



April 28, 2015



Board of Supervisors
Marin County Civic Center
San Rafael, California 94903

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO TRANSFER AND INCREASE APPROPRIATIONS WITHIN THE MEASURE A PARKS AND OPEN SPACE BUDGET (COMPANION TO OPEN SPACE DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS SKY RANCH ITEM)

Linda Dahl
DIRECTOR
GENERAL MANAGER

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize the transfer of \$330,000 from the Measure A Reserve for Acquisition to Measure A Land Acquisition.
2. Authorize the increase to revenues and expenses in the Measure A Parks and Open Space budget for the Marin Open Space Trust donation and the California Coastal Conservancy grant.

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SUMMARY:

The Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) has an opportunity to purchase 16.2 acres of land adjacent to the Bald Hill Open Space Preserve. The property consists of three parcels, Marin County Assessor's Parcels 002-181-21, 007-064-43, and 007-071-01. The property, known as "Sky Ranch," is located in the Towns of Fairfax and San Anselmo and was formerly used as an equestrian boarding facility. The Marin Open Space Trust (MOST) recently purchased the property from a private landowner and offered to sell it to the MCOSD.

Less than a quarter of the property has been developed with an equestrian boarding facility and the remainder includes oak and bay woodlands and other native vegetation types. The MCOSD's draft Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan identifies the portion of the existing open space preserve adjacent to this property as "Legacy Zone," which means the area supports "unique or irreplaceable remnants of natural biological diversity, along with other vegetation types with high biological value." It is likely that portions of the Sky Ranch adjacent to the Bald Hill Open Space Preserve would also be considered Legacy Zone. Additionally, the area supports a variety of native wildlife, including deer, coyote, bobcats, and mountain lions. The property is adjacent to and provides road and trail access to the Bald Hill Open Space Preserve and the Marin Municipal Water District watershed lands. Finally, the property is within an area targeted for open space preservation in the Marin County Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan. The MCOSD would incorporate the property into its Bald

Hill Preserve and develop a day-use equestrian facility, which may include hitching posts, watering facility, picnic table, and other similar facilities, that recognize the historic equestrian legacy of the property.

The purchase agreement associated with these recommended actions, and those of the companion item on the Open Space District Board of Directors agenda today, establishes a purchase price of \$630,000, which is well below the \$1,050,000 appraised value of the property. To affect the purchase, the MCOSD proposes to use \$330,000 of Measure A funding reserved for acquisition, and has applied for a grant from the California State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) for the remainder. The Conservancy staff has indicated support for the project and will be taking this application to its board on June 25, 2015. In order to expedite this process, the attached resolution delegates authority to the MCOSD general manager to sign a grant agreement.

As part of the purchase, MOST has agreed to remove the existing structures except those identified to remain in place to support equestrian day use, and donate up to \$90,000 for the rehabilitation of area of the property impacted by prior use towards restoring natural contours and drainage, preventing future erosion, reestablish native vegetation and prevent non-native intrusion. The attached Memorandum of Agreement describes the roles and responsibilities of the MCOSD and MOST toward this end.

There is a small area (approximately 12,000 square feet or 0.27 acres) within Sky Ranch that was damaged by a recent landslide. This landslide also damaged an adjacent residential property. As a result, the previous owners of Sky Ranch removed much of the landslide and installed subdrains, drainage ditches, and other landslide mitigation measures. To support the acquisition and to reduce the MCOSD's liability and maintenance requirements, the owners of the adjacent property have agreed in principle to accept title to this portion of Sky Ranch. Staff will ask your board to execute a transfer agreement to effect this conveyance in the near future. Following this action, staff will return to your board in the summer with follow up actions, including approval of a resolution and quitclaim deed for the landslide parcel and final documents required by the Conservancy.

Staff has determined that the acquisition of the Sky Ranch is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15316 of the CEQA Guidelines, which allow for exemptions for the transfer of ownership to create parks.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Sufficient capacity exists in the Measure A Parks and Open Space Fund 24590, reserved for acquisition. The following increases to the Measure A Parks and Open Space Budget Fund Center 5200031000 are:

Commitment Item	Description	Amount
4530527	Grants	\$300,000
4710615	Donations	\$ 90,000
5482000	Land Acquisition	\$630,000
5220300	Maintenance	\$ 90,000
9000005	Reserve For Acquisition	(\$330,000)

REVIEWED BY:

<input type="checkbox"/> Dept. of Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County Counsel	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Senior Open Space Planner James Raives is the principal author of this report.

Respectfully submitted,



Ronald Miska
Assistant Director

Merit Number: FMBB 100022261
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