

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

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Friday, May 16, 2003
County Administrative Center
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302/303
San Diego

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 April 18, 2003

Executive Directors Report

CONSENT

1. Adopt Resolution Applying for Land and Water Conservation Grant Funds

ACTION

2. Starwood Trail Maintenance
3. Adopt Resolution of Necessity to Acquire Penn Parcels
4. Adopt Policy Regarding Open Space Zone Changes
5. Cielo Plaza at Rancho Cielo

INFORMATION

6. Status Reports (Oral)
 - a. Coastal Wetlands Restoration Project
 - b. Fairbanks Ranch Country Club
 - c. Sikes Adobe Farmhouse Restoration

- d. Lake Hodges Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge
 - e. Heritage Estates (Poway) Trail Connection
 - f. Property Acquisition
7. 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.

8. Communications

9. 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.

CLOSED SESSION:

1. The JPA Board will meet in closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54957, for the purpose of conducting the annual performance and salary review of Executive Director Dick Bobertz.

Adjournment

Chair

THE NEXT JPA MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 2003.

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 full packets are only mailed free of charge to the JPA and CAC members. 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
May 16, 2003

TO: JPA Board

FROM: Staff

SUBJECT: Application for Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant for Accessibility Improvements along the Mule Hill Historical Trail.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt attached resolution applying for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.

SITUATION

Summary

May 1st was the deadline for applications for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants. Your staff submitted a grant application for \$123,120 for accessibility improvements along the Mule Hill/San Pasqual Valley Trail. This grant request is for funds to implement a project to improve accessibility on the Mule Hill Historical Trail section of the Mule Hill/San Pasqual Valley Trail. The Mule Hill Historical Trail is 1.25 miles long and begins on the west with the historic Sikes Adobe Farmhouse, and ends with the two elaborate interpretive stations that provide information about the Mule Hill Standoff that occurred in the Mexican-American War of 1846-48, the old San Diego to Yuma Road and the former Town of Bernardo.

Because of the trail's urban setting, richness of features and flat topography, this trail is ideally suited to be a trail for users of all abilities, and we anticipate heavy demand. However, the trail surface does not meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards in the section that goes around the Hodges Golf Improvement Center. The surface is muddy and rutted, a condition that recurs constantly due to poor substrate and water that drains down the slope from irrigation or natural rains onto the trail. The purpose of this grant request would be to make the substantial improvements that are required to make the trail an all-weather surface that will provide a firm, smooth, impervious, low maintenance surface that will allow it to be used year-round and meet ADA accessibility standards. Making these improvements will make the trail much more available to the general public and school groups

The project consists of removal of two feet of the existing substrate and installing a mechanism to prevent the situation from reoccurring. A rock drain would be installed on the uphill side of the trail, with a 6" perforated pipe. Six inches of aggregate base and six inches of new polymer binder material (mixed with engineered soil that meets the manufacturer's specifications) would be put in on top of replacement fill. The new trail with the hardened surface would be 8 feet wide, leaving a 4-foot-wide trail on the outside with a simple native soil surface for equestrian use. The remaining two feet of width are used for the lodge pole fence and a shoulder. Header boards would be fixed on the sides of the new hardened surface to clearly define the boundaries, which would enable horseback riders to easily identify the native soil surface that they are supposed to use.

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FISCAL IMPACT

The LWCF Grant program is a 50/50 matching grant. That means that although the entire project cost is estimated at \$246,240, the grant would only pay \$123,120. Therefore other sources would have to be identified for the match, if the grant is awarded.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This project is covered under the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Mule Hill/San Pasqual Valley Trail, certified by your Board on June 16, 2000.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

This grant request has not been reviewed by the CAC.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Adopt resolution applying for grant funds.
2. Do not adopt resolution applying for grant funds and give staff other direction.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt attached resolution applying for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Carter
Deputy Director

Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution

RESOLUTION NUMBER _____

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SAN DIEGUITO RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL OPEN SPACE PARK JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUNDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE MULE HILL HISTORICAL TRAIL

