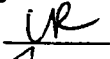



MEETING DATE: June 14, 2004  
DEPARTMENT: Community Development  
PREPARED BY: L. Ruffing  
DEPT. DIR. APPROVAL:   
CITY MGR. APPROVAL:   
PRESENTED BY: L. Ruffing

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY REPORT

### RECEIVE REPORT AND PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF REGARDING POTENTIAL PUBLIC ACQUISITION OF OPEN SPACE

#### BACKGROUND

The State Coastal Conservancy and Georgia-Pacific have begun discussions about the structure, process and terms for the public acquisition of open space on the G-P Mill Site. The open space acquisition could occur separate from the sale of the remainder of the Mill Site. An early, up-front acquisition of open space on the Mill Site has many potential benefits, including:

1. An early acquisition would tap State and other funding resources which are available now for open space acquisition, but which may not continue to be available in the future.
2. A key public objective for the Mill Site, involving establishment of a coastal trail and creation of a substantial open space and recreational asset, would be largely resolved independently from the planning process for Mill Site development.
3. Resolving the open space component of Mill Site will simplify the entitlement process for future development and add value to the portion of the Mill Site reserved for urban uses.
4. An early sale of open space lands would provide G-P with land sale proceeds well in advance of the planning, environmental review and entitlement process for reuse of the Mill Site.

At the May 10, 2004 City Council meeting, the Council indicated a very strong preference that the City own, manage and maintain the public lands acquired through an early conservation acquisition. At this time, it is necessary for the Council to provide additional direction regarding the potential configuration and use of public open space areas on the Mill Site.

#### SUMMARY

In order to proceed with negotiations for the purchase of open space on the Mill Site, the area of a potential open space acquisition must be defined. While delineation of the boundaries of the acquisition is necessary to transfer title of the property, the transaction would also establish a means whereby the boundaries of open space parcels could be adjusted in the

future to respond to land use planning and development proposals consistent with the specific plan that will ultimately be developed for the Mill Site.

Through the planning process thus far, several areas on the Mill Site have been identified as having high open space and recreation potential. It is important to note that not all of the open space would necessarily be acquired through an up-front public open space acquisition, as some areas may be obtained through the specific planning and entitlement process for future development. Potential open space areas on the Mill Site include:

- A coastal bluff corridor to preserve the natural features along the coastline and allow for establishment of a coastal trail. While precise delineation will depend on natural features, geologic conditions, and adjacent development opportunities, the coastal trail corridor would likely be an average of 100 feet in width. Early acquisition of the bluff trail corridor allows for development of this recreational resource and site amenity in advance of the entitlement process for development on the site.
- A strip of land along the north Mill Site boundary to provide a buffer between the Mill Site and Glass Beach and to provide expanded and improved access to Glass Beach. This strip would be approximately 20 feet in width.
- A “public green” connecting the central business district to the coast. A linear park corridor could provide a physical and visual linkage between downtown and the coast and enhance future development opportunities in its vicinity. An ocean bluff park could be developed at the point where the public green connects to the coast.
- A parcel that encompasses the Mill Pond wetland and provides an opportunity for restoration and enhancement of the wetland as a storm water detention facility for City and Mill Site runoff, and as a scenic and recreational amenity for the Mill Site.
- Parkland surrounding the Mill Pond wetland to establish a significant piece of parkland connecting the coast and downtown.
- A parcel adjacent to and east of the City’s wastewater treatment facility that could be used for establishment of a wetland wastewater treatment facility (i.e., marsh) and/or as a buffer for the facility. Preliminary estimates indicate that about 10 acres of land would be sufficient for a wetland treatment system.
- An area of land for community gatherings (i.e., kite festival, fireworks display) and active recreational uses (i.e., ballfields or a sports complex, dog-walking park, etc.).
- A substantial parcel of land in the southern portion of the Mill Site that could be “land-banked” for future development opportunities such as a marine research institution or other educational facility. Such uses would require an estimated 60–80 acres of land. While a land-banked area would be used for open space in the short-term, in the long-term it would be available for potential high-benefit development opportunities. Land-banking property on the south end of the Mill Site has the added benefit of encouraging

development phasing and focusing short-term development activity on the middle and northern portions of the Mill Site. This reduces the potential for internal competition for high value uses on the Site. It also helps direct early development opportunities to locations near the central business district, consistent with the community's objective of supporting revitalization of the existing downtown.

