention of the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Board of Directors that several projects in the San Dieguito lagoon area are currently being processed through the City of San Diego. These projects warrant special attention to ensure that they are planned and implemented in a coordinated manner that respects the unique character of the San Dieguito River valley and meets the requirements of the North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan and MSCP.

The three roadway projects of concern are:

- El Camino Real Street/Bridge Widening (City Engineering)
- El Camino Real Street Widening Phase 2 (PTS No. 9960)
- Via de la Valle street widening

In addition, the following development projects have been approved or are being considered by the City that front along El Camino Real:

- Rancho Valley Farms development (PTS No. 5029)
- Evangelical Formosan Church project on El Camino Real

The San Dieguito River Park JPA and Southern California Edison will begin implementation of the San Dieguito Lagoon Wetland Restoration Project in Spring 2005. This project will entail the restoration of 350 acres of wetland and upland habitat. In addition, the JPA recently purchased a 75-acre parcel (formerly owned by Boudreau) on the west side of El Camino Real just south of Horse Park and the San Dieguito River. This area will be restored and integrated into the lagoon restoration project.

The above projects are located in a particularly sensitive setting and must take into consideration the context in which they are located. The JPA is concerned that the roadway widening and development projects are being planned/processed in a disjointed manner without coordination

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and comprehensive review. JPA staff has been following these projects and has sent comment letters (attached); however, it appears that several different City departments and staff members are processing these projects. JPA staff have also met with members of City staff including Bernie Turgeon of the Planning Department and Rick Thompson, the City's new trails coordinator.

Specifically, the JPA is urging that the City take a comprehensive approach to the following issues related to these projects:

- A coordinated trails system that connects the trail easement on Pacific Highlands Ranch to a trail/pathway up to the Coast to Crest Trail. This trail would connect the Coast to Crest Trail to the Trans County Trail and requires crossing Old El Camino Real and El Camino Real.
- A wildlife undercrossing is planned under El Camino Real as per the NCFUA Framework Plan and MSCP. This crossing needs to be designed along with the roadway widening and could accommodate trail users too if designed properly. The JPA is concerned that plans have not been submitted that comply with the requirement for a wildlife crossing here that preserves a wildlife corridor through Gonzales Canyon to the San Dieguito River.
- The NCFUA Framework Plan and the City's street design manual provides policies and standards for rural treatment of community facilities such as El Camino Real. The road widening should reflect the historic rural character of the area particularly as it descends into the river valley. The JPA strongly supports the City Planning Department staff's recommendations for native-landscaped parkways with d.g.-surfaced pathways along El Camino Real instead of concrete sidewalks. We strongly oppose traditional concrete sidewalks and asphalt or stamped concrete medians in this area, which would visually detract from the river valley setting. Pathways should be provided on both sides of El Camino Real to ensure connecting trails to the regional trails in this area. We understand that right-of-way is constrained along El Camino Real; however, the right-of-way on the west side of El Camino Real is publicly-owned (JPA and City Parks and Recreation) providing an opportunity to work together to provide a trail on the west side as well as the east side of the road. Other recommendations:
 - Pathways should be 8 feet wide to accommodate pedestrians and equestrians and be surfaced with d.g. mixed with a polymer binder for stability and to meet ADA requirements. Equestrians are an important user because of the high number of equestrian facilities in the area and the connection to other equestrian trails. It is assumed that bicyclists would use the bike lane.
 - Parkway should be planted with low-growing native plants that will minimize maintenance requirements and will not block views into the river valley and

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- lagoon. El Camino Real has high vehicular use and a landscaped buffer between the road and pathway is necessary to provide a safe and desirable trail experience.
- We would like to see a curb cut planned along the west side of El Camino Real to accommodate an entrance to the Mesa Loop Trail and staging area planned as part of the San Dieguito River Park's Coastal Park Master Plan.

We have been informed that the City will not maintain landscaped parkways in this area. We understand that the City has budget constraints but the parkway design we are proposing requires little maintenance. In addition the City and JPA has already made an investment in this area to preserve the river valley character, and it is important that the streetscape not detract from the visual setting. We feel that funding methods can be identified to maintain the parkways considering that private projects are being planned in this area and that the parkways can be designed with low maintenance costs in mind.

