



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION: GPA2018-01/PCR2018-01/PCR2018-02

AGENDA ITEM: PH-01

PREPARED BY: Barbara Lynch
Senior Planner

MEETING DATE: March 14, 2018

SUBJECT: General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01; Planning Commission Resolution No. 2018-01 (Negative Declaration), Planning Commission Resolution No. 2018-02 (Open Space Element)

REQUEST: Consider recommending to City Council adoption of the Open Space Element of the General Plan and adoption of a Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

APPLICANT: City of Monrovia

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: Negative Declaration

BACKGROUND: State law mandates that each city and county adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan, which guides future growth and development for the jurisdiction. Monrovia's General Plan is the City's long range view of its future. There are seven mandated elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. The Open Space Element is a document that addresses the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open space land, describes characteristics of the existing park system, projects the need for parks, and provides goals and policies as well as strategies to implement those policies.

The City has been proactive over the years in taking steps to preserve the natural hillside areas and maintaining and adding to its current parks system. As early as the late 1950's the Zoning Ordinance included the "Watershed" zone designation which restricted development on the hillside properties that were given this designation. In 2000 Monrovia citizens chose to continue the preservation of the natural hillsides within the City's boundaries by voting in a tax to acquire undeveloped hillside parcels. This land area is now zoned HWP (Hillside Wilderness Preserve) that prohibits development and HR (Hillside Recreation) that restricts development to recreational facilities. The City has continually adopted policies and development standards to encourage preservation of the natural hillside areas and provide a balance for the reasonable use of private property.

There is no mandatory timeframe to update the Open Space Element. The City's current Open Space Element was adopted in 1966. Although it is very outdated there are other more current city documents that have been adopted overtime that have helped shape and guide the preservation of Monrovia's hillsides and recreational facilities. These documents include the Zoning Ordinance, Land Use Element, Resource Management Plan and several Specific Plans. Also, based on the direction from the City Council, the Community Services Commission is in the process of developing a Park Master Plan to guide future decisions

regarding the City's public parks. The Park Master Plan is another document that once adopted, will provide the framework for the improvement and growth of the City's park system and recreational facilities. This document will be considered by the Community Services Commission at their March 13, 2018 meeting. The adoption of the new Open Space Element will bring it into consistency with these City documents and will provide clear direction to meet the needs of the community today and into the future.

For the Commission's reference, the proposed Negative Declaration is attached as Exhibit A within the proposed Planning Commission Resolution No. 2018-01 (Attachment A), the proposed Open Space Element is attached as Exhibit A within the proposed Planning Commission Resolution No. 2018-02 (Attachment B), and the proposed Park Master Plan is included in the report as Attachment C.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS: There are over 113 acres of parkland in the City that provide both active and passive recreational opportunities. Additionally, the City owns 1,416 acres of permanent open space of undeveloped hillside land that is conservancy property (HWP and HR zoned properties). The proposed Open Space Element is a comprehensive and long range plan that outlines the goals and policies that create the foundation of the City's open space and parkland development and needs.

Parkland Inventory

The Open Space Element provides an inventory of the existing parklands that includes one natural area park (Canyon Park), two community parks (Library Park, Recreation Park), five neighborhood parks (Julian Fisher Park, Kiwanis Park, Lucinda Garcia Park, Rotary Park, Station Square) and one pocket park (Evergreen Plaza). Classifying the parklands allows the City to better evaluate its needs and to better plan for its future demands. These classifications are general guidelines based primarily on a park's size and use.

Canyon Park is a good example of a "*natural area park*." It is a large 80 acre park that is primarily in its natural state with passive recreation that includes trails and picnic areas. In comparison, a "*community park*" is a larger park generally located in more populated areas and provides active (organized recreation and playgrounds) as well as passive, (non-organized recreation, pathways, park benches) recreational opportunities. A community park is generally 10 to 40 acres in size and serves residents within a 2 mile radius.

A "neighborhood park" is smaller and ranges between ½ acre to 5 acres in size and serves residents within a ½ mile radius. Typically a neighborhood park does not provide organized play but is improved with playground equipment. The smallest park is a "*pocket park*" that is generally less than ½ acre in size and serves residents within a ¼ mile walking distance and is used for passive recreation.

The Open Space Element recommends that there be a variety of parklands that collectively provide a full range of recreational needs for a community. A gap analysis map (Figure OS-4) was prepared for Monrovia showing the areas that are currently deficient in parkland. The map should be used as a guide for future parkland acquisitions to ensure that the distribution of parkland is equitable throughout the City.

