



**Agenda Item A.1
PUBLIC HEARING
Meeting Date: June 16, 2014**

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Members

FROM: Anne Wells, Advance Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Ellwood Mesa Coastal Trails and Habitat Restoration Project (13-039-DP); APNs 079-210-013, 079-210-014, 079-210-015, 079-210-024, and 079-210-069 through -072

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission:

Adopt Planning Commission Resolution 14-____, entitled "A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City Of Goleta, California, Adopting the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration 14-MND-001, Adopting the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and Approving the Development Plan for the Ellwood Mesa Coastal Trails and Habitat Restoration Project; APNs 079-210-013, 079-210-014, 079-210-015, 079-210-024, and 079-210-069 through -07."

APPLICANT

Santa Barbara Trails Council (SBTC)
Mark Wilkinson
PO Box 22352
Santa Barbara, CA 93121
(805) 708-6173

PROPERTY OWNER

City of Goleta
130 Cremona, Suite B
Goleta, CA 93117
(805) 961-7557

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

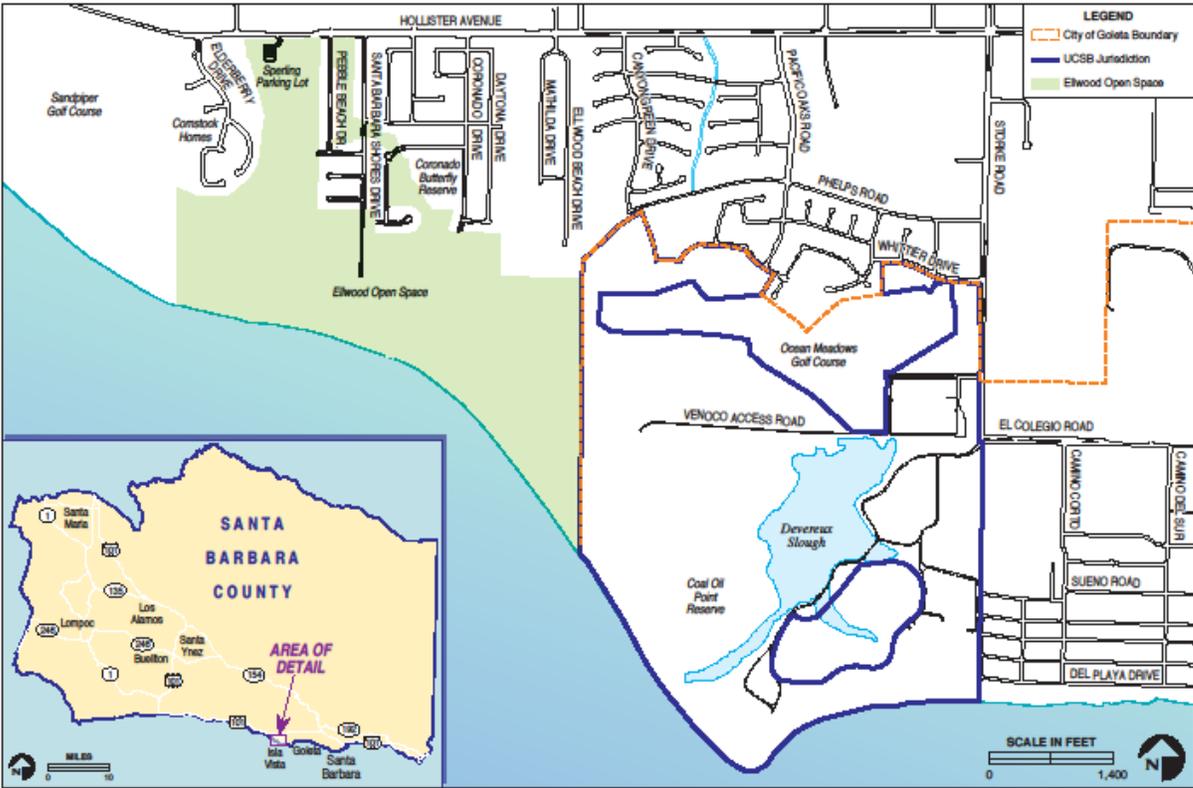
A hearing on the request of the Santa Barbara Trails Council (SBTC and "applicant"), for approval of a Development Plan for the Ellwood Mesa Coastal Trails and Habitat Restoration Project (Project), which includes improvements to existing trails; construction of a culvert over an inactive gully (Gully A) and boardwalk style crossings over an active drainage (Drainage A) and Devereux Creek; improvements to two beach access points, including drainage improvements, as well as removal of asphalt at Beach Access Point E and construction of steps at Beach Access Point F; and habitat restoration, including vegetation removal and planting of native species along trail corridors, located within the City of Goleta. The request also includes adoption of a Final Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Application Filed:	May 3, 2013
Application Deemed Complete:	May 31, 2013
Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration Review:	March 5, 2014 - April 4, 2014
Application Processing Deadline:	90 Days from approval of the MND

