

Pauma Casino Expansion

August 19, 2007

The Pauma Casino is planning a major expansion: A \$300M facility with addition of 23-story, 400-room hotel; a 2,500 seat outdoor amphitheater; a 1,500 space parking garage plus an additional 2,400 parking spaces; three new wells, a 1M gallon water storage tank, etc.). In very rough terms, this will put Pauma on par with the Pala Casino in size today, but Pala (and Pechanga) plan to expand soon as well. Excerpts from some of the relevant documents are posed [here](#).

The Pauma Casino is located on the north side of Route 76 about 4 miles west of the intersection of Route 76 and Valley Center Road; Pala Casino is on Route 76 about 5 miles east of Route 15.

There are possible impacts to local residents that we need to understand better, specifically:

- three new wells producing ~211,000 gallons/day in addition to the ~233,000 gallons currently produced from existing wells
- increased traffic on SR 76, estimated to be at about 40%.

The tribe will hold a public meeting on the project at the Pauma Valley Community Center at 6 p.m. Aug. 28. Following that informational meeting, it is likely that the PMPO will be drafting a response to the project on behalf of Mountain residents. Your comments and/or participation are welcomed.

On a related topic, the Pala Reservation has recently agreed to do significant road widening (to 4 lanes) and improvements to SR 76 between 15 and a mile east of their casino at their cost of \$38M, and it is likely that Pauma will have to follow suit with road improvements.

August 30, 2007 update

A public meeting was held at the Pauma Valley Community Center on August 28th to receive feedback on the proposed casino expansion. You can read the U-T's report on the meeting [here](#). The meeting was attended by about 80-100 Pauma Valley residents, including members from their Planning Committee, members from the Pauma Tribe including the Chairman, as well as federal officials from [NEPA](#), and the firm doing the environmental study.

Primary concerns raised were:

- (1) traffic increases along Rte 76 (more below)
- (2) Water table decline from the three added wells (water usage will increase from ~55K gals/day to ~250K gals/day)
- (3) Community safety (potential increase in crime, drunk driving incidents, etc.)
- (4) Lighting (well covered by Scott Kardel)
- (5) visual appeal (some residents suggested a wider, lower profile casino rather than a 24 story tower, as has been done in Sedona and elsewhere)

I was surprised to find that the Route 76 Corridor study just completed in May (which was reported on earlier, see [here](#)) was unfamiliar to NEPA, the tribe, and the traffic planner in attendance. That study was sanctioned by the 19 member tribes, including Pauma.

The earlier Route 76 study rated current Route 76 traffic as "D" which CalTrans rates as "acceptable" for SD County (as in A, B, C, D, and E) on weekdays and "E" on Saturdays. That traffic will double over the next 5 years and triple over the next 20 years, not counting the addition of casino expansions. So it is expected that traffic will get much worse on 76 with concomitant problems with traffic safety. There is no plan to widen the road to 4 lanes, its highly unlikely that CalTrans will require it, residents don't want it, but it is likely that simple road improvements will be required and that the Tribe wants them as well.

I purchased a CD of the Draft Environment Impact Report done by the environmental firm, if anyone would like to read it.

September 7, 2007

[PMPO Response to the Expansion Proposal](#)

September 22, 2007

[Union Tribune Article on County Response to Casino Proposal;](#)
[Full County Response to Draft-TEIR](#)