

## 4.13 RECREATION

### 4.13.1 Introduction

This section provides the recreational setting of the project site, including surrounding recreational facilities and an analysis of potential impacts that project implementation may have on existing recreational facilities. The information in this section is based on information provided in the City of Del Mar General Plan Recreation Element (1985), the City of San Diego General Plan Recreation Element (2008), and the Torrey Pines Community Plan (1996). The City of Del Mar General Plan Recreation Element is available for review at the City of Del Mar Planning Counter at 1050 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar, CA 92014. The City of San Diego General Plan Recreation Element and Torrey Pines Community Plan is available for review at the City of San Diego Planning Counter at 202 C Street, San Diego, CA 92101.

### 4.13.2 Existing Environmental Setting

**On-Site Recreational Opportunities.** The Del Mar Fairgrounds is a world-class, multiuse, public assembly facility with an emphasis on agriculture, education, entertainment, and recreation. There are several recreation components to the existing Fairgrounds facility. Some of these components include a driving range, miniature golf course, tennis courts, volleyball tent, recreational vehicle (RV) lot, swimming pool, arena (horse), training track, and Racetrack. A list of the on-site recreational components for the project site is provided in Table 4.13.A. All recreation uses on the project site are owned by the 22nd District Agricultural Association (22nd DAA) and operated by the 22nd DAA, the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club, or by a contract operator. Currently there are no City or County recreational facilities on the project site. The fire station site consists of a commercial structure, parking lot, and vacant land, and there are no existing recreational uses on the fire station site.

#### **Off-Site Recreational Opportunities.**

**City of Del Mar.** There are approximately 371 acres (ac) of passive and active recreational opportunities outside of the project site in neighborhood and community parks and other recreational facilities throughout the City of Del Mar. Passive recreational opportunities allow the user to interact with the surrounding environment (e.g., walking, fishing, or sunbathing), while active recreational opportunities generally involve physical activity (e.g., surfing, jogging, or soccer). The City of Del Mar Community Plan Recreation Element (May 1985) designates local parks (miniparks, neighborhood parks, community parks) and regional parks within the City of Del Mar as recreation areas for active and passive recreation. Figure 4.13.1 identifies off-site recreational opportunities located in the City of Del Mar and adjacent areas of the City of San Diego. The closest facilities to the project site include:

- North Bluffs Preserve (also referred to as James Scripps Bluff Preserve): local park, passive recreation, 12.5 ac
- Tennis courts (2) at the intersection of 21st Street and Camino del Mar: local park, active recreation, 0.5 ac

**Table 4.13.A: Existing On-Site Recreational Facilities**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Approximate Square Footage/ Seats/Stalls</b>	<b>User Groups</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Indoor/Outdoor Exhibit Hall Space	254,780 sf	Trade groups, other organizations	Convention, tradeshow/consumer shows, community events, large meetings, concerts
Activity Center	19,800 sf	Groups and organizations	Convention, tradeshow/consumer shows, community events, large meetings, concerts
Expo Center	40,000 sf	Groups and organizations	Soccer, basketball, baseball, tumbling, volleyball, batting cages, pitching, bull pens, league and sports camp activities, group and private instruction
Wyland Center	30,800 sf	Groups and organizations	Convention, tradeshow/consumer shows, community events, large meetings, concerts
Training Track	620,730 sf	DMTC	
<b>Racetrack and Grandstands Complex Facility<sup>1</sup></b>			
Grandstands	15,000 seats	Ground Public	Racetrack viewing and support, concerts, sporting events
Racetrack	264,000 sf	DMTC	Live horse racing
Turf Club	6,200 sf	Open to the public to rent	Weddings, private parties
Paddock Lounge	3,200 sf	Open to the public to rent	Racetrack viewing, private parties
Paddock Green	9,350 sf	Open to the public to rent	Outdoor weddings and private parties
Plaza de Mexico	32,000 sf	Open to the public to rent	Outdoor weddings and private parties
Skyboxes	18,845 sf	Open to the public to rent	Racetrack viewing, private parties
West Grandstands Concourses I & II	48,700 sf	Open to the public to rent	
Hacienda Room	2,960 sf	Open to the public to rent	
Surfside Race Place Complex	8,700 sf	Open to the public to rent	Open to the public, off-track wagering, restaurant, and special events
<b>Surf and Turf Complex</b>			
Driving Range	650,000 sf	Open to the public	65 Teeing stations & golf lessons
Mini Golf Course	63,000 sf	Open to the public	Miniature golf courses, short game area, golf lessons
Tennis Courts	70,000 sf	Open to the public	League/Sports
RV Lot	115,000 sf	Open to the public	
Volleyball Tent	20,000 sf	Open to the public	League/Sports
<b>Arena Complex</b>			
Arena	67,500 sf	Equestrian organizations, other groups	Equestrian events, sporting events, concerts
Arena Room	3,240 sf	Equestrian organizations, other groups	Equestrian and sporting events

