

Del Mar Mesa Community Planning Board
3525 Del Mar Heights Road, Box 246, San Diego, California 92130

City of San Diego Development Service Department
1222 First Avenue, MS 501
San Diego, CA 92101
c/o E. Shearer-Nguyen, Environmental Planner

Re: The Preserve At Torrey Highlands/442880

The Del Mar Mesa Planning Board as an advisory body to the San Diego Planning Commission and San Diego City Council submits this letter, approved unanimously at the April 14, 2016 meeting, outlining issues that should be addressed in the Environmental Impact Study for the proposed development called The Preserve At Torrey Highlands.

Cisterra Development is seeking an amendment to the City's General Plan and an amendment to the Torrey Highlands Subarea Community Plan to re-designate the project site from Commercial Limited to Employment Center, a re-zone from AR1-1 (agricultural or residential 1 per 10-acre lots) to IP-3-1 (industrial park) to construct a 450,000 square foot office complex on an 11-acre site formerly owned by the Catholic Diocese at the eastern end of Del Mar Mesa Preserve.

While the site is within the Torrey Highlands Community Plan Area, it is surrounded on three sides by Del Mar Mesa Preserve, which lies within the Del Mar Mesa Community Plan Area.

The proposed project will be visible from neighborhoods within Del Mar Mesa and is adjacent to popular undeveloped trails that connect to the 10-mile trail system within the community.

The Board commends San Diego City Staff for the comprehensive list of questions that the project applicant must answer about the environmental impacts of the project in the study.

However, the Del Mar Mesa Planning Board wants to ensure that the EIR details impacts to the Del Mar Mesa Community specifically, and more broadly, the cumulative effect on the larger ecosystem of interconnected habitat areas essential for the survival of Del Mar Mesa Preserve.

And so in addition to the issues outlined in the city staff EIR Scoping Document, the Board asks that the applicant describe the following.

1. Effects on the community character of Del Mar Mesa neighborhoods, including:
 - a. Visual impacts to homeowners in neighborhoods The Preserve, Bougainvillea, Duck Pond, Alta Vista, and future homes on the east end of the community. These should be outlined and graphic representations of those views included
 - b. Effects of noise levels and night lighting during daily operation
 - c. Noise and air quality during construction, including effects of exporting 63,000 cubic yards of soil

2. Compatibility with the Del Mar Mesa/Carmel Mountain Preserves Resource Management Plan, approved by the Del Mar Mesa Planning Board and San Diego City Council, which took over a decade to enact representing a compromise agreement between various recreational user groups, environmentalists, and state, federal and local park agencies:
 - a. Show that the same criteria for vernal pool avoidance required of trail planners by wildlife and park agencies when mapping the Resource Management Plan will be followed.
 - b. Identify any trails defined by the Management Plan that will be disrupted or blocked.
 - c. Describe impacts to the special trail "Tunnel 1" through Deer Canyon.

3. Del Mar Mesa and Del Mar Mesa Preserve are home to popular public biking, hiking and equestrian trails. Recreation should be deemed a *significant* area to review:
 - a. Visual graphics that clearly show what the project will look like from view points along the trail systems memorialized in the Resource Management Plan
 - b. Description of any additional stress on the trails both inside Del Mar Mesa Preserve and on the connected 10-mile public trail system within the Del Mar Mesa community
 - c. Disruptions to the quiet enjoyment of Del Mar Mesa Preserve and Los Penasquitos Canyon, should be part of any community character assessment, including but not confined to, noise and visual effects, loss of wildlife, and elimination of sensitive plants, during construction and from daily operation
 - d. Identify funding for affected trail maintenance

4. As stated previously, Del Mar Mesa Preserve is a functioning part of a larger interconnected ecosystem that includes Los Penasquitos Canyon, Carmel Mountain, Los Penasquitos Lagoon and Torrey Pines State Park. Therefore the following should be analyzed:
 - a. Cumulative impacts to the entire Preserve system.
 - b. Adjacency effects on protected Federal, State and City lands at the edges of the project, including vernal pools.

5. Community Benefit
 - a. Community Plan Amendments require that projects of this magnitude substantially benefit the community. Any of those benefits must be within the Torrey Highlands and Del Mar Mesa Community Planning Areas.
 - b. Benefits should substantially enhance the preservation goals of the Del Mar Mesa Preserve and the interconnected habitats of Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve, Carmel Mountain Preserve, Los Penasquitos Lagoon and Torrey Pines State Park.

Finally, but no less important, is that higher uses than the proposed project are allowable if the applicant wins approval for a Community Plan and General Plan Amendment. Given the biological sensitivity and recreational popularity of Del Mar Mesa Preserve, along with direct and indirect on surrounding communities, the range of potential uses, facility density, and building heights should be made very clear to the public.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa D. Ross". The signature is written in dark ink and includes a long, sweeping horizontal line at the end.

Lisa Ross
Chair, The Preserve At Torrey Highlands Subcommittee
Del Mar Mesa Planning Board