WHEREAS, the Congress under Public Law 88-578 has authorized the establishment of a Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant-In-Aid Program, providing matching funds to the State of California and its political subdivisions for acquiring lands and developing facilities for public outdoor recreation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the State Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for administration of the program in the state, setting up necessary rules and procedures governing application by local agencies under the program; and

WHEREAS, said adopted procedures established by the State Department of Parks and Recreation require the applicant to certify by resolution the approval of applications and the availability of local matching funds prior to submission of said applications to the state; and

WHEREAS, the ***MULE HILL HISTORICAL TRAIL ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS*** project is consistent with the Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Resources Plan: California Outdoor Recreation Plan - 1994; and

WHEREAS, the project must be compatible with the land use plans of those jurisdictions immediately surrounding project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors hereby:

1. Approves the filing of an application for Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance; and
2. Certifies that said agency has matching local funds and can finance 100 percent of the project, half of which will be reimbursed; and
3. Certifies that the project is compatible with the land use plans of those jurisdictions immediately surrounding the project; and
4. Appoints the Executive Director as agent of the JPA conduct all negotiations and execute and submit all documents, including, but not limited to, applications, agreements, amendments, billing statements, and so on which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project.

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The foregoing was adopted on the 16th day of May, 2003 by the following vote:

AYES: _____

NOES: _____

ABSTAIN: _____

ABSENT: _____

Tom Golich, Chair

Attest: _____
Dick Bobertz, Executive Director

Agenda Item 2
May 16, 2003

TO: JPA Board

FROM: Staff

SUBJECT: Trail Maintenance of the Starwood (The Crosby at Rancho Santa Fe) Segment of the Coast to Crest Trail

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution to accept maintenance of The Crosby at Rancho Santa Fe segment of the Coast to Crest Trail and establish an endowment fund for maintenance.

SITUATION:

A. Background

The JPA staff has been working with County staff and Starwood Development representatives since March 1998 to site the 1.3-mile long segment of Coast to Crest Trail located on the Crosby project site. At regular updates to your Board on this subject, it was reported that the southernmost section of trail (approximately 4,000 feet) has been a continuing concern due to problems regarding its alignment due to very difficult topography. The final alignment of that trail segment resulted in its location within the 100-year floodplain in order to avoid steep sensitive habitat areas. Since the JPA is expected to assume maintenance responsibility for the trail, funding for expected greater than normal maintenance costs were negotiated. Starwood has secured the required permits for trail construction and offered to provide \$30,000 to the JPA for a trail endowment (Attachment 1).

B. Issue

The Starwood Habitat Management Plan (HMP) was approved by the County as a condition of approval for the Starwood project. The HMP outlines the management requirements and responsibilities for the Open Space I land to be dedicated to the County and assigns trail maintenance responsibility to the JPA. Clause A.2 of a separate 1999 agreement between Starwood and the JPA regarding the Starwood trail segment (Attachment 2) states that, "Upon acceptance by the JPA and recordation of the permanent easement, the JPA shall assume liability and maintenance responsibility for said easement". At issue is whether or not the JPA should accept responsibility for a section of trail with potentially high maintenance costs.

C. Conclusion

The alignment of a portion of the Starwood trail in the 100-year floodplain will make it susceptible to erosion damage. The proposed \$30,000 endowment will offset costs of trail maintenance or

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reconstruction due to erosion and staff recommends that the JPA Board direct staff to take action to deposit the endowment in a fund dedicated to maintenance of the Starwood Trail and accept maintenance responsibility for the trail.

CAC RECOMMENDATION

The CAC received a status report on the Starwood trail issues on 5-2-03. Although, not an action item, there were no requests for further consideration or concerns expressed.

