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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: April 1, 2014

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CH Huckelberry", is written over the printed name of the County Administrator.

Re: **Rillito Regional Park Improvement Update**

There has been continuing discussion and a great deal of misinformation regarding Pima County's intent regarding County Fair Horseracing after this season. I have attached a March 27, 2014 memorandum from Assistant County Administrator Nanette Slusser regarding this issue.

The County is proceeding with utilizing 2004 bonds to make further public park improvements to the facilities after this racing season. Two additional soccer fields will be constructed in addition to Regional Flood Control District improvements to develop a detention basin for Rillito Racetrack Wash to minimize flooding of properties and public highways. In addition, the County continues to work toward a permanent location for a public farmers' market with year-round utilization.

We have and continue to be open to any proposals regarding joint use of the facilities. We have completed extensive studies regarding reuse of the grandstands and clubhouse and find that any multiple use of this facility is not possible. Further, the facility does not meet many current code requirements; in particular, access for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

There are two parties interested in continuing County Fair Horseracing next year and beyond. The County will have discussions with both parties to develop an appropriate agreement and/or competitive proposal process.

The work proposed after this racing season is to develop park facilities and demolish the three remaining west side barn areas. One barn has not been used and has been condemned for several years based on weather damage. The current, 260 usable stalls will be replaced on the property. The barns, which have State Historic Preservation Office designation, have been documented in accordance with all standards and procedures required prior to demolition.

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors  
Re: **Rillito Regional Park Improvement Update**  
April 1, 2014  
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Finally, I have attached a March 29, 2014 article from the Arizona Daily Star regarding off-track betting. We do not have any ideas about how such would impact the uses at Rillito Regional Park at this time.

CHH/anc

**Attachments**

c:     **John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works**  
       **Hank Atha, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Economic**  
          **Development**  
       **Chris Cawein, Director, Natural Resources, Park, and Recreation**  
       **Tom Moulton, Director, Economic Development and Tourism**



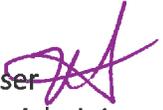
# MEMORANDUM

## Public Works Administration

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**DATE:** March 27, 2014

**TO:** C. H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

**FROM:** Nanette M. Slusser   
Assistant County Administrator

**RE: Rillito Regional Park**

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Pima County continues to receive requests for information on the Rillito Regional Park's status, specifically relating to the racetrack. The 2014 racing season is almost over. Pima County procured a design contract to implement the 2004 bond project for the Northside Community Park. This park project includes the addition of three soccer fields, parking and circulation, and ancillary recreational improvements, such as ramadas for farmers' markets, to further support community use of the space. Construction will begin later this spring on the barns and farmers' market ramadas. Construction will be coordinated to allow the farmers' markets and racing operations to continue in 2015 and the foreseeable future (See Attachment A, proposed site improvements).

One primary concern is related to the three historic barn structures—one of which has been condemned and not used for several years—on the west side of the track. All three will be demolished, and the remaining newer barn structures relocated to the east end of the track. There are currently 260 usable stalls, and the new barn setup will replace the same number of stalls. The historic barns have been documented, which is required to meet the State Historic Preservation Office standards prior to demolition.

Pima County is working with two interested racing operators on next year's race. The Pima County Horsemen's Association has been the only operator racing in the past. With two interested parties, Pima County must complete a proposal selection process to determine the succeeding operator. Neither party can apply for an Arizona Department of Racing permit without a signed operational agreement to use the racetrack. Pima County Office of Economic Development and Tourism is coordinating this proposal process, which should be complete by mid-May; at which time, Pima County will work with the operator to help ensure a successful racing season.

There have been some comments from one of the proposers interested in racing and currently working with the Arizona State Legislature to expand opportunities for off-track betting. How, or whether or not, this would affect activities at Rillito Regional Park has not been explored.

