



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: October 17, 2024 REPORT NO. PC-24-046

HEARING DATE: October 24, 2024

SUBJECT: SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK OSUNA SEGMENT OF THE COAST TO CREST TRAIL PROJECT, Process Four Decision

PROJECT NUMBER: [PRJ-1049410](#)

REFERENCE: Osuna Segment of Coast to Crest Trail Project - San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority [License Agreement](#), [City Council \(R-2024-420\)](#), Osuna Trail Final Mitigated Negative Declaration [SCH# 2023050120](#).

OWNER/APPLICANT: San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

### SUMMARY

#### Issue:

Should the Planning Commission approve a Site Development Permit to construct the one-mile-long Osuna segment of the Coast to Crest Trail, with improvements to include a raised decomposed granite (DG) trail and bridge crossing at the San Dieguito River located at [14555 El Camino Real](#) approximately 2 miles east of Interstate 5 between Via de la Valle and San Dieguito Road in San Diego County, within the [Fairbanks Ranch Country Club Community Planning Area](#)?

#### Proposed Actions:

1. ADOPT the Environmental Resolution;
2. ADOPT the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program and;
3. APPROVE Site Development Permit (SDP) No. PMT-3138236.

#### Fiscal Considerations:

All costs associated with the processing of this application are paid from a deposit account maintained by the applicant. Upon project completion, the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA) will be responsible for maintaining this section of the Coast to Crest Trail.

Code Enforcement Impact: None with this action.

Housing Impact Statement: None with this action.

Community Planning Group Recommendation:

On October 28, 2021, the Carmel Valley Community Planning Board voted 11- 0 in support of the extension of the Osuna Segment of Coast to Crest Trail.

Other Recommendations:

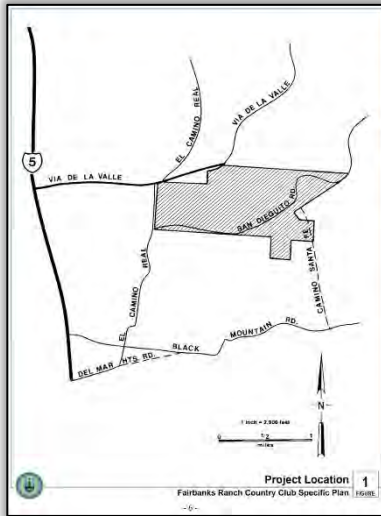
On July 28, 2020, the City of San Diego Real Estate Assets Department signed a letter in support of the Osuna Trail Segment of the Coast to Crest Trail CNRA Recreational Trail and Greenways Grant Program. On November 11, 2021, San Dieguito Planning Group meeting, the group voted unanimously 9-0 with 4 absent/vacant in support of the proposed project to extend the Osuna Segment of the Coast to Crest Trail (CTC Trail or Trail). On February 13, 2022, Whispering Palms Community Council, submitting, issued a letter endorsing the completion of the San Dieguito River Park JPA Osuna Segment of the Coast to Crest Trail.

Environmental Impact:

The San Dieguito River Park JPA, as Lead Agency pursuant to the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prepared and adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH No. 2023050120) for the Osuna Segment of the Coast to Crest Trail (Resolution No. 23-3). A Mitigation, Monitoring And Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared and will be implemented, which will reduce, to below a level of significance, any potential impacts identified in the environmental review process.

The City of San Diego, as a Responsible Agency under CEQA, reviewed and considered the adopted Mitigation Negative Declaration and determined the environmental document to be adequate to cover the activities associated with the City's discretionary action. Implementation of the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program will reduce any potentially significant environmental impacts to Biological Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources to a level below significance. The MMRP specifies what the mitigation is, the entity responsible for monitoring the program, and when during the process it should be accomplished.

## BACKGROUND:



The project site is located in the Fairbanks Ranch Country Club Specific Plan (Plan) area. The Plan area consists of 785+/- acres of land generally located in the San Dieguito River Valley east of Interstate 5 (I-5). A regional site location map is provided in **Figure 1**. The project lies within the San Dieguito River Valley, located at 14555 El Camino Real, approximately 2 miles east of Interstate 5 between Via de la Valle and San Dieguito Road.

The CTC Trail is a planned 71-mile, multi-use regional trail that will ultimately extend from the Pacific Ocean at Del Mar to Volcan Mountain, north of Julian. Approximately 49 miles of the regional trail have already been constructed and are now in use. The proposed Osuna section of the CTC Trail is included in both the JPA-adopted San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan (1994, updated 2002) and the County of San Diego Regional Trails Plan.

