

FENCES Erosion poses risk to tracks

FROM B1 has always been and will always be. It's the train that should move, not us, and you know it."

NCTD and the San Diego Association of Governments, the regional planning agency, plan to eventually move the tracks away from the beach in Del Mar to a new inland route through tunnels. However, the relocation would cost more than \$3 billion and there's no money for construction. Obtaining construction funding, along with all the other preliminary work, is expected to take at least 10 years, and construction would take another decade.

Meanwhile, coastal erosion and rising sea levels pose an increasing threat to the blufftop tracks. Every year, there's less room for people to walk along the tracks and new slides threaten the railroad bed. NCTD and SANDAG are in the fourth phase of a six-phase, multimillion-dollar

effort to stabilize the Del Mar tracks where they are.

Fencing also is planned for the tracks in Oceanside and Encinitas, where the idea has been less of an issue because the tracks there are not so close to the beach. But even though the tracks are a few blocks inland, people frequently cross illegally to get to popular places such as the restaurants and bars along North Coast Highway in Leucadia.

Normally, any coastal construction such as bluff repairs and the fence require approval from the California Coastal Commission and the local jurisdictions involved.

However, in an attempt to bypass those approvals, NCTD filed a "petition for declaratory order" in August with the federal Surface Transportation Board asking the agency to waive the state and local permits.

Del Mar's City Council some time ago voted to oppose fencing "that would mitigate tragic trespassing events and reduce ongoing delays to passenger and freight rail service," the petition says. Also, the transit district "has numerous crucial, upcoming rail maintenance and upgrading projects that will be challenged under the Coastal Act or local coastal laws."



U-T FILE
A southbound train passes 11th Street in Del Mar as a surfer heads down to cross the tracks.

and upgrading projects that will be challenged under the Coastal Act or local coastal laws."

Del Mar and the San Diego chapter of the Surfrider Foundation have both asked the federal agency to deny the transit district's petition.

"In essence, NCTD asked for a waiver to indefinitely bypass state review processes that exist to ensure the proper management of coastal zone resources and ensure public access to our beaches," states a response Surfrider posted on its website Oct. 8.

Del Mar, in its official reply to the NCTD petition, said the requested declaratory order is "inappropriate, unwise, and unnecessary."

"Despite its best efforts throughout its 168-page petition to try and manufacture one, NCTD fails to present an actual, present controversy or uncertainty that could be resolved by the issuance of a declaratory order," states the city's response.

No date has been provided for a final decision on the petition, said NCTD

Marketing and Communications Manager Kimy Wall. NCTD believes it has the right to construct the fence within the railroad right-of-way with or without the declaratory order, Wall said.

In an emergency, the transit district and SANDAG have completed repairs without obtaining approval in advance. Last year, after a Thanksgiving weekend storm eroded the bluffs near the tracks, crews installed a retaining wall within a few days and then got permission months later from the Coastal Commission.

The petition to the Surface Transportation Board addresses broader issues in an effort to eliminate regulatory uncertainties about rail maintenance and upgrades, Wall said.

"NCTD's railroad right-of-way is not a safe place for the general public," she said in an emailed response to questions. "State law recognizes this by making it a violation to illegally cross the tracks."

Fencing is one of a number of safety measures that the district is installing to prepare for more frequent passenger and freight trains

in years ahead, she said. The corridor, which had 62 trains daily this year before the COVID-19 crisis, is expected to have 101 trains daily in 2030.

Cameras, lights, speakers and signs also will be added for safety. In all, the project is expected to cost between \$2.4 million and \$2.8 million.

The fence will be placed along the parallel right-of-way on both sides of the tracks for a 1.4-mile section of the corridor in Del Mar south of the Coast Boulevard crossing.

In Encinitas, the fence will be placed between the four crossings in a 2.5-mile section between the Carlsbad border and the Encinitas train station. A few short sections of that corridor already have fencing.

In Oceanside, the chain-link barrier will be added to about eight-tenths of a mile of the corridor that does not already have fencing south of the Oceanside Transit Center, with crossings at Loma Alta Marsh, Cassidy Street and Carlsbad Boulevard at the Buena Vista La-goon.

philip.diehl@suniontribune.com

SMOLENS

FROM B1 shifting positions, were incensed.

Campa-Najjar later backed away from many of his statements and said he "messed up bad" by appearing with Defend East County. He added he was aware of some of the group's conspiracy theories but not its views about violence toward protesters, both of which were prominent in the Dyer story on the front page of the Union-Tribune in August.

In his interview, Issa told Haskins that citizen groups have a right to protect their communities with weapons. "A militia in fact is a personal right under the Sec-

ond Amendment and your right to defend your community and to take charge, if your government fails you, or to take arms if your government turns on you; those are your original constitutional rights," Issa said, according to an article by Charles T. Clark of the Union-Tribune.

That's wrong, according to Mary B. McCord, who served as acting assistant attorney general for national security at the end of Obama's second presidential term.

"Although these vigilante groups often cite the Second Amendment's mention of a 'well regulated militia' for their authority, history and Supreme Court precedent make clear that the phrase was not intended to — and

does not — authorize private militias outside of government control," she wrote in The New York Times.

"Indeed, these armed groups have no authority to call themselves forth into militia service; the Second Amendment does not protect such activity; and all 50 states prohibit it."

