

COMMENTS

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definitely a milestone, and it's been a long time coming," said Rojas.

However, the core of the preserve, which spans from RPV City Hall east to Shoreline Park, must be purchased from two landowners in Portuguese Bend, Jim York and Barry Hon. The city is counting on \$17 million in approved Proposition 40 monies to acquire nearly 700 acres of privately owned land under the authority of the state Wildlife Conservation Board. Preserve supporters are concerned that Prop. 40 money is quickly dwindling, or is earmarked for other projects.

Following Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's successful run in the recall election, a number of high-ranking positions within the WCB have undergone change. However, said Rojas, a city-hired lobbyist is working to develop relationships with the governor's new appointees and to continue to get RPV's proposed preserve noticed to ensure funding for the land acquisition. Rojas added that completing the NCCP process also is necessary to ensure that the state helps to fund the land purchase.

"What we have heard from the state is that we need to get our NCCP done," said Rojas.

"I just spoke to our lobbyist, and he said we're ahead right now [for the Prop. 40 money]," said Dye. "Nobody is really chasing us, but we have to keep running. And that means finishing off the NCCP."

"Right now, the people in Sacramento aren't paying attention to these issues — it's all about overarching budget issues," Dye continued. "We just have to keep on running so that nobody passes us, complete the NCCP and jump through all the hoops."

Preserve Concerns

Before budget issues overwhelmed local and state officials, the idea of having one of the largest preserves in Los Angeles County was endearing to many beyond the Peninsula.

While the progress of the NCCP has been slow in coming, other issues of concern have arisen in the community.

For one, a shortage of recreational and cultural facilities has forced the city to look at its remaining open spaces. Some wonder if preserving much of the city's undeveloped areas is a

proper land-use decision given the community needs.

Preserve supporters point to a number of ways the city has been successful in the NCCP design to accommodate recreational and cultural uses. The most notable is a portion of Upper Point Vicente Park surrounding City Hall, on which a city formed task force recently suggested an art center, swimming pool and gymnasium. The DEIR states, "The city maintains 14 parks totaling 379.9 acres. The county of Los Angeles operates one park and one golf course in the city totaling 197 acres. A total of 322.9 acres of the facilities in the city are dedicated for active recreational uses, and 390 acres are devoted to passive recreational uses." The report includes Ocean Trails and Los Verdes golf courses as part of the equation.

Additionally, Dye noted, the NCCP allows for extensive trail systems within the preserve, and those can include bicycle and equestrian pathways.

"The goal of the preserve is not to exclude people but to get people where they want to be, like overlooks and bluffs, and also to pay attention to safety and habitat protection," she

said.

Other people have wondered if creating preserve made up mostly of state-owned bluffs and other open spaces would create a fire hazard for nearby homeowners.

According to Rojas, the NCCP allows for the same fire buffers that currently are maintained in the city.

"Just because it is a preserve, that doesn't mean we can't do weed abatement behind homes," said Rojas.

Dye agreed, saying, "Fire protection trumps everything and we don't want to risk anybody's house. In every case, the recommendation of the Fire Department will be followed to the letter."

To comment on the draft environmental impact report, send a written statement to the Rancho Palos Verdes Planning Department, 30940 Hawthorne Blvd., RPV, CA 90275 or e-mail to joelr@rpv.com. Oral comments will be accepted at the March 16 City Council meeting. Copies of the DEIR are available for purchase at City Hall for \$50, or for viewing online at www.palosverdes.com/rpv/planning.

Note: This is a letter attachment and no response is necessary.