

Online Article	Print Article
<p data-bbox="235 235 717 304">PPH to adopt environmental study on Escondido hospital</p> <p data-bbox="235 382 787 634">By: DAVID FRIED - Staff Writer ESCONDIDO ---- In terms of the environment, a hospital is not much different than an office building, according to a Palomar Pomerado Health report gauging the effects of its planned medical campus in an Escondido business park.</p> <p data-bbox="235 676 787 961">The report, which is still in draft form, concludes that the district's proposed 453-bed hospital would be perfectly compatible with planned uses for the Escondido Research and Technology Center and would easily coexist with the 546-megawatt power plant under development in the park.</p> <p data-bbox="235 1003 760 1180">Palomar Pomerado's board will consider approving the report at a special meeting tonight, although the district has made scant information about it publicly available in advance.</p> <p data-bbox="235 1222 799 1474">Palomar Pomerado officials said Monday that the final report would not be ready for public review until shortly before tonight's meeting. The North County Times obtained a draft copy, however, through the city of Escondido, where the document was filed with the planning department last week.</p> <p data-bbox="235 1516 782 1862">After reviewing the report, the board will consider three resolutions related to building at the tech center. One resolution would approve the environmental studies for the project. Another would ask the city of Escondido to add Palomar Pomerado's report to the city's existing environmental impact report for the tech center, and amend zoning regulations for the site to include medical uses. A third would</p>	<p data-bbox="824 235 1360 340">Environmental report backs new PPH site Hospital district won't release public data until meeting tonight</p> <p data-bbox="824 382 1377 634">DAVID FRIED STAFF WRITER ESCONDIDO — In terms of the environment, a hospital is not much different than an office building, according to a Palomar Pomerado Health report gauging the effects of its planned medical campus in an Escondido business park.</p> <p data-bbox="824 676 1377 961">The report, which is still in draft form, concludes that the district's proposed 453-bed hospital would be perfectly compatible with planned uses for the Escondido Research and Technology Center and would easily coexist with the 546-megawatt power plant under development in the park.</p> <p data-bbox="824 1003 1351 1180">Palomar Pomerado's board will consider approving the report at a special meeting tonight, although the district has made scant information about it publicly available in advance.</p> <p data-bbox="824 1222 1383 1474">Palomar Pomerado officials said Monday that the final report would not be ready for public review until shortly before tonight's meeting. The North County Times obtained a draft copy however, through the city of Escondido, where the document was filed with the planning department last week.</p> <p data-bbox="824 1516 1367 1862">After reviewing the report, the board will consider three resolutions related to building at the tech center. One resolution would approve the environmental studies for the project. Another would ask the city of Escondido to add Palomar Pomerado's report to the city's existing environmental impact report for the tech center, and amend zoning regulations for the site to include medical uses. A third would</p>

<p>formally approve moving forward with the project and clear the way for tapping into the \$496 million bond that will help pay for the facility.</p> <p>As proposed, the \$531 million project would include seven buildings and two parking structures spread over 1.2 million square feet. It would include a trauma center, a women's center and 160,000 square feet of medical office space, the latter to be built by JRMC Real Estate, the park's developer.</p> <p>Construction of a hospital to replace Palomar Medical Center as the district's flagship is the central piece of the district's \$753 million expansion plan.</p> <p>Overall, the hospital's anticipated effects would not be much different than those already included in Escondido's 2002 environmental report that cleared the way for development of the business park, according to Palomar Pomerado's report.</p> <p>The project would be located less than a quarter-mile from the power plant Sempra Energy is in the process of completing. However, exposure to potentially dangerous air contaminants at the medical campus would remain well below state thresholds, according to the report.</p> <p>Based on the conclusions of the public health evaluation completed for the Sempra plant, Palomar Pomerado concluded that the power plant "would not pose an unacceptable health risk to patients or workers at the proposed hospital/medical campus."</p> <p>"We're trusting that the data (Sempra) supplied is accurate," said Allen Haynie, an attorney with Latham & Watkins, which represents the district.</p>	<p>formally approve moving forward with the project and clear the way for tapping into the \$496 million bond that will help pay for the facility.</p> <p>As proposed, the \$531 million project would include seven buildings and two parking structures spread over 12 million square feet. It would include a trauma center, a women's center and 160,000 square feet of medical office space, the latter to be built by JRMC Real Estate, the park's developer.</p> <p>Construction of a hospital to replace Palomar Medical Center as the district's flagship is the central piece of the district's \$753 million expansion plan.</p> <p>Overall, the hospital's anticipated effects would not be much different than those already included in Escondido's 2002 environmental report that cleared the way for development of the business park, according to Palomar Pomerado's report.</p> <p>The project would be located less than a quarter-mile from the power plant Sempra Energy is in the process of completing. However, exposure to potentially dangerous air contaminants at the medical campus would remain well below state thresholds, according to the report.</p> <p>Based on the conclusions of the public health evaluation completed for the Sempra plant, Palomar Pomerado concluded that the power plant "would not pose an unacceptable health risk to patients or workers at the proposed hospital/medical campus."</p> <p>"We're trusting that the data (Sempra) supplied is accurate," said Allen Haynie, an attorney with Latham & Watkins, which represents the district.</p>