FISCAL IMPACT

Maintenance of the Starwood section of trail will result in undetermined trail maintenance or reconstruction costs that can be expected to exceed standard trail costs. Those costs will be offset by Starwood's \$30,000 endowment contribution. If a 100-year flood requires reconstruction of a significant segment of the trail in the near term (20 years or less) those costs may exceed the endowment amount. If trail reconstruction is not required until after 20 years, the endowment amount can be expected to grow to meet or exceed trail reconstruction costs.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Accept Starwood trail maintenance responsibility and the endowment offered.
2. Do not accept Starwood trail maintenance responsibility and the endowment offered.
3. Direct staff to do additional research on specified topics.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution to accept maintenance of The Crosby at Rancho Santa Fe segment of the Coast to Crest Trail and establish an endowment fund for maintenance.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Bobertz
Executive Director

Attachments:

1. The Crosby at Rancho Santa Fe 5-1-03 letter
2. Agreement between Starwood and JPA
3. Draft Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION OF THE SAN DIEGUITO RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL OPEN SPACE PARK JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPTING MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CROSBY AT RANCHO SANTA FE PORTION OF THE SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK COAST TO CREST TRAIL

WHEREAS, the San Dieguito Community Plan and the Santa Fe Valley Specific Plan incorporate goals to "Plan a Regional Park and Open Space System of a visionary nature, the focus of which will be the San Dieguito River Valley, and

WHEREAS, the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority was formed by the County of San Diego and the Cities of San Diego, Poway, Escondido, Del Mar and Solana Beach, and given responsibility by those agencies for acquiring, planning, improving operating and maintaining the San Dieguito River Park, including that portion of the Park located within the Santa Fe Valley, and

WHEREAS, An agreement between Starwood-Santa Fe Valley Partners, now known as the Crosby at Rancho Santa Fe, and the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority was entered into on May 5, 1999 for the purposes of planning, constructing and maintaining a section of the San Dieguito River Park Coast to Crest Trail within the Santa Fe Valley, and

WHEREAS, The Crosby at Rancho Santa Fe has agreed to contribute \$30,000 to the San Dieguito River Park to be used by the Joint Powers Authority for repair or replacement of that portion of the trail built by the Crosby within the 100-year floodplain;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby resolved, determined, and ordered by the Board of Directors of the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority that it accepts maintenance responsibility for a trail built to County of San Diego standards within the open space area of the Crosby and dedicated to the County of San Diego.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS ____ DAY OF _____, 2003
BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

Tom Golich, Chair

ATTEST:

Dick Bobertz, Executive Director

Agenda Item 3
May 16, 2003

TO: JPA Board

FROM: Staff

SUBJECT: Adopt Resolution of Necessity to Purchase the Penn Parcels

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt attached Resolution of Necessity to Purchase the Penn Parcels

Summary and Recommendation

At your last meeting, your Board set today's date for a hearing to approve the purchase of the 47-acre Penn property (APN 272-150-29 and 272-150-35) and directed staff to publish the Notice of Intention to Purchase in accordance with Government Code Section 25350 and 6063 prior to the hearing date. Unfortunately, the statutory noticing requirements, which require that the notice be published 3 times a week apart before the meeting, were not met, and consequently your Board cannot approve the purchase at today's meeting. Instead, the Notice of Intention to Purchase will be published announcing a public hearing at your June 20, 2003 meeting.

However, there is another required action for your Board's consideration at today's meeting. The owner of the property is only willing to sell these parcels if your Board condemns the property. This situation was anticipated when your Board adopted the Private Property Rights Protection Policy (Attachment 2) in 1995. This is what it says with respect to eminent domain:

"The JPA has never condemned property. The JPA will never recommend nor participate in a hostile condemnation. By law, when it acquires property the JPA must compensate property owners for the fair market value of their property. It is the desire of the JPA to retain 'friendly' condemnation for tax purposes, an important benefit to property owners desiring to sell their property."

Consequently, it is staff's recommendation that your Board adopt the attached resolution declaring the necessity to institute an eminent domain proceeding under ccp § 1240.510 to acquire property for public park purposes.

