

**County of San Diego
Ramona Community Planning Group
MEETING MINUTES**

August 4, 2022

Meeting was In Person

7:00 PM @ the Ramona Community Library, 1275 Main Street, Ramona

ITEM 1: Call to Order

ITEM 2: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ITEM 3: ROLL CALL (Maxson, Chair)

In Attendance:	Scotty Ensign	Lynn Hopewell	Casey Lynch
	Kristi Mansolf	Robin Joy Maxson	Elio Noyas
	Dawn Perfect	Matt Rains	Andrew Simmons
	Paul Stykel	Dan Summers	

Members Absent: Torry Brean, Debbie Foster, Michelle Rains, Kevin Wallace

ITEM 4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES 7-7-22 (Action)

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 7, 2022, MEETING, AS PRESENTED.

Upon motion made by Lynn Hopewell and seconded by Matt Rains, the motion **passed 10-0-1-0-4**, with Casey Lynch abstaining and Torry Brean, Debbie Foster, Michelle Rains and Kevin Wallace absent.

ITEM 5: PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: Opportunity for members of the public to speak to Group on any subject matter within the Group's jurisdiction that is not on posted agenda. (Speakers will be limited to 3 minutes)

ITEM 6: APPROVAL OF ORDER OF THE AGENDA (Action)

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

Upon motion made by Lynn Hopewell and seconded by Scotty Ensign, the motion **passed 11-0-0-0-4**, with Torry Brean, Debbie Foster, Michelle Rains and Kevin Wallace absent.

ITEM 7: Consent Calendar:

7-A: Ratification and Continuance of Teleconferencing Meeting Option Pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(e).

In order to continue the teleconferencing meeting option, when needed, the following motion was made:

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE RATIFICATION AND CONTINUANCE OF THE TELECONFERENCING MEETING OPTION PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953(e)

Upon motion made by Casey Lynch and seconded by Kristi Mansolf, the motion **passed 11-0-0-0-4**, with Torry Brean, Debbie Foster, Michelle Rains and Kevin Wallace absent.

ITEM 8: ACTION ITEMS:

8-A: Update from San Diego County Sheriff's Department - Ramona Substation for the community of Ramona

Lieutenant Vengler said he had no update to give. Ramona still has the lowest crime rate in the County. There have been some anomalies.

The Chair asked about the National Night Out event.

Ms. Mansolf said it had just been held the past Tuesday at the Library.

Lieutenant Vengler said it was a good event and well attended. Many different entities were there that help provide support during emergencies. Animal Control was one of the groups at the event, and they talked to people about their animals and let them know what services are available to them for their animals.

8-B: New Signs (2) – 406 16th St # 104-A (behind 1662 Main St.) – AT&T Simmons, CUDA Subcommittee (*Carried over from 7-7-22*)

Mr. Ensign said this item was on the Design Review Board agenda as a joint meeting with CUDA, and the applicant did not show up. This is a Code Compliance issue and the existing AT&T signs are not in compliance with what is required, and the applicant won't show up to the meetings and fix the problem.

8-C: ZAP 22-006. The proposed project would be a request for a Minor Use Permit to construct 39 megawatts (MW) / 78 megawatt hours (MWH) of battery energy storage located on approximately 1.70 acres at the southwest corner of an 11-acre property on the north side of Creelman Ln between Ashley and Keyes. The property has a single-family residence. The proposed project would include 32.2-foot long, 5.6-foot wide, and 8.7-foot-tall battery storage containers on individual concrete equipment pads, approximately 5-feet apart, and would connect to the substation on the south side of Creelman Lane via underground lines. Noyas, South Subcommittee (*Carried over from 7-7-22*)

Skyler Tennis presented the project. There are 9 similar sites already existing in the County. More will be added to the grid. One project site is a junkyard now, and so the development will be an improvement. At the existing sites, the batteries are on the top and the power will go down to inverters. There is a plan to have a 12 foot sound wall. There will be walls on 3 sides of the facility with plans to put landscaping all the way around the facility.

Mr. Noyas gave the South Subcommittee report. A lot of neighbors showed up at the South

Subcommittee meeting. There was overwhelming opposition to the project and people asked that the project be denied on that property. It is a done deal through the County, however, and the applicant seems willing to work with us to camouflage the project with landscaping and to make adjustments to the walls.

