



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: March 29, 2007 **REPORT NO.** PC-07-060

ATTENTION: Planning Commission, Agenda of April 5, 2007

SUBJECT: **PENASQUITOS VIEWS TRUCK SEWER - PROJECT NO. 6624
PROCESS 5**

**OWNER/
APPLICANT:** City of San Diego/
City of San Diego, Engineering and Capital Projects Department

SUMMARY

Issue(s): Should the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council of a Site Development Permit and an Easement Vacation to abandon and replace portions of a sewer line within La Tortola Street, Black Mountain Road, Ridgewood Park, Canyonside Community Park and Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve within the Rancho Penasquitos Community Plan area?

Staff Recommendations:

1. **RECOMMEND CERTIFICATION** to the City Council of Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) No. 6624 and **ADOPTION** of the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP).
2. **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** to the City Council of Site Development Permit No. 10859.
3. **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** to the City Council of Easement Abandonment No. 349797.

Community Planning Group Recommendation: On June 2, 2003, the Rancho Penasquitos Planning Board voted 14-0-0 to approve the project as proposed with no conditions (Attachment 9).

Other Recommendations: On February 15, 2003, the Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve Citizens Advisory Committee voted unanimously to approve the project as proposed with no conditions.

Environmental Review: Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 6644 has been prepared for the project in accordance with the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines which addressed potential impacts to Archaeological Resources, Paleontological Resources, Biological Resources/Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) and Land Use/MHPA. A Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared and would be implemented with this project to reduce the potential impacts to a level below significance.

Fiscal Impact Statement: A deposit account funded by the applicant recovers all costs associated with the processing of the project.

Code Enforcement Impact: None with this action.

Housing Impact Statement: None with this action.

BACKGROUND

The project area is located in La Tortola Street, Black Mountain Road, Ridgewood Park and Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve (Attachment 1). The project area is zoned AR-1-1 (Agricultural) and is located within the Rancho Penasquitos Community Planning area, and the sewer alignment and abandonment area is designated Park, Open Space and Residential (Attachment 2).

The proposed project is a utility improvement identified in the City's Capital Improvement Program that will support existing and future growth consistent with the Rancho Penasquitos Community Plan. While the proposed project traverses an area designated as Open Space in the Rancho Penasquitos Community Plan, replacement of sewer lines and utilities are allowed uses within open space.

The project is located within and adjacent to the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), as well as, Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve (Attachment 3). The majority of the existing sewer alignment, which is to be abandoned, is located on public lands owned by the City of San Diego. Currently there are three dirt sewer access roads ranging from six to twelve feet in width within the existing sewer alignment. Two of the dirt access roads extend across city owned open space parallel to the Los Penasquitos Creek, one on the northern slope and the other on the southern slope. Both of these roads were constructed to provide access to the existing trunk sewer and would be utilized to perform the abandonment portion of this project. The third dirt access road runs northeast to southwest, beginning at La Tortola Street and ends at Mercy Road.

DISCUSSION

Project Description:

The project requires approvals for a Site Development Permit (SDP) due to impacts to environmentally sensitive lands. An easement abandonment is required to remove approximately 5,640 feet of sewer line and 17 manholes from the Ridgewood Community Park and Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve. The following is a summary of the proposed project:

- Construct 1,315 feet of new 18-inch PVC sewer
- Construct 145 feet of new 12-inch PVC sewer
- Abandon 5,640 feet of existing 15-inch VC sewer
- Abandon 60 feet of existing 12-inch VC sewer
- Abandon 18 manholes, of which 17 are located within designated Open Space.

The pipeline and associated manholes to be abandoned would be accessed via an existing parallel dirt road approximately twelve feet in width. Abandonment of manholes would occur within a maximum 20-foot radius (of each manhole) and would involve the removal of the manhole cone, filling the opening with sand, grounding the lid to the remaining manhole, and the area replanted with native vegetation. Where manhole abandonment would occur within the existing hiking trail areas, the project would be revegetated with low-growing seed mix.

