



November 9, 2023

Ms. Ashley Jones
City Manager
City of Del Mar
1050 Camino del Mar
Del Mar, CA 92014
Citymanager@delmar.ca.us

Re: Concerns About Rail Alignment Study's Impacts on Affordable Housing Discussions

Dear Ms. Jones:

On behalf of the Affordable Housing Committee of the 22nd District Agricultural Association ("the District"), we want to express our concerns with the City of Del Mar's potential pursuit of a rail alignment through the Del Mar Fairgrounds at the possible expense of our ability to continue with productive discussions regarding affordable housing.

Throughout this year, we have engaged in good-faith conversations with the City of Del Mar about potentially hosting affordable housing on the District's property.

Our Board of Directors recognizes that building more affordable housing is a top priority for all the San Diego communities that we are proud to serve. We have been — and remain — interested in being part of a solution. Our Board has also been clear that selecting the right location for affordable housing on our property would be vital to our neighboring communities, to guests of our beloved long-running events such as the San Diego County Fair, to future potential residents of any affordable housing site, and to the ecosystem of this environmentally sensitive area.

As we have discussed, we still need to work through numerous challenges, including providing appropriate ingress and egress for prospective residents, mitigating environmental and noise concerns, and overcoming any potential negative impacts on our operations.

Thus far, we have been pleased with the progress that we have made in these conversations, and we have moved forward with the consideration of affordable housing at the Del Mar Fairgrounds as part of our ongoing comprehensive planning process.

However, we are aware that the Del Mar City Council intends to vote next week on a set of guiding principles related to the Los Angeles-San Diego (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor realignment. These principles, as currently drafted, include an explicit call for the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to conduct further study of a potential alignment that runs through and/or underneath the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

As you know, SANDAG has already studied a possible LOSSAN alignment that would run underneath and through a portion of the Del Mar Fairgrounds. That study found extensive issues with such a concept, and it has not been regarded as a particularly feasible option.

SANDAG's existing assessment has allowed us to discuss siting affordable housing under the reasonable assumption that we would not host a portal opening or a train running somewhere through our property — and that we would not have years of potentially disruptive construction here while the tracks and/or portal were built.

We firmly agree that protecting our coastline is critical, and we are aware that SANDAG must proceed judiciously to move the train tracks off the bluffs. We also recognize that the City of Del Mar's leaders must make decisions they believe are in the best interests of their constituents.

But, as stewards of this historic property, we believe continuing to plan for the siting of an affordable housing development could be imprudent if SANDAG initiates further study of a Del Mar Fairgrounds alignment. We do not yet know, for example, whether any agreed-upon housing development plans might later be significantly impacted by potential construction and/or future train service.

In addition, a LOSSAN alignment through the Del Mar Fairgrounds could have a major impact on our activities that currently generate significant sales tax revenue for Del Mar, foster livelihoods for workers and small businesses, and create countless memories for generations of families from communities across our region.

We wait in anticipation of the Del Mar City Council's decision and for more direction from SANDAG about whether it plans to complete additional analysis of a potential Del Mar Fairgrounds alignment.

In the meantime, we will continue to strive to be good stewards and good neighbors to our surrounding communities in the cities of Del Mar, Solana Beach, and San Diego. And our priority will continue to be on helping bring people to — not through — the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

Sincerely,



Carlene Moore
Chief Executive Officer
22nd District Agricultural Association

Cc: Mayor Todd Gloria, City of San Diego
Mayor Leesa Heebner, City of Solana Beach
State Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins
State Senator Catherine Blakespear
State Assembly member Tasha Boerner
Hon. Nora Vargas, Chairwoman, SANDAG
Hon. Sean Elo-Rivera, First Vice Chair, SANDAG
Hasan Ikhata, CEO, SANDAG
San Diego County Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer, District 3