Speaker: Bob Romeo, Ramona Resident (Ms. Romeo also gave her 3 minutes to Mr. Romeo)

Mr. Romeo is opposed to the project. The property the facility is to go on is 11.5 acres in size. The project will use 1.7 acres. What will the rest of the property be used for? Two hundred batteries will be stored at the site. He would like the RCPG to ask for a 5 year plan and a 10 year plan for the project. They are trying to buy other properties in the area. So far no one will sell. For infrastructure, they have a narrow dirt road. The batteries last 3 to 5 years and then they get switched out. They are in and out everyday – using the road – not once a month. Someone bought 20 acres next to him and tests are being done on the property. He doesn't know what will be going in. Mr. Romeo asked the RCPG to please vote no and send that message to the County. The batteries can melt down. A similar battery blew up in Arizona. The PUC says to do it on a fast track. Please vote no.

Speaker: John Huss, Ramona Resident

Mr. Huss lives next door to the proposed project. It is 20 feet from his property line. This project is a done deal at the County. He didn't move up here for this. There is a chain link fence for the SDG&E solar project. There may be another solar project put on the 20 acres by Mr. Romeo. There are environmental issues and safety issues. Batteries can blow up. His well is 400 feet from where the project will be and he has concerns about water contamination.

Mr. Lynch asked what type of studies will be done?

Mr. Tennis said agricultural studies, geotechnical studies and cultural studies will be done.

Mr. Lynch asked if we could look at the results of the studies?

Mr. Tennis said they are not ready yet to be reviewed.

Mr. Lynch asked if they would have a lease on the property?

Mr. Tennis said there would be a 20 year lease for the project. There will be a water based, fire suppression system to each container. Heat will trigger the alarm.

Mr. Lynch asked about landscaping. We have asked our County Supervisor to revoke the project permit for the solar project due to the lack of long term landscaping maintenance.

Mr. Tennis said they plan to enter into a 20 year contract for the project landscaping. A water line will have to be put in.

Mr. Lynch asked what is there for the neighbors? The road will not be improved. Our land

value is cheap so that's probably why the project is being proposed here.

Mr. Tennis said they are building next to the substation.

Mr. Summers asked why they are building things like a battery storage facility next to people? Can't it be built elsewhere and switched with power?

Ms. Hopewell said she is concerned with property values in the area. She would rather see houses. Ms. Hopewell made the following motion:

MOTION: TO DENY THE PROJECT BASED ON THE OUTCRY FROM THE COMMUNITY. WE ARE NOT DENYING THE USE OF THE PROPERTY, BUT WE DO NOT WANT THIS PROJECT ON THIS PROPERTY.

(Mr. Summers seconded the motion. Discussion on the motion)

Mr. Stykel asked how Ramona directly benefits from the property?

Mr. Tennis said the project won't lower electric bills. It would take many similar projects to do that. The project helps to support the grid during a brownout.

The Chair asked when the battery storage is connected to the substation – will be it overhead or above ground?

Mr. Tennis said the wires will be underground.

Ms. Perfect said that if we vote to deny the project, we lose the opportunity to make the project better for the community.

Mr. Stykel said that with the solar facility, we tried to mitigate. We can't work with them. It's been 10 to 12 years of misery.

Mr. Lynch said we suffered but we learned. There has not been enough outreach done yet. When the Creelman solar project was originally before us, we had the opportunity to speak. Our only hope is to mitigate. By voting to deny or table it, we won't make it any better. He suggests the applicant work with the County and with us, and bring the project back. This is the first battery storage facility in Ramona. We need to ask questions of the planner.

Ms. Hopewell withdrew her original motion and made a new motion:

MOTION: TO SEND A LETTER BACK TO THE COUNTY PLANNER TO ASK FOR CLARIFICATION ON THE PROJECT LANDSCAPING (REQUIREMENT); THE MATERIAL OF THE ROAD TO BE USED; THE SCREENING OF THE OPERATION; THE TYPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY THAT WILL BE REQUIRED, AND OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY ON THIS ISSUE.

Upon motion made by Lynn Hopewell and seconded by Dan Summers, the motion **passed 8-3-0-0-4**, with Elio Noyas, Matt Rains and Paul Stykel voting no, and Torry Brean, Debbie Foster, Michelle Rains and Kevin Wallace absent.

8-D: MUP 09-010W1 - ATC Starvation Mtn. Renewal of cell site permit with MonoPine tree that is 41 feet tall (45 feet tall to top of branches), a generator and CMU block wall enclosure with Verizon's ground equipment. Mansolf, West Subcommittee

Ms. Mansolf said the West Subcommittee did not have a quorum and so did not review the project. The current, existing cell site is up for permit renewal with no changes. She remembers the West Subcommittee and the RCPG reviewing the project for the initial review in the past. This item is simply the permit renewal of an existing cell site. She asked Jill Cleveland, project proponent, when the cell site would come up for review again?

