

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** JOEL ROJAS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR 

**DATE:** NOVEMBER 20, 2012

**SUBJECT:** AMENDMENT TO THE LOWER POINT VICENTE PORTION OF THE RANCHO PALOS VERDES COAST VISION PLAN.

**REVIEWED:** CAROLYN LEHR, CITY MANAGER 

Prepared by: Ara Mihranian, Deputy Community Development Director 

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) Approve text and graphic amendments to the Coast Vision Plan reflecting the withdrawal of the Annenberg Facility project from Lower Point Vicente; and,
- 2) Initiate a public review process for developing an updated concept plan for the Lower Point Vicente portion of the Coast Vision Plan.

**BACKGROUND**

On September 2, 2008, after an extensive public workshop process, the City Council adopted the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast Vision Plan (Coast Vision Plan). The Coast Vision Plan is an informational planning document for the City's coastal areas (including five key sites not included in the City's Palos Verdes Nature Preserve), that addresses public access, interpretive materials, recreational amenities, and other public facilities to improve the experience of the coast and open space for residents of and visitors to the Peninsula. The Coast Vision Plan for Lower Point Vicente (one of the five key sites) currently describes the development of the site with an educational public use facility featuring companion animals that was proposed by the Annenberg Foundation.

Earlier this year, Councilman Knight identified a possible future City Council item to discuss updating the Coast Vision Plan for Lower Point Vicente given the deed restrictions that were identified as part of the review of the Annenberg Foundation's project. On September

18, 2012, Councilman Knight followed up with a Study Session Report (see attachment) summarizing a proposal to amend the Coast Vision Plan to eliminate the Annenberg Foundation's project from Lower Point Vicente given the withdrawal of the project in August 2011 and to initiate a new public outreach program to obtain feedback for what type of public project should be pursued for Lower Point Vicente. Councilman Knight's proposal was discussed by the City Council at which time it was agreed to place this item on a future Council agenda for discussion. As such, this agenda item is now before the Council.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Councilman Knight's Proposal

At the September 18, 2012 Study Session, Councilman Knight's proposed the following two prong approach for finding an alternative plan for the Coast Vision Plan's description of Lower Point Vicente:

- 1) Amend the Coast Vision Plan by taking out the Annenberg Foundation's proposal and substituting it with a more general description that leaves open the possibility for a future alternative plan to be developed at Lower Point Vicente; and,
- 2) Initiate a public outreach process to develop an alternative plan for Lower Point Vicente to be incorporated into the Coast Vision Plan.

Given the withdrawal of the Annenberg Foundation's proposal, Staff concurs with Councilman Knight's proposal because the Coast Vision Plan is currently outdated. By updating the Coast Vision Plan, it allows the City to pursue future grant opportunities to improve Lower Point Vicente for the public's use. As such, provided below is Staff's recommendation for implementing Councilman Knight's proposal.

### Proposed Text and Graphic Amendments to the Vision Plan Related to Lower Point Vicente

The concept plan envisioned for the Lower Point Vicente site is described in the Coast Vision Plan as having the potential for, among other things, the construction of a complementary educational public use facility proposed by the Annenberg Foundation (see attachment). In light of the withdrawal of the Annenberg Facility, Staff is recommending that the text for this section of the Coast Vision Plan (pages 3-1, 3-5 through 3-7), as shown under the second bullet point be entirely deleted (see attachment). The text under the remaining bullet points would remain allowing the potential for the following improvements:

- Outdoor History Museum and PVIC Phase III Program Components (Tongva Village, geology display, interactive archaeology exhibit, and dry farming/water wise landscaping demonstration garden).
- Parking and Access (to accommodate 136 parking spaces)

- Open Space and Expanded Public Picnic Areas and Trails

In addition to the recommended text amendments, Staff also recommends amending the graphic illustration depicting the proposed improvement for Lower Point Vicente. Specifically, Staff proposes deleting the education public use facility (identified as Item No. 2) on the graphic illustration. Staff does not propose any further amendments to the graphics as the plan shown in the Coast Vision Plan is conceptual.

With the removal of the education public use facility, there will be a gap in the conceptual plan. Until an updated plan is considered for the Coast Vision Plan by the Council as discussed later in this Staff Report, Staff recommends this area be considered a public green in the event a grant opportunity arises. As such, Staff recommends that the Council approve the proposed text and graphic amendments to the current Vision Plan for Lower Point Vicente. If adopted, the amendments described herein would go into effect immediately.

