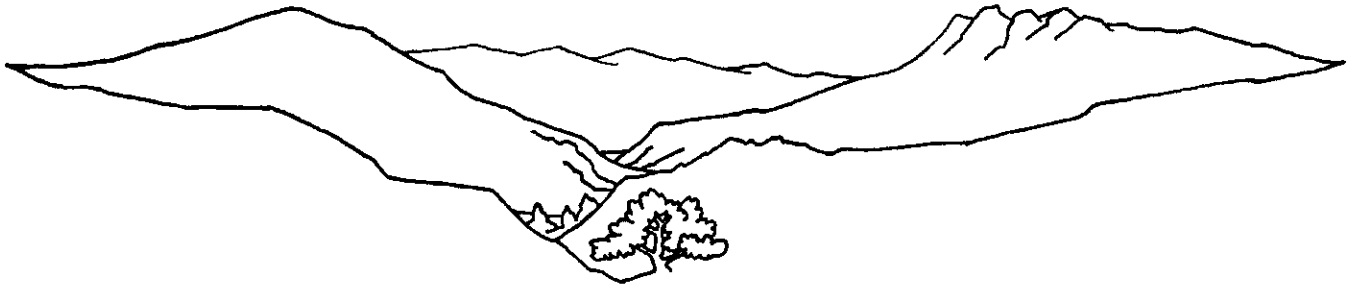


CONEJO OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION AGENCY



TO: Board of Directors
FROM: COSCA Staff
DATE: January 14, 2009
SUBJECT: Initiation of Update to Priority List of Areas for Potential Purchase as Open Space

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize a public workshop to be held at an upcoming COSCA Board of Directors meeting to consider revisions to the existing list of priority areas for potential purchase as public open space.

BACKGROUND:

COSCA's first priority list of potential areas for purchase as public open space was approved by the COSCA Board of Directors on April 10, 1996, and was based on an inventory of areas citywide that have important open space resources as identified in the City of Thousand Oaks' Open Space Element. Since 1996, this list has been updated approximately every four years to reflect new acquisitions and add new priority areas to the list. COSCA's current priority list was approved by the Board of Directors on July 14, 2004 following a public workshop on May 12, 2004. A copy of the July 27, 2004 City Council staff report summarizing the COSCA Board's most recent update is attached (see **Exhibit "A"**).

As more than four years have passed since the last revision of the priority list, it is time to initiate the update process again. Staff recommends that a public workshop be held by COSCA at an upcoming Board of Directors meeting to consider this topic. At the workshop, staff will review existing and potential new priority areas and provide a recommended priority list for consideration by the Board of Directors. The public will be invited to provide input into this process at the meeting.

Notification of the workshop will be provided by the following methods:

- Press release to local newspapers and notice posted on City's website.

A Joint Agency
City of Thousand Oaks/Conejo Recreation and Park District
2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

- Notices to all Homeowners Associations citywide.
- Notices to interested agencies and organizations, such as the National Park Service, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, and Equestrian Trails Incorporated.
- Notices placed in trailhead kiosks citywide.

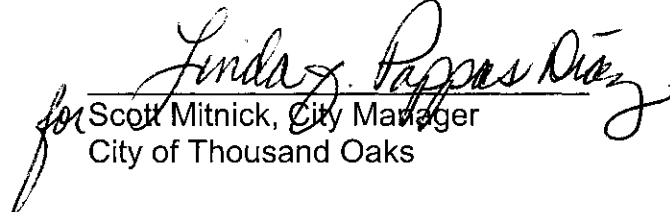
CONCLUSION:

An update of COSCA's priority list of areas for potential purchase as open space is a timely and important issue. With the Board of Directors' approval, staff will make the necessary arrangements for a public workshop at an upcoming COSCA Board meeting to consider this matter.

Prepared by:


for Kristin E. Foord
COSCA Manager

Submitted by:


for Scott Mitnick, City Manager
City of Thousand Oaks


Jim Friedl, General Manager
Conejo Recreation & Park District



M E M O R A N D U M

City of Thousand Oaks • Thousand Oaks, California

Community Development Department

TO: City Manager
FROM: Community Development Department
DATE: July 27, 2004
SUBJECT: Updated Priority List of Areas for Potential Purchase as Public Open Space

ISSUE:

Updated priority list of areas for potential purchase as open space.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive updated priority list of areas for potential purchase as public open space from the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA).

BACKGROUND:

In 1996, the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA) Board of Directors developed a priority list of areas for potential purchase as public open space, which has served as a guide for open space preservation over the last eight years. This original priority list included 19 areas.

On January 27, 2004, the City Council asked COSCA for an updated priority list. In response to this request, on March 10th the COSCA Board of Directors authorized staff to hold a public workshop on this topic.

The public workshop was held on May 12th. Extensive public notification of the workshop was provided, including a press release and notices to all homeowner's associations citywide, environmental organizations, public agencies and interested individuals. At the conclusion of the workshop, staff was directed to evaluate two potential additions to the draft list (Rockwell, and Potrero Ridge), based on public comments.