Open Space/Trail System

The hiking trails in the City primarily consist of paved paths within existing parks, bicycle/jogging trails interconnecting high density residential projects along the Metro Gold Line, and a natural unpaved 4.5 mile trail system located on City-owned conservancy property and within Canyon Park.

The Open Space Element recommends that the Resource Management Plan be used for consideration of future trail connections as this is the plan that was adopted in 2012 to guide the conservation and usage of the City's hillsides. In total there is approximately 4,850 acres of open space/parkland within the City. This includes all City parks, the City owned conservancy property and the National Forest property within the City limits.

Goals and Policies

The goals and policies set forth in the Open Space Element are specific to creating a long range plan that will guide the future growth and ongoing maintenance of the park system as well as conservation and protection of the City's open space. The following goals are:

- Encourage Connectedness-Expand the physical and social connections linking the City together and bridging to its neighbors
- Secure Lands for the Future-Provide a comprehensive system of parks, open space and recreation facilities that serves current and future needs.
- Create Great Parks and Public Spaces-Ensure Monrovia's parks and open spaces meet local needs for active and passive recreation, enhance the environmental and visual quality of the community, and healthy living.
- Foster a Healthy, Active Community-Monrovia's parks, recreation facilities and community programming bring residents together, encourage and amplify healthy lifestyles, and foster community pride, identity and livability.
- Ensure Sound Management and Maintenance-Allocate available resources and seek out additional funding to upgrade and maintain Monrovia's existing parkland and open space infrastructure needs to maintain and expand recreational opportunities for residents.

Level of Service

Monrovia currently provides 3.05 acres per 1,000 people of parkland. This figure includes Canyon Park and is based on a total of 113 acres of parkland within the City's boundaries. In order to maintain this current acceptable level of service, and based on Monrovia's population projections, by 2035 the Open Space Element indicates that approximately 6.8 acres of additional parkland will be needed to continue with the current level of service. However, based on the estimated land acquisition costs outlined in the Parks Capital Facilities Plan (in the Park Master Plan) the Open Space Element recommends that monies available at this time may be better spent on improving and maintaining the existing park system, and land acquisitions should be a long range goal.

Park Master Plan

In conjunction with the proposed Open Space Element, the proposed Park Master Plan provides the more specific goals and actions for the implementation of Monrovia's interconnected system of parks and open spaces throughout the City. This Plan provides a park inventory analysis, projects community needs and outlines strategies and actions for the maintenance and growth of the City's recreational facilities. Also, a Parks Capital Facilities Plan projects the estimated costs for park improvements/maintenance for all existing parks and land acquisition costs for future park expansion.

The Community Services Commission will be considering the Park Master Plan at their March 13, 2018 meeting. At the April 17, 2018 City Council meeting both the Open Space Element and the Park Master Plan will be considered for adoption.

Negative Declaration-Open Space Element and Park Master Plan

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Initial Study was prepared that analyzed the potential impacts that the proposed project (Open Space Element/Park Master Plan) could have on the environment. The Negative Declaration covers both the Open Space Element and the Park Master Plan because even though they are separate documents, they are complimentary to and consistent with each other in regards to comprehensive and long range planning for the City's open space and recreational facilities. The Initial Study identified no environmental impacts, therefore a Negative Declaration is proposed. The project is a policy statement and does not in and of itself initiate regulatory changes. There are objectives that will ultimately result in actions that will be considered "projects" pursuant to CEQA such as potential park expansions and new parkland acquisitions. These actions will be fully evaluated at the time they are proposed, however, it is anticipated that they will have no impact on the environment, either individually or cumulatively.

CEQA requires a minimum review and comment period of 20 days for a Negative Declaration (ND) that does not have to be submitted to the State Clearinghouse. On February 15, 2018, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to adopt a Negative Declaration was sent to the County Clerk. On February 22, 2018, a public notice was published in the Monrovia Weekly. The documents were also posted on the City's website on February 15, 2018. Comments will be accepted up to the time when the public hearing before the Planning Commission is closed.

Staff prepared the ND and has determined that there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record that the project may have a significant effect on the environment and that the requirements of CEQA have been met. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission consider the Negative Declaration in its deliberations and, in its independent judgment, make the same findings and recommend approval of the attached Negative Declaration (Data Sheet 5) to the City Council (PCR2018-02).