The proposed new sewer line would follow an alignment proceeding southwest along La Tortola Street onto an existing dirt road. From this road, the pipeline would veer southwest for approximately 375 liner feet and then turn southwestward again, crossing Los Penasquitos Creek. The dam and pump water method would be implemented for constructing that portion of the alignment that crosses Los Penasquitos Creek. The dam would divert the flow of water for a maximum length of 35 feet. A filtered intake hose would be placed immediately upstream of the dam and would be connected to a pump located at the bank of the creek. Water from the creek would reach the pump via the intake hose and be conveyed within a discharge line along the bank of the creek. The discharge line would be located on the creek bed no more than 35 feet downstream from the dam, at which point the water would be allowed to flow back into the creek.

During construction of the new sewer line, a 25-foot wide temporary construction corridor would be required and upon completion of the project, the corridor would be revegetated and reduced to an eight-foot-wide permanent access path to the proposed pipeline. Construction methods for the sewer pipe replacement include cut and cover and tunneling. Construction equipment required for the project includes a track hoe, front-end loader, dump trucks, and flat-bed delivery trucks. Staging areas for the project have been proposed in the eastern portion of the project site and outside of sensitive habitat areas. Any staging areas that would be located within the Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve would require prior approval and coordination with staff from Park and Recreation Department Open Space Division. For those portions of the alignment in the public streets, the road would be restored to original conditions after construction.

Council Policies – 400-13 and 400-14:

Based on the City's sewer modeling flow monitoring program, trunk sewers are classified as critical, semi-critical or non-critical. In a 2001 planning report, the existing Penasquitos Views Trunk Sewer was classified as critical. Council Policy 400-14, which incorporates the recommendations of the City-Wide Canyon Sewer Maintenance Task Force, maintains that sewer facilities in environmentally sensitive lands should be relocated out of the canyons and into more accessible locations, when economically feasible.

Per 400-14, a cost benefit analysis must be performed to determine if redirection of flow out of the canyon is feasible (cost to redirect does not exceed 35%). For this project, Metropolitan Wastewater Department evaluated three alternatives, which were: 1) leave in place; 2) partial redirection, and 3) total redirection. The cost benefit analysis determined that the partial redirection met the criteria for the economic feasibility and provides for redirection of sewer mains out of the canyon.

Council Policy 400-13 identifies the need to provide maintenance access to all existing sewer lines in order to reduce the potential for spills. This project minimizes the construction of new sewer access paths by using existing access paths in the canyon. The proposed project would be implemented in accordance with the adopted City Council Policies 400-13 and 400-14, and the certified Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Canyon Sewer Cleaning Program and Long-Term Sewer Maintenance Program.

Environmental Analysis:

Land Use (Multiple Species Conservation Program)

Portions of the project alignment are located within and adjacent to the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) of the City of San Diego MSCP Subarea (Attachment 3). Therefore, the proposed project would be required to comply with the MHPA Land Use Considerations, General Planning Policies and Design Guidelines (Section 1.4) and the Land Use Adjacency Guidelines (Section 1.4.3) of the City's MSCP Subarea Plan. Specifically, all proposed lighting adjacent to the MHPA, as well as open space areas, would be required to be directed away from these areas, and shielded if necessary. Drainage must be directed away from the MHPA or open space, or must not drain directly into these areas. No staging/storage areas would be allowed to be located within or adjacent to sensitive biological areas and no equipment maintenance would be permitted. In addition, the limits of grading would be clearly demarcated by the biological monitor to ensure no impacts occur outside of the approved construction footprint.

Biological Resources:

A Biological Resources Report was prepared by Tierra Environmental Services (March 14, 2006) to assess the impacts of the project on biological resources. The biological field surveys conducted included vegetation mapping, sensitive plant species assessment, a general wildlife

survey, gnatcatcher protocol surveys, and narrow endemic plant surveys. The project would result in impacts to Diegan coastal sage scrub (disturbed and undisturbed), non-native grassland, southern willow scrub, ornamental vegetation, ruderal land, and disturbed land. The majority of the project site is located within MHPA. The eastern portion of the project site occurs outside of the MHPA (Attachment 3).

