

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

DATE: May 14, 2025

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

SUBJECT: Consideration of a request by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, pursuant to Government Code Section 65402, that the County report whether the District's proposed purchase of 273.5 +/- acres of property (APN 080-360-010) for preservation in its current condition and use and addition to the adjacent Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, conforms to the adopted County General Plan.

County File Number: PLN2025-00087 (MROSD)

PROPOSAL

Consideration of request by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), pursuant to Government Code Section 65402, for determination whether the District's proposed purchase of 273.5 +/- acres of property (APN 080-360-010) for preservation in its current condition and use and addition to the adjacent Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, conforms to the adopted County General Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission report that the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's proposed purchase of 273.5 +/- acres of property (APN 080-360-010) for preservation in its current condition and use and addition to the adjacent Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, conforms to the adopted County General Plan.

BACKGROUND

Report Prepared By: Will Gibson

Applicant: Midpeninsula Open Space District

Owner: Loebner Gary E Trust

Location: Alpine Road, La Honda

APN(s): 080-360-010

Size: Approximately 273.5 acres

Existing Zoning: TPZ

General Plan Designation: Timber Production

Existing Land Use: Undeveloped, disused grazing land, open space

Flood Zone: X, minimal hazard, FEMA FIRM Panel 06081C0415E

Environmental Evaluation: A report that the proposed acquisition of property conforms to the County General Plan is exempt from environmental review because the County's ministerial functions performed under Government Code Section 65402 are not an approval of a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Any future action on the subject property would be subject to applicable CEQA requirements.

Setting: Varied rural native grassland, scrub and forest

DISCUSSION

A. KEY ISSUES

1. Project Description

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) proposes to acquire the subject parcel, APN 080-360-010, consisting of approximately 273.5 acres of grass, scrub, and forest, located in rural La Honda. The property is undeveloped and previously used for grazing. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District intends to preserve the property in its present condition indefinitely, for inclusion in the adjacent Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, as use as open space, habitat preservation, and watershed protection.

The property is entirely within MROSD's boundary, and adjacent to the Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District currently proposes no development or other activity on the property apart from the proposed purchase.

Per California Government Code Section 65402, prior to acquisition of property, MROSD must request a report on the proposed acquisition's conformity with the County General Plan.

2. Analysis

The proposed acquisition potentially implicates the following General Plan policies:

a. Vegetative, Water, Fish and Wildlife Resources Policies

- (1) Policy 1.22.a of the County General Plan requires that the County regulate land uses and development activities to prevent and, if infeasible, mitigate to the extent possible, significant adverse impacts on vegetative, water, fish and wildlife resources.
- (2) Policy 1.22.b places a priority on the managed use and protection of vegetative, water, fish and wildlife resources in rural areas of the County.
- (3) Policy 1.23 requires the County to regulate the location, density and design of development to minimize significant adverse impacts and encourage enhancement of vegetative, water, fish and wildlife resources.
- (4) Policy 1.24 requires that the County ensure that development will (1) minimize the removal of vegetative resources; and/or(2)protect vegetation which enhances microclimate, stabilizes slopes or reduces surface water runoff, erosion or sedimentation; and/or (3) protect historic and scenic trees.
- (5) Policy 1.36 requires that the County ensure that land uses and development within timber harvesting areas will not significantly detract from or inhibit the use of the property for the growing and harvesting of timber.

Discussion: The subject properties are located in the County's rural unincorporated area, are undeveloped, and are characterized by various vegetation, including grass, scrub, and tree cover. The parcel is zoned TPZ and designated by the General Plan as Forestry, Timber Harvest, but is not used for timber harvesting, and was most recently used as grazing land and private open space.

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has not proposed any development on the properties proposed for acquisition, or any changes to the conditions or uses of the property. The proposal is limited to acquisition of the property, and any subsequent changes in use would be determined through a planning process and creation of a comprehensive use and management plan or master plan, consistent with MROSD's Coastside Protection Program Service Plan ("Service Plan"), in consultation with appropriate agencies, including the County.

