



**MINUTES OF THE SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREA
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEATAC)
MEETING OF 5 January 2009**

PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE:

SEATAC MEMBERS

Jonathan Baskin (absent)
Ty Garrison
Scott Harris
Michael Long (absent)
Thomas Scott
Cheryl Swift

REGIONAL PLANNING STAFF

M.V.B. Reddy
Shirley Imsand
Michele Bush

APPLICANTS

Tom Malloy (951) 739-0508
Tom Reu (818) 398-2241

Biologists

Daryl Koutnik (626) 564-1500
Joe Decruyenaere (626) 564-1500

Place and Date

Monday, 5 January, 2009
Time: 1:00 P.M.
Place: DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING
Hall of Records, Room 1385
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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All the members and the coordinator identified themselves at the start of the meeting

OLD BUSINESS

1:00 p.m. Approved the SEATAC minutes of 6 October 2008 (**Rancho San Francisquito, VTTM 69788**)

New Business

PROJECT: Fairmont butte motorsports park project, COUNTY PROJECT NO. 02-176 PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 02-176 PARCEL MAP NO. 26805 CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 02-176 ZONE CHANGE 02-176

The Fairmont Butte Motorsports Park (FBMP) project site is situated in an unincorporated portion of Los Angeles County, approximately 14 miles northwest of the City of Lancaster, near the community of Fairmont. Specifically, the 320 gross acre site is rectangular in shape and is bounded by State Highway 138 – Avenue D to the north, 155th Street West to the west, 150th Street West to the east, and open space to the south. The project site is located within the Fairmont Butte U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle. The southern portion of the project site is within the current boundaries of County of the Los Angeles Significant Ecological Area (SEA) 57 – Fairmont Butte, while the northern portion of the project site is outside the SEA boundaries. The proposed project would be constructed in the northern portion of the site, outside the boundaries of SEA 57 – Fairmont Butte.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project involves the construction and operation of a motor recreational facility for the driving, testing, and racing of automobiles or similar vehicles, including appurtenant facilities in conjunction there with. It would principally contain a road course configuration approximately 3.6 miles in length. Primary use of the facility would be for racing events sponsored by private clubs and racing organizations and for automotive testing.

The racetrack would operate only during daylight hours during typical racing events, although car maintenance may be performed during the evening. Automotive and race car practice and/or testing/development session are expected to occur during the weekdays (here defined as Monday through Thursday inclusive) for about 40 weeks per year and would involve approximately 5 to 10 cars. At this time, approximately 50 persons would be present at the facility on weekdays. Racing events are expected to occur on weekends (here defined as Friday through Sunday inclusive) almost every weekend of the year with an expected attendance of approximately 50 to 300 entered cars and an on-racetrack population of approximately 250 to 1,325 persons (3.5 persons per entered car + 75 track employees and employees of leased facilities + 200 spectators). These events are generally sponsored by private car clubs or other racing organizations. Although these events are open to the public, given the relative isolation of the subject property, few spectators are expected to attend.

Ancillary facilities and structures at the FBMP include water tanks, a septic system, storm water retention basins, an aboveground fueling station, and heli stop. Access to the motor recreational facility would be provided at one location via the intersection of State Highway 138 - Avenue D and 150th Street West. Roadway improvements are required by the County of Los Angeles and Caltrans as part of project approval. The County of Los Angeles requires 42 feet of half-street improvement to 150th Street

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West consistent with collector street standards from Highway 138 - Avenue D south to the main entrance of the proposed development. Highway 138 – Avenue D would be improved in conformance with Caltrans requirements including, at a minimum, the addition of an eastbound deceleration lane and westbound left turn lane approaching 150th Street West. Parking would occur throughout an approximately 16-acre, paved paddock area that is situated in the central portion of the proposed motorsports facility. Selected infrastructure and utilities needed to serve the FBMP project are proposed on site or are located near to the project site. In-place infrastructure includes electricity and natural gas that currently exists within rights-of-way within or adjacent State Highway 138 – Avenue D. Water to the project site would be derived from an on-site well and domestic sewage would be treated and disposed of in two deep seepage pits that have been designed to accommodate projected demand.

Grading and construction of the FBMP project would be phased. The site is currently vacant land, and no demolition is required. At this time, it is expected that grading would occur in two phases, while construction would occur in three phases. Grading would be balanced on site, no import or export of material is proposed or is required, and grading volume would total approximately 200,070 cubic yards of cut and fill. At this time, it is anticipated that build out of the FBMP (assumes project initiation in July 2009).

Action Requested: Continued review of combined Biological Constraints Analysis and Biota Report submitted in April 2008, with review of focus studies requested by SEATAC members at the previous meeting 5 May 2008. Applicant is requesting to review revised EIR that contains mitigation measures.