**Table 4.13.A: Existing On-Site Recreational Facilities**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Approximate Square Footage/ Seats/Stalls</b>	<b>User Groups</b>	<b>Activities</b>
San Diego Arena	31,250 sf	Equestrian organizations, other groups	Equestrian and sporting events
Durante Arena	31,250 sf	Equestrian organizations, other groups	Equestrian and sporting events
<b>Backstretch</b>			
Horsemen Center	10,000 sf	Jockeys, grooms, owners, and trainers	Food service and gathering space
Permanent and Portable Horse Stalls	1930 stalls	Equestrian groups	Stabling of horses for thoroughbred racing, horse shows, and Rodeo's Halloween "Scream Zone"

Source: Del Mar Fairgrounds Master Plan (July 2008).

<sup>1</sup> The Racetrack and Grandstands complex provides support facilities to live Horseracing Meets. The complex is also utilized during the Fair. Other uses occur during the Interim Season.

sf = square feet

**This page intentionally left blank**





FIGURE 4.13.1

LSA



0 1,000 2,000 Feet

LEGEND

-  Project Limit
-  Recreation Areas

**This page intentionally left blank**

- San Dieguito Lagoon Preserve: regional park, passive recreation, 52.5 ac (Note that the acquisition/reservation of this Preserve is in process by San Dieguito River Park [SDRP], Joint Powers Authority [JPA])
- The existing Coast to Crest Trail segment along the river at the Fairgrounds south property line is on an easement granted from the 22nd DAA. The trail will ultimately be 55 miles (mi) long (see Figure 3.3)

The City of Del Mar's Recreation Element does not indicate whether the City is deficient in recreational resources.

**City of San Diego.** The City of San Diego has over 36,300 ac of recreation land/opportunities in its jurisdiction. The City of San Diego distinguishes recreation opportunities by three use categories: population-based parks, resources-based parks, and open space lands.

- Population-based parks (community and neighborhood parks) are located in and near residential developments and are intended to serve the daily needs of neighborhoods and communities.
- Resource-based parks (beaches, canyons, historic sites) are located in and near natural or manmade features and are intended to serve citywide residents and visitors.
- Open space lands (canyons, mesas, natural landforms) are City-owned lands located throughout the City, intended to preserve and protect native plants and animals while providing access and recreation uses to the public.

Furthermore, the Torrey Pines Community Plan (1996) identifies park/open space land uses adjacent and near the project site, including: San Dieguito Valley/Lagoon (194 ac), Crest Canyon Open Space Park (134 ac), Crest Canyon Neighborhood Park (10 ac), and the Torrey Pines State Reserve (184 ac). Figure 4.13.1 identifies the locations of these off-site recreation opportunities.