Ms. Cleveland said the cell site would come up for review again in 10 years. She confirmed that the cell site was existing – a faux tree, 41 feet tall – and that there would be no changes to the cell site itself or to the accessory cabinet that houses the additional equipment that supports the operation of the cell site. Unlike most cell sites, the accessory building is made out of decorative stone which makes it look unique and not industrial.

Mr. Ensign said this project was on the Design Review Board agenda, but no one was in attendance to present the project.

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE EXISTING 41 FOOT MONOPINE AS PRESENTED.

Upon motion made by Lynn Hopewell and seconded by Matt Rains, the motion **passed 10-0-0-1-4**, with Casey Lynch stepping down and Torry Brean, Debbie Foster, Michelle Rains and Kevin Wallace absent.

8-E: Time Extension for TPM 21176, a 53.11 acre, 4 Lot Subdivision at the Northeast Corner of Highland Valley Road and Highland Trails Drive. Gildred Building Company, Owner. Project was previously approved February 5, 2018. No changes are being proposed to the approved project. Mansolf, West Subcommittee

Ms. Mansolf said the West Subcommittee did not review this project either, due to lack of a quorum. This project was approved by the RCPG in 2018 and the applicant/project proponent is asking for a Time Extension as all of the work for the project has not yet been completed. No changes are being proposed to the project.

Stephen Haase, project applicant confirmed that no changes are being proposed to the project and the Time Extension is being filed to complete the project. The Time Extension will allow an extension of 72 months.

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE TIME EXTENSION FOR TPM 21176 AS PRESENTED.

Upon motion made by Dawn Perfect and seconded by Casey Lynch, the motion **passed 11-0-00-4**, with Torry Brean, Debbie Foster, Michelle Rains and Kevin Wallace absent.

**8-F: Community member Michele Ritchey has some concerns about perceived increase of speed since the installation of stop signs in the San Diego Country Estates. In addition, she is wondering where her stop sign is.
Rains, Transportation/Trails Subcommittee**

Mr. Rains would like an opportunity to go to the County offices to meet with the new team for traffic issues.

Mr. Lynch said Mr. Rains would not be speaking with the public, but he would be meeting with County staff. He would not be representing the RCPG, but he would be seeking information.

The Chair said she thought it would be okay for Mr. Rains to meet with County staff to obtain information on County related traffic/transportation issues.

**8-G: Update from the County on Zone 3 (San Diego Country Estates) if available
Rains, Transportation/Trails Subcommittee**

Mr. Rains said he is waiting to get more information on this item before moving forward with it.

8-H: Presentation by County Staff on Program for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and the Revised Transportation Study Guide. This information will be presented to the Board of Supervisors on August 17th. Presentation will include impacts to our unincorporated community of Ramona. The RCPG will provide comments to the Board of Supervisors on this issue.

Mark Slovick, County Deputy Director, said there is a new way to assess transportation impacts of a development project on the environment. It is Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) – this is new legislation, a state law, that went into effect on July 1, 2020, and it is an attempt to minimize transportation impacts from development projects by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle pollution. Previously, Average Daily Trips (ADT's) were used to determine transportation impacts. State Senate Bill 743 requires the amount of driving and length of trips – as measured by VMT's – be used to assess transportation impacts. This item is going to the Board of Supervisors on September 28. It was considered at the Planning Commission on July 22.

Jacob Armstrong, County Chief of the Land Development Division, said SB 743 was signed into law in 2013 with the goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage infill development and improve public health through active transportation. If a project is not VMT efficient, the developer will need to prepare an EIR. This could be cost prohibitive and may be a reason not to develop a project. In June, 2020, the County adopted a Transportation Study Guide. In September, 2020, a lawsuit was filed against the County for the Transportation Study Guide. On May, 2021, the Board considered VMT implementation to date and directed 13 items to be explored. In June, 2021, the Office of Planning and Research updated their FAQ's to clarify the

definition of “region.” In September, 2021, the Board rescinded the Transportation Study Guide. In August, 2022, the Board is considering the adoption of a revised Transportation Study Guide. VMT efficient areas have been identified. Ramona would have met the criteria for an infill area, but the Board of Supervisors excluded Ramona based on Ramona being in a high and very high fire hazard severity area. The Transportation Study Guide, if adopted by the Board, will be the basis for addressing the transportation effects of development projects.