JURISDICTION

The Project requires approvals from and is in the jurisdictions of the City of Goleta (City) and the California Coastal Commission (CCC). The City has jurisdiction over and is requested to approve a Development Plan. The Project is within the Coastal Zone and, therefore, the CCC has jurisdiction over and is requested to approve a Coastal Development Permit for the Project.

VICINITY MAP



Ellwood Trails Vicinity Map

FIGURE 1

BACKGROUND

In 2004, the City, the County of Santa Barbara (County), and the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) released the jointly-prepared *Ellwood-Devereux Open Space and Habitat Plan* (Open Space Plan). The Open Space Plan protects and

enhances the 652-acre coastal resource located on the lower Devereux Creek watershed. The City adopted the Open Space Plan in 2004 and uses the plan to guide public access and natural resource protection on the City's portion of the Open Space Plan area, the Ellwood Mesa-Sperling Reserve.

The California Coastal Trail (Coastal Trail) and the Juan Bautista de Anza Trail (Anza Trail) are included as critical links in the Open Space Plan trail system. These trails connect the Ellwood Mesa-Sperling Preserve parking lot on the west of the Ellwood Mesa-Sperling Preserve to Isla Vista, which is located to the east of Ellwood Mesa-Sperling Preserve. Additionally, the Coastal and Anza Trail alignments and supporting policies are included in the Goleta General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan (General Plan) Open Space Element.

In summer 2012, the City Council authorized staff to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the SBTC to carry out the Ellwood Mesa Trails and Habitat Restoration Design Project. The scope of work includes design, engineering, environmental review, and permitting associated with the possible future improvement of the Coastal and Anza Trails on the Preserve, as well as other access improvements on related trails and at beach access points.

Staff spent considerable time in the field to assess and map trail boundaries and existing conditions, and identify potential design issues. Potential design issues included: (1) eroded gully areas located immediately south of the Sperling Parking lot; (2) a steep and eroded Devereux Creek crossing; (3) eroded and pot-holed trails; and (4) eroded beach access points at Beach Access Points E and F. An array of alternative design solutions were created for consideration during the public outreach portion of Project design. Additionally, restoration plans were developed to support trail design, including removal of non-native species and expansion and enhancement of native habitats and species.

In September and December 2012, the City and SBTC conducted two public outreach workshops and one public site visit to meet with the community, share ideas, and to gather input. At the first outreach meeting, input clearly favored alternatives that would keep Ellwood Mesa as natural as possible, minimize impacts, and avoid improvements that might intensify use or create new problems. Out of this input, six design principles were developed and presented at the outreach meeting in December 2012, as follows:

1. Minimal Change (no more modification than necessary).
2. Maintain Natural Setting (no borders, rural feeling, flowing, variable width trails, and native soil).
3. Focus on solutions that have the least impact/expense (minimal expense for the job).
4. Enhance, not replace (no radical changes).
5. Solve problems and do not create new ones.
6. Ensure long-term sustainability (minimize problems over many years).

The December 2012 public workshop resulted in a set of guidelines based on the design principles (See Appendix "A" Habitat Restoration Plan of the Final MND, Exhibit 1 of Attachment 1) which led to four Project Goals:

1. Improve public access across gullies and crossings, while reducing impacts to riparian habitats in these areas (specifically the gullies near the parking lot and the Devereux Creek crossing).
2. Restore damaged portions of the Coastal and Anza Trails, especially along the bluff portions of the Coastal Trail.
3. Provide habitat restoration along the trail corridors.
4. Improve access for public safety to the beach at Access Points E and F.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Trail Improvements

The Project would improve approximately 2.1 miles of existing coastal trails on Ellwood Mesa. The trail system as proposed would largely follow the existing trail network comprising the California Coastal Trail and Anza Trail. The Coastal Trail design is based on the use of existing trail surfaces and existing native soil tread with varying trail widths. The trail would be multi-use, consistent with existing conditions. In some locations, the trail would be groomed to control storm water runoff. Trail erosion and potholing would be backfilled and compacted to minimize ponding and erosion. The trail design emphasizes restoration along the Coastal Trail to narrow sections of the existing trail where it is currently widened from off-trail disturbance, and repair eroded areas to ensure that the trail can support foot traffic after rain events.

