

Issues and Answers about Fairmont Butte Motorsports Park

Updated February 26, 2010

This document addresses issues and concerns that have been raised about the project with factual answers for each one.

TOP ISSUES

1. **Views of wildflowers looking north from the Poppy Reserve would be changed forever.**

ANSWER: No part of the racetrack facility would be visible from the Poppy Reserve as the proposed racetrack is hidden from Poppy Reserve views by the 300 foot-higher Fairmont Butte that defines the southern boundary of the project site.

2. **Racing will occur 365 days-a-year, night and day.**

ANSWER: Racing events will almost exclusively take place on weekends plus occasional Fridays for related testing. No racing organization that we know of conducts its races during the week—it's just not practical. Also, racing will occur during daylight hours only. Minimal night lighting will comply with County "dark sky" regulations.

3. **Sound will clearly be heard on the trails at the Poppy Reserve.**

ANSWER: County-approved certified testing has shown that racing vehicle sound is barely audible from footpaths on the Poppy Reserve closest to the racetrack site and often below the ambient level. Sound is further diminished by the nearly omnipresent wind. Plus, racing vehicle noise will be specifically restricted and tested/verified on site.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES AND/OR DETAILS

I. Project Description and Proposed Uses

1. **ISSUE:** The project is a racetrack and bar.

ANSWER: The intended use of the motor recreational facility would be for private clubs, racing organizations and the automobile industry as a location for racing and automotive testing. While alcohol is proposed to be served at the motorsports park facility associated with the clubhouse and restaurant, the restaurant would not be open to the public but only for the users of the track facility including the clubhouse.

2. **ISSUE:** Automotive and motorcycle racing would occur year round, day and night.

ANSWER: The proposed project is requesting year round operation but the primary use for racing events would be on weekends. Typical racing events generally occur over a two or three-day "weekend" period that includes Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There would be no night racing and there is no lighting of the racetrack. "Dark sky" lighting would be used and night operations would be confined to activities associated with limited vehicle maintenance.

3. **ISSUE:** With or without "grandstands" for viewing, the butte area south of the track will become a magnet drawing spectators and off road vehicles to view the racing. Spectators will climb and use the buttes to view the racing. Traffic on the Butte (containing SEA 57) will increase damage to the butte and impact the "bird of prey" usage. Damage to SEA 57 along with the entire ridgeline of Fairmount Butte will be extensive.

ANSWER: This concern of butte use was also a previous concern brought up during the SEATAC review. There would be a fence demarcating that the butte is off limits and the caretaker would "patrol" this area to warn those wanting to use the butte. A sign on the fence could be placed providing an explanation that protection of biological resources is the reason why use of the area is limited.

4. **ISSUE:** Proposed parking along 150th Street will draw vehicles south of the track.

ANSWER: There would be no parking along 150th Street and all parking would be within the boundaries of the track. There would be no direct access south of the track, so no vehicles would be allowed there.

II. Aesthetics/Visual

1. **ISSUE:** Views north from the California Poppy Reserve will be damaged with the racetrack development.

ANSWER: The northernmost point of the Poppy Reserve is approximately one mile from the proposed track. No part of the racetrack facility would be visible from the Poppy Reserve as the proposed racetrack is hidden from Poppy Reserve views by the 300 foot-higher Fairmont Butte. NOTE: An engineering study of this false claim was conducted by the requested engineer. The conclusion was that a building on the proposed track property would have to be 100 ft. high for its roof to be visible from the Poppy Reserve. Our tallest building will be 35 ft. high.

2. **ISSUE:** Astronomy viewing (star gazing) from the Poppy Reserve would be impacted.

ANSWER: No night racing is proposed and the racetrack itself would not have lights. Security lighting will be used. A lighting plan will be submitted that meets the County "dark sky" regulations.

3. **ISSUE:** The proposed 150th Street location has panoramic vistas of wildflowers looking north from the Reserve area. This would be changed forever.

ANSWER: There would be no view of the racetrack location from the Poppy Reserve as the Fairmont Butte ridgeline separates the proposed project location from all areas of the Poppy Reserve.

III. Air Quality

1. **ISSUE:** Exhaust from the high performance race engines will produce increased PM-10 particles and strong odors. They will be carried by the prevailing north-western winds in a direction over the Poppy Reserve and also the un-incorporated area of Antelope Acres. Odors from the racing fuel blends will be noticeable at times at the Reserve.

ANSWER: The prevailing wind direction is from west to east, so the Poppy Reserve would not have a direct effect from air emissions occurring on the racetrack facility. However, Antelope Acres, a minimum of five miles downwind from the proposed project site, could experience some effect. The DEIR acknowledges the impacts to air quality from PM10 emissions and concludes a significant impact. However, recreational vehicle use is permitted in California such as at the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreational Area located west of Interstate Highway 5 near Gorman.

IV. Biology

1. **ISSUE:** Wildflowers will be lost.

ANSWER: The racetrack development would impact wildflower areas that have been previously used for agriculture. A habitat management plan will be prepared to foster and encourage wildflowers in non-paved areas of the project site. Both poppies and goldfields will be cultivated on the project site. Some of the project design is proposed within the north end of the Significant Ecological Area 57 (SEA). All of the county-recognized SEA would be preserved in perpetuity through a conservation easement. There is no development proposed on the butte.

2. **ISSUE:** Wildlife corridors negatively impacted.