In Georgia, appointed U.S. Sen. Kelly Loeffler and her chief Republican opponent, Rep. Doug Collins, sought the endorsement of congressional candidate Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Republican who has spread baseless QAnon conspiracy theories and posted racist and xenophobic videos on social media, according to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

In September, Greene

posted a photo of herself holding what appeared to be an assault rifle next to the images of Democratic Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. "We need strong conservative Christians to go on the offense against these socialists who want to rip our country apart," she wrote.

Republicans from President Donald Trump on down have accused Democrats of, among other things, being quick to condemn police actions during peaceful social justice protests, while reluctant to speak out against violence by some demonstrators.

On Thursday, Greene endorsed Loeffler. The incumbent is counting on Greene's backing to boost her past Collins in the Nov. 3 special election and into a likely runoff in January with Raphael Warnock, the leading Democrat.

Eighty-one candidates who adhere — to some degree — to QAnon conspiracies ran for House and Senate seats and 24 will be on the November ballot, according to Alex Kaplan of Media Matters. He said 22 of the remaining candidates are Republicans and two are independents.

Most are in heavily Democratic districts and likely to lose. Greene is among the exceptions; her Democratic opponent withdrew from the race and she is virtually assured of winning a seat in the House.

One of QAnon's main beliefs is that Trump is fighting a military-backed holy war against a secretive ring of satanic elites who sexually exploit children, and sometimes eat them, while being protected by a "deep state" global bureaucracy, according to a story by Kristina Davis and Joshua Emerson Smith of the Union-Tribune.

Hollywood A-listers and Democrats are seen as the villains in the baseless conspiracy theory. The FBI in Phoenix last year characterized QAnon theories as a domestic terror threat after linking them with acts of violence.

Trump has said he knows little about the group, and did so again Thursday night during a town hall-style meeting broadcast by NBC.

"I know nothing about QAnon... I do know they are very much against pedophilia. They fight it very hard," he said.

Asked by host Savannah Guthrie to condemn the

group, Trump declined. Yet, he has repeatedly spread QAnon's baseless ideas online.

Last week, Trump took to Twitter to retweet the QAnon conspiracy theory that terrorist leader Osama bin Laden was not killed in Pakistan by Navy SEAL Team Six in 2011 — instead, a body double was the victim — and he could still be alive. The claim goes much further: that then-President Barack Obama and Vice President Biden had the SEALs killed to cover it all up.

A former SEAL who has said he was the one who actually killed bin Laden, Robert O'Neill, is very much alive. He quickly went public to knock down the notion that bin Laden's death was a hoax — and criticized the president, who is spreading a rumor by a group now linked with terrorism.

Tweet of the Week


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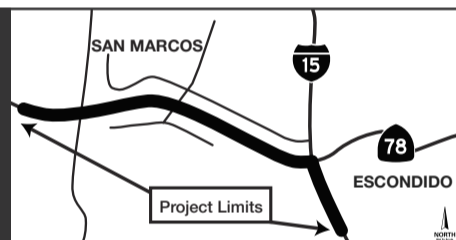


NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Caltrans is proceeding to initiate an Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) and a virtual Public Scoping Meeting has been scheduled for the I-15/SR 78 Managed Lanes Direct Connectors Project

VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

Date: Thursday, October 29
Time: 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Location: Access the Online Meeting at [KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SR78](https://www.KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SR78)
Questions or Comments?
(888) 547-1161
SR78@KeepSanDiegoMoving.com



What's Being Planned: The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in partnership with the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and City of San Marcos, proposes to build Managed Lanes Direct Connectors between I-15 and SR 78, extend three miles of Managed Lanes in each direction on SR 78 between the I-15/SR 78 interchange and San Marcos Boulevard, and construct additional freeway and multimodal improvements at Nordahl Road, Woodland Parkway, Barham Drive, and Rancheros Drive.

Why This Ad: Caltrans, as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) to analyze potential effects the proposed project may have on the environment. This notice is to inform you of the scheduled public scoping comment period and public scoping meeting for this project and to solicit public input into the development of the scope of the project and the EIR/EA.

Where Do You Come In: Comments will be accepted during the minimum 30-day public scoping period from **October 19, 2020 to November 20, 2020**. Comments may be submitted via the website ([KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SR78](https://www.KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SR78)), phone (888) 547-1161, email (SR78@KeepSanDiegoMoving.com), or mail (Caltrans District 11, c/o Ellen Renker, 4050 Taylor Street (MS 242), San Diego, CA 92110). Caltrans will address substantive comments in the Draft EIR/EA.

Virtual Public Scoping Meeting: Caltrans and SANDAG will host a virtual public scoping meeting on **Thursday, October 29, 2020 from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM PST**. You may join the meeting anytime between these hours. Meeting information is available at: [KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SR78](https://www.KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SR78).

For more information about this project, please contact Ellen Renker, Associate Environmental Planner, at ellen.renker@dot.ca.gov or (888) 547-1161.

Special Accommodations: Individuals who require special accommodation (American Sign Language interpreter, documentation in alternative formats, etc.) are requested to contact the Caltrans District 11 Public Information Office at (619) 688-6670 at least 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting date. TTY users may contact the California Relay Service TTY line at 1-800-735-2929. Para información en español, por favor llame al (619) 688-6670.

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