- A. Citizens Advisory Committee Recommendation: This item has not been reviewed by the CAC.
- B. Issues: No issues have been identified.
- C. Fiscal Impact: Funding for this acquisition would come from the Proposition 12 River Parkway funds that were granted to the JPA by the Wildlife Conservation Board in February 2003.
- D. Environmental Review: A Categorical Exemption for Acquisition of Open Space Land

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has been issued.

ALTERNATE ACTIONS

1. Adopt attached Resolution of Necessity to Purchase the Penn Parcels.
2. Do not adopt attached Resolution of Necessity and give staff other direction.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt attached Resolution of Necessity to Purchase the Penn Parcels

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Bobertz
Executive Director

Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution with Map of Proposed Acquisition Site
2. Private Property Rights Protection Policy

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE SAN DIEGUITO RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL OPEN
SPACE PARK JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY DECLARING
THE NECESSITY TO INSTITUTE AN EMINENT DOMAIN
PROCEEDING UNDER CCP § 1240.510 TO ACQUIRE
PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC PARK 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 §§ 6500 et seq.) to acquire property to further its purposes; and

WHEREAS, the JPA is authorized to undertake eminent domain actions pursuant to the California Joint Powers Law, Government Code §§ 6502, 6508, California Code of Civil Procedure § 1240.510, and by the authority of the JPA’s Joint Powers Agreement, Section 10 (See also, Government Code §§ 25350.5 and 37350.5); and

WHEREAS, the JPA is undertaking a program to acquire and manage the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park as a regional open space park system for preservation and recreational purposes; and

WHEREAS, the subject parcels, totaling 47 acres, contain oak woodland forest and very high quality coastal sage scrub habitat and are part of the designated high-priority acquisition and preservation area in the adopted City of Poway Sub-Area Habitat Conservation Plan; and

WHEREAS, acquisition of these parcels will advance the purpose of the JPA by ensuring the protection of this land and preventing the development of the land into other incompatible uses; and

WHEREAS, the property owner does not object to the JPA acquiring the property by eminent domain; and

WHEREAS, the offer required by the Government Code has been made to the owner of record;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby resolved as follows:

1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct.
2. Public Use.

The two parcels to be acquired pursuant to this Resolution of necessity are part of a steep sloping mountainside with oak woodland forests and very high quality coastal sage scrub habitat that are in a designated high-priority acquisition and preservation area in the adopted City of Poway Sub-Area Habitat Conservation Plan. Acquisition of the parcels is necessary and in

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the public interest in that preservation of the property is required to achieve the purpose of the JPA and to prevent the parcels from being developed or used in a way that is incompatible with the purpose of the open space park.

3. General Description of Property Location.

The subject property consists of two parcels totaling 47 acres (APN Nos. 272-150-29 and 272-150-35) contiguous to the 86 acres that the JPA owns on Sycamore Creek Road. The parcels are within the Poway Sub-Area Habitat Conservation Plan and on the List of Acquisition and the Conceptual Area Protection Plan for the San Dieguito River Valley. See Attachment "1" for a location map.

4. JPA Findings.

In adopting this Resolution, the JPA finds and determines each of the following:

- a. The public interest and necessity require that the parcels be included within the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park for the reasons set forth above.
- b. The proposed project is planned or located in the manner that will be most compatible with the greatest good and the least private injury in that, among other things, there is no other feasible or practical alternative for achieving the public's objective of preserving and managing the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park, and the owners do not object to the JPA acquiring the property by Eminent Domain.
- c. The property to be acquired as described in this Resolution is a necessary and important part of completing the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park;
- d. The hardship to the JPA and the public if the property is not acquired outweighs any hardship to the owners of such property.
- e. The offer required by Government Code § 7267.2, offering to acquire the property for not less than its appraised value as determined by a qualified appraiser, has been made and transmitted to the owner as required by law.

5. Environmental Review/CEQA Compliance.

The acquisition of the subject property is categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to Section 15325 of the CEQA Guidelines (transfers of ownership to preserve natural conditions) and Section 15313 (acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes).

6. Notice and Hearing.

The Board finds and determines that notice of the proposed adoption of this Resolution of Necessity was given, and a hearing was held, as required by Code of Civil Procedure § 1245.235 and other applicable laws and regulations.