ANSWER: Impacts to biological resources on the property were well studied, including wildlife movement. There is no regional movement corridor on the project site and the local corridor through Broad Canyon Wash would not be blocked with structures. Viable movement routes within and around the site for species such as fox, coyote and bobcat would be preserved. The development of the proposed project would not prevent wildlife movement between SEA 57 on the south to SEA 60 to the north.

3. **ISSUE:** A grouping of very healthy Joshua trees (not indicated on the Project Map – should be added and addressed) are located on and near the Project and were on a calendar cover of the Nature Conservancy, a couple of years ago.

ANSWER: Impacts to Joshua trees and Joshua tree woodland is fully addressed in the Biota section of the DEIR. There are 17 Joshua trees on the project site and it was conservatively determined that the area where the trees occur is Joshua tree woodland, a sensitive habitat. 0.3 acres of the 2.6 acres of on-site Joshua tree woodland would be impacted by the project. One tree is proposed for removal, for which mitigation of transplanting or replacement is proposed.

V. Cultural Resources

1. **ISSUE:** Cultural resources will be destroyed by the project.

ANSWER: The DEIR acknowledges that some cultural resources may be disturbed by the project. However, approval of the project would require the project proponent to preserve artifacts in place or to excavate cultural sites by a qualified archaeologist for off-site preservation.

VI. Noise

1. **ISSUE:** Racetrack noise would considerably impact the serenity of the Poppy Reserve.

ANSWER: Acoustical sound tests were conducted at the site with actual race cars. Sound effects were monitored at various locations on the Poppy Reserve. At the most popular locations on the Reserve, such as at the Visitor's Center, the automobile noise from the racetrack was barely audible. With wind blowing across someone's ears, sound generated from the proposed racetrack facility would likely not be perceptible.

The noise analysis acknowledges that some operations of the motorsports facility may be audible at the most northern parts of the Poppy Reserve but the noise level would be at a level

that would be barely noticeable and considerably below the county standard for significant impacts. The potential noise impacts were well studied and included on-site noise tests.

VII. Traffic

1. **ISSUE:** Visitors to the racing facility would impact visitors to the Poppy Reserve.

ANSWER: Attendance to the most popular weekend racing events would not exceed 2,000 people. If the racetrack is used 52 weekends of the year, the annual users of the proposed racetrack would be approximately 104,000 people. This is roughly equivalent to the number of visitors to the Poppy Reserve during a good wildflower year.

2. **ISSUE:** Many will elect to take the dirt part of 150th Street West to the east merging with traffic from 140th Street West. This will substantially increase travel along the north – south road between Fairmont and Antelope Buttes which connects with paved “Lancaster Road”, near the Poppy Reserve. This increased traffic flow along the west and north side of the Poppy Reserve will add a large volume of car and off-road noise, to the Preserve, in addition to the racetrack noise. The traffic between the Buttes will disturb wildlife and jeopardize Native American sites in that area.

ANSWER: There is no direct connection east of the project site to 140th Street, except Highway 138. There is a dirt path that OHV motorcycles take, which is located well south of the end of the proposed paved section of 150th Street. There is no logic for cars, especially pulling a trailer with racing vehicle(s), to travel east to 140th Street on a dirt track and then travel south when the goal of racetrack visitors would be to come to the track, race and leave for home afterward. 150th Street will be paved to the proposed racetrack entrance, making access easy to Highway 138—the primary and essentially only west-east travel corridor. It is not clear why someone coming to the racetrack would travel on 140th Street unless they were lost. 140th Street is a diagonal dirt path, primarily used by off-highway motorcycles, and there is no direct access from the extension of 140th Street to the Poppy Reserve (the road actually takes one west of the northern part of the Reserve).

VIII. Land Use

1. **ISSUE:** The racetrack is a grave threat to Poppy Reserve.

ANSWER: The applicant has offered to work cooperatively with the Poppy Reserve. There are no direct conflicts between the operation of the racetrack and the operation of the Poppy Reserve. The two uses are separated and buffered by Fairmont Butte. The proposed zone change to Commercial-Recreational is consistent with the recreational uses of the Poppy Reserve.

2. **ISSUE:** The opening up of this area to commercial development will jeopardized any attempt to plan for a rural life style and facilitate unplanned urban sprawl. For the residents in the area to be pressured by threats of a large housing development in place of the racetrack is unconscionable.

ANSWER: No current development pressure is known for the area with the exception of solar and wind energy production projects. There is no proposal for a residential subdivision on the property, although the property is currently zoned that would allow for such use. The residential alternative described in the DEIR, which contemplates the property being developed

with homes in place of a racetrack, is a legal requirement of the environmental document because of the proposed land use changes. Residential uses are currently permitted with the agricultural zoning.

3. **ISSUE:** Engine oil, seeping into a drinking water source is a concern. Therefore oil separation from runoff water needs extra attention around the racetrack.

ANSWER: The project must comply with certain water quality regulations and discussion is provided in the DEIR Water Quality section. There is a list of five different provisions to protect water quality.

4. **ISSUE:** The racing activity will draw many vehicles off Highway 138 along with off-road vehicles.

ANSWER: This is highly unlikely because this is not a spectator-oriented track (i.e., no grandstand). The kinds of vehicles that would use the facility, both automobiles and motorcycles, are engineered for paved-surface racing, not off-highway “dirt” use. There is ample parking, which would be primarily gravel based (no unpaved parking or access road). The opposite effect of attraction is likely for off-highway vehicles because they will be excluded by the project fencing of an area where they currently ride.