California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Santa Ana Region

Linda S. Adams
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

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Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

April 30, 2009

Jason Moquin
City of Corona Community Development Department
400 S. Vincentia Avenue
Corona, CA 92882

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY FOR A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, RANCHO DE PASEO VALENCIA, TRACT NO. 34760, SOUTH ENDS OF MOUNTAIN GATE DRIVE AND MALAGA STREET, CITY OF CORONA, SCH# 2009041015

Dear Mr. Moquin:

Staff of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region (Regional Board) have reviewed the Initial Study (IS) for a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the above-referenced Project in the City of Corona (City). The Project consists of the proposed annexation of 25.5 acres of unincorporated Riverside County foothill slopes south of the City's current southern border, and the subdivision of this land and existing Tentative Tract Map No. 34760 into 34 residential lots (Project) and 15.28 acres of unspecified open space. This 65.4-acre Project would require an amendment to the Mountain Gate Specific Plan.

We believe that the DEIR should incorporate the following comments in order for the Project to best protect water quality standards (water quality objectives and beneficial uses) contained in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Santa Ana River Basin (Region 8 Basin Plan, 1995, as amended):

1. A citrus grove that currently occupies these foothill slopes of the Santa Ana Mountains will be demolished and it appears from the aerial photo (Locational Exhibit) that at least five natural drainages will be directly or indirectly impacted by the Project. Ephemeral flows from the Santa Ana Mountains through these drainages appear to support, at minimum, the following beneficial uses that should be discussed in the DEIR along with Project impacts to them: Agricultural Supply (AGR), Wildlife Habitat (WILD), Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM), Groundwater Recharge (GWR), and Non-Contact Water Recreation (REC2). It is possible that Contact Water Recreation (REC1) and Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE) are supported and impacted as well. Also, the Project's geographic relation to the proposed Foothill Parkway route should be discussed, including whether impacts to these drainages overlap between the projects. The DEIR should thoroughly discuss the potential impacts of the Project on riparian wildlife corridors and vegetation, and the potential for hydromodification posed by increased flows from increased impervious surface area.

2. Because the Project appears to result in excavation of ("dredging") and/or placement of fill into these riparian drainages, which may include wetlands, this project may impact "waters of the United States," and therefore fall within the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and require their issuance of a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit (please contact Jason Lambert of USACE at 213-452-3361). Therefore, the Project should be conditioned to have the applicant conduct a jurisdictional delineation to establish whether or not the Project (or any part of the Project) falls under USACE jurisdiction, and if so, to apply for the prerequisite Section 401 Water Quality Standards Certification (Certification) from the Regional Board that construction and operation of the project will not adversely affect water quality standards. The jurisdictional delineation (and subsequent USACE staff determination) may find that these surface waters are isolated from waters of the U.S. and therefore outside of federal jurisdiction. The project applicant needs to be made aware that these so-called "isolated waters" are nevertheless waters of the State and consequently a project that impacts them may be subject to individual waste discharge requirements pursuant to the California Water Code.

   The issuance of a 401 Certification represents a determination by the Executive Officer that discharges of waste to waters of the U.S. that are associated with the referenced project will comply with the applicable provisions of Sections 301 (Effluent Limitations), 302 (Water Quality Related Effluent Limitations), 303 (Water Quality Standards and Implementation Plans), 306 (National Standards of Performance), and 307 (Toxic and Pretreatment Effluent Standards) of the Clean Water Act, and with other applicable requirements of State law. In order for such a determination to be meaningful, projects subject to Certification are evaluated for their direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to waters of the U.S., specifically, impacts to water quality standards. Such impacts must be mitigated to receive a Certification and the DEIR should identify likely mitigation concepts. Information concerning Certification can be found at http:// www.waterboards.ca.gov/santaana/water_issues/programs/401_certification/index.shtml .

3. The DEIR must reflect that appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) and management measures are being developed and implemented to control the discharge of point source and non-point source pollutants, both during construction and for the life of development projects. Post-construction BMPs must address all pollutant loads carried by dry weather runoff and first-flush storm water runoff from an entire project. BMPs utilized on projects receiving a Certification must meet Best Available Technology (BAT) standards that may go beyond BMPs typically needed under: 1) the State Water Resources Control Board's Water Quality Order No. 99-08-DWQ, "General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity" (Please see web site at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/) and 2) the Regional Water Quality Control Board's Waste Discharge Requirements for Riverside County (NPDES Permit No. CAS618033, Order No. R8-2002-0011, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the County of Riverside, and the Incorporated Cities of Riverside County within the Santa Ana

Region Areawide Urban Runoff), also known as the Riverside County municipal separate storm sewer system, or "Riverside County MS4" permit (please see web site at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/santaana/html/riverside_permit.html). All development must conform to the Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) requirements of the MS4 by implementing a variety of structural and non-structural BMPs controlling pollutants from both point sources and non-point sources (NPS). If a Section 404 permit is not required, then the criteria for water quality permitting of the construction of the proposed facility will be those criteria required by the statewide Water Quality Order No. 99-08-DWQ and the WQMP requirement of the MS4 permit.