## DISCUSSION

The objectives of the proposed project are to:

1. Construct the Osuna segment of the CTC Trail as identified in the San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan and County of San Diego Regional Trails Plan.
2. Connect the Osuna portion of the trail to the existing 3.5-mile segment of CTC Trail by one mile from the eastern end of its current terminus at the Surf Cup Sports fields (formerly Polo Fields) to link the trail to San Dieguito Road.
3. Minimize impacts to riparian areas and native habitats by routing through disturbed areas, installing fencing to define trails, installing a bridge, and avoiding wetlands where possible.
4. Provide a safe and enjoyable multi-use trail experience for the trail users (hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians).
5. Avoid and minimize impacts to the natural resources where possible, including riparian wetland habitat, by selecting a bridge design that imposes minimal impacts.
6. Avoid and minimize impacts on historic and cultural resources.

## Project Description:

The purpose of the Osuna trail segment (referred to as the Osuna segment or the San Dieguito River Park Osuna Segment of the Coast to Crest Trail Project in some instances) is to extend an existing western 3.5-mile segment of the CTC Trail by one mile from its current terminus at the Surf Cup

Sports (formerly Polo Fields) to link the trail to San Dieguito Road. The project lies within the San Dieguito River Valley, located at 14555 El Camino Real, approximately 2 miles east of Interstate 5 between Via de la Valle and San Dieguito Road. It would provide a vital linkage, connecting established lagoon and coastal segments of the CTC Trail to the eastern inland trail segments. The Project's proposed improvements include a raised decomposed granite (DG) trail and bridge crossing at the San Dieguito River. The (non-vehicular) trail bridge crossing is essential to connecting the trail to San Dieguito Road where it would link to the subsequently planned segment of the CTC Trail.

This approximate one-mile extension of the Trail will also function as a multi-use trail for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. The Osuna segment will include an approximate 150-foot-span prefabricated bridge over the San Dieguito River and will provide an important link to other planned trail segments in the area. The overall trail system will provide a public access route through the City of San Diego open space and easements granted by private landholders. The proposed trail route parallels the north boundary of the City of San Diego open space.

The area for the proposed project consists of the proposed trail alignment plus a 100-foot buffer, totaling 23.85 acres. The CTC Trail is located along the north border of the City of San Diego (City) and the County of San Diego (County). The CTC Trail is located between the Surf Cup Sports facility (Surf Cup) and the Fairbanks Ranch Golf Course, both of which are leased properties from the city of San Diego.

The project boundary extends from the Surf Cup property on the West, borders the Morgan Run Golf Course property to the north, crosses through Fairbanks Ranch property to the east, and traverses through the Evergate Stables property via an existing access road connecting to San Dieguito Road. The trail alignment is constrained due to its proximity to the Morgan Run Golf Course property. Morgan Run has rejected the request from the JPA for the trail to pass through their property and for joint use of their existing bridge over the San Dieguito River. The existing bridge serves the Morgan Golf Course, and it will remain in place and will be used exclusively by golf course users and maintenance staff. The project has been designed to site the CTC Trail bridge and abutments to the south and west of the Morgan Run Golf Course property line. The trail will be surrounded by existing wetlands and upland vegetation. The trail alignment through the Evergate Stables property is located in the unincorporated County of San Diego, was modified to minimize impacts to the freshwater marsh and coastal salt marsh vegetation by utilizing the existing service access road as the trail crossing rather than creating an expanded trail footprint which would present additional environmental impacts.

The project is within the City of San Diego's MSCP Subarea plan area but outside the Multiple Habitat Planning Area (City of San Diego 1997).

#### Permits Required

- A Site Development Permit (SDP) Process Four is required for deviations from Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations, San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) Section [143.0150](#). The project proposes deviations to the Sensitive Biological

Resources regulations in the form of wetlands. This action is pursuant to SDMC Section [126.0502\(d\)\(4\)](#)). Additionally, the applicant team solicited input from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife prior to the first hearing consistent with the City's Biology Guidelines.

The project complies with SDMC Section 143.0150(d) Deviations from Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations. The project falls under the allowable deviations to the wetland regulations as an essential public project and, specifically, linear infrastructure essential under SDMC Section 143.0150(d)(1)(B)(ii). The CTC Trail is a regional multi-use public trail planned for 71 miles from the coast in Del Mar to the crest of Volcan Mountain near Julian. Currently, 49 miles of the Trail are complete, with the Osuna segment representing the 50th mile. The CTC Trail is adopted in the San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan ((SDRP)1994, updated 2002) and included in the County of San Diego's Master Trails Plan and State of California State Trails Plan. The SDRP is included in the City's Parks Master Plan.