We look forward to working with the City on these issues and hope that you will facilitate a coordinated effort on these important projects to ensure that they are planned and implemented comprehensively.

Sincerely,

Pam Slater-Price, County Supervisor
JPA Board Chair

Cc: Councilmember Scott Peters, District 1
Bernie Turgeon, City Planning Department



San Dieguito River Valley
Regional Open Space Park
18372 Sycamore Creek Road
Escondido, CA 92025
(858) 674-2270 Fax (858) 674-2280
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September 17, 2003

Mr. John Fisher
City of San Diego
Development Services Department
1222 First Avenue, MS 302
San Diego, CA 92101

Subject: El Camino Real Street Widening/PTS. No. 9960

Dear Mr. Fisher:

The San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA) staff and Project Review Committee (PRC) have reviewed the proposed project plans to widen El Camino Real from San Dieguito Road to Half-Mile Drive. The proposed project is located in the San Dieguito River Park Focused Planning Area (FPA) and borders the eastern edge of the proposed San Dieguito Lagoon Wetland Restoration Project. This letter provides City staff with preliminary comments regarding the proposed project based on "Preliminary Site Development Permit" plans dated 7/9/03 received from the City.

The JPA staff has been successfully working with City Engineering staff on the other phase of El Camino Real widening that is from Via de la Valle to San Dieguito Road. The subject project should be carefully coordinated with the other phase of El Camino Real as well as with the proposed Rancho Valley Farms development recently submitted by Pardee Development. All three separate projects are interrelated and should be coordinated together to avoid significant impacts to the critical wildlife corridor (Gonzales Canyon), MHPA function, the planned regional trail system through this area, and community character. These regional issues are critical to the viability of the San Dieguito River Park in the western river valley.

Specifically, the project issues we have identified thus far are explained below and include:

- The need to incorporate regional trail connections into the project
- The requirement for a wildlife crossing under El Camino Real from Gonzales Canyon
- The project should be designed to be compatible with the river valley and historic agricultural character of the area.

TRAIL CONNECTIONS

There are existing and planned regional and community trails in the surrounding area that must not be severed by the widening of El Camino Real. The San Dieguito River Park

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Coast to Crest Trail is planned along the San Dieguito River both east and west of El Camino Real. This regional trail corridor will extend from the ocean 55 miles to Volcan Mountain in the east. The multi-purpose trail (for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians) would travel in an east/west direction from the lagoon and would follow the San Dieguito River along the 22nd Agricultural District's Horse Park facility and continue eastward crossing underneath the north abutment of the El Camino Real bridge. JPA staff has been working with the City of San Diego engineering staff to ensure that the El Camino Real bridge widening project accommodates the Coast to Crest Trail. However, regional trail connections to the Coast to Crest Trail could be compromised if the widening of El Camino Real is not planned to accommodate these trails.

The Pacific Highlands Ranch Specific Plan includes a network of multi-purpose trails. One of these trails travels through Gonzales Canyon to Penasquitos Canyon Preserve and connects to the Trans-County Trail, another regional east/west trail corridor, to the south. The trail's northern terminus is currently just east of Old El Camino Real, but the trail is planned to be extended to the west to connect to the Coast to Crest Trail as this portion of the NCFUA is developed. The trail connection from Pacific Highlands Ranch must be continued to the Coast to Crest Trail. The connector trail would connect regional trails from Black Mountain and Penasquitos Preserve through Black Mountain Ranch and Carmel Valley to the Coast to Crest Trail. This trail connection would also link the 55-mile long Coast to Crest Trail to the 115-mile long Trans-County Trail, both regional trail corridors included in the California State Recreational Trails Plan (2002). Both trails will also eventually link to the State Coastal Rail Trail along the Pacific Ocean and the Pacific Crest Trail through the mountains. The trail connection would cross Old El Camino Real and then must safely cross El Camino Real either by improving the existing box culvert or by some other means to accommodate the trail. Once across El Camino Real, the trail would follow in the right-of-way of El Camino Real, cross the El Camino Real bridge, and connect to the Coast to Crest Trail on the north side of the river.

