December 13, 2016

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

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO AUTHORIZE PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE PURCHASE AGREEMENT FOR ACQUISITION OF BUCK’S LANDING, ASSESSOR’S PARCEL NUMBERS 180-171-11 AND 186-010-20

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the President to execute the purchase agreement.

SUMMARY:
The County of Marin (County) has an opportunity to purchase 32.1 acres of land adjacent to Marin County Open Space District’s San Pedro Mountain Open Space Preserve. The fair market value of the property is $1,430,000 as determined by a recent appraisal. The current owner, Gallinas Landing, LLC, purchased the property from a private party in April 2015, and has agreed to sell it to the County for the appraised value.

The property is known as “Buck’s Landing” and consists of two parcels, APN: 180-171-11 and 186-010-20, located in the unincorporated area of San Rafael. The property is split into three distinct areas of differing characteristics and uses. The undeveloped lands south of North San Pedro Road abut the recently acquired addition to the San Pedro Mountain Open Space Preserve (known as “Heron Hill”). The lands north of North San Pedro Road are adjacent to the Gallinas Creek and offer the opportunity to develop a public park with access to the creek and bay. The third area is approximately five acres of intact wetlands along Gallinas Creek.

The purchase is contingent upon securing funding through grants and the settlement of a lawsuit brought by neighbors over access across the property. Staff will apply for a grant from the California State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) to fund a portion of the purchase. Conservancy staff has indicated support for the acquisition, subject to review of the grant application and availability of funds. Your Board will consider the grant agreement at a later date.

Marin County Parks staff has determined that the acquisition is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to section 15316 of the CEQA Guidelines, which allows the “transfer of ownership of land in order to
create a park” (Class 16). The County will conduct appropriate CEQA review for any interim or permanent redevelopment of the property.

Post-Acquisition Costs
Upon successful acquisition, Marin County Parks will implement interim measures necessary to allow for public use of this facility. This work would likely include the development of a parking area, restrooms, accessible path of travel, and other facilities (such as picnic tables and benches) to support the initial public use of the property. Staff estimates these one-time costs to be approximately $190,000, which would be funded with Measure A funds.

The facility will also require some regular maintenance, including portable restroom cleaning, vegetation control, trash management, and other similar work. Based on costs for other similar facilities, staff estimates that ongoing maintenance costs would be at most $15,000 per year, funded by Measure A. Maintenance of the park will be managed by existing staff who are currently working in nearby parks in Santa Venetia and at McNears Beach Park. In the event that Measure A funding is not available, this nominal annual maintenance cost would be incorporated into the County’s existing baseline maintenance budget. If necessary, staff would reduce maintenance requirements to the minimum necessary to keep the area open to the public.

Finally, the County would also initiate a master planning process that would define the permanent redevelopment of the facility. The master plan will incorporate impacts from sea level rise into the design of the facility by incorporating shoreline retreat into the design. As the development is moved upland, the department will restore habitat in the abandoned area. Staff expects one-time costs of preparing the plan to be approximately $100,000; implementation costs would be dependent on the contents of the plan. Marin County Parks would use Measure A funding to cover the cost for acquisition, planning, redevelopment, and maintenance of the property. If Measure A funding were not available, staff would not move forward with the plan or permanent development of the site until able to secure other sources of funding.

Given the recent acquisition of neighboring “Heron Hill” by the Open Space District, the potential of allowing public access to the shoreline, Gallinas Creek and San Pablo Bay, as well as the opportunity to incorporate a retreating shoreline to address sea level rise, staff believes that the timing is appropriate for your Board to consider this investment at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT:
The FY2016-17 Measure A Parks and Open Space Program Reserved for Acquisition Budget is $1,630,239. There are no General Fund impacts associated with this acquisition; any one-time or ongoing post-acquisition costs would be funded with Measure A funds, or mitigations would otherwise be implemented to minimize obligations and prevent added net county costs.

REVIEWED BY:
[ ] Dept. of Finance [ X ] N/A
[ X ] County Counsel [ ] N/A
[ ] Human Resources [ X ] N/A
Senior Open Space Planner James Raives is the principal author of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

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Marin County Open Space District