C. H. Huckelberry, County Administrator

**Rillito Regional Park**

March 27, 2014

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Staff continues to meet with all parties interested in the future of the racetrack and the potential joint use as a soccer tournament site. Several plans proposed by staff would allow continued joint use of the site. The most reasonable plan requires compromise by all future users (See Attachment B). To date, there has been no interest from the Pima County Horsemen's Association to work collaboratively on this or other options. All future uses of the site, including that of a soccer tournament facility, will require off-site parking or the inclusion of a built parking structure in a future bond election.

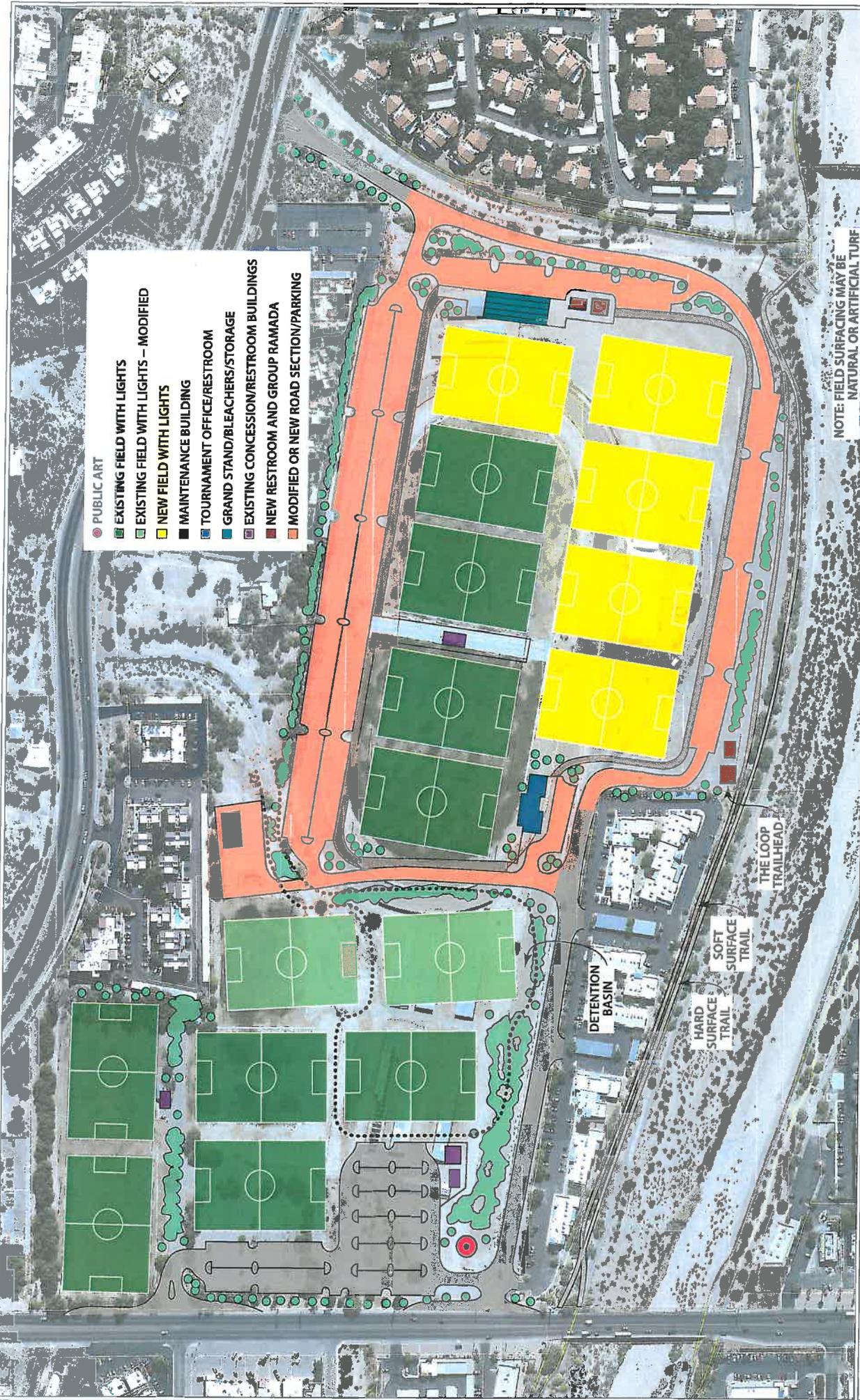
Attachment C is a fact sheet developed to respond to frequently asked questions regarding Rillito Regional Park. The fact sheet has been distributed widely among the press, Rillito supporters, interested parties, and various elected officials.