As part of the lagoon restoration plan, the San Dieguito River Park also proposes a viewing trail called the Mesa Loop Trail just west of El Camino Real across from the Stallions Crossing residential project (on the east side of the roadway). We request that the roadway widening project accommodate a vehicular entrance to the Mesa Loop Trail head from El Camino Real.

WILDLIFE CROSSING

This area provides the last opportunity to preserve a critical wildlife corridor between Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River Valley, a linkage that is identified in the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). El Camino Real presents a challenge to the corridor's function as an impediment to safe wildlife passage. The MSCP recognized this issue and, thus, the City's Subarea Plan requires a "large culvert or bridge undercrossing for wildlife movement where El Camino Real crosses the outlet of Gonzales Canyon into the San Dieguito River" (C15, page 26). The development agreement for Pacific Highlands Ranch required monetary contributions to this wildlife crossing across El Camino Real. The El Camino Real project must include improvement plans for this crossing. The current plans propose only to widen the road across the existing triple-box culvert with no attention given to the crossing. The culvert appears inadequate for a wildlife crossing and does not meet the City's MSCP standards for a wildlife crossing. The El Camino Real Biological Technical Report (RECON, July 31, 2003) mentions the existing culvert, but does not comment on its current function as a wildlife crossing nor on its

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viability as a wildlife crossing once the roadway is widened. The report should include detailed information on the current condition of the culvert as a wildlife crossing (such as data on its use by wildlife), include a comparison of other successful crossings in the County, and an assessment on whether the culvert would provide a safe useable crossing for wildlife once the roadway is widened. The report should document the types of wildlife that currently use the culvert, the number of road kills, and include alternative designs for a crossing such as a bridge undercrossing. The approaches to the crossing should also be examined and designed to provide adequate vegetative cover for wildlife that use the crossing. The wildlife crossing designs should also incorporate a trail crossing under El Camino Real.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND AESTHETICS

The NCFUA Framework Plan provides policies and standards for rural treatment of community facilities such as El Camino Real. The road widening should reflect the historic agricultural character of the area particularly as it descends into the river valley.

Street design should be more rural in character. Both the roadway and proposed 14-foot wide concrete median should be reduced in width to minimize the hard surface and intrusion into the river valley landscape. Contiguous concrete sidewalks and standard streetlights are not compatible with the surrounding rural/agricultural setting or the NCFUA Environmental Tier/MHPA. Those elements shown on the plans should be redesigned to incorporate the trail connections discussed above. The wide median and 5-foot wide sidewalk could be eliminated or reduced and replaced by a non-contiguous meandering decomposed granite path or “enhanced pedestrian” facility (i.e., a trail as discussed above). The Framework Plan and City’s street design manual support rural design treatments in this area. Please also refer to my comment letter to you dated May 9, 2003 regarding the proposed Rancho Valley Farms project.

We look forward to a continuing dialogue with the City on this project and would like to participate in the project design process to address these issues. I would also like to receive a copy of the City’s assessment letter for this project and all environmental reports as they become available. The project will also be reviewed by the San Dieguito River Park Citizens Advisory Committee and the JPA Board of Directors will take action on the project once the final plans and environmental study are available. Please feel free to call me anytime or email me at shawna@sdrp.org. Thank you for providing the San Dieguito River Park with an opportunity to comment on this important project.

Sincerely,

Shawna C. Anderson, AICP
Environmental Planner

Cc: K.C. Strang, Council District 1
Bernie Turgeon, City of San Diego Planning Dept.
Jan Fuchs, PRC Chair
Craig Kahlen, Rick Engineering

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MEETING MINUTES
EL CAMINO REAL WIDENING PROJECT – WILDLIFE CROSSING
NOVEMBER 6, 2003, CITY HALL

ATTENDEES:

John Fisher, City Development Services Dept.
Bernie Turgeon, City Planning Dept.
Randy Rodriguez, City MSCP
Chad Kane, City MSCP
Chris Cameron, Councilman Peters office
Dick Bobertz, San Dieguito River Park JPA
Shawna Anderson, San Dieguito River Park JPA
Jan Fuchs, Carmel Valley Planning Board/San Dieguito River Park CAC
Anne Harvey, Carmel Valley Planning Board
Frisco White, Carmel Valley Planning Board
Karen Berger, San Dieguito River Park CAC
John Ponder, Sheppard Mullin (rep Western Pacific)
Carol McGinnis, Sheppard Mullin (rep Western Pacific)
Craig Kahlen, Rick Engineering (Western Pacific engineers)