**City of Solana Beach.** The City of Solana Beach is located north of the project site and provides several recreational opportunities outside and near the project site. Nearby parks include the La Colonia Park, Seascape Surf Park, and Del Mar Shores Park. La Colonia is a community park with a sports field and community center. Seascape Surf Park is known to many surfers as Cherry Hill and provides beach access and beach-related recreation opportunities (surfing, swimming, body-boarding, etc.). Del Mar Shores Park is located at the City's southern border and also provides beach access and beach-related recreation opportunities.

**San Dieguito River Park.** The SDRP, a resource-based park, is the closest recreation opportunity in the City of San Diego outside the project site. The SDRP is operated by the JPA, as described below.

The SDRP JPA, also known as the SDRP, is the agency responsible for creating a natural open space park in the San Dieguito River Valley. It is envisioned that the park will someday extend from the ocean at Del Mar to Volcan Mountain, just north of Julian. The SDRP JPA was formed

as a separate agency on June 12, 1989, by the County of San Diego and the Cities of Del Mar, Escondido, Poway, San Diego, and Solana Beach. It was empowered to acquire, plan, design, improve, operate, and maintain the SDRP. The SDRP JPA Board is composed of two elected officials each from the County of San Diego and the City of San Diego, one elected official each from the Cities of Del Mar, Escondido, Poway, and Solana Beach, and one public member representing the Citizens Advisory Committee. The mission of the SDRP JPA is to:

“preserve and restore land within the Focused Planning Area of the SDRP as a regional open space greenway and park system that protects the natural waterways and the natural and cultural resources and sensitive lands and provides compatible recreational opportunities, including water related uses, that do not damage sensitive lands,”

and to

“provide a continuous and coordinated system of preserved lands with a connecting corridor of walking, equestrian, and bicycle trails, encompassing the San Dieguito River Valley from the ocean to the river’s source.”

The Focused Planning Area (FPA) for the SDRP extends along a 55 mi corridor that begins at the mouth of the San Dieguito River in Del Mar and ends at the desert just east of Volcan Mountain (see Figure 4.1.3). The FPA encompasses the San Dieguito River Valley and its major tributary canyons, as well as Lake Hodges, San Pasqual Valley, Boden Canyon, Pamo Valley, Lake Sutherland, the Santa Ysabel Creek drainage, Volcan Mountain and portions of the high desert in San Felipe Valley. With the expansion of the FPA boundaries in 1993 to include the entire Rutherford Ranch, the SDRP now proposes a greenway and open space park system that will link the Anza Borrego State Park to the Pacific Ocean.

The FPA is the area of focus for the SDRP’s acquisition and planning efforts. The FPA roughly corresponds to the viewshed of the San Dieguito River Valley and its tributary streams, defined by the SDRP JPA as what is visible when standing on the valley floor. The FPA has been adopted by the six member agencies of the SDRP JPA as a regional park planning boundary. The SDRP development projects and user activities are limited to public lands and also to private lands whose owners have given written consent. Mere inclusion in the FPA does not indicate that private property is part of the park and does not in any way affect the private property rights of the owner.

It is anticipated that creating the SDRP will take many years. Over 50 percent of the land within the planning area of the park is in public ownership now. Some of those areas will be set aside as open space for habitat preservation. (See Chapter 3.0 and Figure 3.3 for a description of Southern California Edison’s San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration Project. Appropriate recreational activities for the remaining public areas are being also planned and implemented. For funded planning projects, workshops will be held to determine where park facilities should be placed. It is SDRP JPA’s policy (Private Property Rights Protection Policy) that private property rights will be respected, and the park will not infringe upon those rights to implement its goals and objectives.

The Coast to Crest Trail is a major component of the JPA efforts, and the 22nd DAA recently worked with the JPA to implement the portion of the trail that extends from Jimmy Durante Boulevard to I-5. Some trail segments are already open to the public. The first portion of trail (in boardwalk style) was constructed in April 2007 from Jimmy Durante Boulevard to the lagoon-viewing platform in the South Lot for a total length of 0.33 mi. The remaining length of the trail path was completed in 2008. The JPA applied for and received a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the trail.