#### Developing an Updated Plan for Lower Point Vicente

With the withdrawal of the proposed Annenberg Facility from Lower Point Vicente, Staff is aware that some members of the public have expressed an interest in developing an updated concept plan for Lower Point Vicente that is consistent with the General Plan and the deed restrictions that apply to the property. In light of this public interest, as well as the public process used to develop the original Council adopted Coast Vision Plan, Staff recommends using a similar approach to update the concept plan for Lower Point Vicente. Specifically, Staff envisions the following approach / schedule:

- Public Workshop No. 1 (February 2013) – Solicit public input. This step would include contacting the Los Serenos Docents, the California Native Plant Society, and other interest groups or persons who have expressed an interest in developing a plan for Lower Point Vicente.
- Develop Draft Concept Plan (February – April 2013) – based on public input, Staff would work closely with local interest groups to develop a conceptual plan illustrating the desired improvements envisioned for Lower Point Vicente.
- Public Workshop No. 2 (May 2013) – Present the public with the updated Draft Concept Plan and make any refinements for Council consideration.
- City Council Meeting – (June 2013) – Present the City Council with an updated Concept Plan for adoption.

Staff envisions engaging the public by conducting the workshops during non-business hours to encourage a higher participation rate and by informing the public of the workshops through public notices, the City's website, and list-serve messages. Lastly, as part of developing the Concept Plan, Staff will ensure that the proposal is consistent with the City's General Plan, Zoning Code, Coastal Specific Plan, and the deed restrictions. Furthermore, Staff will consult and coordinate with the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS), who oversee the deed restrictions, to ensure the updated Concept Plan is consistent with the deed restrictions.

Based on the foregoing discussion, Staff recommends that the City Council initiate a public process for developing an updated concept plan for the Lower Point Vicente portion of the Coast Vision Plan.

### **CONCLUSION**

In light of the withdrawal of the Annenberg Facility at Lower Point Vicente, the Council adopted Coast Vision Plan needs to be updated to reflect this change. As such, Staff recommends that the text and graphics depicting the Annenberg Facility be deleted from the Coast Vision Plan as identified in the attachment. Furthermore, in order to proceed with developing an updated Concept Plan for Lower Point Vicente, Staff recommends that the Council initiate a public process for developing the final updated design concept for Lower Point Vicente.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

At this time, Staff envisions the proposed changes to occur entirely by in-house Staff using existing computer software to make the necessary changes to the Coast Vision Plan. Therefore, no additional costs will be borne by the General Fund. However, in the event that it is realized that access to more sophisticated computer software or specialized consultants are needed to finalize the Concept Plan, Staff will come back to the Council with a budget adjustment.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- September 18, 2012 City Council Study Session Report (Councilman Knight's proposal)
- Amended Coast Vision Plan Text and Graphic for Lower Point Vicente (excerpt pages)

**September 18, 2012**  
**City Council Study Session Report**  
**(Councilman Knight's Proposal)**

**Amendments to the Rancho Palos**  
**Verdes Coast Vision Plan**  
**November 20, 2012**  
**City Council Meeting**



## **Study Session Memorandum**

**To: Mayor Misetich and Council Members**  
**From: Councilmember Knight**  
**Date: September 18, 2012**  
**Subject: Update of the Coastal Vision Plan (CVP)**

### **BACKGROUND**

With the withdrawal of the Annenberg facility component of the Coastal Vision Plan, the Plan needs to be updated so the City can move forward with an alternative plan for the undeveloped areas in this park.

I am proposing a two pronged approach for finding an alternative plan for the Lower Point Vicente (LPV) area:

1) Move the CVP through the needed channels to update the language/graphics of the plan taking the Annenberg component out and substituting a more general description that leaves open the possibility for an alternative plan to develop at LPV. I would think the CVP update language would follow a normal public hearing process. Although my main goal is to get us back on track with LPV, if staff feels other sections need revision due to changed circumstances, they should come forth with recommendations accordingly.

2) Begin the public outreach process to develop an alternative plan for the LPV area. This may turn out to be a combination of agendaized public hearings and workshops.

Staff can prepare a draft of the needed language changes and proposals for how public outreach can be implemented, with a rough estimate of time to accomplish both tasks. The language change and outreach are closely related but Staff can help with whether or not we need the CVP language update to be settled first before starting the public outreach process or if the two tasks can run in parallel.