At the last meeting of the Planning Commission, the Commission was provided with copies of the Open Space Element and Park Master Plan. All documents pertaining to the Open Space Element and the Park Master Plan, including the proposed Negative Declaration are available for public review on the City's website (www.cityofmonrovia.org/your-government/communitydevelopment/planning/open-space-element-update) and have been since they were posted on February 15, 2018.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 2018-01 recommending adoption of the Negative Declaration to the City Council and adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 2018-02 recommending adoption of the Open Space Element (GPA2018-01) to the City Council. If the Planning Commission concurs with this recommendation then, following the public hearing, the following motion is appropriate:

Adopt Planning Commission Resolutions No. 2018-01 and 2018-02 recommending approval to the City Council.

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2018-01**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT THE NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND MAKE CERTAIN FINDINGS AS REQUIRED BY THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA"), IN CONNECTION WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE PARK MASTER PLAN AND GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT GPA2018-01 ADOPTING THE OPEN SPACE ELEMENT**

RECITALS

(i) California Government Code Section 65560 mandates that each city shall include an Open Space Element in its General Plan, and that the Open Space Element set forth the comprehensive and long range preservation and conservation of open space land.

(ii) In compliance with State law, the City has initiated an application for General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01 to adopt a new Open Space Element of the General Plan.

(iii) To define the future direction for parks and recreation programs and the community needs for current and future facilities, the City also has initiated the Park Master Plan.

(iv) Because the Open Space Element and the Park Master Plan complement and are consistent with each other, City Staff determined that they constitute one project and prepared one Initial Study and evaluated them together pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). Accordingly, the term "Project," as used herein, refers to and includes both the Open Space Element and the Park Master Plan.

(v) On March 13, 2018, the Community Services Commission of the City of Monrovia conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the Draft Park Master Plan. At the hearing, all interested persons were given an opportunity to be heard. The Community Services Commission received and considered the staff report and all the information, evidence, and testimony presented in connection with the Draft Park Master Plan.

(vi) On March 14, 2018, the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia conducted a duly noticed public hearing on General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01 and the Draft Open Space Element. At the hearing, all interested persons were given an opportunity to be heard. The Planning Commission received and considered the staff report and all the information, evidence, and testimony presented in connection with the Draft Open Space Element and the draft Negative Declaration, which was prepared for the Project.

(vii) Environmental Review

(a) Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and the City's local CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study was completed. On the basis of the Initial Study, City staff for the City of Monrovia, acting as Lead Agency, determined that there was no substantial evidence that the "Project" would have a significant effect on the environment; as a result, City staff prepared a Negative Declaration for the Project pursuant to CEQA and the City's local CEQA Guidelines.

(b) Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15072, the City of Monrovia as lead agency, provided a Notice of Intent to adopt a Negative Declaration (“ND”). State Clearinghouse review was not required.

(c) The proposed ND for the proposed Project is comprised of the Initial Study and the draft ND, both of which are attached hereto as Exhibit “A” and incorporated herein by this reference.

(iv) The custodian of records for all materials that constitute the record of proceeding upon which this decision is based is the Planning Division Manager. Those documents are available for public review in the City’s Planning Division, located at 415 South Ivy Avenue, Monrovia, California 91016.

(v) All legal prerequisites to the adoption of this Resolution have occurred.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia hereby finds, determines and resolves as follows:

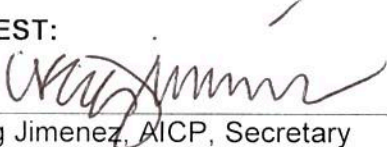
1. The Planning Commission finds that all of the facts set forth in the Recitals of this Resolution are true and correct.
2. The Planning Commission finds that the public has been afforded ample notice and opportunity to comment on the ND.
3. The Planning Commission finds that the additional information provided in the staff report accompanying the Project description, the ND, the written comments that were received, and the evidence presented in written and oral testimony at the above-referenced public hearing do not represent significant new information so as to require re-circulation of any portion of the ND pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15073.5.
4. The Planning Commission has independently considered and reviewed the information in the ND, and any and all comments received regarding the ND, and based upon the whole record of the proceedings before it finds that the ND was prepared in compliance with CEQA and the City’s local CEQA Guidelines, and that the findings contained therein represent the independent judgment and analysis of the Planning Commission.
5. The Planning Commission finds that there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record that the Project will have a significant effect on the environment.
6. Based on the findings and conclusions set forth above, the Planning Commission as the advisory body for the lead agency recommends to the City Council of the City of Monrovia that the City Council take all necessary actions to adopt the Negative Declaration for the Project.
7. The Secretary of the Planning Commission shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 14th day of March 2018.