The Osuna segment would connect existing segments of the CTC Trail on both sides of the river, including San Dieguito Road (existing bike lanes and future CTC Pathway). It closes an essential CTC Trail gap connecting 4.6 miles of coastal/lagoon trail segments to 24 miles of inland segments.

#### Zoning:

The project site is located within the AR-1-1, AR-1-2, and OF-1-1 zones, which allow for the proposed use. The project site contains Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL). The project cannot avoid impacts on ESL to Biological Resources and Wetlands. The project proposes mitigation, which represents a deviation from the ESL regulations. Therefore, the project requires a Site Development Permit (SDP) Process 4 pursuant to SDMC Section 126.0502(d)(4). Additionally, the applicant team solicited input from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife prior to the first hearing consistent with the City's Biology Guidelines.

The proposed deviation would allow a bridge crossing over the San Dieguito River that would impact 0.173 acres of wetland habitat. The project minimizes and mitigates wetland impacts to the extent feasible and affords relief from the circumstances and conditions of the land, which are not of the applicant's making. These include existing adjacent established land uses; private land that is not available for the project; the necessity to cross the river at this location to connect to the CTC Trail going east with no other feasible options that have less impact; and the ability to utilize an existing dirt utility road for most of the trail length, again resulting in the least amount of impact to ESL. Furthermore, deviations to the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Wetland Regulations are allowed pursuant to SDMC Section [143.0150\(d\)\(1\)](#) Essential Public Projects Option. As a linear infrastructure essential public project, the proposed Osuna trail would extend the existing 3.5-mile western Lagoon Trail segment of the CTC Trail by connecting the established lagoon segments of the CTC Trail to the eastern inland trail segments.

### Community Plan Analysis:

The Fairbanks Ranch Country Club Specific Plan contains policy recommendations on page 33 for Recreation to "provide a range of opportunities for active and passive recreation, educational activities, and neighborhood identification, in all parts of the city, adapted to the needs and desires of each neighborhood and community."

The plan recommends "enhancing the urban scene by the development of an extensive and varied system of open space and recreation facilities." The proposed trail provides access to open space areas and opportunities for active recreation, consistent with the adopted plan.

The Whispering Palm residential community is located nearby to the northwest of the project site, but the Osuna segment is not proposed in the residential area and would not interfere with existing homes. The proposed project would not disrupt or divide the established community nor have the potential for cumulatively considerable impacts on an established community.

The project would contribute to the completion of a regional trail, the Coast to Crest Trail, which is included in and consistent with the San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan (which is included in the City's Parks Master Plan) and the County of San Diego Regional Trails Plan. The project would not conflict with any other land use plans and is consistent with the area's open space, recreational, and agriculture zoning. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

### Environmental Analysis:

As a Responsible Agency under the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), City Environmental Analysis staff has reviewed and considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared for the project and determined that the document covers the activities associated with the City's discretionary action. A Mitigation, Monitoring And Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared, and implementation of the MMRP would mitigate potentially significant environmental impacts to Biological Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources.

### Conclusion:

The staff has reviewed project plans and documents, and all the necessary findings can be made to approve the project as discussed in depth above and demonstrated in the resolution of approval (Attachment 9). Staff recommends that the Planning Commission ADOPT the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program and APPROVE Site Development Permit No. PMT-3138236.

### Alternatives

1. ADOPT the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program for PRJ-1049410; and APPROVE Site Development Permit No. PMT-3138236, with modifications.
2. DO NOT ADOPT the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program for PRJ-1049410; and DO NOT APPROVE Site Development Permit No. PMT-3138236, if the findings required to

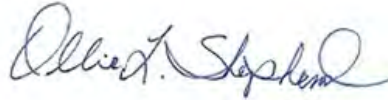
approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,



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Renee Mezo  
Assistant Deputy Director  
Development Services Department



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Ollie Shepherd  
Development Project Manager  
Development Services Department

Attachments:

1. Location Map
2. Aerial Photograph
3. Community Plan Land Use Map
4. Site Photographs
5. Draft Environmental Resolution with MMRP
6. [Final Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)
7. Draft Permit with Conditions
8. Draft Permit Resolution with Findings
9. Community Planning Group Recommendation
10. City of San Diego Real Estate Assets Department signed letter of support for Osuna Trail Segment of the Coast to Crest Trail CNRA Recreational Trail and Greenways Grant Program.
11. San Dieguito Planning Group Recommendation
12. Whispering Palms Community Council, letter endorsing completion of the San Dieguito River Park JPA Osuna Segment of the Coast to Crest Trail.
13. Ownership Disclosure Statement
14. Project Plans