March 15, 2017

TO: Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals

FROM: San Diego Association of Governments

SUBJECT: Public Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the San Diego River Trail: Carlton Oaks Golf Course Segment Project

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will consider adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the San Diego River Trail (SDRT): Carlton Oaks Golf Course Segment Project.

Project Title: Draft MND for the SDRT: Carlton Oaks Golf Course Segment Project

Project Location: In the cities of San Diego and Santee, San Diego County, California, in the area bounded by West Hills Parkway to the west, Mast Park to the east, the Carlton Oaks Golf Course to the north, and the San Diego River to the south.

Project Description: The following summarizes the proposed project as described in the Draft MND.

SANDAG proposes to construct the Carlton Oaks Golf Course Segment of the SDRT as a Class I bikeway for the exclusive use of people walking and riding bikes. The proposed bike path would extend a distance of approximately two miles between Carlton Hills Boulevard and West Hills Parkway through Mast Park, Mast Park West, and the Carlton Oaks Golf Course. The proposed project consists of two segments, the Mast Park/Mast Park West Segment and the Golf Course Segment, as described below.

Mast Park/Mast Park West Segment

The Mast Park/Mast Park West Segment begins at the proposed project’s eastern terminus in the Mast Park parking lot and extends west under the Carlton Hills Boulevard bridge and through Mast Park West to the Carlton Oaks Golf Course. The portion of this segment generally between the Carlton Hills Boulevard bridge and the Carlton Oaks Golf Course is subject to a conservation easement held by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Among other things, the conservation easement governs allowable uses of this property. The conservation easement would have to be amended in order for the project to be implemented as described below.
The proposed project would begin at the southeastern corner of the paved parking lot in Mast Park and extend southwest down a vegetated slope and adjacent to a driveway that leads to an overflow parking area with a decomposed granite (DG) surface. At the bottom of the slope, the proposed project would continue westward under the Carlton Hills Boulevard bridge and across a small drainage, and then it would follow the alignment of an existing DG trail that extends east-west and northeast-southwest through Mast Park West for approximately a half mile to the edge of the Carlton Oaks Golf Course. This existing trail consists of an approximately 8- to 14-foot-wide DG trail lined with split-rail fencing along with interpretive signage and benches at select locations, as well as a trailhead at Carlton Hills Boulevard. The east-west portion of the existing trail is approximately 14 feet wide with split-rail fencing placed approximately 2 feet inside the DG trail on both sides. The northeast-southwest portion of the existing trail is approximately eight feet wide and lined with split-rail fencing on both sides. The proposed project would be constructed along this existing trail alignment. The portion of the dirt trail between the trailhead and the Carlton Hills Boulevard bridge would not be improved. Existing interpretive signage, benches, and bike racks along the existing trail would not be affected and would remain in their current location.

The proposed project within this segment would consist of a 10-foot-wide, all-weather, paved surface with 2-foot-wide pervious shoulders on each side. Split-rail (i.e., lodge pole) fencing would be installed along both sides of the bike path, although in some areas the existing split-rail fencing along the existing trail would be relocated and incorporated into the project, as described below. Along the east-west portion, the existing fencing on both sides of the existing trail would be moved to the outer edges of the new bike path.

Along the northeast-southwest portion, the existing trail would be widened on the west side and the existing fencing along the eastern edge of the trail would remain while the existing fencing along the western edge of the existing trail would be moved to the outer edge of the new bike path. The drainage crossing just west of the Carlton Hills Boulevard bridge would consist of a ford with a natural bottom. Slope protection or similar measures to control erosion would be installed at locations on the east side of the bike path in slope areas along the northeast-southwest portion of the bike path where erosion is evident. Manufactured slopes created to accommodate the bike path would be at a two to one or three to one, where erosion is evident, gradient and would be revegetated with native plant species prior to completion of project construction.