Mitigation at a 1:1 ratio for impacts to Diegan coastal sage scrub and non-native grassland within the MHPA are required on site. Impacts to southern willow scrub habitat require a mitigation ratio of 2:1 regardless of the mitigation site location. For this project, 0.192 acre of mitigation in the form of creation would be accomplished by creating southern willow scrub habitat off-site within Metropolitan Wastewater Department's Los Peñasquitos North Mitigation Site. No mitigation is required for impacts to ornamental, ruderal, or disturbed areas. However, impacts to ornamental areas will be mitigated at a 1:1 ratio in order to restore impacted portions of Ridgewood Park to their pre-construction condition.

Potential effect to the threatened federal and state listed sensitive wildlife includes the coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, and southwestern willow flycatcher. Therefore, construction would be scheduled to avoid adverse noise effects during the gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, and southwestern willow flycatcher breeding seasons. If construction would occur within a breeding season of any of the aforementioned sensitive avian species, a biologist would be required to conduct protocol surveys to determine the presence and/or absence of these species prior to construction. If the surveys are negative, no further mitigation would be required. If the surveys are positive, mitigation in the form of temporary noise barriers and acoustical monitoring would be required. Additional measure, such as construction restrictions would be implemented to ensure the noise levels of occupied habitat in the MHPA do not exceed dB (A) hourly average.

The wetlands associated with Los Peñasquitos Creek are confined between the existing channel banks. Human uses, including an existing foot path along the southern bank of the creek and the Arizona crossing constructed by the San Diego County Water Authority, occur within 100 feet of the Los Peñasquitos Creek wetlands. Therefore, the existing wetland buffer in the project area is minimal. The proposed project would result in a temporary impact to wetland habitats during construction and would provide a permanent access route up to the edge of the creek.

Archeology Resources:

An Archaeological Survey was conducted and a letter report was completed by Tierra Environmental Services (October 21, 2003). The report concluded that a majority of the project site is underlain by the Santiago Peak Volcanic Formation which provided a regionally important resource for native American flaked stone tools. While, the report concluded there is no evidence to suggest that the project would impact a unique archaeological resource, there is a potential for heritage resources to be present during construction activities. Therefore, an archaeological monitor would be present during grading and/or trenching activities in native soils.

Paleontological Resources:

The project area is underlain by Santiago Peaks Volcanics which has been assigned a moderate sensitivity rating to produce paleontological resources. Therefore, trenching and excavations into undisturbed soils within areas underlain by the Santiago Peaks Volcanics is considered a potentially significant effect to paleontological resources and would require monitoring during construction activities.

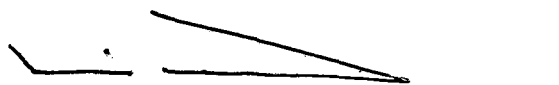
Conclusion:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval of the Site Development Permit and Easement Abandonment proposed by the Penasquitos Views Trunk Sewer proposal. This recommendation is made because the project meets all the required development regulations and findings in effect for the proposal.


ALTERNATIVES:

1. **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** to the City Council of Site Development Permit No. 10859 and Easement Abandonment No. 349797, with modifications.
2. **RECOMMEND DENIAL** to the City Council of Site Development Permit No. 10859 and Easement Abandonment No. 349797, if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,



Mike Westlake
Program Manager
Development Services Department



Patricia Grabski, AICP, Project Manager
Development Services Department

MEE/PXG

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. MHPA Map
4. Project Site Plans
5. Project Data Sheet
6. Draft Permit with Conditions

7. Draft Resolution with Findings
8. Draft Easement Vacation Resolution and Findings
9. Community Planning Group Recommendation
10. Council Policy 400-13
11. Council Policy 400-14