



# CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



**April 14, 2026**

## **ITEM TITLE**

Joint Powers Agreement: Approve a Joint Powers Agreement Between the City of Chula Vista and the County of San Diego for the Planning, Operations, and Maintenance of the Otay Ranch Open Space Preserve

**Report Number:** 26-0020

**Location:** East of Interstate 805, south-southwest of Jamul, and north of the U.S.-Mexico border in the area generally surrounding the Lower Otay Reservoir

**Department:** Development Services

**G.C. § 84308 Regulations Apply:** No

**Environmental Notice:** The activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines. Therefore, pursuant to State Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) no environmental review is required. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the activity qualifies for an Exemption pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines.

## **Recommended Action**

Adopt a resolution approving a renewed and revised 30-year Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Chula Vista and the County of San Diego for the Planning, Operations, and Maintenance of the Otay Ranch Open Space Preserve and authorizing the City Manager to execute the renewed and revised 30-year Joint Powers Agreement.

## **SUMMARY**

On March 6, 1996, the Chula Vista City Council approved a 30-year Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Chula Vista and County of San Diego for the planning, operations, and maintenance of the Otay Ranch Open Space Preserve. Today’s requested action will authorize the City Manager to execute a renewed and revised 30-year Joint Powers Agreement between the City and County for continued planning, operations, and maintenance of the Otay Ranch Open Space Preserve through March 6, 2056.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The proposed activity was reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and it was determined that the activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA

Guidelines because it will not result in a physical change in the environment. Therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it has also been determined that the activity qualifies for an Exemption pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

This determination is predicated on CEQA Guidelines Section 15004 which provides direction to lead agencies on the appropriate timing for environmental review. Any future projects resulting from implementation of the Joint Powers Agreement will require preparation of environmental documents in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines and the City's Municipal Code.

## **BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

Not applicable.

## **DISCUSSION**

The City of Chula Vista ("City") City Council and County of San Diego ("County") Board of Supervisors ("Board") adopted the Otay Ranch General Development Plan/Subregional Plan ("Subregional Plan") on October 28, 1993. The Subregional Plan contemplated development within a series of villages that would be located within the City and the County's land use jurisdictions within an area known as Otay Ranch, which is within the southwestern San Diego region in the area generally surrounding the Lower Otay Reservoir. To mitigate for impacts from development, the Subregional Plan also conceptualized an approximately 11,000-acre open space preserve system (the "Otay Ranch Open Space Preserve" or "Otay Ranch Preserve") that would be jointly managed by the City and County in perpetuity as an entity referred to as the Preserve Owner/Manager (the "POM"). In 1993 along with adoption of the Subregional Plan, the City Council adopted Phase 1 of the Resource Management Plan (the "RMP") for the Otay Ranch Preserve, which established a comprehensive program for the long-term protection and management of sensitive resources located within the Preserve.

Due to the joint nature of planning and development for Otay Ranch, on March 6, 1996, the City Council approved a 30-year Joint Powers Agreement ("JPA") between the City and County (Attachment 1). The JPA described the roles and responsibilities for the planning, operations, and maintenance of Otay Ranch Preserve by the POM. Since 1996, the City and County have partnered collectively to operate and manage the Otay Ranch Preserve as the POM. The 1996 JPA, which expired on March 6, 2026, allows for a 30-year extension. The City and County worked together to update and revise the JPA to further define operational responsibilities and memorialize a variety of regulatory changes that have taken place since adoption of the original JPA in 1996.

The main update within the JPA is related to regional management of species within the Otay Ranch Preserve. When the Subregional Plan and Phase 1 RMP were adopted in 1993, the regional Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) had not yet been established. The MSCP Subregional Plan for the southern portions of San Diego County was adopted by the County and the City of San Diego in 1997. The City of Chula Vista MSCP Subarea Plan was then adopted in 2003. The MSCPs are regional habitat conservation plans that set forth a plan to allow development to occur and establish a pathway to mitigate for impacts to species and their habitats. After adoption of the MSCPs, the City and County developed and adopted the Phase 2 RMP in 2018. The Phase 2 RMP ensures consistency with the applicable MSCPs and includes a detailed plan for how

the POM will implement the resource protection objectives that were established in the Phase 1 RMP. Given that the MSCP and Phase 2 RMP were not yet prepared when the 1996 JPA went into effect, the revised 2026 JPA has been updated to modify references and update language to be consistent with these documents (Attachments 2 (strikeout) and 3 (clean)).

Today's requested action will authorize the City Manager to execute a renewed and revised JPA between the City of Chula Vista and the County of San Diego for the planning, operations, and maintenance of the Otay Ranch Open Space Preserve.

### **DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT**

Staff has reviewed the property holdings of the City Council members and has found no property holdings within 1,000 feet of the boundaries of the property which is the subject of this action. Consequently, this item does not present a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under California Code of Regulations Title 2, section 18702.2(a)(7) or (8), for purposes of the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov't Code §87100, et seq.).

Staff is not independently aware, and has not been informed by any City Council member, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision-maker conflict of interest in this matter.

### **CURRENT-YEAR FISCAL IMPACT**

Planning, operations, and maintenance of Otay Ranch Preserve is fully funded by Community Facilities District (CFD) 97-2. There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action. Funding is available based on annual funding allocations from CFD 97-2.

### **ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT**

Annual funding allocations from CFD 97-2 will adequately fund ongoing planning, operations, and maintenance activities of Otay Ranch Preserve as specified in the renewed and revised JPA.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Executed Joint Powers Agreement for the Otay Ranch Open Space Preserve dated March 1996
2. Revised Joint Powers Agreement for the Otay Ranch Open Space Preserve 2026 (Strikeout)
3. Revised Joint Powers Agreement for the Otay Ranch Open Space Preserve 2026 (Clean)

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