

Proposed Las Varas Ranch Development



Presented to Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

Santa Barbara County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee



Presentation Overview

- **Introduction and Background-** Art Najera, President CRAHTAC,
- **State and County Policies -** Otis Calef, CRAHTAC Member



Introduction

- Las Varas Ranch- One of the most important projects for trails, recreation and open space in last two decades
- Major adopted State and County policy goals
 - Provision of a nearshore California Coastal Trail
 - Access to and acquisition of Edwards Point
- Key legacy for future generations



Background- California Coastal Trail

- California Coastal Trail is of statewide importance
- Gaviota Coastal Trail most scenic in Southern California
- Las Varas Ranch is key segment of Gaviota Coastal Trail
- Strong community interest in a near shoreline Coastal Trail



Background-Edwards Point

- Supports substantial existing coastal access
- Local Coastal Plan- Acquisition as “Major Coastal Park” (one of only 2 such planned coastal parks countywide)
- Local Coastal Plan mandates coastal access to Edwards Point
- Las Varas Ranch development would forever foreclose attaining these policy goals and mandates



State and Policy Interpretation

- “Shall indicates an unequivocal directive”;
- “Should signifies a less rigid directive, to be honored in the absence of compelling or contravening considerations”.
- Citizens rely on County to uphold its plans
- Staff report/ EIR not do not meet these standards; ignore Planning Commission and CRAHTAC recommendations



California Coastal Trail Policies

- ***Coastal Conservancy Guidelines:*** “Provide a continuous trail as close to the ocean as possible ...”
 - “The trail should be sited and designed to be located along or as close to the shoreline as physically and aesthetically feasible.”
- **Draft Gaviota Coast Plan:** “California Coastal Trail should be a continuous trail as close to the ocean as possible”
 - “Acquire near shore bluff top easements for the California Coastal Trail from the Bacara Hotel to El Capitan State Beach”



State & County Policy- Edwards Point

- **County LCP:** “Existing Beach Parks used to capacity”
- **Coastal Act Policy 30221:** “Oceanfront land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use
- **LCP Policy 7-18:** “vertical easements connecting the proposed coastal bicycle trail...to the beach shall be acquired by a public agency at...Edwards (near Gato Canyon).”
- **LCP Policy 7-18:** “The following areas, which have recreational potential, should be acquired by a public agency: Edwards – Parking, restrooms, picnic tables, bike racks, store, low-intensity camping.”
- **LCP Table 3-5:** Acquire Edwards Point as a “Major Coastal Park”

Conclusion

- Analysis in staff report and EIR conflict with adopted policies; ignore intent of draft Gaviota Coast Plan
- Support CRAHTAC, Planning Commission and Board intent in draft Gaviota Coast Plan
- Support adopted State and County Policy
 - Pursue acquisition of a nearshore Coastal Trail
 - Require access at Edwards Point
 - Pursue acquisition of Edwards Point



Conclusion

- The trails community believes that a reasonable compromise should be explored
- We respectfully request the Planning Commission to direct P&D and the property owner to work with the trails community to identify an acceptable near shoreline location for the Coastal Trail with appropriate beach access