Discussion:

The SEATAC expressed that the site for the project is sensitive due to wild life habitat and a wash in the southern border. The committee asked Impact Sciences, the biology consulting firm to the project on how the project design changed from the last meeting as they did not observe any changes in the revised EIR. The biologists replied that they want to make sure the mitigation measures proposed in the revised EIR could be helpful to reduce the significant effects of the project. Also added that moving the project site to the North will help partially to reduce the impact, but the portion of the project will still be in SEA. The committee said they did not see any redesign of the project in the submitted EIR, and the biologist agreed with the committee. Then the committee felt why we are here if there is no change in the project design from the last meeting. There were repeated mentions of redesign of the project, which could be moving the project to the north and not clear about what to be included in the redesign. SEATAC stated that in the light of the change in the delineation of the SEA boundary about 200 feet north of the wash, it still does not change any of SEATAC's conclusions about the impacts of the project from the last meeting and that they would like to see the project reanalyzed moving it to North which is a flat area and away from designated SEA.

One of the SEATAC member pointed out that approximately 181 acres of wild life habitat will be lost and recalled that the loss is significant. The committee would like to know, how this significant loss of wild life habitat can be mitigated. The biologist mentioned that one way could be moving the project to the North away from the wash but did not have definite plan at present that is included in the EIR. The applicant stated that if the project is accepted as it is, it will be better preserved with fencing, no trespassing and dumping. The applicant feels that the project site is a mess now and not fenced. Anyone

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can go and dump the things as it is happening. If the project is accepted as it is he will fence the area and take care of it better than the present situation. The committee responded that by limiting the area or fencing the area the concept of open space is lost and it limits the wild life movement. Therefore, limiting the area or fencing is not an environmentally feasible solution. Also by limiting the project area it is not sure the wild flowers in the project site could be preserved.

Referring to the mitigation measures proposed, one of the member from SEATAC expressed that the loss of habitat, say for example in Place A of the project can be mitigated by leaving a open space of in Place B of the project will not work in this particular case. A loss of habitat in Place A is lost forever and cannot be mitigated by leaving open space in place B of the project. Therefore the effect is significant. Further, mitigation measures proposed in the EIR do no explain passive relocation of burrowing owl or sensitive species on the edge portion. It is also important to know the population dynamics of Burrowing Owl in the impacted area and on how this can be mitigated in the open space is not clear. A clear survey for Burrowing Owl is needed and with mitigation measures to minimize the impact. Any mitigation in the buffer area is not feasible as it protects the un impacted area from the impacted. It is also important to survey the breeding habitat of burrowing owl in the Antelope Valley and see what portion of the open space is suitable to mitigate the habitat loss in impacted portion of the project. Since the mitigation measures fall short as it is, the impact is significant. The applicant reiterated that the site as it is a highly disturbed and stated that if the project is accepted in the present form they will take good care of the area preserving the poppy reserves and wild flowers any other sensitive species. However, SEATC feels that even though it is an impacted site as it is and these impacts are seasonal, it still carries wild life value.

There was some discussion on the existing boundaries of the project in SEA and found that the southern boundary of the project is within the existing SEA. The proposed SEA would be extended up to 200 feet from the southern wash of the project which means that more of the project area comes under the SEA. In such case mitigation measures will vary in relation to SEA and no SEA pertaining to the sensitive species and the species those exist in the rocky areas vs. on the ground. SEATAC expressed that in the mitigation measures it is better to include or consider moving the project away from the preserved islands and open space can be provided as a buffer zone between the project site and the surroundings. SEATAC hoped that this redesign should be evident in the mitigation measures. Once again this happens by redesigning the project away from the current SEA boundaries and the wash. SEATAC emphasized again the project in its current design is not compatible with SEATAC guidelines. There was a discussion on even after moving the project away from SEA, still there is some impact based on the nature of the project where traffic and sound is involved. The fundamental question being asked was out of two parcels in the project the South one is in the SEA in part and the north one is not. It makes more sense to develop the project in the north side away from SEA and this will answer the discussion to certain extent. The applicant replied that the nature of the project demands a certain kind of topography and elevation and the northern parcel is a flat land which is not suitable for the project. In that case the committee asked the applicant to conduct feasibility and cost studies on these two sites on what it takes to develop the project in the northern flat area vs. south. In any case the applicant still insisted to develop the project in the southern parcel due to topography that supports project needs. The committee expressed that he should come up with clear mitigation measures in the open space or any conservation easement to leave the opens space permanent, contact conservation agencies or the county to commit the open space permanent with suggested mitigation measure to compensate for the loss of habitat to the south.

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