The proposed acquisition itself conforms to the General Plan Vegetative, Water, Fish and Wildlife Resources Policies, because a primary purpose of the acquisition, consistent with MROSD's mission and the requirements of its Service Plan and use and management planning process, is long-term protection of natural resources on properties acquired by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space

District. In addition, any proposed future changes or improvements to the property would be regulated by the County tree removal and grading ordinances and the “Site Design Criteria” of Chapter 20.A.2 of the Zoning Regulations, and the County will have the authority to review any specific development plans for the property at the time of application. In general, any significant change in use of the property would require a TPZ permit, which would be subject to additional review and approval.

b. Soil Resources Policies

- (1) Policy 2.17 calls for the County to regulate development to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation.
- (2) Policy 2.23 calls for the County to regulate excavation, grading, filling and land clearing activities to protect against accelerated soil erosion and sedimentation.

Discussion: The proposed acquisition does not conflict with the General Plan Soil Resources Policies. Any proposed future development would be subject to the County Grading Ordinance, which incorporates measures to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, and subject to the guidelines and policies of MROSD’s Service Plan, which requires MROSD to adopt measures that minimize and mitigate any erosion-creating activities. The County would have the opportunity to review any proposed development at the time of application. As noted, MROSD’s Service Plan also includes measures to ensure minimization of any impact due to increased intensity of uses on properties acquired by MROSD, should such increases occur.

c. Visual Quality Policies

- (1) Policy 4.21 calls for the County to protect the visual quality of scenic corridors by managing the location and appearance of structural development.

Discussion: A portion of the subject property falls in the viewshed of the Highway 35 scenic corridor. However, the proposed acquisition does not in itself impact the visual quality of the property and conforms to the General Plan Visual Quality Policies. Any future improvements, if proposed, would be subject to review by the County at time of application and would be regulated through the cited policies and Section 6325.1 of the Zoning Regulations, “Primary Scenic Resources Areas Criteria.”

d. Park and Recreation Resource Policies

- (1) Policy 6.10 generally encourages park providers to locate passive park and recreation facilities in rural areas in order to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive open space lands. This policy considers the following activities to be generally compatible with passive park and recreation facilities: camping, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding and nature study.

Discussion: The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has not proposed any improvements to the property or any expansions of recreational uses on the property. The purchase alone does not conflict with Policy 6.10. Any potential future changes to uses resulting from the acquisition would be located entirely in the rural area and limited to the types of compatible uses identified by Policy 6.10, to be determined at the time of proposal.

- (2) Policy 6.47 encourages the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to acquire, protect, and make available for public use open space lands in rural areas and open space of regional significance in urban areas in cooperation with San Mateo County.

Discussion: MROSD's plan for the acquired property is addition to the adjacent Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, consistent with Policy 6.47.

B. SUMMARY

The proposed acquisition does not conflict with the above-listed policies. The purpose of the acquisition is consistent with the General Plan, and with MROSD's mission, Service Plan, and use and management planning process, as are all uses currently intended for the site. Any future development would be regulated by relevant County ordinances, would require relevant permits, and would be subject to review by relevant agencies. All aspects of the acquisition are consistent with the County General Plan.

C. ALTERNATIVES

The alternative to a report of conformity with the General Plan is for the Planning Commission to report that the proposed acquisition does not conform to the policies of the adopted County General Plan. Another alternative is to take no action. Upon expiration of 40 days from submittal, failure to make a report will be deemed a finding that the acquisition as described in the submittal is in conformity with the adopted General Plan.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A report that the proposed acquisition of property conforms to the County General Plan is exempt from environmental review because the County's ministerial

functions performed under Government Code Section 65402 are not an approval of a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act. Any future action on the subject property would be subject to applicable CEQA requirements.