7. Commencement of Eminent Domain Action.

The JPA General Counsel is hereby directed to prepare and file an Eminent Domain action to acquire the property described in this Resolution, and to take any and all such

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further and additional actions as may be required to carry forward such proceeding to conclusion.

8. Further Actions.

The JPA General Counsel, and its Executive Director, are hereby authorized to take any and all such further actions and to sign such further documents as may reasonably be needed to carry forward the directions in this Resolution of Necessity. General Counsel and the Executive Director shall keep the Board informed at all times as to the status of the case.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2003, by the following vote:

AYES: _____

NOES: _____

ABSENT: _____

ABSTAIN: _____

Chair, San Dieguito River Park JPA Board of Directors

ATTEST:

Executive Director, San Dieguito River Park JPA

Agenda Item 4
May 16, 2003

TO: JPA Board

FROM: Staff

SUBJECT: Policy Opposing Open Space Zone Changes

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a policy that the JPA Board not support any proposed zone change to a more intensive use in the FPA when the subject land is zoned open space for passive recreational or natural open space uses.

SITUATION:

A. Background

The River Park's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has asked staff to recommend that your Board adopt a policy opposing any zone change in the River Park Focused Planning Area (FPA) when the land is already zoned for natural open space. What prompted this request is the action by your Board supporting a zone change request from Starwood Development to amend the Santa Fe Valley Specific Plan to allow the development of a neighborhood commercial project on land that was zoned open space. In that particular case, the subject parcel was zoned Open Space II for a golf course clubhouse (not natural open space) and the proposal was to change the zone from OS-II to Neighborhood Commercial. The CAC's Project Review Committee discussed whether it was appropriate for the JPA to support open space zone changes in the FPA. Members of the CAC felt that as the JPA Board has a goal of preserving open space in the river valley, the JPA Board should decline to consider any such request for a zone change of natural open space in the FPA.

B. Issues

The JPA is authorized to review and provide recommendations as appropriate for certain land use proposals that are proposed in the jurisdictions within the River Park. The issue is whether the JPA should consider proposed zone changes in the FPA that propose to change a zone from passive open space to any other zone.

As you are aware, open space zones can allow a variety of land uses. Attachment 1 provides a breakdown by jurisdiction of the different open space zones and their purposes. As can be seen in the attachment, open space zones vary by jurisdiction. Some municipal zoning codes distinguish between natural open space zones and open space zones that allow more intensive recreational uses (such as cities of San Diego and Poway). However, other jurisdictions apply

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one zone to both passive and active open space uses (City of Escondido).

Due to the wide range in open space zones within the FPA, the CAC's recommendation was written so that it applies only to open space zones for which the intent is to preserve natural open space.

CAC RECOMMENDATION

At the meeting of May 2, 2003, the CAC voted 17 in favor of the open space policy, 4 opposed, and one abstained.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Adopt a policy to not support open space zone changes.
2. No action.
3. Provide staff other direction or additional research.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a policy that the JPA Board not support any proposed zone change to a more intensive use in the FPA when the subject land is zoned Open Space for passive recreational or natural open space uses.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawna Anderson
Principal Environmental Planner

Attachments:

1. Open Space Zones by Jurisdiction

Agenda Item 5
May 16, 2003

TO: JPA Board
FROM: Staff
SUBJECT: Cielo Plaza at Rancho Cielo

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to send the attached comment letter to County of San Diego requesting redesign of the Cielo Plaza project.

SITUATION:

A. Background

The Cielo Plaza project is part of the Rancho Cielo Specific Plan (1996). The Specific Plan allows a commercial area of 30,000 to 50,000 square feet on the corner of Del Dios Highway and Calle Ambiente, on the north (west) side of Del Dios Highway (Attachment 1). The Specific Plan requires site plan review of the proposed commercial development due to the site's location on a scenic highway. Site plan approval is given by the Director of County Department of Planning and Land Use, and the decision can be appealed to the Planning Commission. Although the decision schedule is undetermined at this time, it is expected that the Director will review this project in March 2003. The project proposes a 50,000 square-foot commercial development comprised of 5 individual buildings with retail and office space. A project site plan will be provided at the Board meeting. A draft letter to the County with comments on the project is attached (Attachment 2).