The Anza Trail design includes a combined surface for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians. Similar to the Coastal Trail, the Anza Trail route uses existing trail surfaces and existing native soil tread with varying trail widths. While minor grading is proposed to address erosion and inadequate drainage, most of the trail surface would remain natural and ungroomed. This ungroomed trail surface is intended to slow down trail users to minimize the risk of trail user conflicts. At one location, the trail will be re-routed to avoid a vernal pool, as prescribed in the City's General Plan.

The proposed trail improvements would incorporate features that minimize erosion, limit downstream sedimentation, and reduce ongoing maintenance requirements using erosion control and minimization best management practices that manage and control water flows affecting the trails.

Drainage Crossing Improvements

The Project would also include improvements to three drainage or gully crossings. A summary of the improvements are provided below.

- **Gully A:** An inactive, eroded six-foot deep and 20-foot wide gully intersects an existing trail on the west side of Ellwood Mesa. The Project includes the installation

of a culvert across what is referred to as Gully A to channel waters and improve the grade for accessibility.

- **Drainage A:** An eroded drainage channel approximately four feet deep and 25 feet in width intersects an existing trail on the west side of Ellwood Mesa, south of Gully A. The Project proposes to grade the realigned trail down to a point between 24 and 30 inches above the drainage floor and construct a 6-foot wide boardwalk-style crossing utilizing screw piling technology that would not require engineered foundations.
- **Devereux Creek:** Devereux Creek intersects the existing trail south of Gully A. The existing trail crosses the 60-foot wide creek bed, making passage during the winter months difficult. A 6-foot wide, 60-foot long boardwalk is proposed at this location utilizing screw piling technology that would not require engineered foundations.

Beach Access Improvements

The Project includes improvements to two existing beach access points on Ellwood Mesa. Access Point E, located on the southeastern side of Ellwood Mesa, was originally constructed almost 50 years ago. Over time water flowing down the road from the mesa has caused substantial erosion and damage to the trail as well as the lower bluff edge. The Project includes the removal of old asphalt and trail improvements that would allow for water to sheet off at intervals. Two 20 to 30 foot long bioswales would be established to capture runoff from the trail and direct it to two downdrains that would outlet on the beach. The bioswales would be revegetated with native species appropriate to the bluff habitat.

Access Point F occurs about 700 yards west of Point E. This access was constructed more than 70 years ago to serve as a dirt road for oil and gas extraction work on the beach. The road has since disintegrated and erosion has incised deep gullies into the trail, with a very narrow trail width. The Project would construct a series of steps down through the entrenched areas, restore the open area, including removal of illegal fire pits, and improve the sloping ramp to the beach. The Project would also include restoration and erosion control techniques to divert water away from the access point so it no longer flows off the Mesa and down trail. Non-native vegetation would be removed adjacent to the stairway and native vegetation would be restored

Restoration

Habitat restoration is proposed as part of the Project adjacent to the trail, along the coastal blufftop, and along the two beach access points. Non-native plants would be removed and native vegetation would be restored as part of the Project. Coastal bluff scrub, riparian, southern vernal pools, native grassland, and coastal sage scrub species are included in the Project plant palette. A total of approximately 13 acres are to be restored as part of the Project

PROJECT INFORMATION

Site Information	
Property Name	Ellwood Mesa-Sperling Preserve
APN	079-210-013, 079-210-014, 079-210-015, 079-210-024, and 079-210-069 thru -07
Property Owner	City of Goleta
General Plan / Coastal Land Use Plan Designation	Open Space/Recreation
Zoning District, Ordinance	Recreation (REC)
Parcel Size (gross acreage)	232 acres
Present Use & Development	Open Space/Recreation
Surrounding Uses/Zoning	
North:	Hollister Avenue, then the Union Pacific Railroad, then the U.S. Highway 101
South:	Pacific Ocean
East:	Coal Oil Point Reserve
West:	Bluffs at Sandpiper residential area and Santa Barbara Shores Park
Access	Hollister Avenue
Public Services	
Water Supply:	Goleta Water District
Fire:	SB County Fire Stations 11 & 14
Sewage	Goleta West Sanitary District
Electric	Southern California Edison

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The General Plan includes policies and maps related to the Coastal and Anza Trails on Ellwood Mesa. The policies in the Open Space Element provide direction regarding the improvements of these trails. General Plan policies establish criteria and standards for trail improvements. These policies guided the Project design. As such, no changes are proposed to the General Plan as part of the proposed Project. The Project is consistent with General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan policies. A summary of the Project’s General Plan Consistency is provided in Attachment 3, Exhibit 3.