### **STAKEHOLDERS**

Staff should reach out to groups that have either been working on alternative plans for

LPV or have comments including the California Native Plant Society, the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy, our own Parks and Recreation Dept., the residents at the Enclave next to the park and our residents in general.

I envision an inclusion of some of the elements of the original CVP including the Los Serenos Docent display requests, trails, picnic areas, etc. but we need to be very clear, with any proposal, that the deed restrictions and positions of the National Park Services (NPS) and the State Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS) are reviewed so as to help guide any suggested plan to be in compliance with these agencies.

### **GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

There is an ongoing update of the City's General Plan by the Planning Commission that has yet to come before the City Council for final approval. I was part of that of that process when on the Planning Commission and was witness to the length of time it takes to get it right. For the CVP update, the examination of possible new definitions of open space, such as at the LPV Park, is only one part of the larger GP update process.

I would like to see if the GP Land Use definitions for the parks like LPV can be separated out to get a consensus (PC, CC, public) so an alternative LPV plan can move forward without being bogged down waiting for the entire GP update approval.

### **NOW IS THE TIME**

As it stands now, the Lower Point Vicente park section of the Coastal Vision Plan is in limbo. As currently written, it cannot be implemented. Even if we started today, it will take time to amend the CVP, get public outreach to come up with an alternative plan for LPV, put it through the CEQA process and get it in the queue to be agendized for final approval. The longer we wait the more we miss out on grant opportunities for this park. And, as time passes with the State budget crisis, grant opportunities could dry up.

More importantly, the longer we wait to find an alternative plan the longer the public is kept from the full enjoyment of this beautiful site.

**Amended Coast Vision Plan  
Text and Graphics  
for Lower Point Vicente**

**Amendments to the Rancho Palos  
Verdes Coast Vision Plan  
November 20, 2012  
City Council Meeting**

## THE KEY SITES

Five Key Sites have been selected for inclusion in the Vision Plan because they serve as key open space parcels within the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast, but are not a part of the City's NCCP Preserve, and/or because they provide ideal public use opportunities. Although several of the key sites have been the subject of community conversation and planning prior to the Vision Plan process, there has previously been no public process to consider all of these properties together, and to consider the unique role each site plays in the context of the emerging Rancho Palos Verdes Coast. Goals for each of these sites were developed and reviewed with City Staff as part of the Vision Plan process, and were also reviewed with the City Council and community members, as part of the public process for this Plan.

Background information on existing conditions at each key site, together with site goals, site concept design descriptions and recommendations for implementation, are included below for the following Vision Plan key sites.

### UPPER POINT VICENTE

Presently housing the City Hall complex, this site is identified as the civic and cultural heart of Rancho Palos Verdes. Additional facilities for the arts, culture and community, together with connections to the surrounding trail network are envisioned that would complement the ultimate build out of the Civic Center.

### LOWER POINT VICENTE

Given the existing Point Vicente Interpretive Center's focus on the marine environment of the Rancho Palos Verdes coastline, the educational emphasis of this

site is proposed to be expanded to include outdoor history museum elements long envisioned by the Point Vicente Interpretive Center docents, together with **enhanced recreational amenities.**

These components are intended to expand the learning opportunities at the site, to connect the ocean and land, people and animals, and the community.

