



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT



DEPARTMENT: Community Development

MEETING DATE: April 22, 2003

PREPARED BY: Alice Griselle, Director
Community Development Department

AGENDA LOCATION: I-3

TITLE Review and Dissolution of Wilderness Preserve Steering Committee (WPSC)

BACKGROUND: The Wilderness Preserve Steering Committee was appointed in August of 2000 with a vote of the City Council per Resolution No. 2000-79. At the City Council meeting, it was explained per the official minutes, "that the Steering Committee would serve as an ad hoc committee and report its findings directly to the City Council. The role of the Steering Committee is to develop an open space acquisition plan. The open space acquisition plan will serve to protect important natural resources, and may also provide passive recreation opportunities for the community. The steering Committee will recommend with respect to land acquisition and the community services commission will recommend with respect to land uses." The current members are co-chairs Gloria and Cleve Crudginton, Mayor Hammond, Councilmember Garcia, Planning Commissioner Eric Abe, Dorothy Dudley, Monrovia Mountains Conservancy representative Paul Larsen, and Foothills Wildlife Conservancy representative Steve Miller. Councilmember Mary Ann Lutz was the Community Services representative but once elected was no longer able to serve on the Committee as the Community Services Commission representative.

The WPSC has been meeting on an as needed basis since 2000, and directed the acquisition of approximately 362 acres of hillside lands for \$18,544,803. Currently, there is \$133,720 left of the bond issuance proceeds with an additional \$25,000 outstanding from reimbursement from the State Habitat Conservation Fund for the Wright property for a total of \$158,720. In addition, there is \$395,000 left from the State Wildlife Conservation Board funds. The acquisition history is as follows.

1/01	Wright	11 acres	\$300,000
4/01	Dunbar	40 acres	15,500
8/02	Miller	165.6 acres	11,770,000
8/02	Bowden	20.6 acres	4,700,000
8/02	S Pokrajac	5.66 acres	740,000
8/02	Bowden	39 acres	donation
12/02	Woodward	80 acres	800,000

Based on the above acquisitions and donation, the WPSC has provided great vision in creating a solid basis for the Monrovia Hillside Wilderness Preserve.

FUTURE ACQUISITIONS Remaining to purchase in Phase I are ten properties that have no direct access to utilities or streets. This makes these properties extremely expensive to develop considering they would need paved access, electricity and water. However, the City is making every effort to continue to purchase these properties at a fair market appraised value. Attachment A is the future Hillside Wilderness Preserve Acquisition List for the original properties considered for the Hillside Wilderness Preserve. Attachment B is the Phase II Acquisition List that was discussed at several WPSC meetings at the request of residents in close proximity to these locations (Hendrawan, Li) or at the request of the owners of the properties (Robinson and Janssens). Field trips were conducted and these three lots were added as Phase II acquisitions.

Based on direction from the WPSC, the next purchase will most likely be Sachan as the City received another Deer and Mountain Lion Habitat Conservation Fund grant from the State for the purchase of the property. The \$160,000 will be matched with City bond proceeds and the \$25,000 reimbursement from the State for the purchase of the Wright property. The appraised price of the 20.7 acres is \$310,000 with \$10,000 for escrow fees and other related fees. The grant will not be available until the Fiscal Year 2003/04 State budget is approved. Acquisition of the Sachan property has always been a high priority of the WPSC because of its high environmental value. Ruby Canyon is a pristine riparian habitat and with the Sachan property acquisition, the City will own all of upper Ruby Canyon. Ruby Canyon runs through the former Woodward property, the Sachan property and the Former Wright property.

The Proposition 12 Grant was submitted by the deadline of July 3, 2003, and the requests for matching funds to purchase the Elkins, Sartwell, Emigh, and Sachan are still unopened until the State hires staff to process them.

The Proposition 40 application has been submitted to the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) for the purchase of the Butcher 27.4 acre site, the Sartwell 20 acre site, and the Emigh 5 acre site. The RMC has promised that successful applicants will be notified by June 2003. The grants are 100% funding without the need for a match.

Staff will again submit for the State Habitat Conservation Grant in October. The property will be selected based on the outcome of the Prop 12 and 40 grant applications. So far, the City has received all three grants that we submitted for the Wright, Woodward, and Sachan properties. With the limited number of funds of \$133,720 from the bond proceeds, \$25,000 reimbursement from the State, and \$395,000 from the WCB, acquisitions will be dependent on full or matching grants. As noted, Sachan has a \$160,000 State grant for the \$310,000 appraised price, there are full grants in for Prop 40 monies for Butcher, Sartwell, and Emigh, and the Prop 12 grant monies are currently on hold for Elkins, Sartwell, and Emigh, and application will be made for the State Habitat Grant in October. There are no properties that are proposing development at this time, and it would be unwise to purchase properties without matching monies. Dunbar was the only property purchased without a match because it was a tax sale of 40 acres for \$15,500 or \$387.50 an acre, clearly our most cost-effective purchase. Staff will purchase the properties as funds become available.