Let me know if you need additional information on the Rillito Regional Park plans.

NMS:lsm

**Attachments**

c: John M. Bernal, Deputy County Administrator, Public Works  
Chris Cawein, Director, Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation  
Tom Moulton, Director, Economic Development and Tourism  
Nancy Cole, Manager, Public Works Project Management Office



- PUBLIC ART
- EXISTING FIELD WITH LIGHTS
- EXISTING FIELD WITH LIGHTS - MODIFIED
- NEW FIELD WITH LIGHTS
- MAINTENANCE BUILDING
- TOURNAMANT OFFICE/RESTROOM
- GRAND STAND/BLEACHERS/STORAGE
- EXISTING CONCESSION/RESTROOM BUILDINGS
- NEW RESTROOM AND GROUP RAMADA
- MODIFIED OR NEW ROAD SECTION/PARKING

NOTE: FIELD SURFACING MAY BE NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL TURF



RILLITO REGIONAL PARK PHASE 2 CONCEPT PLAN - APRIL 10, 2013

ATTACHMENT A





# ATTACHMENT C

## Rillito Regional Park Update – Fact Sheet

- 1. The Rillito Park Improvements are voter-approved.** The voters have consistently supported the transition of the site from horse racing to soccer. In both 1997 and 2004, Pima County voters approved two bond projects specific to the Rillito Regional Park, P-07-Rillito Park Improvements and P-4.26-Rillito Racetrack. Both projects included soccer fields and lighting. The 2004 project relocated stables to make room for the additional soccer fields and other improvements. Also in 2004, the Pima County voters approved a City requested bond project for a community park in the north central metropolitan area. The City spent years attempting to find a location for the park without success. The project was then amended to allow the construction of a community center at Rillito Regional Park. The amendment occurred in 2006, just prior to the great recession. After experiencing significant challenges maintaining their existing community centers and other recreational facilities during the recession, the City and County agreed the funds could be best used expanding the existing soccer facilities at Rillito Regional Park. The bond ordinance amendment was approved by the City after a full vote of the Mayor and Council in 2013. At the same time, the City and County entered in an intergovernmental agreement to allow Pima County to construct the proposed improvements.
- 2. Horse Racing can continue at Rillito Regional Park indefinitely.** The current project will add three soccer fields, lighting and other park amenities. Construction will begin following the racing season. To make room for the fields, the existing useable barns/stables will be relocated to the east side of the track. Three barns will be demolished on the west side and new barns will be constructed on the east side. There is only one condemned barn. All are listed as contributing properties to the National Register district. SHPO has approved the documentation that has been completed. Pima County will supplement the lost barns/stables to bring the complement of useable facilities to 260. The track, grandstand and clubhouse will all remain in current condition and location. Some parking will be lost due to the relocation of the barns/stables. Both soccer and horse-racing uses will need to find additional off-site or remote parking. Currently, major events exceed parking capacity at the site, including horse racing. There is considerable surface parking within ¼ to 1-mile of the site.
- 3. The Rillito Racetrack is listed as a historic district on the National Register.** There are 171 listed sites and historic districts within Pima County and four National Historic Landmarks; the Carnegie Desert Lab at Tumamoc Hill, San Xavier Mission, Ventana Cave, and the Titan Missile site. There are no plans to demolish the site. Nor are there any funds allocated for this purpose. However, in the future, if Pima County voters approve funding to demolish any portion of the district, it is permissible. The County would be required to fully document the existing site attributes prior to demolition. The grandstands were designed solely for horse race viewing and are functionally obsolete for soccer viewing. Improvements to bring the grandstand up to existing code exceeds the cost of an entirely new facility that would be functional for a variety of uses.
- 4. Rillito Regional Park is heavily used for soccer.** Soccer leagues use the facilities year round and account for the majority of the park's estimated 250,000 to 300,000 users annually. Horse racing accounts for approximately 40,000 of those users.
- 5. Rillito Regional Park will continue to offer a diversity of uses for the community and tourists.** Events, festivals, farmer's markets, soccer, and horse racing remain options for the existing facility. Both horse racing and soccer tournaments bring in outside visitors who spend tourism dollars in Pima County. The Ft. Lowell Shootout, a smaller regional soccer tournament is estimated to have a \$3 million impact. In 2007, the FMR report showed out-of-town amateur