E. REVIEWING AGENCIES

County Attorney's Office

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Findings
- B. Site Location Map

County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Department

RECOMMENDED FINDING

Permit or Project File Number: PLN2005-00087

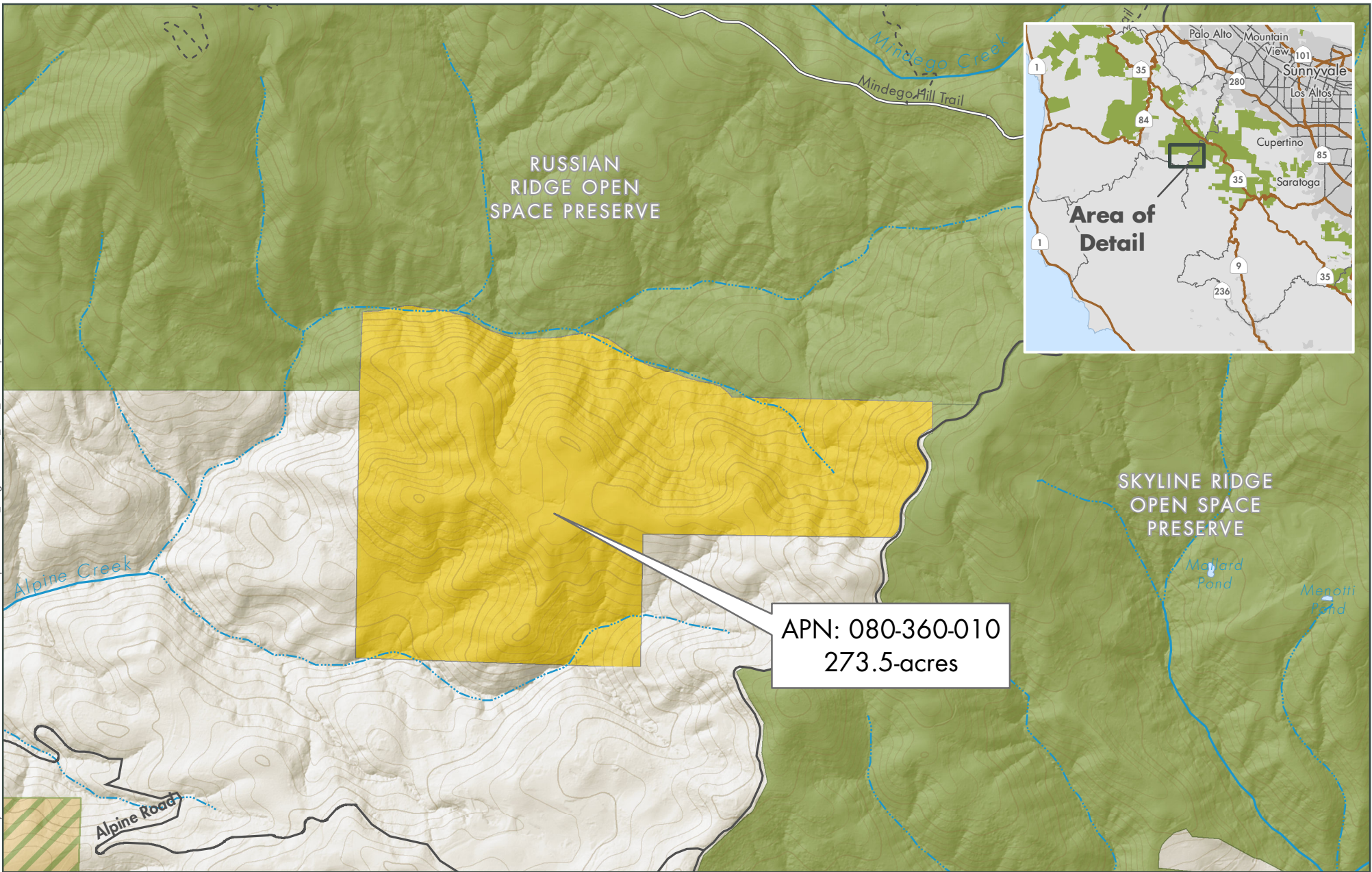
Hearing Date: May 14, 2025

Prepared By: Will Gibson

For Adoption By: Planning Commission

RECOMMENDED FINDING

That the Planning Commission report that the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's proposed purchase of 273.5 +/- acres of property (APN 080-360-010) for preservation in its current condition and use and addition to the adjacent Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, conforms to the adopted County General Plan.



APN: 080-360-010
273.5-acres

Pratt Trust Property

-  MROSD Preserves
-  Pratt Trust Property
-  Private Property
-  MROSD Easement Over Land Trust

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)
1/28/2020

