

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:

Prepared on: October 5, 2004
Department Name: Planning & Development
Department No.: 053
Agenda Date: October 19, 2004
Placement: Admin
Estimate Time: 30 minutes
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:
Document File Name: G:\GROUP\Permitting\Case Files\DVP\03 cases\03DVP-00000-00022\Open Space Plan Adoption\BOS report 10 19 04.DOC

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Val Alexeeff, Director
STAFF CONTACT: Dave Ward, Supervising Planner, 568-2072
Lisa Plowman, Deputy Director, 568-2025
SUBJECT: Ellwood-Devereux Open Space and Habitat Management Plan

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt the CEQA Findings for amending the Comprehensive Plan - Parks, Recreation and Trails Map that incorporates the public trail segments of the Ellwood-Devereux Open Space Plan and certify the Environmental Impact Report.
2. Adopt a Resolution amending the Comprehensive Plan, Goleta Community Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan to add policies incorporating the Ellwood-Devereux Open Space Plan (OSP) (Case Number 04GPA-00000-00008).
3. Adopt a Resolution amending Comprehensive Plan Parks, Recreation and Trails Map, Goleta Community Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan to add public trail segments provided by the OSP located on the Ocean Meadows property (APN 073-090-062 & -012), Camino Corto Open Space Reserve (APN 075-010-028), Del Sol Vernal Pool Reserve (APN 075-010-037), and Devereux School property (APN 073-090-029) OSP (Case Number 04GPA-00000-00009).

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 1., An Efficient Government Able to Respond Effectively to the Needs of the Community, Goal No. 4., A Community that is Economically Vital and Sustainable, and Goal No. 5., A High Quality of Life for All Residents.

I. Executive Summary and Discussion:

Planning History

The County of Santa Barbara has been actively involved in planning for the Ellwood Devereux portion of west Goleta for over 20 years. Intensive planning efforts began with preparation of the County's Local Coastal Program. The policies in the LCP specified maximum densities for the sites and identified development standards intended to address resource constraints. Specific Plans were required for both areas prior to development of these last remaining open spaces in the area. In 1993, the Goleta Community Plan was finalized by the County, and subsequently certified by the Coastal Commission. That plan refined the policies for the two specific plan areas. During the 1980's and 1990's, the property owners pursued development of the sites.

On the Ellwood Beach-Santa Barbara Shores site, the County acquired the Santa Barbara Shores property for a regional park, while the owners of the Ellwood Beach portion of the property processed several specific plans and development applications, including certification review by the Coastal Commission, and ultimately several lawsuits, initiated both by the property owner and community groups. These applications, as well as the associated environmental and policy review, served to identify the substantial environmental constraints to development of the Ellwood Mesa, the portion of the area remaining in private ownership. The process was extremely contentious and controversial, and it was unclear how development of the area would ultimately be resolved.

The West Devereux area was owned by the University Exchange Corporation (UEC) in the 1980's. UEC also proposed a specific plan, which the County began to process. During the process, UEC sold the property to the University of California at Santa Barbara, removing the specific plan area, except the Ocean Meadows Golf Course, from the County's jurisdiction. The University subsequently pursued development proposals for the site for faculty and student housing. The University's Long Range Development Plan to bring this area into the campus plan and allow for its residential development was approved by the Regents. The plan was not submitted for consideration to the Coastal Commission due to opposition from the environmental community and neighboring residents, as well as from the County.

Current Effort

University and County staff began discussions about joint planning the area in 2001, hoping to find a final resolution to development of the specific plan areas that would result in permanent protection of a significant amount of open space along this remaining undeveloped portion of the coast, as well as formalize access and public use in the area. The concept and approach was raised to the Board of Supervisors and the University's executive level. Both agreed that a joint planning approach would provide the most positive opportunity to protect the best areas of both specific plan areas and resolve these long-contentious development issues. The agencies authorized their staff's to proceed with joint planning. Upon its incorporation, which occurred while the University and the County were pursuing this approach, the City of Goleta joined in the effort and all three agencies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding guiding planning and processing efforts. Among other items, the MOU established a Joint Review Panel (JRP) comprised of staff from each of the three (3) public agencies involved. The JRP was tasked to oversee preparation of the Open Space and Habitat Management Plan, referred to as the Open Space Plan (OSP) and the associated environmental impact reports for each of the three (3)

separate development projects involved: Ocean Meadows Residences in the County, the Faculty & Student Housing on the UCSB campus properties, and Comstock Homes in the City (see Attachment E – Open Space Plan Map). The Open Space Plan is the result of the extensive coordination with the University and the City of Goleta that has occurred over the past several years.

II. Multi-Agency Planning Effort For The Ellwood-Devereux Open Space Plan

The intent of establishing the JRP was to create a forum and an approach for addressing and resolving land use and environmental conflicts in the Joint Proposal area. Over the past 18 months, the JRP worked together to develop a comprehensive plan to protect sensitive environmental resources along the Ellwood-Devereux Coast while allowing for reasonable development within the land area governed by each participating agency.