4. The DEIR should encourage BMPs that utilize the principles of low impact development (LID) as part of a comprehensive, community-wide system for protecting water quality standards. LID makes use of project-level features such as grassed paseos and rain gardens to manage urban runoff quantity and quality while conserving water. These principles are intended to reverse the trend of increasingly paved and constructed areas that alter the rate and volumes of surface water runoff and groundwater recharge. LID is among the Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource Efficient Land Use (see attachment), adopted in 2005 by the Local Government Commission (LGC). The LGC encourages communities to incorporate these principles into general plans. SWRCB management has expressed support of LID and the Ahwahnee principles as useful to address major goals and objectives.

   To protect the wildlife habitat beneficial use of natural drainage courses, the number of subsurface utility crossings through the drainage(s) must be minimized, and all road crossings over drainages should take the form of bridges or arched open-bottomed culverts so as to provide movement corridors to terrestrial wildlife. Also, a streambed alteration agreement may be required by the California Department of Fish and Game.

If you have any questions, please contact Glenn Robertson at (951) 782-3259, grobertson@waterboards.ca.gov, or me at (951) 782-3234, or madelson@waterboards.ca.gov

Sincerely,

Glenn Robertson, for

Mark G. Adelson, Chief
Regional Planning Programs Section

Attachment

cc: State Clearinghouse
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles – Jason Lambert
California Department of Fish and Game, Ontario – Anna Milloy/Michael Flores
Sarah Lozano, DUDEK, Riverside

X:Groberts on Magnolia/Data/CEQA/CEQA Responses/ IS-City of Corona – Rancho de Paseo Valencia, Tract 34760.doc

The Ahwahnee Water Principles For Resource Efficient Land Use

Preamble

Cities and counties are facing major challenges with water contamination, storm water runoff, flood damage liability, and concerns about whether there will be enough reliable water for current residents as well as for new development. These issues impact city and county budgets and taxpayers. Fortunately there are a number of stewardship actions that cities and counties can take that reduce costs and improve the reliability and quality of our water resources.

The Water Principles below complement the Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities that were developed in 1991. Many cities and counties are already using them to improve the vitality and prosperity of their communities.

Community Principles

1. Community design should be compact, mixed use, walkable and transit-oriented so that automobile-generated urban runoff pollutants are minimized and the open lands that absorb water are preserved to the maximum extent possible. (see the Ahnwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities)

2. Natural resources such as wetlands, flood plains, recharge zones, riparian areas, open space, and native habitats should be identified, preserved and restored as valued assets for flood protection, water quality improvement, groundwater recharge, habitat, and overall long-term water resources sustainability.

3. Water holding areas such as creek beds, recessed athletic fields, ponds, cisterns, and other features that serve to recharge groundwater, reduce runoff, improve water quality and decrease flooding should be incorporated into the urban landscape.

4. All aspects of landscaping from the selection of plants to soil preparation and the installation of irrigation systems should be designed to reduce water demand, retain runoff, decrease flooding, and recharge groundwater.

5. Permeable surfaces should be used for hardscape. Impervious surfaces such as driveways, streets, and parking lots should be minimized so that land is available to absorb storm water, reduce polluted urban runoff, recharge groundwater and reduce flooding.

6. Dual plumbing that allows grey water from showers, sinks and washers to be reused for landscape irrigation should be included in the infrastructure of new development.

7. Community design should maximize the use of recycled water for appropriate applications including outdoor irrigation, toilet flushing, and commercial and industrial processes. Purple pipe should be installed in all new construction and remodeled buildings in anticipation of the future availability of recycled water.

8. Urban water conservation technologies such as low-flow toilets, efficient clothes washers, and more efficient water-using industrial equipment should be incorporated in all new construction and retrofitted in remodeled buildings.

9. Ground water treatment and brackish water desalination should be pursued when necessary to maximize locally available, drought-proof water supplies.

Implementation Principles

1. Water supply agencies should be consulted early in the land use decision-making process regarding technology, demographics and growth projections.

2. City and county officials, the watershed council, LAFCO, special districts and other stakeholders sharing watersheds should collaborate to take advantage of the benefits and synergies of water resource planning at a watershed level.

3. The best, multi-benefit and integrated strategies and projects should be identified and implemented before less integrated proposals, unless urgency demands otherwise.

4. From start to finish, projects and programs should involve the public, build relationships, and increase the sharing of and access to information. The participatory process should focus on ensuring that all residents have access to clean, reliable and affordable water for drinking and recreation.

5. Plans, programs, projects and policies should be monitored and evaluated to determine if the expected results are achieved and to improve future practices.

Authors: Celeste Cantu, Martha Davis, Jennifer Hosterman, Susan Lien Longville, Jonas Minton, Mary Nichols, Virginia Porter, Al Wanger, Kevin Wolfe

Editor: Judy Corbett

For more information, contact the LGC Center for Livable Communities: 916-448-1198, ext 321