

Roeding Park expansion draws concerns, support

By Marc Benjamin, staff writer

The Fresno Bee, Friday, June 24, 2011

The city's plan to expand Fresno Chaffee Zoo and Rotary Storyland/Playland drew criticism Thursday evening from people who said it would harm the historic open areas of Roeding Park.

Supporters of the plan, meanwhile, told the Fresno City Council to forge ahead, because the expansion would enhance the entire park as a package.

The comments came during a city council hearing on the environmental-impact report for the 148-acre park's master plan. The 2,600-page document examines traffic, harm to trees, park species and many other factors.

Next week, the plan goes to the city council for a vote. If the council approves the report, then expansion projects can begin. Under the plan, the zoo would expand from 18 to 39 acres, and Storyland/Playland would grow from seven to nine acres. That would mean about 20 fewer acres of open park.

Lawyer Richard Harriman – who represents the Roeding family and some local residents – said he doesn't want to see that happen. The expansion, he said, would have a disproportionate effect on the poor and minority populations, because the free portion of the park would become smaller.

George Roeding of Fremont, great-grandson of the park's founder, said the park's expansion would remove green space and harm established trees.

"Some of the trees in Roeding Park are over 100 years old," he said. "Older trees, like older people, need more care."

But a long-time zoo employee said she has seen the care for those trees start to deteriorate as the city has cut its parks maintenance budget.

Linda Cover, a zoo employee for 40 years, said that if the zoo takes over 20 acres of park space, zoo employees will take care of the trees and relieve the city of the financial burden.

Gabriel Ross, a San Francisco lawyer who represents the Friends of Roeding Park group, wrote in a letter that the environmental report did not properly address the park's historic significance as an arboretum dating back more than 100 years.

It also did not consider species that use the park, and it incorrectly calculated traffic flow and its effects on air quality, Ross wrote.

Ruth Todd, a consultant who researched the park's history, told the council that the expansion plans would not ruin the park as a historic site.

"The sum of the parts ... contributes to the historic significance of the park," she said.

Examining historical documents, Todd also said when the Roeding family donated land, it provided more than 40 acres for a zoo.

This isn't the first time the environmental report has been considered. The Planning Commission approved it in January, but the city chose to recirculate it out of concern that some issues were not fully addressed.

For example, some were concerned that the city didn't contact the state and federal parks officials about the proposed changes as it was required to do under the terms of grants it had received.

The city received nine more comment letters, but they did not raise new issues, said Michael Houlihan, an environmental consultant for the city.

California air board expands clean-fuel shipping zone

After the Navy complained that cargo ships were traveling through its testing area to avoid pollution regulations closer to shore, the California Air Resources Board votes to extend the clean-fuel zone.

By Margot Roosevelt, staff writer
L.A. Times, Friday, June 24, 2011

More than half of oceangoing vessels serving the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have been skirting traditional shipping lanes to avoid air pollution curbs, prompting California officials Thursday to extend the state's clean-fuel zone beyond the Channel Islands.

The unanimous vote by the California Air Resources Board came after strong protests from the U.S. Navy that the jump in commercial ship traffic across the Point Mugu Sea Range was "seriously jeopardizing successful completion of vital Department of Defense testing and training missions."

California's clean fuel zone, which took effect in July 2009, is the toughest ship pollution rule in the world, requiring oceangoing vessels to substitute less-polluting oil for the bunker fuel they commonly use.

As originally designated, California's coastal zone encompassed a strip 24 nautical miles wide, including traditional shipping lanes between the Channel Islands and the shore.

But shippers began to travel beyond the islands — motoring through the 36,000-square-mile area where the Navy conducts tests involving missiles, ships, submarines and aircraft. Since the clean-fuel zone took effect, the number of ship transits through Navy waters jumped from an average of two a day to as many as 15 a day, according to the Navy.

The traffic delayed one major missile exercise, according to Capt. Aaron Cudnohufsy who testified before the board Thursday. He said delays can cost up to \$30 million a day, and predicted that conflicts would increase with projected growth in commercial shipping.

More than 40% of U.S. imports travel through the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Burning of bunker fuel has been a major contributor to asthma, cancer and other illnesses in neighborhoods around the ports. Between 2009 and 2015, the clean-fuel zone is expected to prevent 3,500 premature deaths, according to the air board.

Environmentalists and public health groups applauded the extension of the zone. Candice Kim of the Coalition for Clean Air called it "a great victory for the environment," adding that it sent "a message to shippers that avoiding regulations intended to save lives won't be tolerated."

The Pacific Merchant Shipping Assn., an industry group, fought the original clean-fuel zone in court. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in March that the state had the authority to regulate ships.