**Golf Course Segment**

The Golf Course Segment begins at the eastern end of the Carlton Oaks Golf Course at the terminus of the Mast Park/Mast Park West Segment and extends west along a portion of the southern edge of the golf course to its western terminus at West Hills Parkway. The proposed project within the golf course generally would be constructed on, or adjacent to, the existing berm along the southern edge of the golf course and northern edge of the river for a distance of approximately 1.5 miles. It would consist of a 10-foot-wide, all-weather, paved surface with 2-foot-wide pervious shoulders and split-rail fencing on each side. The existing berm would be improved by expanding, rebuilding, and/or reinforcing areas necessary to support the proposed bike path. Slope protection or similar measures to control erosion would be installed at locations within this segment on the south side of the bike path in slope areas where erosion is evident. Manufactured slopes would be created at a two to one or three to one gradient and would be revegetated with native species prior to completion of project construction. Near the west end, the proposed project would install a bridge or similar structure to cross Sycamore Creek.
Other Project Features

In some areas along the golf course where the proposed project would be in close proximity to the playing field area, protective fencing would be installed along short sections on the north side (golf course side) of the project to protect path users from getting hit by errant golf balls. Trees removed from the golf course would be replaced at a one to one ratio with native or locally appropriate tree species that match the current golf course tree palette. Several retaining walls up to approximately seven feet high would be constructed in certain locations along the north side of the project alignment within the golf course to reduce the proposed project’s encroachment into the existing golf course. Additional retaining walls may be constructed in conjunction with the options for the West Hills Parkway connection. Pedestrian-scaled lighting may be provided at select locations along the proposed bike path to provide safety and security consistent with the San Diego River Park Master Plan.

Options for Connecting to West Hills Parkway

At the proposed project’s western end, SANDAG is considering three options for a connection to West Hills Parkway. The environmental effects of these options are analyzed in the MND. Each of these options would include a staircase at the bottom of the ramp that would connect to the existing West Hills Parkway sidewalk.

- **Switchback Ramp Option**: This option entails a switchback ramp that would ascend north and then south along the slope adjacent to the roadway, with a connection point to the existing sidewalk near the westbound SR-52 overcrossing structure. This option also would include installation of a proposed traffic signal and a continental crosswalk along West Hills Parkway at the intersection with Carlton Oaks Drive where the ramp would connect to the existing sidewalk.

- **Curvilinear Ramp Option**: This option would include construction of a curvilinear ramp that would ascend northward along the slope and then curve west to connect perpendicularly to the existing sidewalk. This option also proposes minor physical improvements along West Hills Parkway.

- **Linear Ramp Option**: This option consists of a linear ramp along the western edge of the golf course that would gradually ascend northward and connect to the existing sidewalk just south of the intersection of West Hills Parkway and Carlton Oaks Drive. This option also would include the minor physical improvements along West Hills Parkway identified for the Curvilinear Ramp Option.

**Construction**: Construction is estimated to begin in late 2018 and take approximately 12 months to complete. Construction staging is anticipated to occur within the golf course and would avoid sensitive biological resources. Construction vehicles would be stored within the golf course staging area. Construction access routes could be provided from one or more of the following locations:

- West Hills Parkway;
- an existing unpaved access road within a Padre Dam Municipal Water District easement on private property owned by the Vista del Verde homeowners association and along the eastern boundary of the golf course accessible from Carlton Oaks Drive; and/or
- the parking lot at Mast Park.
**Probable Environmental Effects:** Based on an initial study, the Draft MND concludes that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment. The following environmental issues areas are evaluated in the Draft MND: Aesthetics and Visual Resources, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation/Traffic, Utilities and Service Systems, and Mandatory Findings of Significance.

**Availability and Comments:** In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15105, 15072, and 15073, this public notice officially notifies the general public, public agencies, and interested individuals and organizations that a 30-day public review period will begin on **March 15, 2017**. Written comments regarding the adequacy of the Draft MND must be received by **April 14, 2017**. Comments should be addressed or emailed to:

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Copies of the Draft MND and supporting materials are available online at keepsandiegomoving.com/SDRiverTrail and at the SANDAG offices at the address provided above. The Draft MND and supporting materials also are available at:

Santee Branch Library
9225 Carlton Hills Blvd #17
Santee, CA 92071

San Carlos Branch Library
7265 Jackson Drive
San Diego, CA 92119-2314

The Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA require this notice to disclose whether any listed toxic sites are present at the project site (Section 15072(g)(5)). Section 7.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, of the Draft MND identifies hazardous materials and impacts from project implementation.

If you have questions, please contact Andrew Martin at (619) 595-5375 or via email at andrew.martin@sandag.org.