MONROVIA WILDERNESS PRESERVE FOUNDATION The Monrovia Wilderness Preserve Foundation was formed in March 2001 to receive funds from non profit organizations and meets on an on needed basis but does have an organizational meeting every May per the by laws. The Monrovia Wilderness Preserve Foundation is composed of the same members as

the WPSC. The Monrovia Wilderness Preserve Foundation will remain in place and the next meeting will be held in May of 2003.

TRANSITION: The WPSC has done its work over the last few years as evidenced by the attached map showing the approximately 362 acres added to the Hillside Wilderness Preserve. Staff has direction on the next purchases shown on Attachment A and B, money is limited and dependent on future grants, and the City Council will still be the decision making body on all future purchases. The WPSC has completed the task that they were appointed for and the Community Services Commission be the stewards of the Preserve. The Monrovia Hillside Wilderness Preserve lands are designated in the General Plan and on the zoning map as "Hillside Wilderness Preserve." This classification is designated for preserving open space land left in its natural state including preservation of endangered habitats and species, wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors, open space for passive recreation uses such as hiking and nature studies, utility easements and reservoirs, and nature centers and educational facilities. The HWP designation is only assigned to land owned by or conveyed to a public agency, Public Trust or conservancy and for lands with irrevocable offers to dedicate to the City." This designation cannot be changed except by a vote of Monrovia residents. The Community Services Commission is charged with stewardship of the preserve with input from environmental specialists and most importantly with input from the public.

CONCLUSION: The WPSC has done a tremendous job over the last few years. A wildlife corridor has been established across northern Monrovia connecting to Arcadia Wilderness Park on the west and to the Los Angeles National Forest to the north and Bradbury to the east. Thousands of animal and plant species have been protected in perpetuity. The direction has been set for staff to continue the acquisition of the remaining properties. The WPSC's mission is complete. The Monrovia Wilderness Preserve Foundation will continue to be able to receive funds from non-profit organizations. The Community Services Commission will be the stewards of the land. The Community Services Commission in partnership with the Parks Division have protected Canyon Park, Spanish Canyon, and the Arboretum property for many years with great success and they will continue as the stewards of the Wilderness Preserve.

On April 2, 2003 at the Wilderness Preserve Steering Committee meeting, seven members voted to recommend to the City Council the dissolution of the Wilderness Preserve Steering Committee with one member abstaining.

RECOMMENDATION: In conclusion, the acquisition funds are substantially depleted, and what little remains has already been designated for future acquisitions with the effect that the WPSC's assigned duties have now been completed pursuant to Resolution 2000-79. Consequently, the WPSC recommends to the City Council that the Committee be dissolved.

FISCAL IMPACT: No fiscal impact.

COUNCIL ACTION REQUIRED: If the City Council concurs with the Wilderness Preserve Steering Committee recommendation, the following motion is in order:

MOTION

Approve the dissolution of Wilderness Preserve Steering Committee pursuant to Resolution No. 2000-79.

ATTACHMENT A

HILLSIDE WILDERNESS PRESERVE ACQUISITION LIST

PHASE I

NAME	ACREAGE	APN	ESTIMATED ACQUISITION COST	OTHER GRANTS FILED
Sachan	20.7	8501-007-003	320,000+	State Deer & Mountain Lion (\$160,000) Grant received after July '03
Butcher	27.4	8503-004-021	800,000*	Prop 40/RMC Pending
Sartwell	20	8501-012-011	300,000*	Prop 12/State Pending Prop 40/RMC Pending
Emigh	5	8501-012-010	250,000*	Prop 12/State Pending Prop 40/RMC Pending
Elkins	60 ac 29.5 ac <u>34.73 ac</u> 124.3 ac	8501-012-012 8501-012-013 8501-012-014	2,400,000*	Prop 12 /State Pending
Pokrajac	19.2	8503-004-033 8503-004-030	800,000+	
Leonard	40	8501-009-002	400,000*	
Kissinger	8	8501-012-006	250,000*	
Seibert	2.38	8501-012-007	125,000*	
Oldson	10	8501-011-006	125,000*	
TOTAL	276.98		\$5,670,000	

