

DATE ISSUED: February 23, 2006 **REPORT NO. PC-06-084**

ATTENTION: **Planning Commission, Agenda of March 2, 2006**

SUBJECT: LAKE MURRAY TRUNK SEWER - PROJECT NO. 31088. PROCESS 4

REFERENCE: Council Policy 400-13
 Council Policy 400-14

OWNER/ City of San Diego

APPLICANT: Metropolitan Wastewater Department

SUMMARY

Issue(s): Should the Planning Commission approve a Site Development Permit for the replacement of 14,543 lineal feet of the Lake Murray Trunk Sewer, construction of permanent sewer maintenance access paths and a staircase installation?

Staff Recommendation:

1. CERTIFY MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION NO. 31088 and ADOPT MITIGATION, MONITORING, and REPORTING PROGRAM and
2. APPROVE Site Development Permit No. 185199

Community Planning Group Recommendation: On May 17, 2004, the Navajo Community Planners, Inc., vote 9-1-0 in favor of the project, with no recommendations.

Environmental Review: A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION No. 31088 has been prepared for the project in accordance with State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. A Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared and will be implemented, and will reduce any potential impacts identified in the environmental review process to a level of insignificance.

Fiscal Impact Statement: All costs associated with the project will be covered by the

applicant.

BACKGROUND

The project site is located near Lake Murray in the City of San Diego, between Interstate 8 to the south and Navajo Road to the north, and in portions of Chaparral Canyon, Lake Murray Park and Mission Trails Golf Course, in the AR-1 and RS-1-7 Zones of the Navajo Community Plan Area (Attachments 1, 2 & 3). These areas are designated for Parks and Golf Course use in the community plan.

The existing Lake Murray Trunk Sewer originates at the intersection of Cowles Mountain Boulevard and San Carlos Drive on the northeast runs through portions of the golf course, along the western edge of Lake Murray, through Chaparral Canyon, and terminates at Alvarado Road near Interstate 8 on the southwest. There it connects to the Alvarado Trunk Sewer.

The existing Lake Murray Trunk Sewer is approximately 15,900 linear feet. The proposed 14,543 linear-foot sewer line replacement is part of the City of San Diego's program to upsize sewer lines that are near capacity and where feasible, to relocate sewers out of canyon areas. The Lake Murray Trunk Sewer is proposed to be replaced due to capacity deficiencies. A portion of the alignment runs through Chaparral Canyon, which has environmentally sensitive habitat.

In December 2002 through January 2003, maintenance and repair work was performed and maintenance access paths to many side main manholes were constructed. These existing access paths along the trunk sewer line are proposed to remain and become permanent.

DISCUSSION

Project Description:

The proposed Lake Murray Trunk Sewer replacement would increase pipe diameter and would construct additional permanent access paths to manholes located along the side mains that connect to the trunk sewer on 16.5 acres. The existing sewer line includes 12-, 15-, and 18-inch diameter pipe, and would be replaced with 18-, 24-, and 24-inch diameter pipe respectively. Through Chaparral Canyon, replacement work would be restricted to a 30-foot wide temporary construction corridor along the trunk sewer. A 40-foot wide temporary construction corridor would be observed through the rest of the alignment. Construction methods for sewer pipe replacement would include cut and cover, and tunneling.

The project proposes to improve maintenance access to the trunk sewer by providing access routes to manholes along the Lake Murray Trunk Sewer and its associated connector lines (Attachment 10). Currently, maintenance access paths exist to the majority of the manholes along the trunk sewer alignment. North and south of the Lake Murray Dam existing access paths include a paved walking and jogging path along the western shoreline of Lake Murray, unvegetated dirt access paths along the edge of the golf course south of Jackson Drive, and golf cart paths and turf surfaces within the Mission Trails Golf course between Jackson Drive and

Cowles Mountain Boulevard.