### DEL CERRO PARK

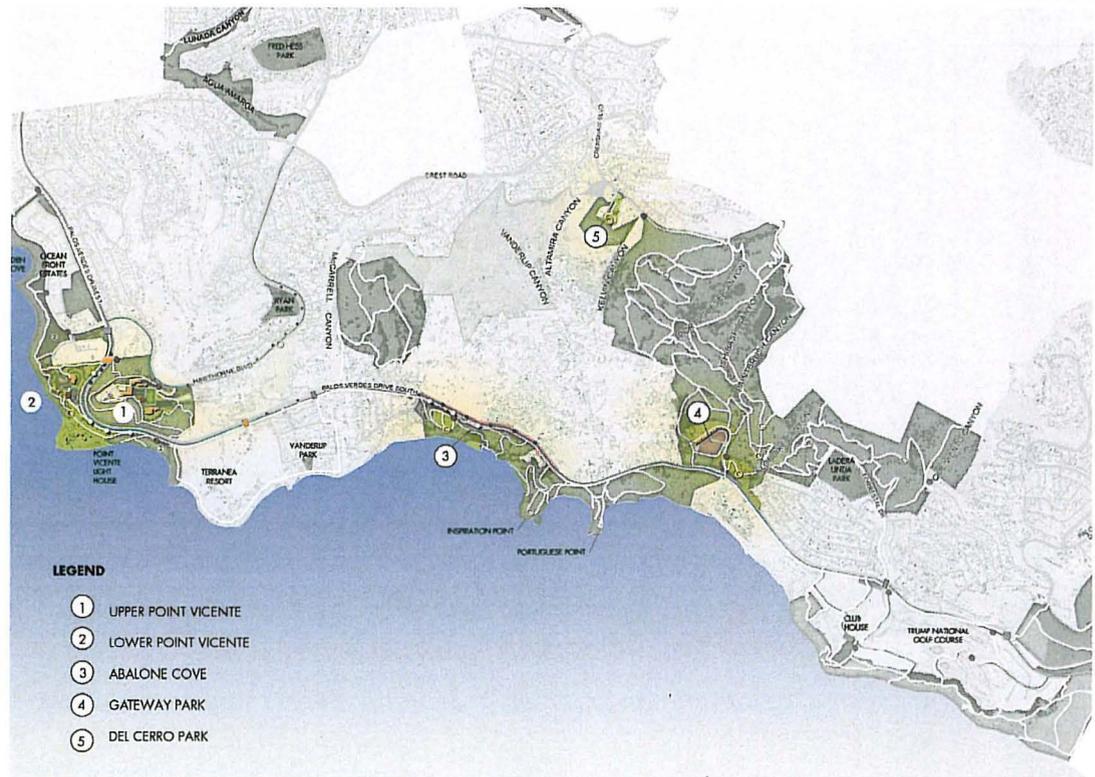
While the park functions of this site remain unchanged, its amenities are enhanced to celebrate the environmental stewardship that made the City's NCCP Preserve possible. Proposed improvements are oriented to the dramatic views of the Preserve and coast that are experienced from its bluff edge.

### ABALONE COVE

Abalone Cove is one area of the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast from which direct access to the ocean, as well as access to the Preserve trails, can be made. Thus, this site is identified as a gateway to nature, on land and at sea, with an enhanced bluff pathway, overlook and picnic areas envisioned.

### GATEWAY PARK

This site, set within a portion of the City's most unusual geological setting, is surrounded by and a gateway to, the City's Preserve, but is outside its boundaries. This site has long been the focus of the City's Equestrian community as an area for equestrian training and recreation, as well as an area identified by Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy as an outdoor educational resource related to the Preserve. The site is identified as a portal to outdoor education and recreation.



Five Key Sites

## LOWER POINT VICENTE

Presently the Lower Point Vicente site is zoned Open Space Recreation, and is identified for passive recreation in the City's General Plan. The 20.5 acre site incorporates the Point Vicente Interpretive Center (PVIC), at 10,000 sf of developed building area, and 13,000 sf of hardscaped plazas and outdoor amphitheater area. The Interpretive Center is focused on the coastal setting, marine life and history of the Peninsula, and since its expansion, also serves as a destination for community functions, such as meetings, weddings and parties. The Interpretive Center continues its tradition of hosting the annual Whale of a Day celebration as well. The adjacent Point Vicente Lighthouse is presently closed to the public, and home to Coast Guard personnel. The Lighthouse itself is periodically open for tours, and Coast Guard related exhibits and activities are integrated into the Whale of a Day event as well. A pathway along the bluff edge of the site connects into the Ocean Front Estates bluff front trail system via a bridge over the storm drain at the northern edge of the site. However, the connection terminates to the south at the Lighthouse property line. A farming operation is presently the only active use on the portion of the site inland of the existing PVIC parking lot.

### SITE GOALS

As a result of the public Vision Plan process, and discussion with City Staff and elected leadership, the following goals have been established for the concept design for this site:

- Develop the conceptual design of the entire Lower Point Vicente area that integrates, in terms of design and amenities, existing and proposed facilities

- These include the Point Vicente Interpretive Center and its proposed outdoor education components (PVIC Phase III, relating to cultural, social, physical and natural history and environments), surrounding public parkland, and other potential, complimentary educational public uses
- Determine broad site design and program possibilities for publicly accessible space at the Lighthouse property, should the City obtain permission to this land via the Coast Guard
- Implement an integrated approach to access and parking for all users

### SITE CONCEPT PLAN

With the City's approval, The Annonberg Foundation spearheaded the development of a detailed conceptual design for the Lower Point Vicente site. The detailed concept plan was guided by input from City staff and elected leadership, as well as input from a Community Advisory Committee. The associated report, produced as the result of this concept design process is available under separate cover, and the results of the process have been presented to the public and City leadership at each Vision Plan public meeting, the City Council meeting on the Vision Plan process, as well as at numerous community meetings attended by the Foundation. Materials relating to this proposal were also posted on the City's website during the Vision Plan process.