MIG is preparing a schematic diagram that indicates some potential boundaries and uses for the subareas, as described above. The diagram will show general spatial concepts and uses for delineation of open spaces on the Mill Site. Once the diagram has been reviewed by Coastal Conservancy staff and Georgia-Pacific, it will be distributed, under separate cover, to the Council and the public. The Council is requested to review and comment on the potential delineation of acquisition areas and uses.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact of an open space acquisition on the City will depend, in large part, on the eventual ownership and management structure. Assuming that the open space is owned and managed by the City—in accordance with the Council's expressed preference—the City will need to plan for maintenance, repairs and improvements to park facilities and allocate sufficient revenues to perform such activities.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. No action. The Council could continue action on this item and request that additional information be provided.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

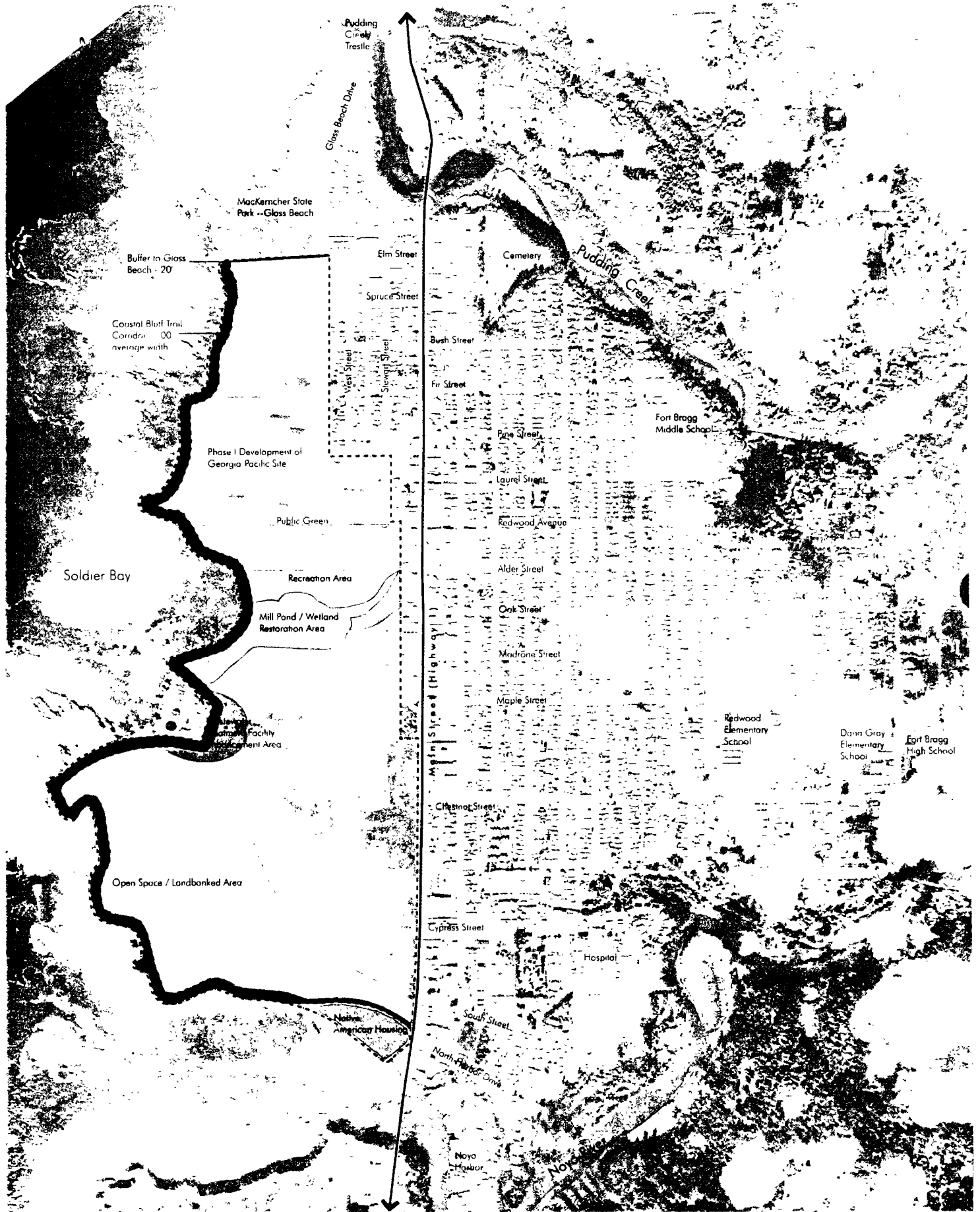
Receive Report and Provide Direction to Staff Regarding Potential Public Acquisition of Open Space.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

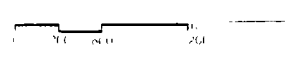
1. Conservation Acquisition Diagram (to be distributed under separate cover)

### **AGENDA & SUMMARY REPORT TO:**

1. Moira McEnespy/Sheila Semans; State Coastal Conservancy
2. Carol Stephens, Georgia-Pacific
3. Don Moody, CB Richard Ellis
4. Daniel Iacofano, MIG
5. Walter Kieser, EPS



- Coastal Bluff Trail Corridor - 100 average width
- Buffer with Glass Beach - 20 width
- Public Green
- Mill Pond / Wetland Restoration Area
- Phase I Development of Georgia Pacific Site
- Wastewater Facility Effluent Treatment Area
- Open Space / Landbanked Area
- Recreation Area
- Native American Housing



June 14, 2004  
 Source: City of Fort Bragg  
 Map prepared by MIG Team