B. Issues

Based on input received from the CAC' and staff's review of the plans, the following issues were identified:

- The project's bulk and scale is excessive for the site, preventing it from blending with the natural terrain.

The San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan states that "the form, mass and profile of the individual structures and architectural features should be designed to blend with the natural terrain", and "structures located within the view of the FPA should be generally low in profile". In addition, the Rancho Cielo Scenic Highway Element development controls state that "A site plan shall be required for the neighborhood commercial center to prevent adverse grading, revegetation of slopes, and encourage a commercial facility that blends well into the natural

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terrain". The Rancho Cielo Specific Plan commercial feasibility study is the basis for the proposed 50,000 square feet of commercial/office space. The feasibility study actually recommends a range of 30,000 to 50,000 square feet. Based on the site design proposed, the site is too small to accommodate 50,000 square feet without compromising aesthetic concerns and greatly impacting the scenic value of the area.

- The proposed building heights range from 35 feet to 44 feet high including a 44-foot high tower, which would cause visual impacts to the river valley.

Recommend that the building heights be reduced to no more than 35 feet (2 stories). The Concept Plan design standards state that "structures should be set back from ridges and bluffs to reduce their visual impact" and buildings "should not be visually prominent as viewed from within the valley floor", and "commercial uses should be designed to complement the traditional/rural character of the FPA". At a minimum, the taller structures (i.e., over 35 feet high) should be moved towards the back of the site to better mimic the topography and to minimize height and bulk close to Del Dios Highway, a County-designated scenic highway. The buildings would tower over the scenic roadway. As proposed, they would be 82 feet higher than the roadway based on the existing topography. The proposed 44-foot high tower serves no real purpose and is inappropriate for the location. Recommend that it be eliminated from the plan. Also recommend that a berm, landscaped with native plants, be located around the perimeter of the site to further screen the buildings from the River Park, Del Dios Highway, and future Coast to Crest Trail.

- The project's impact on the River Park and scenic highway is not sufficiently documented.

Recommend that the project applicant prepare viewpoints and topographical cross sections from the trail and river for public review as required by the County's scenic regulations.

CAC RECOMMENDATION

The CAC reviewed the Cielo Plaza project at their meeting of February 7, 2003. Their comments and concerns about the project reflect the issues listed above. However, they expressed an additional concern not listed above. The CAC felt that the Cielo Plaza project would generate additional traffic in an area of Del Dios Highway that is already facing increased traffic and ingress/egress demands, contributing to the degradation of the River Park experience. CAC members added that large traffic generators such as that which would be created by adding 50,000 square feet of commercial/office space on Del Dios Highway will increase traffic on Del Dios Highway, causing cumulative impacts that will increase pressure to widen this scenic highway. Several members felt that traffic on Del Dios Highway caused by the project may also interfere with access to the future Starwood trail staging area to be constructed across Del Dios Highway from the project. Access to the staging area will be from the utility road off of Del Dios Highway adjacent to the existing fruit stand, less than 600 feet from Calle Ambiente.

The CAC voted to incorporate the comments discussed above (and the traffic comments) into a letter to County staff (yes-17, no-4, abstain-1).

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River Park staff did not include the traffic comment into the draft County letter (Attachment 2) because there are no supportive goals, objectives or any discussion in the River Park Concept Plan regarding increased traffic and its impact on the park.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Direct staff to send the attached comment letter to County of San Diego requesting redesign of the Cielo Plaza project.
2. Give staff other direction.

RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to send the attached comment letter to County of San Diego requesting redesign of the Cielo Plaza project.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawna Anderson
Principal Environmental Planner

Attachments:

1. Project Location Map
2. Draft Comment Letter