In a letter to the board, the association's vice president, T.L. Garrett, opposed the extension, saying that it will require companies to retrofit tanks, pipes and engines.

Using the longer route outside the Channel Islands has saved shippers about \$6,000 per round-trip, according to the air board, because bunker fuel is cheaper than cleaner alternatives.

The two industry officials who testified Thursday, Dan Krokosky of Chevron Shipping and Henry Pak of Hanjin Shipping, did not object to the extension. Instead, they urged the board to delay until 2015 the next phase of clean-fuel rules, which require a transition from fuel with 1% sulfur content to fuel with 0.1% sulfur content.

"It is unlikely that anyone is going to sell this 0.1% fuel," Krokosky said, adding that the fuel's viscosity had created safety issues. "One of the dangers is that a ship will not start," he said.

Air board officials acknowledged that 2% of vessels using the lowest sulfur fuel have experienced propulsion failures. But they said the technical issues are being resolved.

The board voted to extend the timetable for the cleaner fuel by two years, to 2014.

Environmental groups opposed any delay in moving to the low-sulfur fuel, but they said the effect could be offset if the board would enact limits on ship speed. Lowering ship speeds to 12 knots within 40 nautical miles of the coast, said Cooper Hanning of the Natural Resources Defense Council, would reduce collisions with whales and other marine mammals, as well as cut air pollution and greenhouse gases that are trapping heat in the Earth's atmosphere.

Calif regulators extend clean-fuel shipping zone

The Associated Press

In the SF Chronicle, Modesto Bee and other papers, Friday, June 24, 2011

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- California regulators have extended the state's offshore clean-fuel shipping zone beyond the Channel Islands.

The Navy has been complaining that ships are traveling around the Southern California island chain and through its Point Mugu Sea Range to avoid state Air Resources Board regulations closer to shore.

California's clean-air rule, the world's toughest ship pollution regulation, took effect in July 2009. The state's coastal zone encompassed a strip 24 nautical miles wide, including traditional shipping lanes between the Channel Islands and the shore.

The Los Angeles Times says that since the rule went into effect, an average two ships a day traveled through the restricted 36,000-square-mile area where the Navy tests missiles, ships, submarines and aircraft.

The Air Resources Board voted Thursday to extend the clean-air zone to 40 miles.

[Fresno Bee Earth Blog, Thursday, June 23, 2011:](#)

On the siege of ozone and heat

By Mark Grossi

A few notes on the ozone and heat the past two days:

- People have asked if Arvin in Kern County is still the ozone hot spot for the San Joaquin Valley. So far this summer, it is not. Fresno-Clovis is where the highest readings are occurring. But Porterville and Sequoia National Park have the most ozone violations in this region.
- The Valley did not have a dreaded violation of the one-hour federal ozone standard. The threshold is 125 parts per billion. Fresno had 119 on Wednesday. Clovis had 119 on Tuesday. Valley motorists are paying \$12 extra on their vehicle registration fees as a penalty for missing the deadline on this standard.
- How bad was the air on Tuesday and Wednesday? Take a look. The red boxes mean the ozone exceeded the threshold for the eight-hour federal ozone standard. Yeah. It's a sea of red.
- Will the ozone calm down as the temperature drops? It does look like the siege will let up a little. The forecast is calling for temperatures to fall by the weekend. But if you have any lung problems – a friend of mine has pneumonia – the air is still unhealthy for you to breathe today.

[Stockton Record, Editorial, Friday, June 24, 2011:](#)

Marine highway moving

Port of Stockton's upgrade, cargo changes will benefit area

Two demolition contracts have been awarded that will help clear the way for the creation of a marine highway between Stockton and Oakland.

The Port of Stockton awarded the contracts, totaling about \$350,000, to rip out an existing harbor crane in its older East Complex and to tear out an old boiler room on the west end of the Rough and Ready wharf.

The crane being removed has a lift capacity of only 30 tons and, as one port official put it, only "works sometimes."

Also awarded this week was a \$5.4 million contract to build a new overpass to route the Port of Stockton Expressway, a north-south link between Rough and Ready Island and Highway 4, above a Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway line.

These contracts are in addition to the \$10 million contract awarded in March for the construction of two 140-ton cranes and a \$3.3 million contract awarded two weeks ago to purchase two barges.

All of this is part of a plan to start moving cargo barges from the Port of Oakland to Stockton's port and the Port of Sacramento loaded with ship cargo containers rather than hauling them by truck.

This creates winners all the way around: jobs, at the ports and for the businesses that serve them; less truck traffic around the Oakland port and on the highways snaking into and through the Valley; **and less air pollution.**