DISCUSSION:

Shawna Anderson explained that JPA staff had requested the meeting to discuss the issue of a wildlife and trail crossing as part of the El Camino Real roadway project. Shawna stated that \$100,000 was contributed by Pardee for the wildlife crossing as a requirement of the Pacific Highlands Ranch project and it is included in the FFP and required by the City's MSCP. Dick Bobertz added that a trail connection is required from the Pacific Highlands Ranch trail through Gonzales Canyon to the Coast to Crest Trail, which would also connect the Coast to Crest Trail to the Trans-County Trail.

Some thought that other projects in the area may also have been required to contribute money for the crossing. JPA staff felt that the existing funds are not adequate to provide the required crossing and because the El Camino Real project is not fully funded, it should not be allowed to proceed until funds are identified.

John Fisher mentioned that the proposed Rancho Valley Farms project (Pardee/Boudreau) could be required to contribute additional funds. It was also suggested that Western Pacific's current line of credit could potentially be extended until funding is secured.

ACTION: John Fisher and other city staff will research whether additional funds were contributed from other projects, and opportunities for additional funds through development fees. JPA staff will research potential grant funding opportunities for the crossing.

JPA and Carmel Valley reps expressed concern over the condition of the culvert as a wildlife and trail crossing. Concerns included darkness and length of culvert, too small to accommodate the three functions (wildlife, equestrian trail, and drainage), lack of vegetated approaches, etc. Craig Kahlen explained that the length would not increase because the road has already been widened to the ultimate width and that the project would involve paving only.

Anne Harvey stated that these culverts don't work and the one at Carmel Country Estates in Carmel Valley attracts

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teen parties, graffiti, is often flooded and isn't used by wildlife resulting in a high number of road kills. Shawna added that the biological report submitted for the project does not address the crossing adequately and doesn't provide data to support its conclusions. City staff stated what is needed is scientifically supported information and surveys of the functionality and success criteria of wildlife crossings to determine if in fact they are not working as intended.

Discussed various ways to accommodate the crossings including topographic situation for bridging the road to provide a better crossing under the road, separating wildlife crossing and trail alignments, and redesigning the culvert to better accommodate the three uses. City staff requested that Rick Engineering and Western Pacific evaluate if light wells could be included in their proposed design. Also discussed relocating the culvert to another location where the vertical clearances for all uses would meet minimums.

Discussed minimum vertical clearance necessary for equestrian trail users. Shawna stated that 13 feet is the minimum clearance. Craig stated that existing public infrastructure (gravity flow sewer lines) would limit clearance to less than 13 feet. A bridge with 13 feet clearance would also involve raising the roadway, which may cause biological impacts to adjacent areas and interfere with the gravity sewer and future force mains (would need to be relocated or redesigned). Alternatives to the 13-foot minimum would need to be explored.

Discussed an alternative trail route from Pacific Highlands that would cross El Camino Real at San Dieguito Road. JPA staff stated that this route would not be desirable, especially for equestrians, due to the busy roadways and the lack of a recreational trail experience.

Randy Rodriguez stated that the Rancho Valley Farms project will assess wildlife movement as part of its project application and environmental documentation. MSCP staff met with wildlife agencies and discussed ways to improve culvert, which included adding light and vegetated approaches.

ACTION: Applicant will assess and sketch alternative wildlife/trail crossing alignments and designs. Biological report will be revised to better address wildlife crossing based on comments received from City staff and San Dieguito River Park. JPA staff will further assess the minimum clearance issue. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled after studies from Rick Engineering are available and answers to funding questions are sorted out.

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TO: JPA Board
FROM: Staff
SUBJECT: Draft County Trails Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to send the attached comment letter in response to the Draft County Trails Program.

SITUATION:

The County of San Diego has been working on a trails plan for several years and has recently released a draft County Trails Program scheduled to be considered by the Board of Supervisors in December 2004. The JPA staff has been working with County staff on portions of the trails that pass through the San Dieguito River Park FPA and/or connect to the Coast to Crest Trail.