## Bill could end live greyhound racing in Tucson without closing track



MARCH 29, 2014 12:00 AM • BY [DARREN DARONCO](#)

Live dog racing could come to an end in Southern Arizona without Tucson Greyhound Park shuttering its doors.

A Tucson legislator wants to amend a state law prohibiting tracks from offering off-track betting to patrons unless the facility holds a minimum of 100 days of live racing a year.

Currently, only smaller counties, such as Apache County, are exempted from the law.

Rep. **Ethan Orr**, R-Tucson, said he believes it's time everyone is treated equally.

"If it applies in one county, why not them all," Orr said.

Orr decided to draft the amendment after speaking with different people who would be affected by the proposal, including greyhound advocates.

"It's something our community is very passionate about: not having to have that racetrack," Orr said. "This gives the racetrack the option of discontinuing live racing."

While Tucson Greyhound Park did not return the Star's calls for comment this week, the park backed a similar bill last year.

Then Tucson Greyhound Park CEO **Tom Taylor** sought the change as a backup plan so the track could stay open even if business continued to plummet.

"We don't want to quit (live racing), but when you have a certain number of factors out of your control, you need to have a contingency plan," Taylor said last year. "The only thing that is going to protect us, is to not have live racing."

Foes of greyhound racing cheered Orr's proposal.

"The stars are aligned on this right now," said Tucson Councilman **Steve Kozachik**, a longtime critic of the track.

"The Legislature has the chance right now to end live racing in Arizona by decoupling it from simulcast, taxing the gaming revenues and using them to fund CPS or education. That's a win, place and show all in one simple legislative act."

**Susan Via**, an activist opposed to greyhound racing, said the legislation represents a win for both the state and the racetrack owners.

She said the state will save money by no longer having to inspect the track and the track owners can do away with the actual races, which she said no one is interested in anyway.

Rillito Park Racetrack could also see benefits from the bill.

One of two groups vying for a new contract to continue thoroughbred and quarterhorse racing at Rillito wants to bring off-track betting back to the county-owned facility.

The bill might allow the operators of the track to continue cashing in on bettors even after the track's roughly eight-week horse racing season ends.

**Jaye Wells**, the director of the Rillito Park Foundation, said the revenues from gambling will help make the facility economically viable for the long term.

Without extra revenue, it's uncertain how long the horse track could survive.

County Administrator **Chuck Huckelberry** said the advanced age and general condition of the buildings at the track means it cannot continue indefinitely.

Orr plans to submit the amendment once the budget is finished. He said a majority of the House is behind it and expects the amendment won't suffer the same fate as last year's bill.

In addition to the off-track-betting provision, Orr wants to rid the bill of a proposed clause that would allow the Arizona Department of Racing to overrule cities and counties that pass ordinances regarding dog or horse racing.

"I don't think a state rule-making body should have the ability to preempt local communities when it comes to gambling," Orr said.