Speaker: Jim Hickle, Ramona Resident

Why is Ramona being excluded as an infill area? The Town Center is a low fire hazard severity area. Infill areas have higher population densities, are close to jobs and affordable housing and are more VMT efficient. Lakeside is not a transit hub either, but they are included as an infill area.

Mark Slovick said one of the big factors in excluding Ramona as an infill area is having no existing or planned public transit.

Speaker: Steve Powell, Ramona Resident

Instead of a current density of 14.5 units per acre, the VMT would encourage 100 units or more of subsidized housing in the Form Based Code area, 3rd Street to Etcheverry. There is C-36, General Commercial in this area. There are also mixed use housing components in the Form Based Code area. An EIR negates a project. If the town stops development, a town will die. Applying VMT standards decimates the Form Based Code.

Mr. Stykel said that it will cost people money to work. People in Poway will move to Riverside

Mr. Slovick said this is not a tax. New development projects don't need future studies if they are VMT efficient. Projects in the unincorporated area that are not recognized as VMT efficient will need an EIR. This is not a tax.

Mr. Lynch said there is a difference between infill and where we are today. An infill area has existing transit to an area based on a regional transportation plan. Ramona had Specific Planning Areas (SPA's), but some were bought and will not be used for development. Cummings Ranch is the only SPA left in Ramona to be developed. The only opportunity developers will have is to buy land and put 10 homes on it. We won't have the amenities we want that usually go with development. It's as though there is a rule in place to not let development occur in the backcountry. We are at a severe disadvantage. Developers will pay a tax if they want to pay a fee to offset their VMT impact.

Mr. Slovick said the County would not levy a tax. Instead, a voluntary program would be available to pay mitigation fees that could be used for transit and biking improvements.

Mr. Noyas said mobility hubs are supposed to cut greenhouse gases. When people are sitting in traffic (in a densely populated area), they burn a lot of greenhouse gases. Electric cars are using the road and not paying a tax. This is being done to us by our elected officials. Nobody voted

on this. Will they track where we are driving or how far, or penalize us for where we are living? This is not America. This will shut down communities – not being able to build.

Mr. Rains said that this is cost prohibitive. It is hard to understand the scale. Ramona has recently asked for transit solutions for our children. We can ask that transit be looked at more seriously for Ramona, and not just for the children. We do need to build here.

The Chair said she went to the Planning Commission meeting. Planning and Zoning look as though they are going out of the window. VMT's measure whether or not to make an area a transit opportunity area. The Form Based Code area was not considered.

Ms. Perfect said there is an economic development basic: some reasonable growth is necessary to keep our town vibrant. If we increase the cost to develop, it will not be affordable. There will be no future housing here for our children. This VMT penalty encourages subsidized housing, but we don't have the services to support the population that qualifies for subsidized housing. Certain services are funded on a per capita basis (per person in the population) such as parks and libraries. Schools are funded based on enrollment. We have been told this is not a tax. It's not a tax because of the high vote threshold to pass a tax like this. This isn't a tax – it is a penalty. This plan penalizes our rural lifestyle and is an attack on our way of life. We are not a city and do not have the right to resolve this issue for ourselves.

The Chair said this item is going to the Board of September 28. We need to provide comments on this issue. The environmental groups are very well organized at these meetings.

Mr. Armstrong said all 58 counties in the State are impacted by VMT's. Two-thirds of the 58 counties have not adopted guidelines. Sixteen counties within the State have adopted their own guidelines.

Mr. Hickle asked if the Transportation Study Guide for San Diego County identifies Ramona as a transit opportunity area?

Mr. Armstrong said a transit opportunity area is an area that currently has no transit, but may be a good candidate to have transit in the future. Ramona was not studied for this.

MOTION: TO SEND COMMENTS ON THE VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT) ISSUE.

Upon motion made by Dawn Perfect and seconded by Lynn Hopewell, the motion **passed 11-0-0 0-4**, with Torry Brean, Debbie Foster, Michelle Rains and Kevin Wallace absent.

**8-I: Monthly update from Caltrans on status of State Route projects
Summers, RSRS Subcommittee**

8-I-1: SVC Multimodal Project EIR progress

Mr. Summers said there are still property owners who have not given permission for Caltrans to enter their property for biological and environmental studies. Caltrans can use force to get the studies done, if necessary.

8-I-2: Progress on repaving SR 67

Currently work had been done on replacing the guardrails in the corridor.

