

DATE ISSUED: November 6, 2002

REPORT NO. 02-259

ATTENTION: Land Use and Housing Committee
Agenda of November 13, 2002

SUBJECT: Consideration of the San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan

SUMMARY

Issue – Should the Land Use and Housing Committee refer the Joint Powers Authority’s (JPA) adopted San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan to City staff for analysis?

Manager’s Recommendation – Recommend that the Land Use and Housing Committee refer the proposed Concept Plan to City staff for analysis. Following an analysis, staff will return the proposed Concept Plan to the full City Council for action.

Fiscal Impact – The fiscal impact associated with this action is primarily the staff time to review the San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan for consistency with the City’s existing Plans and Policies. Costs would be absorbed by the departments involved with the review.

BACKGROUND

To establish an overall planning framework for the San Dieguito River Valley, the Executive Director of the San Dieguito River Park JPA has requested the City of San Diego, a member agency of the San Dieguito River Park JPA Board of Directors, consider the adoption of the San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan as a park-planning document.

The San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan has been prepared by staff from the San Dieguito River Park JPA to ensure the preservation of the San Dieguito River Valley’s sensitive resources, rural character, and visual quality. The area ultimately adopted as the regional planning boundary for the park, referred to as the “Focused Planning Area,” incorporates the entire viewshed of the river valley, its major tributary canyons, and a high desert linkage to Anza

Borrego State Park (Attachment 1). The Focused Planning Area extends for 55 miles from the ocean at Del Mar to the desert just east of Volcan Mountain (Attachment 2).

The San Diego City Council, on April 4, 1989, adopted a resolution (R-273162) recognizing, for planning purposes, the Focused Planning Area boundaries. The intent of this recognition was to facilitate continued planning for the potential park development. The San Diego City Council, on April 6, 1992, adopted Council Policy 700-14. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for managing City-owned property in the Focused Planning Area of the San Dieguito River Park that are compatible with the objectives of the park's plan.

The San Dieguito River Park JPA

The San Dieguito River Park JPA is the agency empowered to plan for and maintain the San Dieguito River Park. Land use authority within the Focused Planning Area is retained by the local jurisdictions. The JPA has been empowered by its member agencies, the county of San Diego, the cities of San Diego, Del Mar, Escondido, Poway, and Solana Beach to acquire, hold and dispose of property for park purposes. The JPA is also responsible for the improvement, operation, management, and maintenance of the San Dieguito River Park.

DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Concept Plan

The Concept Plan, prepared by the JPA with input from volunteers, consultants, and a Citizen Advisory Committee, provides the framework that will enable the realization of the overall park objectives. The purpose of this concept plan is to merge the goals and recommendation of previous park planning efforts into one overall conceptual plan that represents the unified expression of the desires of the citizens of San Diego County for the San Dieguito River Valley. The primary function of the Concept Plan is to protect natural habitats along the San Dieguito River Valley. Areas with less sensitive biological resources are proposed as recreational areas and it is anticipated that a trail system will serve the river valley.

The San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan was adopted by the JPA Board of Directors in February 1994, but was not circulated to the member agencies for adoption. On February 15, 2002, the Board of Directors approved administrative changes to the Concept Plan. The administrative changes updated descriptions of the existing conditions within the Focused Planning Area and recognized existing Park proposals, new park proposals for possible implementation in the future, description of the City of San Diego MSCP, and minor revisions to sections of the Plan. Member agencies are now being asked to adopt the February 2002 updated Concept Plan.

Planning Process

Since the JPA itself does not have land use authority over the properties within the Focused Planning Area, the JPA is recommending that its member agencies adopt the Concept Plan as a park planning document. If adopted by its member agencies, the Concept Plan can effectively serve as a tool for implementing the goals of the San Dieguito River Valley. Consistency with

the plan's goals and recommendations will be considered by the City of San Diego when making decisions regarding appropriate land uses and development projects within and surrounding the river valley.

A program Environmental Impact Report has been prepared and certified by the JPA that examined the significant direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of implementing the overall goals and proposals described in the Concept Plan. As subsequent activities are proposed that implement the goals and proposals of the Concept Plan, an Initial Study will be used to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared.

Consistency With Other land Use Plans and Policies

Upon preliminary review, the Concept Plan's goals for the future use of the San Dieguito River Valley appear to be consistent with the Park and Open Space recommendations of the Process Guide and General Plan, Torrey Pines Community Plan, San Pasqual Valley Plan, North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan (including several Subarea Plans), and the MSCP Subarea Plan. The City of San Diego incorporated language referring to the San Dieguito River Valley into the Torrey Pines Community Plan that was adopted in 1996. The San Pasqual Valley Plan, adopted in 1995, also incorporates language regarding the use of the Concept Plan. The San Pasqual Valley Plan specifically recommends that recreational facilities be designed and implemented through the joint efforts of the City and the JPA. The North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan also acknowledges the San Dieguito River Park Focused Planning Area and has included design and development recommendation that apply to development within the Focused Planning Area.

CONCLUSION

The Concept Plan is a policy document that will provide direction and guidance in park land acquisition, development efforts and evaluation of proposals that may affect the park. Adoption of the Concept Plan by the City of San Diego and other member agencies would facilitate implementation and carry out the intent of the Joint Powers Authority Agreement.

If the Land Use and Housing Committee directs staff to analyze the San Dieguito River Park's Concept Plan, the Planning Department will distribute the Concept Plan to the City Attorney's Office, MSCP staff, Real Estate Assets Department, Park and Recreation Department, Development Services Department, and Water Department for review. Staff's review of the Concept Plan will determine if it is consistent with the City's adopted Plans and Policies. The costs associated with reviewing and processing the Concept Plan would be absorbed by the general fund budgets of the departments involved.

Dick Bobertz, Executive Director of the San Dieguito River Park will provide the presentation regarding the Concept Plan at the November 13, 2002 Land Use and Hosing Committee meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Gail Goldberg, A.I.C.P.
Planning Director

Approved: P. Lamont Ewell
Assistant City Manager

GOLDBERG/JA

Note: The attachments are not available in electronic format. A copy is available for review in the Office of the City Clerk.

Attachments: 1. Vicinity Map
2. San Dieguito River Park Focused Planning Area