Thousands of acres of the SDRP were burned during the Witch Fire, one of the most severe fires in the Southern California Firestorm of October 2007.<sup>1</sup> The Witch Fire occurred in an area that largely coincided with the boundaries of the park's focused planning area from Lake Sutherland to Rancho Santa Fe. The fire affected approximately 62 percent of the SDRP, according to SDRP Web site, including destruction of the Park Headquarters located on Sycamore Creek Road in the San Pasqual Valley (at the northwestern edge of City of Poway). Park events were suspended and some trails temporarily closed following the fires to allow for assessment and restoration efforts, access restriction for dangerous and sensitive areas, and in order to reduce the potential for increased erosion. SDRP officials and staff conducted an assessment of the extent of damage to the park and incorporated fire damage restoration into the River Park Plan.

#### **4.13.3 Regulatory Setting**

The City of Del Mar adopted a Recreation Element for the Community Plan in May 1985 to guide planning and development of Citywide parks and recreation areas. The Recreation Element provides goals and objectives to manage existing and planned recreation areas. Please see Section 4.1 of this EIR, Land Use, for more information regarding project consistency with this element. The 22nd DAA's recreational facilities and programs are generally not subject to either the City of Del Mar or City of San Diego Zoning Codes or General Plans because the 22nd DAA is a State agency. The 22nd DAA is considering the application of condominium ownership structure for some of the hotel units. The City's Subdivision Ordinance (Chapter 24.25 of the Municipal Code, "Dedication: Park/Recreation") provides for the dedication of land or payment of in-lieu fees for park or recreation purposes. The amount and location of land to be dedicated or the fees to be paid are intended to bear a reasonable relationship to the use of the park and recreational facilities by the future inhabitants of the subdivision (Ord. 396) (Gov. Code 66477). Since the condominium subdivision would be for hotel units that function more closely to timeshares and are not permanent residences, the provision of parkland in proximity to the condominiums is not warranted. Therefore, it is anticipated that payment of recreation fees will be applied to the proposed condominiums.

#### **4.13.4 Methodology**

The analysis in this section addresses issues relating to recreational facilities and the provision of recreational programs that may be affected by the proposed project. Recreation impacts are assessed based on the physical effects of the planned facilities identified in the Master Plan on existing

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sdrp.org/resources/What's%20Growing%20On/Reopening%20trails.htm> (accessed February 18, 2008).

recreational components of the Fairgrounds. The Master Plan is also analyzed to determine whether it would cause an increase in the use of existing off-site recreational facilities that would result in substantial physical deterioration of those facilities. Finally, the project is analyzed to determine whether any adverse physical effects on the environment might result from implementation of the proposed near-term and long-term projects. Because the 22nd DAA is a State agency, it is not subject to the recreation standards or policies of the Cities of Del Mar or San Diego.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.13.5 Impact Significance Criteria

For this project, the following thresholds of significance are used. The impacts of the proposed project on recreational facilities may be considered to be significant if the proposed project would:

**Threshold 4.13.1**      **Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.**

**Threshold 4.13.2**      **Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.**

#### 4.13.6 Project Impacts

**Threshold 4.13.1**      **Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.**

**Near-Term Project Impact Analysis.** The project site is located in north San Diego County in the Cities of Del Mar and San Diego. The Fairgrounds project site is currently developed, and the proposed near-term projects are intended to provide visitor-serving uses and enhance the patron/visitor experience, the Fairground's attractiveness, and economic self-sustainability of the Fairgrounds, consistent with objectives identified in the 2008 Master Plan. The near-term projects include physical improvements that will promote the mission of the Del Mar Fairgrounds as a regional entertainment, recreational, cultural, and community asset.

