

December 4, 2009

Dear Interested Party:

We are writing to inform you about the status of the proposed La Pata Gap Closure and Camino del Rio Extension in your community and the renewed efforts to finish the work leading to a completed Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and establishment of a final road alignment. This is the second of several letters that will be sent in an effort to keep you apprised of current activities, upcoming meetings, schedules and important information. The first of two public meetings was held on December 2, 2009 and provided public agencies and the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the draft EIR.

The County of Orange is preparing a Project Report and EIR for a proposed project that would extend and widen the existing 1.8 mile portion of La Pata Avenue south of Ortega Highway, outside the City of San Juan Capistrano, roughly two miles to connect with La Pata Avenue in San Clemente at Calle Saluda. The project would close the "gap" between the two roadway segments, providing an essential link in the local roadway network. The project also includes the Camino del Rio quarter-mile extension to the future La Pata Avenue from where it ends, just east of Camino de Los Mares. Both highways are proposed as four-lane roadways. The attached exhibit illustrates the proposed project.

Prior to initiating the technical studies for input to the EIR the County would like to hear from residents in the adjacent communities regarding what environmental issues should be analyzed and/or specific community issues to be evaluated. If you would like to provide input to the County regarding these issues you can do so through the County's website, by sending an email to the address at the end of this letter or regular mailing comments to the address provided. If you provide comments please do so by January 4, 2010, so that your input can be considered in the analysis of the proposed project

The La Pata Avenue Gap Closure and Camino del Rio Extension project is needed to ease traffic congestion and improve access to neighboring communities while ensuring minimal environmental impact on the area's high quality of life. These projects are consistent with adopted General Plans and Specific Plans in San Juan Capistrano and San Clemente as well as the County of Orange.

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The County recently retained consultants to prepare the engineering and environmental studies for the projects, which will study the proposed project environmental impacts and summarize alternative alignments. The process is expected to take about 15 months to complete. Measures will be proposed in the Draft EIR to address potential significant impacts on the environment. Public participation throughout the study process will be an essential component to ensuring all issues are addressed.

The proposed project will be refined based on input received from the community. Public input will also be critical after the draft EIR is released for comments sometime in summer 2010. A public meeting will be held at that time to give participants the opportunity to comment on the draft report findings. You will be provided with additional information on the meeting through future communications. The final EIR is expected to be completed next fall or early winter.

As I mentioned, your participation and input throughout this process will be key to ensuring that all environmental issues are properly addressed in the EIR and that the alignment selected for the proposed project will improve traffic congestion, improve access to neighboring communities, minimize environmental impacts and maintain and improve the area's high quality of life.

You can stay informed through the County's Web site by clicking on the La Pata Gap Closure and Camino del Rio Extension link at www.ocpublicworks.com/pcpw/projects/lapata.aspx. There is substantial information regarding the project and upcoming process at the link.

For more information, contact Project Manager Harry Persaud at (714)834-2694 or email LaPataProject@ocpw.gov.com.

Sincerely,



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Attachment