Open Space Plan

The OSP provides the policy framework for on-going joint planning and management of 652 acres (approximately 388 acres publicly owned) of regionally significant coastal resources and open space area along the Ellwood-Devereux Coast. The OSP further establishes allowable recreational activities, provides for public access and continued habitat preservation/restoration of the coastal open space areas. This includes an extensive public trail system, public parking and access provisions, and recreational amenities (see Attachment D, Planning Commission Staff Report, Exhibits: Open Space Plan Summary and Open Space Plan Trails Map).

New Residential Development Projects

The JRP worked together to ensure new residential development is located away from the coast in the less environmentally sensitive inland areas, adjacent to existing urban development. This relocation, in turn, allows each sponsoring agency to re-designate and re-zone the vacated parcels as open space. A major goal of the JRP is relocation of the Comstock and UCSB housing projects away from the central portion of the Ellwood Mesa and coastal bluffs to preserve a total of 239.5 acres under City and 314.3 acres under UCSB jurisdiction in perpetuity, which would be managed for resource protection and public use. In addition, the Ocean Meadows development in the County would concentrate development in one location rather than potential dispersed around the existing golf course property. When implemented as initially conceived, the combined actions on the part of the JRP would effectively preserve coastal parcels from future urban development, as well as those within the managed areas, and would serve to combine these parcels into one large contiguous coastal open space and natural reserve. The relocation of development is the first, and most important, step to implementing the Open Space Plan.

County Jurisdiction

Concurrent with the review and approval process of the OSP, the Ocean Meadows Residences project includes 60 residential units, under Application Nos. 03TRM-00000-00002, 04CDP-00000-00078, 03GPA-00000-00003, 03RZN-00000-00002, 03DVP-00000-00022, 04CUP-00000-00020, 04CUP-00000-00038.

University Jurisdiction

UCSB's proposal includes development of separate facilities for faculty housing and family student housing. UCSB proposes 236 units of faculty housing for the North Parcel of the University North Campus and 151 units of Family Student Housing for the Storke-Whittier Parcel (also on the North Campus).

City of Goleta Jurisdiction

The City's Comstock Homes 62-unit luxury residential estates project involves a series of land transactions between the developer (transferring its 136.62 acres in exchange for a 36-acre portion of the existing Santa Barbara Shores Park south of Hollister Avenue), the Trust for Public Lands and the City. Upon completion of these transactions, the City of Goleta will own 136.62-acres comprising the Ellwood Mesa parcels, as well as the remaining portion of the lands in Goleta that are within the boundaries of the Ellwood-Devereux Coast OSP.

Open Space Plan Implementation

Implementation of the Open Space Plan goals and policies will follow approvals by the agencies and the California Coastal Commission. Management actions and projects by each agency associated with the implementation of the Open Space Plan within their jurisdiction must be consistent with these goals and policies. Implementation will occur in phases, in keeping with the priorities (initial improvements) set forth in the OSP and the availability of funding for opportunity projects. Each sponsoring agency is responsible for obtaining the requisite permits and funding for actions identified within their jurisdiction. However, close coordination and collaboration will continue to be necessary to obtain funding from certain sources, and to ensure that management issues affecting the entire Open Space Plan Area are cohesively addressed.

The Joint Review Committee (formerly referred to as the JRP) will likely meet on a regular basis to provide a forum for sponsoring agency officials, sub area managers and docents, residents and owners of adjacent properties, Open Space Plan Area user groups, and members of the public to discuss ongoing issues related to implementation of the Open Space Plan. Issues addressed may include: independent or collaborative preparation of grant applications; budget reports for both independent or collaborative projects; administration of public or private funding; requisite permit or approval actions; contract solicitations or awards for projects; status reports and evaluation of monitoring or mitigation projects; applicable regulatory compliance requirements; consideration of potential conflicts among users or between users and preservation/restoration efforts; consideration of potential restrictions on the type of use, access, and/or projects; educational and scientific research activities; and other relevant issues.

III. Goleta Community Plan Text And Map Amendments

The overall goal of the Open Space Plan is to protect and enhance the Ellwood-Devereux Open Space Plan area and provide for public access compatible with the conservation of its regionally significant coastal resources. As described earlier, the land use vision for resource project and regional planning of the Ellwood-Devereux area is well established in the Goleta Community Plan. Thus, the Open Space Plan officially describes the management goals, policies, and actions to guide management of public access and habitat protection.

To implement the Open Space Plan within the County, it is necessary for the County to amend the Goleta Community Plan to include the following new policies and map amendments.