A revised priority list was subsequently prepared, with a staff recommendation to include these two areas. This revised priority list was adopted by the COSCA Board on July 14, 2004.

Updated 2004 Priority List

The updated priority list includes 16 areas (see Exhibit "A"). The COSCA staff reports for May 10th and July 14th provide a description of these areas, and the process COSCA used to update the list (see Exhibits "B" and "C").

Twelve of the areas on the 2004 priority list were on the previous list, and four areas were added (Canyon West, Lake Eleanor, Potrero Ridge, Rockwell). The boundaries of one area was expanded slightly (Erbes Road). The "Trail Crossing Improvement" category was also renamed "Trail Crossing Improvements and Access" to recognize the potential need to purchase access rights for public trail access.

As before, areas on the priority list are organized into three broad priority groups, based on the following working definitions:

"Priority 1" Category: This group includes areas with important open space resources such as valuable plant and animal habitats, rare plants, wildlife corridor connections, and scenic value which are not likely to be adequately protected through the development review process. Purchase of parcels or development rights in these areas therefore appears to be the best method of protecting open space resources. In addition, the likely cost of areas in this category should be comparable to other local open space acquisitions. This category commonly includes ridgelines and areas that are vital to completion of the open space "ring" around Thousand Oaks.

"Priority 2" Category: Areas which possess important open space resources for which purchase may be desirable. Such areas are not in the Priority 1 group for one or more of the following factors: (a) they may be comparatively expensive due to approved or recorded tract maps, adopted Specific Plans, or easily developable terrain, and (b) the principal open space resources of these areas are likely to be protected as open space through the development review process. These areas often serve to augment the open space "ring", rather than complete it. Despite potentially higher costs per acre and preservation of significant open space through the development review process, these areas should be monitored for potential acquisition opportunities.

"Priority 3" Category: Areas for which purchase does not appear necessary to conserve open space resources. Areas in this category

include those with open space resources that should be adequately protected through the development review process. Nevertheless, these areas should also be monitored for potential purchase if the price is favorable, such as through the sale of tax-defaulted land.

The prioritization of areas into these three groups is based in part on an evaluation of each area according to 16 criteria approved by the COSCA Board of Directors in 1992 (see Exhibit "B", Table 1).

It should be noted that a significant amount of land that was identified on the 1996 priority list has since been preserved as open space and is not included in the updated list. Open space was preserved, for example, in 13 of the 19 areas on the original priority list, totaling approximately 1,886 acres (see Exhibit "C", Table 3).

Some areas preserved as open space since 1996 were not on the first priority list. Land was preserved, for example, in the following areas that were not on the first priority list: Hill Canyon Open Space, Hillcrest Open Space, La Jolla Open Space, Lang Ranch Open Space, Los Padres Open Space, and Zuniga Ridge Open Space. This highlights the fact that the priority list provides a framework for open space conservation but additional areas may be considered for preservation as opportunities arise.

Conclusion

COSCA's updated priority list of 16 areas for potential purchase as public open space includes past priorities, adds new areas, and reflects open space preserved since 1996.

This priority list serves as a framework for open space acquisition efforts in Thousand Oaks, and a method of identifying the select properties that merit consideration for preservation through fee purchase.

Prepared by:



Mark Towne
COSCA Manager

Submitted by:



John C. Prescott
Community Development Director

Table 1: Updated 2004 Priority List of Areas for Potential Purchase as Public Open Space

Priority Group ⁽¹⁾	Area (see attached map for locations)	Acres (approx.)	Number of Parcels (approx.)	Evaluation Criteria Points	Protection through Development Review
1	C. Mt. Clef Ridge	25	4	39	Inadequate due to small parcels
	H. Skyline Addition	37	38	26	Inadequate due to numerous small parcels
	K. Southern Ridge	375	330	39	Inadequate due to numerous small parcels
	L. Broome Addition	30	2	29	Purchase may be desirable
	G. Conejo Ridge	6	3	23	Purchase may be desirable
	D. Sunset North	53	1	32	Purchase may be desirable
2	I. Westlake South	193	2	39	Purchase may be desirable
	P. Erbes Road	142	4	36	Purchase may be desirable
	E. Sunset Northeast	54	3	29	Purchase may be desirable
	Q. Canyon West	24	1	30	Purchase may be desirable
	S. Rockwell	45	1	31	Purchase may be desirable
	T. Potrero Ridge	11	1	31	Purchase may be desirable
	Trail Crossing Improvements and Access	-	-	-	Improvements may be desirable; access needed
3	J. Southshore Hills	23	1	35	Adequate
	A. Adventist Hill	16	1	25	Adequate
	R. Lake Eleanor	18	1	27	Adequate
	M. Vallecito	72	4	26	Adequate

(1) Areas are not ranked in importance within each priority group.