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<p>The new hospital, however, would create more traffic than the offices originally planned for the area. Once completed, the hospital would generate 17,060 car trips each day, 6,950 more than anticipated in the city's original environmental studies for that 52-acre section of the park. However, while offices produce traffic at peak morning and evening hours, the hospital's effects on the roads would be more evenly distributed throughout the day, the report concludes.</p> <p>Palomar Pomerado plans to minimize the impact of that traffic by adding several signals and additional turning lanes around the site. It would also help pay for planned improvements for the interchange at Nordahl Road and Highway 78.</p> <p>No mention, however, was included in the report about extending Citracado Parkway, a key element of the compromise the district reached with Escondido's council this summer.</p> <p>Haynie said negotiations on that agreement are ongoing, and remain separate from the necessary environmental approvals for the medical campus.</p> <p>For months, the district and a council majority were entangled in an often bitter tug-of-war over where to locate the new hospital.</p> <p>Eventually, the council majority agreed to allow the facility in the park, so long as Palomar Pomerado picked up the tab for what the city says will be needed road improvements in the area. In all, those improvements would cost an estimated \$26 million, according to the city.</p> <p>In exchange for its approval, the council has also demanded that the district commit</p>	<p>The new hospital, however, would create more traffic than the offices originally planned for the area. Once completed; the hospital would generate 17,060 car trips each day, 6,950 more than anticipated in the city's original environmental studies for that 52-acre section of the park. However, while offices produce traffic at peak morning and evening hours, the hospital's effects on the roads would be more evenly distributed throughout the day, the report concludes.</p> <p>Palomar Pomerado plans to minimize the impact of that traffic by adding several signals and additional turning lanes around the site. It would also help pay for planned improvements for the interchange at Nordahi Road and Highway 78.</p> <p>No mention, however, was included in the report about extending Citracado Parkway, a key element of the compromise the district reached with Escondido's council this summer.</p> <p>Haynie said negotiations on that agreement are ongoing, and remain separate from the necessary environmental approvals for the medical campus.</p> <p>For months, the district and a council majority were entangled in an often bitter tug-ofwar over where to locate the new hospital.</p> <p>Eventually, the council majority agreed to allow the facility in the park, so long as Palomar Pomerado picked up the tab for what the city says will be needed road improvements in the area. In all, those improvements would cost an estimated \$26 million, according to the city.</p> <p>In exchange for its approval, the council has also demanded that the district commit</p>
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<p>to a planned renovation of the existing Palomar Medical Center downtown.</p> <p>Palomar Pomerado prepared its report in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act, which allows an agency to file an addendum to an existing environmental impact report without the 30-day public comment period that usually accompanies such environmental studies.</p> <p>To comply with the law, Palomar placed a notice of the meeting in local papers on Saturday. And board President Marcelo Rivera said that all the discussion regarding the environmental reports would be taking place in an open forum.</p> <p>"It's not as if we're doing any politicking behind closed doors," Rivera said. "We're doing everything in public."</p> <p>Nevertheless, when asked to provide copies of the environmental studies, Palomar Pomerado officials told members of the public and press on Monday that the documents were still in draft form and not immediately available.</p> <p>Robroy Fawcett, a critic of the proposed hospital plan who regularly posts district documents on his blog covering Palomar Pomerado's governance, said he was one of those told by district officials that the study was not available.</p> <p>"It's archaic and out of the dark ages," Fawcett said. "The way they're handling this meeting, the way they're not making the documents available, it's not good government."</p> <p>Contact staff writer David Fried at (760) 740-5416 or dfried@nctimes.com</p>	<p>to a planned renovation of the existing Palomar Medical Center downtown.</p> <p>Palomar Pomerado prepared its report in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act, which allows an agency to file an addendum to an existing environmental impact report without the 30-day public comment period that usually accompanies such environmental studies.</p> <p>To comply with the law, Palomar placed a notice of the meeting in local papers on Saturday. And board President Marcelo Rivera said that all the discussion regarding the environmental reports would be taking place in an open forum.</p>
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