Access paths to manholes on the trunk sewer line below Lake Murray Dam in Chaparral Canyon would be created. These paths would be located on an old, overgrown access route. During construction there would be a 30-foot construction corridor along the sewer alignment in Chaparral Canyon and along the access route from Del Cerro Boulevard to the sewer alignment. A permanent eight-foot wide access path and two terminal turn-around areas, 30 feet in diameter, would remain to provide continued maintenance.

Additionally, permanent access paths would be created to the side mains that connect to the Lake Murray Trunk Sewer. One exception is the side main located in a canyon between the intersection of Del Cerro Boulevard and Elaine Way, and the Lake Murray Trunk Sewer. This section would be redirected out of the canyon and into City streets (Attachment 10). In addition, a staircase is proposed to manhole No. 272 near Del Cerro Boulevard. By installing the staircase and maintaining this manhole by hand, excessive damage to the hillside at this location would be prevented.

Access paths would also be created to several manholes south of Jackson Drive and south of Navajo Road. Access paths to manholes on an ornamental slope between Mission Trails Golf Course and existing residential development west Cowles Mountain Boulevard and south of Navajo Road would also be created. Following completion of the trunk sewer replacement, sections of a concrete-lined drainage channel along Lake Murray would be replaced.

An overall objective of the Navajo Community Plan is to assure that a high level of all public services is reached and maintained. The Plan calls for periodic studies to ensure adequate sewer, water and drainage facilities for the community. Due to the age of the existing trunk sewer and a number of recent sewer emergencies, it has been determined that the proposed improvements to the Lake Murray Trunk Sewer are required to prevent future sewage spills and provide the high level of public service called for in the Navajo Community Plan. Installation of the permanent access paths would facilitate improved sewer line and manhole maintenance and allow City crews to provide highest level of public service.

Community Plan Analysis:

The proposed project would be consistent with the plan objective of providing a high level of public services. The project would not conflict with any other goals or objectives and is, therefore, consistent with the Navajo Community Plan.

Environmental Analysis:

The project is being implemented in accordance with the adopted City Council Policies 400-13 and 400-14 (Attachment 9), and the certified Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Canyon Sewer Cleaning Program and Long-Term Sewer Maintenance Program. Council Policy 400-13 identifies the need to provide maintenance access to all existing sewer lines to reduce the potential for sewer spills. Council Policy 400-14 includes a general goal of evaluating

redirection of sewage flow out of canyons and other environmentally sensitive lands and into streets or other accessible locations.

A redirection of flow analysis, pursuant to Council Policy 400-14, was conducted by the Metropolitan Wastewater Department and it determined that the cost of relocating the Lake Murray Trunk Sewer out of Chaparral Canyon and the project's open space was economically infeasible. The life cycle cost of redirecting the flow is greater than 35% more than the life cycle cost of leaving the sewer infrastructure in place and is, therefore, considered cost prohibitive. However, partial redirection of flow for one side main north and west of the cul-de-sac near the intersection of Del Cerro Boulevard and Elaine Way is feasible and has been incorporated into the project. Access to the trunk sewer and remaining side mains within the canyon area will be maintained and improved to provide adequate long-term maintenance and emergency access.

Upland Impacts

The project as proposed would have impacts to upland resources. In addition to monitoring and preconstruction meeting activities, mitigation for the project-related impacts is included in the Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 31088. The MND would create 5.0 acres of upland habitat and restore 1.98 acres of wetlands both located within the Mission Trail Regional Park. The project would be required to mitigate the impacts according to the appropriate mitigation ratios as required by the City of San Diego Biology Guidelines.

Onsite upland mitigation will occur on land designated as part of the City of San Diego Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) within the Mission Trails Regional Park. The mitigation site is situated west of Lake Murray, on the slope, west of the tennis courts (Attachment 10, Figure 6). The area presently contains patches of non-native ruderal and non-native (annual) grassland habitat that are adjacent to existing native coastal sage scrub habitat that are appropriate for coastal sage scrub, broom baccharis scrub and non-native (annual) grassland mitigation. Mitigation for 0.06 acre impacts to non-native (annual) grassland will also occur here. Mitigation for impacts to non-native (annual) grassland will be out-of-kind, and will be coastal sage scrub or broom baccharis scrub habitat. In addition, construction corridor impacts would be revegetated with native species.

