

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

DATE: April 27, 2016

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

SUBJECT: Consideration of a request by the San Mateo County Parks Department Division to determine if County acquisition of parcels 023-730-120, 023-730-030, 023-730-210, and 023-740-030, owned by the City of Pacifica, and 023-073-170, 023-730-020, 023-730-220, and 023-740-020, owned by the State of California, for use as park, recreational, nature preserve, and open space, conforms to the County General Plan.

County File Number: PLN 2016-00147

PROPOSAL

A request by the San Mateo County Parks Department to determine, per California Government Code Section 65402, if County acquisition of parcels 023-730-120, 023-730-030, 023-730-210, and 023-740-030, owned by the City of Pacifica, and 023-073-170, 023-730-020, 023-730-220, and 023-740-020, owned by the State of California, for use as park, recreational, nature preserve, and open space, conforms to the County General Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission find that the County acquisition of parcels 023-730-120, 023-730-030, 023-730-210, 023-740-030, 023-073-170, 023-730-020, 023-730-220, and 023-740-020 for use as park, recreational, nature preserve, and open space, conforms to the County General Plan, by making the findings shown in Attachment A.

BACKGROUND

Report Prepared By: William Gibson

Applicant: San Mateo County Parks Department

Owner: City of Pacifica, State of California

Location: Unincorporated San Mateo County Rural Midcoast, south of Pacifica and west of Linda Mar, adjacent to Highway 1 and south of Grand Avenue

APNs: 023-730-120, 023-730-030, 023-730-210, 023-740-030, 023-073-170, 023-730-020, 023-730-220, and 023-740-020

Size: 260 acres in total: 023-730-120, 023-730-030, 023-730-210, 023-740-030, and 023-073-170, 162 acres; 023-730-020, 023-730-220, and 023-740-020, 98 acres

Existing Zoning: RM-CZ/CD

General Plan Designation: Open Space

Sphere-of-Influence: Unallocated

Existing Land Use: Open space and natural preserve with some recreational trails

Water Supply: The properties are served by the North Coast County Water District, but have no current water.

Sewage Disposal: None of the parcels have sewage facilities.

Flood Zone: Zone X, area of minimal flooding, FEMA Panel 06081C0107E

Environmental Evaluation: A request for General Plan Conformity analysis is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and is not subject to environmental evaluation. The purchase of property is also exempt under Section 15316, Transfer of Ownership of Land in Order to Create Parks. Any future development proposed on the property would need to address relevant CEQA requirements.

Setting: The properties are undeveloped coastal open space, with a mix of typical coastal tree cover, scrub, grass, and other varied vegetation, crossed by a number of hiking trails.

DISCUSSION

A. KEY ISSUES

1. Basis for Acquisition

The parcels in question, the “Pedro Point Headlands” parcels, were originally intended for transfer by the City of Pacifica (the City) and the State of California (the State) to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, for maintenance as protected open space and public park. After San Mateo County’s creation of the Devil’s Slide Trail and Devil’s Slide Trail Park, the owners determined, in consultation with the County Parks Department, that transfer of the properties to the County of San Mateo for park creation would better suit the intended purpose. The City intends to transfer its properties to the County at no cost; the State will transfer its properties for \$56,000. The County intends to maintain and improve the transferred properties for

open space and managed park space, with multiple hiking trails connecting to adjacent portions of the California Coastal Trail in the Devil's Slide County Park and the City of Pacifica.

2. Reason for General Plan Conformity Determination

Per California Government Code Section 65402, prior to any acquisition of property for public purpose, the County must request a determination of the acquisition's consistency with the adopted General Plan.

3. Conformance with the San Mateo County General Plan

The proposed acquisition potentially involves the following General Plan policies, which are addressed herein.

a. Vegetative, Water, Fish and Wildlife Resources Policies

- (1) Policy 1.22.a of the County General Plan requires that the County regulate land uses and development activities to prevent and, if infeasible, mitigate to the extent possible, significant adverse impacts on vegetative, water, fish and wildlife resources.
- (2) Policy 1.22.b places a priority on the managed use and protection of vegetative, water, fish and wildlife resources in rural areas of the County.
- (3) Policy 1.23 requires the County to regulate the location, density and design of development to minimize significant adverse impacts and encourage enhancement of vegetative, water, fish and wildlife resources.
- (4) Policy 1.24 requires that the County ensure that development will (1) minimize the removal of vegetative resources; and/or (2) protect vegetation which enhances microclimate, stabilizes slopes or reduces surface water runoff, erosion or sedimentation; and/or (3) protect historic and scenic trees.

