



**PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
DECEMBER 17, 2024**

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DATA SUMMARY

Subject: City of Grass Valley Acquisition of Loma Rica
Location/ APN: East of Brunswick Road and either side of Idaho Maryland Road
Zoning/General Plan: Loma Rica Specific Plan/ Special Development Area (SDA)
Environmental Status: Not a project under CEQA pursuant to California Government Code section 65913.5(a)(3).

RECOMMENDATION:

- I. That the Planning Commission take the following action pursuant to land acquisition of two properties:
 - a. That acquisition of Loma Rica Ranch Open Space Dedication and MI designated area is not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to §21065 of the California Government Code
 - b. Determine that the City's acquisition of the Loma Rica Open Space Dedication and Light Industrial property is consistent with the City's General Plan.

BACKGROUND:

California Government Code Section 65402 requires that the acquisition of real property be submitted to and reported upon by the Planning Agency (Planning Commission), as to conformity with the adopted General Plan. The City is requesting a determination of General Plan consistency for the proposed acquisition of two properties 1) Loma Rica open space dedication area and Light Industrial designated property, and 110 Springhill Drive (Property).

ANALYSIS:

Portions of the Loma Rica Ranch property, east of Brunswick Road and either side of Idaho Maryland Road, contain unique areas of nature, wildlife habitat, and open space values. As part of the conditions of approval for the Loma Rica Ranch Development project, the applicant was required to establish certain open space areas to preserve and protect these areas in perpetuity.

On August 22, 2023, the City Council approved the dedication of an Open Space Easement to the City of Grass Valley over portions of the Loma Rica Ranch property. After further discussions with the developer and coordination with trail and biking advocacy groups, it was determined that a real property dedication of the open space areas would better convey to the City the right to enforce the protection of the natural, scenic, historical, and Conservation Values of the Open Space area and to enact future trail and land improvements. The Open Space area opens up to the public the many beneficial uses afforded by the areas, including hiking and biking trails, equestrian trails,

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wildlife and ecological enhancements, nature study, and fuel reduction, to name a few.

In addition to the Open Space dedication, the owners of Loma Rica Ranch have agreed to transfer ownership of 10+ acres of M1-zoned property to the City of Grass Valley. This land is intended for the potential development of a biomass management facility. While the zoning (M1) is compatible with such a facility, the project will still undergo a separate and comprehensive approval process. This process will include, but is not limited to, environmental review and compliance with all applicable regulations.

GENERAL PLAN

The entire Loma Rica Specific Plan area is located within a General Plan land use designation of Special Development Area (SDA), reserved for areas to be master planned or subject to a specific plan. SDA is a mixed use designation: a variety of land uses might be proposed and approved under the aegis of the specific plan, master plan, or similar instrument. The proposed land acquisition furthers the following goals of the General Plan:

- **7-LUO Preservation of open space and unique property features.**
- **1-COSG Provide a balance between development and the natural environment, protecting and properly utilizing Valley's sensitive environmental areas/features, natural resources and open space lands.**
- **3-COSG Ensure the protection of Grass Valley's trees and forested areas.**
- **4-SO Reduction of risk from exposure to structural and wildlife fires, including Policy 6-SP:**
 - **Incorporate fire hazard reduction considerations into land use plans/patterns, both public and private.**

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), §21065 of the California Government Code, the acquisition of the Loma Rica open space and light industrial zoned property is not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act, because no specific project has been identified for any portion of the property. Any proposed project in the future will be required to undergo environmental review and be consistent with all federal, state, and local regulations.

Attachments:

1. Open Space Grant Deed / Agreement for city acquisition
2. Exhibit showing the M1 property for city acquisition.