8-I-3: Progress on Mina De Oro

Caltrans said they are done with the work on Mino de Oro. They ran out of money for the project.

Ms. Mansolf asked if there were plans to put in a guardrail at the improvement location? It looks as though a guardrail is needed to complete the work that has been done.

Mr. Summers wasn't aware of plans to add a guardrail.

8-I-4: Progress on "Welcome to Ramona" sign

Sam Amen of Caltrans is looking into the possibility of putting a Ramona monument sign at 10th and Main

8-I-5: Improving the Mussey Grade/SR 67 intersection

There is the strip of SR 67 that is at the Mussey Grade Road intersection that is dangerous. A complaint has been made. Caltrans evaluated the area and said it was fine. This area should be repaved as a temporary fix for now, or it should be prioritized before everything else.

8-I-6: Mt. Woodson Trail Signage

As we heard last month, the signs will not go in until the parking lot is completed.

8-I-7: Response to the SVC Multimodal Project Draft

Mr. Summers said the CMCP document is a large, 182 page document. There will be a meeting to discuss it on September 9. There are many elements in the document that include bikes, wildlife crossings, and now equestrian issues have been added.

ITEM 9: OTHER BUSINESS (Possible Action)

9-A: Announcements and Correspondence Received

Ms. Perfect said the County put in the sidewalks on D Street between 11th and 12th Streets.

Mr. Lynch said the sidewalks were on the CIP list for the last 16 years.

9-B: DESIGN REVIEW REPORT (Ensign) – Update on Projects Reviewed

Mr. Ensign gave the Design Review Board report. The applicant on the Design Review Board agenda for the new signs for AT&T did not show up. Neither did the applicant for the Starvation Mt. cell site.

Jim Piva gave a presentation on the Ramona Archway Monument sign. It was well received. The Archway will go over 10th at Main. There was discussion on the banner that will be placed on the Archway – there will be a tract system that will facilitate movement of the banner.

Mr. Lynch said that there are 2 competing ideas going on. Caltrans is considering putting up a monument sign and another one is planned for 10th and Main.

The Chair said that possibly Mr. Piva will hand off the concept to Caltrans if they will do the work on the monument sign.

9-C: Discussion Items (Possible Action)

9-C-1: Concerns from Members

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Rains when the Transportation/Trails Subcommittee meetings are being held? He felt the meetings need to be held on a consistent night.

Mr. Rains said they will be held the second Thursday before the RCPG meeting.

9-C-2: Future Agenda Item Requests

Ms. Mansolf said CUDA may have 4 projects on the next agenda. The AT&T sign project may be on the next agenda. The applicant said he will let us know when he wants to attend again. The D Street Mixed Use Project will be on the agenda, and the McDonald's minor deviation. As far as the VMT issue, Mr. Hagey, with the walkable community project, asked to be on the next CUDA agenda to see if his development can be excluded from the VMT requirements. Ms. Mansolf asked who should she contact to see if this is something that can be done?

The Chair said to contact Jacob Armstrong with this question.

Mr. Summers said there is no update on the status of the 3rd ambulance.

9-C-3: Addition and Confirmation of New/Continuing Subcommittee Members

Mr. Rains said Rebecca Geiger asked to be a member of the Transportation/Trails Subcommittee.

Mr. Lynch said that he is stepping down as a member of the Transportation/Trails Subcommittee and will attend meetings when he is available to do so, as a member of the public.

MOTION: TO ADD REBECCA GEIGER TO THE TRANSPORTATION/TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE.

Upon motion made by Elio Noyas and seconded by Kristi Mansolf, the motion **passed 11-0-0 0-4**, with Torry Brean, Debbie Foster, Michelle Rains and Kevin Wallace absent.

- 9-D: Meeting Updates**
- 9-D-1: Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission and TAC Meetings (*No Information Brought Forward*)**
- 9-D-2: Future Group Meeting Dates – Next RCPG Meeting to be 9-1-22, Location/Format to be Determined**

ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Mansolf

The RCPG is advisory only to the County of San Diego. Community issues not related to planning and land use are not within the purview of this group. Item #5: Opportunity for members of the public to speak to the RCPG on any subject within the group's jurisdiction that does not appear as an item on this agenda. The RCPG cannot discuss these matters except to place them on a future agenda, refer them to a subcommittee, or to County staff. Speakers will be limited to 3 minutes. Please fill out a speaker request form located at the rear of the room and present to Vice Chairperson.

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