Some of the near-term projects proposed in the Master Plan (Health Club/Sports Training Facility, new exhibit hall with rooftop sports fields, widening the turf track, and hotel) could result in increased visitor use of the site and increased employment at the Fairgrounds; however, the proposed projects do not include new permanent housing that would result in new residents using local parks and recreational facilities. It is anticipated that the hotel will result in an increase of 413 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, and the Health Club/Sports Training Facility will result in 30 FTE employees at the project site. No change in the number of employees is associated with the relocated fire station or replacement 22nd DAA administrative office. Also, it is anticipated that hotel guests will avail themselves of on-site recreation amenities, including the hotel pool and Del Mar Racetrack,

---

<sup>1</sup> However, the EIR addresses any inconsistencies between the proposed project and those plans in Section 3.1, Land Use, of this EIR [as required by CEQA Guidelines 15125 (d)].

and result in minimal increase use of local parks. Although some of the on-site employees and hotel guests may use adjacent recreation amenities, including nearby portions of the Coast to Crest Trail, they are not expected to do so in numbers that would result in substantial deterioration of this new regional facility. Other near-term projects (realignment of Solana Gate, improving the existing East Parking Lot, providing sewer hook-up facilities at the RV parking spaces, construction of a new official gate/administration office, relocation of the existing Fairgrounds maintenance buildings/yard) are improvements to the existing operations of the Fairgrounds and will not result in an increased number of employees. Instead, these projects will provide more modern and efficient facilities for use by the existing employees, much like the long-term projects described below. The proposed near-term projects would not cause a substantial increase in use or physical deterioration of off-site recreational facilities as a result of project implementation, and no mitigation is required.

Although the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to an existing park, payment of recreation fees may be required for the proposed condominium units as a result of application of the City's Subdivision regulations.

**Long-Term Project Impact Analysis.** Similar to the near-term projects, implementation of the proposed long-term projects would not result in a substantial increase in use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.

The proposed long-term projects (seasonal train platform, parking structure, improvements to the Backstretch Area, a new Horseman's Village, vehicle wash rack, and truck tunnel under the Racetrack) are intended to enhance the visitor and user experience. Visitor experience would be enhanced through improved accessibility by alternative modes with an on-site rail platform and by car with visitor parking in a consolidated parking structure. As noted in Section 4.1, Land Use, the provision of additional parking in the proposed multilevel parking structure will allow preservation and biological restoration of the South Lot, which currently provides overflow parking. The new Horseman's Village and truck tunnel will improve the working and operational conditions for the Fairgrounds workers, trainers, jockeys, and grooms during Race Meets. These improvements will not result in an increase in the number of employees on site but will provide more modern and efficient facilities for use by existing employees. While the long-term projects could potentially result in increased visitor use of the site, the off-site recreational opportunities available in the Cities of Del Mar, San Diego, and Solana Beach would not be adversely impacted by the proposed long-term projects of the Fairgrounds. The proposed long-term projects would not result in a significant impact to off-site recreational facilities, and no mitigation is required.

**Thresholds 4.13.2**      **Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.**

**Near-Term Project Impact Analysis.** Implementation of the proposed near-term projects include the following recreation components: the construction of three rooftop playing fields incorporated with the construction of a modern exhibit building to replace the facilities being demolished; and construction of a 60,000 sf Health Club/Sports Training Facility. In addition to the near-term projects,

the 22nd DAA has approved a roof structure for the existing arena, and the 22nd DAA worked cooperatively with the San Dieguito River JPA to implement a trail along the river between Jimmy Durante Boulevard and I-5; the portion of the trail near the Fairgrounds was completed in 2008. Implementation and operation of the proposed Master Plan, including the recreation components listed above, is expected to result in potential significant impacts presented in the topical sections of this EIR (e.g., Sections 4.7, Biological Resources; 4.8, Geology and Soils; and 4.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, among others). The near-term projects are intended to improve the existing Fairgrounds recreational facilities of the project site and do not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities off site that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Therefore, no mitigation for impacts to recreational uses is required.