New Policy BIO-GV-23:

Recreational amenities, trail improvements and other open space area development on the Ocean Meadows property (APN 073-090-062 & -012), Camino Corto Open Space Reserve (APN 075-010-028), Del Sol Vernal Pool Reserve (APN 075-010-037), and Devereux School property (APN 073-090-029) shall be consistent with the Ellwood-Devereux Open Space Plan. (added by 04-GP-00000-00008, DATE)

In order to incorporate the public trails component of the Open Space Plan, the County proposes to amend the Park Recreation and Trails Map to include the new public trail segments through several parcels as depicted in Attachment F, and the following new policy:

PRT Map Amendment:

The Comprehensive Plan Parks, Recreation and Trails Goleta-Santa Barbara Area Map (PRT-3) shall be amended to include the addition of proposed trail easements on the Ocean Meadows property (APN 073-090-062 & -012), Camino Corto Open Space Reserve (APN 075-010-028), Del Sol Vernal Pool Reserve (APN 075-010-037), and Devereux School property (APN 073-090-029) identified in the Ellwood-Devereux Open Space Plan.

Policy PRT-GV-2A.1:

In addition to the Goleta Trails Implementation Study, trail development and implementation on the Ocean Meadows property (APN 073-090-062 & -012), Camino Corto Open Space Reserve (APN 075-010-028), Del Sol Vernal Pool Reserve (APN 075-010-037), and Devereux School property (APN 073-090-029), shall be consistent with the Ellwood-Devereux Open Space Plan. (added by 04-GP-00000-00009, DATE)

By incorporating the above text and map amendments, the County will provide the resource protection and enhancement, and public access components of the OSP. Future development, including trail improvements and resource enhancement projects, would be subject to the goals and policies of the OSP, in addition to the Goleta Community Plan and Coastal Development Permit requirements under the Coastal Zoning Ordinance, Article II.

IV. Environmental Review

One environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared for this project that evaluates the potential impacts of both the Ocean Meadows Residences project and the portion of the OSP

within the County's jurisdiction (04EIR-00000-00002). The complete draft and proposed final EIR are available for review at Planning & Development as they are too voluminous to attach to this staff report. The impact summary table from the proposed EIR is attached to this Board report as Attachment B.

Mitigation

The mitigation measures proposed in the proposed final EIR to address potential impacts resulting from the Ocean Meadows Residences project and OSP are listed in the Impact and Mitigation Measure summary table included as Attachment B and are explained in detail in the proposed final EIR.

EIR Process

The draft EIR was circulated for public comment for 45 days beginning on April 1, 2004. A public comment meeting was held to receive public comments on the draft document on April 27, 2004. Planning staff reviewed all public comments and prepared responses, modifying the draft document as required. All public comments and responses are contained in Appendix E of the proposed final EIR.

Based on the analysis contained in the proposed final EIR, Planning and Development staff determined that all potential project impacts can be reduced to less than significant levels through incorporation of the proposed mitigation measures (see CEQA Findings in Attachment A). For the County's portion of the Open Space Plan, these mitigation measures would be applied to future Open Space projects that require Coastal Development Permits.

V. Planning Commission Recommendation

At the Planning Commission hearing of September 1, 2004, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the project with the following text amendments to the OSP:

A) Add to OSP page 32:

Segment 5 (eastward): The JRP shall consider the feasibility of constructing a wildlife corridor within the drainage culvert during the widening of Storke Road.

B) Add to OSP page 79:

Future Improvement Opportunities:

- Wildlife corridor through future Storke Road drainage
- Riparian vegetation enhancement east of Segment 5 on UCSB property

These recommended additions to the OSP have been incorporated into the Board Resolution to amend Comprehensive Plan, Goleta Community Plan (see Attachment E) which will be reviewed and approved by the California Coastal Commission during certification of each Open Space Plan component from all these jurisdictions.

Mandates and Service Levels:

The General Plan Amendments are considered by the Planning Commission based upon Division 12, Section 35-180 of Article II, the Coastal Zoning Ordinance, which defines the process of amending the County Local Coastal Plan, including that the Planning Commission shall hold at least one public hearing on the proposal, with final local action required by the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Commission's action, contained in Attachment C is therefore a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: Funding for the adoption and implementation of these amendments is in Planning & Development's Fiscal Year 2004-2005 budget on page D-286 under Comprehensive Planning Division Programs - Community Plan and General Plan Elements.

Special Instructions

Clerk of the Board shall complete noticing for the project in the Santa Barbara News-Press 10 days prior to the hearing.

Clerk of the Board shall forward a copy of the Minute Order to Planning and Development, attn: Cintia Mendoza, Hearing Support.

Concurrence

County Counsel

Attachments:

- A. CEQA Findings, Ellwood-Devereux OSP approvals
- B. CEQA Impact Summary Table
- C. Planning Commission Action Letter
- D. Planning Commission Staff Report, including
 - Policy Consistency Review
 - Open Space Plan Map
 - Open Space Plan Summary
 - Open Space Plan Proposed Trails Map
 - Open Space Plan – County proposed trails Map
- E. Board Resolution to amend Comprehensive Plan, Goleta Community Plan
- F. Board Resolution to Amend Parks, Recreation and Trails Map