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Item No. 2  
File: Irvine Coast LCP

**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AGENCY REPORT**

**DATE:** May 19, 1987  
**TO:** Orange County Planning Commission  
**FROM:** EMA-Planning (Project Planning Division)  
**SUBJECT:** First Amendment to the Irvine Coast Local Coastal Program and Zone Change 83-24P (District 5)  
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**BACKGROUND**

The Irvine Coast comprises 9,432 acres of undeveloped land between the cities of Newport Beach and Laguna Beach. The City of Irvine and portions of unincorporated Orange County form its inland boundary. Refer to regional location map Attachment 1.

The Irvine Coast Local Coastal Program (LCP) consists of a Land Use Plan (LUP) and an Implementing Actions Program (IAP). The LUP was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1981 and fully certified by the California Coastal Commission in 1982. The IAP was approved by the Board in 1983 and submitted to the Coastal Commission. However, no final action was taken on the IAP by the Commission.

The Irvine Company (TIC), owners of the Irvine Coast excluding Crystal Cove State Park, has initiated an amendment to the certified LUP and County approved IAP. Since May 1986, County staff has worked with the applicant, interested citizen groups and public agencies to refine the new development proposal described in this report. Outstanding issues are identified herein and will be the subject of future reports to your Commission.

**APPROVED LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM**

The approved LCP/Land Use Plan reflects the development plan depicted in Attachment 2. The development area is primarily designated Low Density Residential, except for two small pockets assigned Medium Density Residential (one adjacent to Corona del Mar and the other atop Pelican Hill ridge) and Visitor-Serving uses along Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) and Laguna Canyon Road. A total of 1,945 market rate dwelling units, plus 648 affordable units, are allowed on approximately 3,600 acres of the Irvine Coast.

The approved plan identifies a 30-acre site at proposed Sand Canyon Avenue and PCH which would accommodate 250 hotel rooms and 25,000 square feet of retail commercial uses. Major professional office (200,000 square feet), hotel (1,500 rooms) and retail commercial (50,000 square feet) uses would be situated at proposed Pelican Hill Road and PCH.

proposed to mitigate impacts of development. Only minor changes to the open space dedication program are proposed by TIC to reflect the new development plan. Because the open space is a major mitigation measure for development in the LCP area, staff will recommend that the open space be dedicated incidental with the effective date of the Planned Community zoning following certification of the LCP by the Coastal Commission. Public comments also indicate a desire to require the proposed open space at an earlier stage than that provided for in the approved and proposed LCP.

#### Transportation/Circulation

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The approved and proposed development plans include the construction of two arterials, six-lane Pelican Hill Road and two-lane Sand Canyon Avenue. The TIC-proposed Pelican Hill Road improvements involve the initial construction of four lanes from PCH to MacArthur Boulevard, a portion of which is outside the coastal zone. Existing LCP policy links the improvement of a minimum of two lanes of Pelican Hill Road to the construction of the 101st dwelling unit or 351st hotel room. Project generated traffic on the surrounding circulation system may warrant a reevaluation of the existing phasing plan.

Public comments received question the validity of the traffic analysis prepared for the project. The analysis, contained in the Appendix, Attachment 7, utilizes a non-standard trip generation rate for the hotel uses at the Pelican Hill site. This rate was developed based upon a study of existing resort hotels similar to that envisioned for the Irvine Coast. This and other basic traffic assumptions are being reassessed by staff.

#### Development Configuration and Intensity

The approved and proposed development plans assign low density residential uses to the strip of land between Crystal Cove State Park and the open space to be dedicated as part of the Laguna/Laurel Canyon project. Staff believes that this area should be designated open space to allow for a continuous wildlife migration and open space corridor. Deletion of the proposed residential use along this ridgeline would also minimize visual impacts of development as viewed from the State Park.

Public comments indicate that the Pelican Hill hotel complex is a potentially more intensive use of the area than that allowed by the approved plan, notwithstanding the destination orientation of the proposed resort hotel concept. Citizens are concerned that the building envelopes are too loosely defined, and that the proposed regulations would allow increases in development subject only to the approval of a coastal development permit. While other County planned community regulations allow a similar level of flexibility, it is argued that the regulations proposed do not satisfy the intent of the Coastal Act and County objectives. Staff is reviewing these concerns and will report its findings and recommendations at the next Planning Commission hearing on this matter.

#### LCP Policies and Regulations

In summary, public comments suggest that the LUP policies are too broad and that the IAP regulations are too flexible. Land Use Plan policies under additional scrutiny by staff include: 1) Resource Conservation and Management policies (open space, habitat areas, erosion, runoff and grading); 2) Tourist Commercial development policies; and 3) Transportation and Public Works policies. Staff will also reexamine the regulations and recommend any appropriate modifications to the IAP for consideration.