The 22nd DAA has developed a phasing plan to implement the Master Plan near-term projects based on anticipated funding and time constraints from other events held on site. The long-term projects proposed in the Master Plan require additional environmental analysis and/or will be implemented by another lead agency (i.e., SANDAG is the Lead Agency for the seasonal train platform) and therefore have not been included in the proposed phasing plan. The phasing plan consists of two phases for a total of 38 months of construction, including demolition, site work, and structural completion of each near-term project. The phasing plan is described in more detail in Chapter 3 of this EIR. The phased implementation of the proposed project is intended to maximize availability of existing on-site recreation uses during construction. Construction on the Fairgrounds and proposed fire station site could affect views from the North Bluffs Preserve and the San Dieguito River Park; however, these effects would be short-term and would not result in a substantial adverse effect in use of these recreational facilities.

Habitat restoration activity in the South Lot and paving and bioswale creation in the southern portion of the East Parking Lot would be in proximity to the Coast to Crest Trail. The type and duration of the grading, planting, and paving activity for the habitat restoration and parking lot improvements are expected to be short-term focused efforts, and the overall effect on trail users will be limited to odors from asphalt and construction equipment over the course of several days to a week. The trail would remain open during construction. Therefore, the impact of project construction to use of the Coast to Crest Trail is considered to be less than significant. No changes to impacts of construction activity to off-site recreation resources are expected to occur as a result of the phasing of construction activity. A 100 ft setback from the River to the edge of pavement in the East Parking Lot will be maintained, after project completion, including area to accommodate the Coast to Crest Trail and reduce impacts to the River and Trail.

**Long-Term Project Impact Analysis.** As stated above, the proposed long-term projects call for the construction of a seasonal train platform, a multilevel parking structure, a truck tunnel, Horseman's Village, vehicle wash rack, and improvements to the Backstretch Area. Implementation and operation of the proposed long-term projects, including the recreation components listed above, are expected to result in significant impacts presented in the other topical sections of this EIR. The long-term projects are intended to serve and enhance the existing Fairgrounds recreational facilities at the project site and do not include off-site recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of off-site recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Therefore, no mitigation for impacts to recreational uses is required.

#### **4.13.7 Cumulative Impacts**

Cumulative impact analysis considers the impacts of all park and recreation factors in the vicinity of the project. The proposed project, together with other projects, would not contribute to significant cumulative impacts on parks and recreational facilities in the surrounding area. There would be no increase in the permanent residential population as a result of implementation of the near-term or long-term projects; thus, no permanent increase in needed recreational facilities would be associated with the project. The planned recreational components of the proposed projects are intended to promote the Fairgrounds as a multiuse facility emphasizing agriculture, education, entertainment, and recreation, thus enhancing the visitor experience. The cumulative projects identified in Section 4.2, Traffic and Circulation, of this EIR include expansion of an existing private health spa, a new health spa, and expansion of an animal center that provides therapeutic horseback riding. The cumulative projects do not result in the loss of public recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project's incremental contribution to recreation impacts is not cumulatively considerable. Implementation of the proposed projects would not result in a significant cumulative impact to existing recreational facilities in the Cities of Del Mar, San Diego, and Solana Beach, and no mitigation is required.

#### **4.13.8 Level Of Significance Prior To Mitigation**

No significant impacts related to recreation have been identified.

#### **4.13.9 Mitigation Measures**

There are no significant effects from the near-term or long-term projects to recreation; therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

#### **4.13.10 Programmatic Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategies**

As described above, the proposed long-term projects would not result in significant impacts related to existing recreational facilities, nor would they require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities; therefore, programmatic impact avoidance and mitigation strategies for long-term projects are not required.

#### **4.13.11 Level of Significance after Mitigation**

No significant impacts related to recreation resources have been identified.

**This page intentionally left blank**