JPA staff believes that the County Trails Program will assist in implementing the San Dieguito River Park's Concept Plan by recognizing the Coast to Crest Trail as one of the regional trails in San Diego and by including trails that would connect the Coast to Crest Trail to other community and regional trails in the County. Based on a thorough review of the program, JPA staff did identify some items in the implementing ordinance that could be clarified to avoid confusion or misunderstanding. These items are listed in the draft letter to the County (Attachment 1).

CAC RECOMMENDATION

The CAC heard a presentation about the proposed trails program by Maryanne Vancio, the County Trails Program Coordinator at their September 10, 2004 meeting. They then directed the CAC's Trails Committee to review and comment on the plan and report back at the next CAC meeting. However, the CAC was not able to hear the Trails Committee report at their October 1, 2004 meeting because the quorum was lost and the meeting ended before the item was heard. The Trails Committee's recommendations are consistent with those included in Attachment 1.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Direct staff to send the attached comment letter.
2. Provide direction on additional issues/items to include in a letter.
3. Give staff other direction.

Respectfully submitted,

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Shawna Anderson
Principal Environmental Planner

Attachments:

1. Draft JPA Comment Letter

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ATTACHMENT 1

****DRAFT****

October __, 2004

Maryanne Vancio
Trails Program Coordinator
County of San Diego
Department of Parks and Recreation
5201 Ruffin Road, Suite P
San Diego, CA 92123

Subject: Draft County Trails Program

Dear Ms. Vancio:

The San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA) would like to commend the County of San Diego for undertaking the County Trails Program and promoting and implementing trails in San Diego County. The JPA is highly supportive of the County Trails Program and appreciates the effort that County staff has put into working with JPA staff and the community throughout the planning process.

The JPA Board considered the draft County Trails Program at its October 15, 2004 meeting and offers the following suggestions for additions or clarifications to the plan and implementing ordinance for your consideration.

General Comments:

The JPA is supportive of the trail guidelines presented in Section 7 of the Community Trails Master Plan and agrees that these should be used as “guidelines” and not “standards” to provide more flexibility in designing trails for various situations and to minimize impacts on the environment.

The Regional Trails Plan Map should show a connection between the Coast to Crest Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail to link the San Dieguito River Park to the Anza Borrego State Park.

Suggestions to the “Proposed New Ordinance Regulating Use of Trails” dated 8/11/04:

The JPA understands that the proposed ordinance would only apply to trails and pathways that have been “dedicated to and accepted by the County” (Section 812.202 Applicability). This means that the ordinance would apply to some segments of the San Dieguito River Park Coast to Crest Trail (such as the segment through the Crosby Estates in Santa Fe Valley).

The JPA currently has the authority to maintain and manage San Dieguito River Park trails (such as the Coast to Crest Trail and other JPA trails in the Focused Planning Area). Please clarify that

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the proposed trails ordinance Section 812.214, Authority to Close Trail preserves the JPA's authority and flexibility to manage San Dieguito River Park trails as appropriate. Examples include ability to close a trail for maintenance or other reason deemed appropriate by the JPA. The same sections of the ordinance should not allow the "County Official" to make unilateral decisions regarding management of San Dieguito River Park trails.

The JPA prohibits certain unauthorized activities along our trails not mentioned in Section 812.207, Acts Prohibited on Trails and Pathways such as hunting, feeding or harassing wildlife, defacing rocks and structures, etc. Please clarify and add language as appropriate to Section 812.207 that maintain the JPA's authority to prohibit other uses on San Dieguito River Park trails not mentioned in the proposed ordinance.

Please clarify that Section 812.204(d), Definition of County Official would include the San Dieguito River Park JPA as a "designee" or if additional language should be added (such as "contracted agent") to recognize the JPA's authority under this ordinance.

We hope that these comments are helpful in finalizing the details of the County Trails Program prior to its consideration by the County Board of Supervisors. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our comments please don't hesitate to call Shawna Anderson our Environmental Planner. Thank you again for working with the JPA and we look forward to the plan's adoption.

Sincerely,

Pam Slater-Price, County Supervisor
JPA Board Chair