COASTAL ZONING ORDINANCE CONSISTENCY

The Project site is zoned Recreation (REC). Trails and trail access improvements are allowed within the REC zone district. Exhibit 5 of Attachment 1 summarizes the Project’s consistency with zoning ordinance standards and requirements. The Project complies with the development standards of the REC zone district, including allowable uses. The Project meets zoning ordinance standards.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City reviewed the environmental impacts of the proposed Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §§ 21000, et seq., “CEQA”), the regulations promulgated thereunder (14 Cal. Code of Regulations §§ 15000, et seq., the “CEQA Guidelines”), and the City’s Environmental Guidelines (“Goleta Guidelines”). A Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (14-MND-001, State Clearinghouse #2014031069) was prepared and made available for a public review period from March 25, 2014 through April 24, 2014. No comments were received from State agencies. Locally, the Santa Barbara County Fire District requested design accommodations for emergency vehicles. Comment letters from the general public included concern related to minimal improvements. The Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (FMND) (Attachment 1, Exhibit 1) addressed those issues and other CEQA required issue areas. The FMND found potentially significant impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, recreation, and transportation and traffic. With the inclusion of the proposed mitigation measures in the FMND adverse impacts are mitigated to the maximum extent feasible.

The FMND was not re-circulated for review and comment after the initial public review of the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (DMND) as described in Attachment 1. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15073.5 (b) , the City determined there was no need to recirculate the Final MND as the revisions did not rise to the level of substantial revision as no new avoidable significant effects were identified and no mitigations measures or Project revisions were added in order to reduce the effect to insignificance. While the language of some mitigation measures has been rewritten to be clearer, the same level of mitigation as anticipated by the DMND will occur with the implementation of the mitigations measures contained within the FMND. The same nine impact areas that were identified to be significant without imposition of mitigation measures impacts in the 2014 DMND remain the same in the 2014 Final MND. Theses impact areas are to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, recreation, and transportation and traffic.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice for this hearing was published in the Santa Barbara News-Press on June 6, 2014. The City mailed 1,187 notices to property owners within 1,000 feet, occupants within 300 feet, and interested persons on June 6, 2014. Notices were also sent by email to interested parties, the Planning Commission and the City Council. The agenda was posted at Goleta City Hall 72 hours prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

FINDINGS FOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL

The Development Plan is consistent with the findings of Section 35-174.7 of the Coastal Zoning Ordinance as the Project site is adequate in size, shape, and location to accommodate the density and intensity of the Project and potential adverse impacts are

mitigated to the maximum extent feasible. Exhibit 2 of Attachment 1 summarizes the Project's consistency for findings required for approval of a Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The Project is consistent with the Open Space/Passive Recreation land use designation and Recreation zoning district. The Project's impacts would be less than significant with the incorporation of required mitigation measures. Lastly, all of the required findings for the Development Plan can be made. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the FMND, adopt the Mitigation and Monitoring Program, approve the proposed Development Plan, and make the appropriate findings as outlined in the attached Planning Commission Resolution (Attachment 1) and accompanying Exhibits.

It should be noted that the Applicant will be required to obtain a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) from the CCC if the Development Plan is approved by the Planning Commission. If the CCC approves the CDP, the Applicant will then be required to obtain a Land Use Permit application to the City for effectuation of this Development Plan and all associated conditions of approval.

At such time that the Ellwood Mesa Coastal Trails and Habitat Restoration Project receives the necessary permit approvals, staff will work with the SBTC to find grant funding in order to implement this important public project.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

The action of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council within ten (10) calendar days from the date of the Commission's final action.

Legal Review By:

Approved By:

Winnie Cai
Deputy City Attorney

Jennifer Carman
Planning Commission Secretary

ATTACHMENTS

1. Adopt Planning Commission Resolution 14-____, entitled "A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City Of Goleta, California, Adopting the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration 14-MND-001, Adopting the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and Approving the Development Plan for the Ellwood Mesa Coastal Trails and Habitat Restoration Project; APNs 079-210-013, 079-210-014, 079-210-015, 079-210-024, and 079-210-069 through -07".

Attachment 1

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