Robert Parry, Chair
Monrovia Planning Commission

ATTEST:



Craig Jimenez, AICP, Secretary
Monrovia Planning Commission

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Carol Lynch, Assistant City Attorney
City of Monrovia

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) §
CITY OF MONROVIA)

I, CRAIG JIMENEZ, AICP, Secretary of the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia, California, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of Planning Commission Resolution No. 2018-01, and that it was duly adopted and passed at a regular meeting of the Monrovia Planning Commission on the 14th day of March, 2018, by the following vote:

AYES: **Beebe, McClellan, Parry, Rose, Schaeffler, Winn**
NOES: **None**
ABSTAIN: **None**
EXCUSED: **Austin**

ATTEST:



Craig Jimenez, AICP, Secretary
Monrovia Planning Commission

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2018-02**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT GPA2018-01 ADOPTING THE OPEN SPACE ELEMENT OF THE MONROVIA GENERAL PLAN**

RECITALS

(i) California Government Code Section 65560 mandates that each city shall include an Open Space Element in its General Plan, and that the Open Space Element sets forth the comprehensive and long range preservation and conservation of open space land within its jurisdiction.

(ii) In compliance with State law, the City has initiated this application for General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01 to adopt the Open Space Element of the General Plan. As a result of that application, the Draft Open Space Element was prepared and is attached as Exhibit "A" to this Resolution and incorporated by reference as though set forth in full.

(iii) On March 14, 2018, the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia conducted a duly noticed public hearing on General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01, which will amend the General Plan by replacing the current Open Space Element with the Draft Open Space Element. At the hearing, all interested persons were given an opportunity to be heard. The Planning Commission received and considered the staff report and all the information, evidence, and testimony presented in connection with this project.

(iv) Environmental Review

(a) Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and the City's local CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study was completed for the Draft Open Space Element and Draft Park Master Plan. On the basis of the Initial Study, City staff for the City of Monrovia, acting as Lead Agency, determined that there was no substantial evidence that the project could have a significant effect on the environment; as a result, City staff prepared a Negative Declaration for the project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and the City's local CEQA Guidelines.

(b) The Planning Commission has adopted Resolution 2018-01 recommending that the City Council of the City of Monrovia take all necessary actions to adopt the Negative Declaration for the project.

(c) The Planning Commission has independently considered and reviewed the information in the Negative Declaration in making its recommendation on General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01 to adopt the Draft Open Space Element.

(v) The custodian of records for all materials that constitute the record of proceeding upon which this decision is based is the Planning Division Manager. Those documents are available for public review in the Planning Division located at 415 South Ivy Avenue, Monrovia, California 91016.

(vi) All legal prerequisites to the adoption of this Resolution have occurred.

A. RESOLUTION

NOW, THEREFORE, the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia hereby finds, determines and resolves as follows:

1. The Planning Commission finds that all of the facts set forth in the Recitals of this Resolution are true and correct.
2. Adoption of General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01 will not have a significant effect on the environment.
3. The project is in conformance with the environmental goals and policies adopted by the City.
4. General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01 is consistent with, and necessary to carry out General Plan goals and policies set forth in the Land Use and other Elements of the General Plan and addresses the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open space land and the needs of the existing park system.
5. General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01 will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare in that it will provide for the conservation of open space and orderly and consistent development of the existing park system in the City.
6. Based upon the findings and conclusions set forth above, the Planning Commission hereby recommends approval of General Plan Amendment GPA2018-01, which will amend the General Plan by adopting the Draft Open Space Element as set forth in Exhibit "A", to the City Council

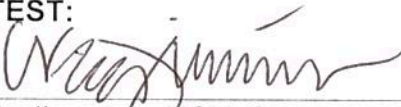
The Secretary of the Planning Commission shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 14th day of March 2018.



Robert Parry, Chair
Monrovia Planning Commission

ATTEST:



Craig Jimenez, AICP, Secretary
Monrovia Planning Commission

APPROVED AS TO FORM:




Carol Lynch, Assistant City Attorney
City of Monrovia

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) §
CITY OF MONROVIA)

I, Craig Jimenez, AICP, Secretary of the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia, California, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of Planning Commission Resolution No. 2018-02, and that it was duly adopted and passed at a regular meeting of the Monrovia Planning Commission on the 14th day of March, 2018, by the following vote:

AYES: **Beebe, McClellan, Parry, Rose, Schaeffler, Winn**
NOES: **None**
ABSTAIN: **None**
EXCUSED: **Austin**

ATTEST:



Craig Jimenez, AICP, Secretary
Monrovia Planning Commission