



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## REPORT TO THE HEARING OFFICER

HEARING DATE: February 16, 2005 REPORT NO. HO 05-022

ATTENTION: Hearing Officer

SUBJECT: SALK INSTITUTE GEOTECHNICAL TESTING  
PTS PROJECT NUMBER: 54535

LOCATION: 10010 North Torrey Pines Road

APPLICANT: The Salk Institute Corporation

### SUMMARY

Requested Action - Should the Hearing Officer approve a Coastal Development Permit No. 190894 and Site Development Permit No. 190895 for geotechnical investigation work?

#### Staff Recommendation -

1. CERTIFY Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 54535 and ADOPT Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program; and
2. APPROVE an application for a Coastal Development Permit No. 190894 and Site Development Permit No. 190895 for geotechnical investigation work.

Community Planning Group Recommendation – On November 9, 2004, the University Community Planning Group voted 11-4-0 to recommended approval of the proposed geotechnical investigation work with no conditions.

Environmental Review – A Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 54535, has been prepared for the project in accordance with State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. A Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program has been prepared and will be implemented which will reduce, to a level of insignificance, any potential impacts identified in the environmental review process.

## BACKGROUND

The Salk Institute, an existing 26.34 acre site, is a developed biological scientific research center that consists of seven buildings, approximately 289,818 square feet total of gross floor area, parking lots, and landscape improvements located at 10010 North Torrey Pines Road. The project site is within the Coastal Overlay (appealable), Coastal Height Limit, Community Plan Implementation Overlay (Area A), and RS-1-7 Zones within the University Community Plan. The Salk Institute property is bounded to the south by residential development; the west side canyon area and City-owned open space; the east by North Torrey Pines Road; and the north side of the property by Torrey Pines Scenic Drive, City-owned open space, and University of California San Diego property. The development was originally approved by the City of San Diego in 1961 through issuance of Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 3841 as amended, and thereafter subsequent CUP No. 85-0589, an amendment to CUP No. 3841, and Coastal Development Permit/Hillside Review/CUP No. 90-1140, an amendment to CUP No. 3841.

The Salk Institute proposes to expand their facilities, consistent with the University Community Plan's allocation of 500,000 square feet for scientific research building. In order to further develop the property, the location and design of the proposed facilities is based upon the geotechnical analysis of which requires testing and data collection from the project site. The Salk Institute has applied for a Coastal Development Permit and Site Development Permit for the City to authorize geotechnical investigations to occur on the site.

## DISCUSSION

### Project Description

The proposed geotechnical investigations include two trenches and three borings as indicated on the plans (Attachment 11). The locations were selected for their ability to provide the best possible geologic information with regard to fault location and slope stability while minimizing impacts to biological resources and steep slopes (Attachment 5).

The trenching analysis would determine the potential fault hazard for the site. The trenches would be located within the existing northwest parking lot area and would be approximately 36 inches wide and up to 25 feet deep. Soils removed from the trenches would be stockpiled next to the trench or within the parking lot and used for backfilling after the investigation is complete. These trench locations would not directly impact sensitive biological resources and would stay a minimum of 100 feet away from property's northwestern wetland area.

Three geophysical borings are required to assess the slope stability of the site. Two of the borings are proposed in the northwestern portion of the site and one is proposed in the southwestern portion of the site. These borings would be large 36-inch diameter bucket borings and drilled to a maximum depth of 125 feet. Access to the boring location on the southwestern portion of the site would require the traversing of equipment to the location, via driving through disturbed Diegan coastal sage scrub. Potential habitat disturbance from transportation would include a 26-foot diameter area to maneuver the drill rig and other equipment and an access route

to drive to the drill location. The total area anticipated for all this work is approximately 5,140 square feet (0.12 acre), of which 3,900 square feet (0.09 acre) would be in native habitat areas. The access to the boring location would be from the south through very sparse disturbed coastal sages scrub. The boring itself would occur in a large bare area and would not impact any coastal sage scrub species. To prevent disturbance to native soils, tarps (or other ground covering) would be used beneath stockpiles to protect the soil, seed bank and plant material. All stockpiling of bored subsurface materials would be put on tarps. Methods would be employed to minimize impacts to the surrounding habitat in these areas such as driving through disturbed or open patches in the vegetation and using tarps to capture stockpiled soil. Each boring would take approximately four days to complete.

Each geotechnical testing location would be returned to its pre-disturbance state after trenching and boring activities. The trenches and boring holes would be backfilled using the stockpiled materials. Any excess soil, large rocks or debris would be removed from site. Native coastal sage scrub seed would be spread in all disturbed habitat and disturbed coastal sage scrub areas (at boring sites 1 and 3) to assist in the re-establishment of the native habitat and prevent invasive species from entering adjacent native habitat. Tire ruts or other signs of disturbance would be raked and seeded with native coastal sage scrub species. The crushed vegetation would be spread out over the impact area.

#### Environmental Analysis

The City of San Diego conducted an Initial Study which determined that the proposed project could have a significant environmental effect upon biological resources and historical resources (archaeology). Subsequent revisions in the project proposal create the specific mitigation identified in the Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 54535, Section V., Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program. The project as revised now avoids or mitigates the potentially significant environmental effects previously identified.

#### Project Related Issues

The proposed geotechnical investigation work will not include the construction of any structures on the project site. However, consistent with the City's Land Development Code Section 143.0110, development, including excavation and grading activities, within the Coastal Zone and Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) requires a Coastal Development Permit and Site Development Permit. The proposed work is strategically located to minimize impacts to ESL habitat to include avoidance of steep hillsides, adjacent Multi-Habitat Preservation Area's open space, and temporary impacts to on-site disturbed habitat.

#### Conclusion

Staff recommends approval of the proposal as requested.

## ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve Coastal Development Permit No. 190894 and Site Development Permit No. 190895, with modifications.
2. Deny Coastal Development Permit No. 190894 and Site Development Permit No. 190895, if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Tim Daly, Development Project Manager

### Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Project Location Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Test Location Analysis, 11/30/04
6. Draft Permit with Conditions
7. Draft Resolution with Findings
8. Copy of Recorded Permits
9. Ownership Disclosure Statement
10. Project Site Plan(s) (Forwarded to HO)