Wetland Impacts

A portion of the required mitigation for temporary wetland impacts would occur through onsite enhancement. The 0.59 acre mitigation site is located within the MHPA and Mission Trails Park in the drainage channel situated west of Lake Murray and north of the tennis courts. This area is owned by the City of San Diego and within the boundaries of Mission Trails Regional Park. The drainage channel is presently covered with disturbed southern willow scrub and non-native invasive species. Wetland enhancement mitigation for the Lake Murray Emergency Sewer Maintenance Repair Project would be located within the same area onsite.

The remainder of the wetland mitigation must be creation, and there is no potential for onsite wetlands creation. Offsite mitigation is required for 0.2 acre of southern willow scrub and 0.07 acre of freshwater marsh. Offsite wetland mitigation would occur within the same watershed at

the San Diego River wetland mitigation bank site that has been created by the City of San Diego Metropolitan Wastewater Department and is located at Camino Del Rio North, just east of Interstate 805.

MHPA

Portions of the trunk sewer alignment are located within the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) of the City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea and the Mission Trails Regional Park. 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 of San Diego's MSCP Subarea Plan. The proposed project would be consistent with compatible land uses as referenced in Section 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 of the MSCP Subarea Plan.

More 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.

Due to the mitigation site's proximity to upland habitat in the MHPA, indirect noise impacts related to construction must be avoided during the breeding season of the California gnatcatcher. Therefore, indirect noise impacts related to construction must be avoided during the breeding season of the least Bell's vireo and the southwestern willow flycatcher (March 1 through August 15). A Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program (MMRP), as detailed within Section V of the MND would be implemented to minimize indirect construction noise impacts to a level below significance. As a condition of the MMRP, if grading is proposed during the breeding season, a preconstruction protocol survey would be required to determine the absence and/or presence of the species. If the survey is negative, no further mitigation would be required. If the survey is positive, mitigation in the form of temporary noise barriers and acoustical monitoring would be required.

Staff has reviewed the impacts and the proposed mitigation, and has concluded that consistency with the MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines as outlined in Section V. of the Mitigate Negative Declaration would mitigate potential significant indirect land use impacts to a level below significance.

Paleontological Impacts

The majority of the project area is underlain by Alluvium/Slopewash, Pomerado Conglomerate, and the Mission Valley Formation. The project would require trenching depths ranging from approximately fifteen to twenty-five feet which could potentially impact these paleontological resources. Disturbance or loss of fossils without adequate documentation and research would be considered a significant environmental impact. Therefore, the Mitigation, Monitoring and

Reporting Program would require that a qualified Paleontologist or Paleontological Monitor be present during all excavations that exceed ten feet in depth and that could impact previously undisturbed formations. Should paleontological resources be discovered, a recovery and documentation program would be implemented. Monitoring would not be required along any portions of the alignment where the pipeline is being replaced in-place (same depth) or in those areas having a low sensitivity level for resources. With implementation of the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program, impacts to paleontological resources would be reduced to below a level of significance.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed project is necessary to help eliminate future sewage spills in the sensitive area near Lake Murray. The project is consistent with Council Policies 400-13 and 400-14 regarding sewer facilities in canyons and the applicant has selected the least impactful alignment for the proposed sewer project and its associated access paths. The MND prepared for the project has identified some direct impacts and staff has determined that with the implementation of the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program those direct impacts would be mitigated to below a level of significance. The project is consistent with the Navajo Community Plan and the Navajo Community Planners supports the project. Therefore, staff is recommending approval of Site Development Permit No. 185199.

ALTERNATIVES

1. **Approve** Site Development Permit No. 185199 with modifications.
2. **Deny** Site Development Permit No. 185199, if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Information Division
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HALBERT/MED

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map

3. Project Location Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Draft Permit with Conditions
6. Draft Resolution with Findings
7. Ownership Disclosure Statement
8. Project Chronology
9. Council Policies 400-13, 400 14
10. Access Paths
11. Project Plans

document1