

MONTEREY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting: June 10, 2009 Time: 9:00 A.M.	Agenda Item No. 4
Project Description: Conduct a workshop to consider several Draft General Plan Update policies in the Open Space Element, and Agriculture and Winery Corridor Plan and related proposed mitigation measures.	
Project Location: Unincorporated County (non-coastal)	APN: Countywide
Planning File Number: PLN070525	Name: County of Monterey
Plan Area: Cachagua, Carmel Valley, Central Salinas Valley, Greater Monterey Peninsula, Fort Ord, Greater Salinas, North County(Inland), South County, Toro, Agricultural Winery Corridor	Flagged and staked: N/A
Zoning Designation: : Multiple	
CEQA Action: Environmental Impact Report prepared (EIR #07-01, SCH#: 2007121001)	
Department: RMA - Planning Department	

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission

- 1) Conduct a workshop to consider several Draft General Plan Update policies in the Open Space Element, and Agriculture and Winery Corridor Plan and related proposed mitigation measures; and
- 2) Provide direction to staff.

OVERVIEW:

Staff has attached some proposed text modifications to draft mitigation measures/general plan policies that will be the focus of a staff oral presentation (See Exhibit A). Staff drafted these modifications for the Commission to consider for addressing comments received from the public and from the Commission. These text modifications are in addition to the proposed text modifications submitted to the Commission at its May 27, 2009 meeting.

DISCUSSION

At the May 27th, 2009 meeting, staff distributed proposed text modifications to several open space policies in the Draft General Plan and a text change to a policy in the Agriculture Wine Corridor Plan. The Planning Commission also initiated discussions of several biological resource policies with respect to the level of protection that should be afforded in the General Plan and possible text modifications to definitions, policies and mitigation measures that could be considered. Staff was asked to return with revised text based on this discussion and public comments.

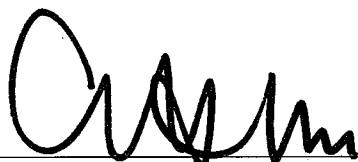
At this time, staff is still reviewing the suggested species definition that was proposed by the Planning Commission and how it could be incorporated into related policies in the Draft General Plan. Staff requires more time to complete this review before providing text changes to the Commission.

At the May 27th meeting, staff distributed text modifications to the slope policy in Section 3 of the

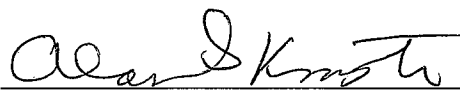
the Open Space Element (OS-3.5). These modifications were suggested in order to address comments regarding the lack of clarity of the current text. Staff also provided options for Planning Commission consideration that required a higher level of review for activities pertaining to the conversion of previously uncultivated slopes over 25%. Staff has received comments on the DEIR for the General Plan regarding the nexus between the draft slope policy and several of the biological resource policies.

Staff also provided some text changes on May 27th with respect to policies regarding kit fox, oak trees, and raptors. These policies, along with the slope policy and biological resource policies are presented as a possible package of modifications.

Last, based upon the schedule approved by the Commission on May 13th, staff is providing some proposed text modifications to mitigation measures in the DEIR proposed as policy additions to the General Plan that addressed potential impacts for the timeframe beyond the 2030 planning horizon. Exhibit A includes proposed text modifications regarding biological resource mitigation for the post 2030 timeframe. The policies address water resources in the Public Services Element for the post 2030 timeframe will be provided at a later date.



Carl P. Holm, AICP, Assistant Director of Planning
(831)755-5103 or
holmcp@co.monterey.ca.us



Alana S. Knaster, Deputy Director, RMA
(831) 755-5322 or
knastera@co.monterey.ca.us

June 8, 2009

cc: Front Counter Copy; Planning Commission; County Counsel, RMA-Public Works; Water Resources Agency; Environmental Health; Parks Department; RMA-Redevelopment and Housing Office; Agricultural Commissioner; Carl Holm; Alana Knaster, Project File PLN070525.

Exhibit A Draft Open Space Element Policies for the Post 2030 Timeframe

EXHIBIT A

Draft Open Space Element Policies Pertaining to the Post 2030 Timeframe

Staff is proposing edits to the mitigation measures proposed in the DEIR re impacts to biological resources for the timeframe post 2030 to Buildout. These changes are intended to address comments that the timeframe for implementation of these new policies is unrealistic or highly speculative since the DEIR is relying on a more aggressive scenario for population growth than is currently anticipated. Edits are shown in strikeout/underline mode.

POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACTS ON SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

(Refer to Bio 1.4) By 2030, prepare an Update to the General Plan to identify expansion of existing focused growth areas and/or to identify new focused growth areas to reduce loss of natural habitat in Monterey County. (Add new policies to OS-5.)

OS-5.20 At five year intervals, the County shall examine the degree to which thresholds for increased population, residential construction and commercial growth have been attained. If the examination indicates that the thresholds** predicted in the General Plan EIR have been reached, (or are within % of the projected growth) then the County shall initiate a General Plan Amendment update the County General Plan by no later than January 1, 2030 to consider the potential to expansion of focused growth areas established by the 2007 General Plan and/or the designation of new focused growth areas. The purpose of such expanded/new focused growth areas would be to reduce the loss of special status species (still to be defined) and their habitat due to continued urban growth after 2030. The new/expanded growth areas shall be designed to accommodate at least 80% of the projected residential and commercial growth in the unincorporated County from the timeframe that the 2030 growth threshold has been reached to buildout. This General Plan Amendment update will also address expansion of agricultural operations and potential significant impacts to special-status species.

** The text will insert specific numerical thresholds

Bio-1.5 By 2030, prepare a ~~Comprehensive County Natural Communities Conservation Plan.~~ Conservation Strategy
(Add new policy to OS-5)

OS-5.21 With _____ years of the estimated date that growth thresholds for increased population, residential construction and commercial growth have been attained, the County shall assess the vulnerability of special status species becoming threatened or endangered. The County shall complete the preparation of a NCCP for all incorporated areas in Monterey County by no later than January 1, 2030 to address all state and federal listed species and all CEQA defined special status species with potential to be listed up to buildout of the county. The County shall complete the preparation of a conservation strategy for those areas containing substantial suitable habitat for those species. The County shall invite the participation of the USFWS, NMFS, CDFG, incorporated cities, the federal land agencies, Caltrans and other stakeholders. The NCCP conservation strategy shall also consider preservation of sensitive natural communities (still to be defined), riparian habitat, wetlands, and wildlife movement corridors. The Conservation Strategy shall also include mechanisms for on and off-site mitigation ratios and fee programs for mitigating significant impacts.