Lower Point Vicente Existing Conditions



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Lower Point Vicente Concept Plan



- 1 Point Vicente Interpretive Center
- 2 **Public Green**
- 3 Outdoor History Museum / Plaza Area
- 4 Habitat restoration / native planting
- 5 Surface Parking Lot
- 6 Possible Future Trail connecting through Coast Guard property
- Picnic Pods
- Trails
- 7 Lighthouse
- 8 Coast Guard buildings

The concept design for this site, shown at left, has been extrapolated from this process, as well as public input and discussions with City staff and leadership, and depicts the potential for:

- PVIC - The existing Point Vicente Interpretive Center (shown at 10,000 sf of building area and 13,000 sf of surrounding hardscape, or 2.5% of the site area) remains.
- ~~A Complementary, Educational Public Use Facility - A facility, not approved by the City, but proposed by The Annenberg Foundation, is depicted on the concept plan (shown at 15,000 square-foot footprint with two levels and a portion of its parking under part of the building, and encompassing not more than 5% of the site area.) In order to be an appropriate addition to this site, a facility such as this must be designed to integrate into the physical contours of the land, be consistent with the design guidance provided in Chapter 5 of this document, and not dominate either the site or PVIC either in terms of massing or height. The building must be publicly accessible, and complement the educational mission of the PVIC, as well as contribute to telling the compelling and unique story of animal life on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. This facility may include indoor uses such as: museum-quality educational exhibit areas drawing community and school visitors, multipurpose classroom spaces for community, professional, and school groups, space for limited companion animal care and socialization, as well as a multipurpose theatre space which could be used for teaching as well as available for community and civic events and meetings. Outdoor program areas related to a use such as this could include some enclosed and screened companion animal socialization/~~

~~demonstration area for supervised activities, as well as open outdoor gathering and seating areas in a promenade and plaza spaces which would link a new facility to PVIC and provide an extension of both the indoor space of PVIC and the complementary facility built on-site.~~

- Outdoor History Museum/PVIC Phase III Program Components - The outdoor history museum must be designed to complement the Interpretive Center docents. (It is depicted on the concept plan at 69,000 sf/7.8% of the site area). The components include a Tongva village, geology display, interactive archaeology exhibit, and dry farming/water wise landscaping demonstration. This could be complemented by an exhibit tying the story of the site together, and focusing on the whole ecology of the Peninsula and the continuum of marine, coastal, bluff top and terrestrial life within it.
- Parking and Access - Parking, driveways and drop off areas must be provided in order to serve all site uses (in the concept plan depicted at just over 102,000 sf/11.4% of the site area, and 136 parking spaces)
- Open Space – Open space and picnic areas, both those existing along the bluff edge of the site, and new areas, are shown in the concept plan, to be planted with native and locally appropriate vegetation. New, accessible open space areas are depicted on the inland portion of the site presently only occupied by and accessible to the existing farming operation in a leasehold. Further, this component includes a new trailhead and trail system encompassing an enhanced existing bluff front trail, as well as a new connection through

the site inland through the open space, potentially along the northern edge of the site, to Palos Verdes Drive. This trail would open access across the site, connect to the Preserve trail, and extend toward the bluff and the Upper Point Vicente site. Finally, a potential new trail alignment is shown, connecting from the southern edge of the site, through the Palos Verdes Drive edge of the Lighthouse property. This alignment would facilitate implementation of the Coastal Access Trail alignment south, to connect to the Fishing Access trail head and amenity area. The open space component of this concept plan is shown at over 15 acres, or nearly 74% of the site area

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- Enter into a planning process, engaging community stakeholders, PVIC staff and docents, and City staff and leadership, to complete detailed design of the complementary educational facility, outdoor history museum/PVIC Phase III, and site wide improvements
- Open a discussion with the Coast Guard relating to the possible future trail connection to the south, requiring relocation of the fence line of the Lighthouse property toward the bluff in order to allow a trail connection off Palos Verdes Drive to the Fishing Access

Bluff Side Trail at Lower Point Vicente Existing (1) and Proposed (2)