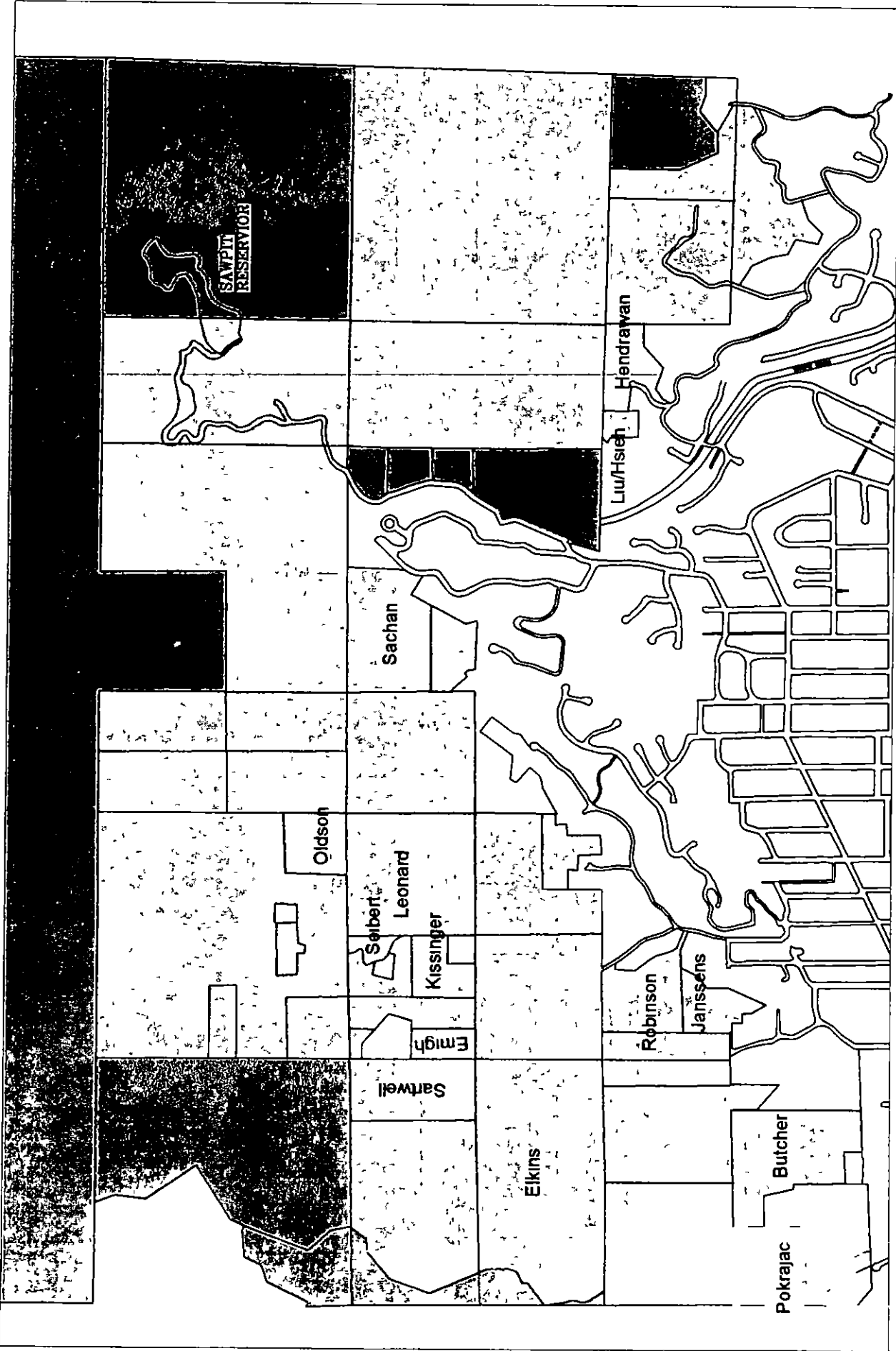
* Estimated Cost Based on Comparable Acquisitions
+ Appraisal Value




ATTACHMENT B

HILLSIDE WILDERNESS PRESERVE ACQUISITION LIST

PHASE II

NAME	ACREAGE	APN	ESTIMATED ACQUISITION COST	OTHER GRANTS FILED
Middle Norumbega				
Hendrawan	1.72	8523-002-034		
Li/Hsieh	2.27	8523-002-032 8523-002-033		
West Side				
Robinson	4.85 14.38	8503-001-029 8503-002-008		
Janssens	2.09 3.50	8503-016-009 8503-001-020		
TOTAL	28.81			



-  City Owned Wilderness Preserve
-  Potential Wilderness Preserve
-  Non-City Owned Open Space

City of Monrovia
Community Development Department
Planning Division

