

Melrose Extension County Park Land Meeting Memo

Attendees:

Susan Hector, ASM Affiliates and Jake Enriquez, SD County Parks and Recreation
August 14, 2008

The discussion focused on County DPR review of the proposed Melrose Drive extension project.

1. Conversion of park land. SMH shared a communication from State Parks with Jake, indicating that the park land conversion process would need to comply with Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) requirements, since these federal funds were used in the park. The requirements essentially state that the conversion must replace park land acre-for-acre, and must replace park functions and facilities taken.

The replacement land must be usable park land, and will not include landscaped slopes, medians, or other acreage needed for the road project. No isolated pieces that are not usable for recreation would be acceptable. Replacement land must be clear of any unwanted materials and restored with native vegetation.

In terms of replacement of park functions, the County will focus on maintaining and supporting trail connections across North Santa Fe Road and Guajome Lake Road. An at-grade crossing will not be acceptable in this area.

Any conversion of park land would have to be approved first by the Board of Supervisors. The County would not support the conversion unless trail connections are maintained and improved by the project. The trails are heavily used, with the park hosting 18 cross-country events each year.

2. Mitigation of adverse impacts. The second issue is mitigation of impacts to the park from the road project. This is separate from the park land conversion process. The road has the potential to change the character of the park, increase and change recreational usage, and result in direct impacts to the property. The following concerns were raised:

- Current trails, parking, and restrooms in the park are not adequate for an increase in usage that will occur with the road connection
- Water quality may deteriorate due to runoff and road waste; the condition of the upper pond should be evaluated to see if increased runoff would cause structural damage
- Increased noise and pollution will change the park experience for visitors

Mitigation measures discussed included trail improvements in the vicinity of Vista Sports Park and historic Rancho Guajome Adobe (this trail crosses North Santa Fe into the project area, and continues into the campground), restroom and parking enhancements, use of native or non-invasive vegetation for slope landscaping, and noise barriers as appropriate.