Discussion: The subject properties are a mix of lightly forested land, some grass and scrub covered open space areas, and coastal bluffs. The area is already crossed by a number of hiking trails. The properties potentially contain vegetative and wildlife resources, and provide potential habitat for various flora and fauna native to rural and coastal areas.

The County Parks Department and the Pacifica Land Trust currently have an application before the San Mateo County Planning

Department for a CDP for trail restoration work within project parcels (PLN 2015-00568). Past use of these parcels for off-road motorcycle use has resulted in numerous steep and overly wide trails that are prone to erosion. If approved, the work authorized by the above case will reroute some sections of trail and reduce the exposed width of remaining trail segments, all in an effort to reduce erosion. This case, PLN 2015-00568, will be before the Planning Commission at the May 11, 2015 hearing. The proposal before you today is limited to acquisition of the property; any subsequent changes in use will be determined through a planning process, consistent with applicable County regulations. The acquisition in itself does not conflict with the General Plan's vegetative, water, fish and wildlife resources. In addition, the County has indicated its intent to maintain these areas for open space, recreational, and other low intensity uses. Such uses are unlikely to conflict with these general plan policies.

b. Soil Resources and Visual Quality Policies

- (1) Policy 2.17 calls for the County to regulate development to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation.
- (2) Policy 2.23 calls for the County to regulate excavation, grading, filling and land clearing activities to protect against accelerated soil erosion and sedimentation.
- (3) Policy 4.25.a calls for minimizing grading or earth-moving operations.
- (4) Policy 4.25.b requires blending graded areas with adjacent landforms through the use of contour grading rather than harsh cutting or terracing of the site.

Discussion: The proposed acquisition does not conflict with the General Plan Soil Resources policies or Visual Quality policies. The future development discussed above will be subject to the County Grading Ordinance, which incorporates measures to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation.

c. Park and Recreation Resource Policies

- (1) Policy 6.10 generally encourages park providers to locate passive park and recreation facilities in rural areas in order to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive open space lands. This policy considers the following activities to be generally compatible with passive park and recreation facilities: camping, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, and nature study.

Discussion: The subject properties are in the County's rural zone. The County has expressed an intent to develop and maintain the subject parcels as a County park, and connect them to the existing Devil's Slide Park, for use as low intensity recreation and open space. These uses are consistent with Policy 6.10.

- (2) Policy 6.14 calls for the County to encourage all providers to design sites to accommodate recreation uses that minimize adverse effects on the natural environment and adjoining private ownership.

Discussion: While the County has not formulated any specific development proposals beyond the above cited restoration work, the general intended uses of the acquired property are entirely consistent with Policy 6.14 of the General Plan.

B. ALTERNATIVES

The alternative to a determination of conformity is for the Planning Commission to find that the proposed acquisition does not conform to the General Plan.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A request for General Plan Conformity analysis is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and is not subject to environmental evaluation. The purchase of property is also exempt under Section 15316, Transfer of Ownership of Land in Order to Create Parks. Any future development proposed on the property would need to address relevant CEQA requirements.

D. REVIEWING AGENCIES

San Mateo County Parks Department
County Counsel

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Recommended Findings
- B. Vicinity Map

WSG:jlh – WSGAA0199_WJU.DOCX

County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Department

RECOMMENDED FINDING

Permit or Project File Number: PLN 2016-00147

Hearing Date: April 27, 2016

Prepared By: William Gibson
Project Planner

For Adoption By: Planning Commission

RECOMMENDED FINDING

Find that the proposed acquisition by the County of parcels 023-730-120, 023-730-030, 023-730-210, 023-740-030, 023-073-170, 023-730-020, 023-730-220, and 023-740-020 for use as park, recreational, nature preserve, and open space use conforms to the General Plan Vegetative, Water, Fish and Wildlife Resources Policies, Soil Resources Policies, Visual Quality Policies, and Park and Recreation Resource Policies, and is consistent with the County's General Plan.

WSG:jlh – WSGAA0199_WJU.DOCX



County of San Mateo - Planning and Building Department

ATTACHMENT B

