

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, BUILDING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT**

**DATE: SEPTEMBER 2, 2008**

**SUBJECT: RANCHO PALOS VERDES COAST VISION PLAN**

**REVIEWED: CAROLYN LEHR, CITY MANAGER** 

**Staff Coordinator: Ara Michael Mihranian, AICP, Principal Planner** 

**RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt Resolution No. 2008-\_\_ adopting the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast Vision Plan that creates an informational planning document providing guidelines for future improvements along the City's coastline in terms of public access, interpretative materials, and recreational amenities including conceptual design schemes for the five key sites.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Annenberg Foundation awarded the PVPLC a grant to develop a plan, in collaboration with the City, that cohesively connects certain key open space properties along the coast, including the NCCP properties, through the use of trails, architecture, signs, and interpretative materials. This plan eventually became known as the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast Vision Plan, also known as the Vision Plan. Melendrez, a renowned landscape architecture and urban planning firm based in Los Angeles, was hired to integrate the existing planning documents, solicit public input and work with the City/PVPLC staff to create the RPV Coast Vision Plan. The planning process involved in the creation of the Vision Plan dates as far back as June 3, 2006 when a public workshop (with approximately 80 attendees) was held at Ridgecrest Elementary School. Based on input from the City Council, City Staff, stakeholders, and members of the public, the Vision Plan is now being presented to the City Council for adoption. The adoption of the Vision Plan document does not approve the construction or implementation of any projects, but rather provides Staff and the various groups that have a stake in any of the proposals the opportunity to move forward to their respective next step.

## **BACKGROUND**

### The Vision Plan Goal

The goal of the Vision Plan is to create a conceptual plan that cohesively connects certain key open space properties along the coast, including the NCCP properties, through the use of trails, architecture, signs, and interpretative materials. The idea of the Vision Plan is to provide the City with a conceptual planning document that will assist the City in planning and funding future improvements to these key open space properties, such as enhanced public access and recreational amenities, and other facilities to improve the public's experience of the City's coastline area.

### The Vision Plan Project Area

The properties encompassing the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast Vision Plan were selected because of their physical relationship to the coast and the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, because they serve as key open space parcels and because they provide ideal public use opportunities. Although several of the identified properties have had some planning and community input on their uses in the past, there has never been a public process to consider all of the properties together. Because of the unique public use opportunities that exist on five specific City properties that are not committed to active recreational use or located within the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, the Vision Plan focuses on the development potential of the following five key sites:

- Upper Point Vicente (the civic center portion)
- Lower Point Vicente
- Abalone Cove
- Gateway Park (the 25-acre Active Recreation Area / sandbox area)
- Del Cerro Park

### The Vision Plan Preparation Process

Melendrez, a renowned landscape architecture and urban planning firm based in Los Angeles, was hired to integrate existing City planning documents, solicit public input and work with the City/PVPLC staff to create the RPV Coast Vision Plan. The planning process has involved the following steps:

- Data Gathering Phase (March to June 2006)
- Vision Plan Public Workshop No. 1 (June 2006) – This was attended by 85 persons.
- Creation of Vision Plan Alternatives (June to Oct. 2006)
- Vision Plan Public Workshop No. 2 (Oct. 2006) - This was attended by 80 persons and approximately 50 oral and/or written comments were submitted on the concept of the Vision Plan.
- Final Concept Development (Nov. 2006 to Oct. 2007)
- Vision Plan Public Workshop No. 3 (November 2007) - This was attended by

approximately 125 persons and 103 oral and/or written comments were received on the concept of the Vision Plan.

At the November 2007 workshop, questions and/or concerns raised by members of the public regarding specific components of the Vision Plan design schemes, including the proposed Annenberg animal facility, prompted the City Council to direct Staff to prepare a matrix identifying the outstanding issues for consideration before the adoption of the final Vision Plan document. Furthermore, the Council directed Melendrez to meet with additional community groups, such as the Council of Homeowners Associations, for additional input on the Vision Plan proposal.

On May 6, 2008, the City Council reviewed an Issues Matrix, prepared by the Melendrez, that identified issues raised by the public at the November 2007 workshop and in letters submitted to the City during the comment period. Based on the discussion at the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Council provided Staff and Melendrez with direction on the outstanding issues. This direction has been folded into the final Vision Plan document, which is now being presented to the City Council for approval.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Vision Plan puts forward a series of concepts that are inspired by the City's General Plan, driven by public input and derived by Melendrez through their own observations of the area. Provided below is:

- i. A description of the public input process for developing the Vision Plan
- ii. A summary of the actual Vision Plan document
- iii. An explanation of what is meant by approving the Vision Plan

### **i. Vision Plan Public Input Process**

The Vision Plan that is being presented to the City Council for approval represents a culmination of an extensive public outreach effort. As noted earlier, the preparation of the Vision Plan was supported by public comments received over a two-year time period. Specifically, the process involved three major daylong public workshops that generated a collective total of approximately 300 participants and over 200 comments. In addition, a point was made of soliciting public input on the Vision Plan from a variety of community groups and organizations. As such, during the planning process, the following community groups/organizations provided input on the Vision Plan:

- Council of Homeowner's Associations
- Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy
- Los Serenos de Point Vicente
- Rancho Palos Verdes Equestrian Committee
- Public Use Master Plan Committee
- Rancho Palos Verdes Community Leaders Breakfast
- Peninsula Seniors
- Chamber of Commerce

Based on input from the above groups and organizations, plus input from the public and the City Council during the three public workshops, and input from City Staff, the Vision Plan has been completed and is described in the following section. The final Vision Plan was transmitted to the City Council on August 13, 2008, and was made available to the public on the City's website and at various locations throughout the City (Hesse Park, Ladera Linda, City Hall, Miraleste Library, and the Main Library).

ii. Vision Plan Document

The final Vision Plan document that is being presented to the City Council this evening is divided into the following six sections:

1. Introduction
2. Vision Plan
3. Key Sites
4. Connections
5. Design Guidance
6. Appendix

The following discussion briefly summarizes each of the above six sections. Since it is anticipated that the bulk of the City Council and public discussion will be focused on the development concepts for the five key sites, a more detailed summary of the proposal for the five key sites is included.

1. Introduction

The Introduction section provides background information on the planning process that occurred since the original inception in 2006. This section also identifies the area encompassing the Vision Plan, consisting of publicly owned land and parklands, including the City owned Palos Verdes Nature Preserve.

2. Vision Plan

This section explains how the community interprets the City's coastal region. Based on community participation at the initial June 2006 workshop, the community identifies the City's coastal region by the following four elements:

- A Place Set Apart
- A Natural Place
- A Place for Fun and Adventure
- A Community Gathering Area

This section also provides a definition and a vision statement for each of the above key elements and establishes the framework in the form of a map of the area encompassing the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast Vision Plan (see page 2-7)

### 3. Key Sites

City Staff originally selected the five key sites discussed in the Vision Plan because they serve as critical open space destination spots that are not included in the City's Nature Preserve. This section provides concept designs and further guidance, in the form of recommendations, for future development and enhancement of each of the key sites. The five key sites are as follows:

- Upper Point Vicente (the area outside the Preserve)
- Lower Point Vicente
- Abalone Cove
- Gateway Park
- Del Cerro Park

The following discussion is a summary on each of the concept designs for the key sites, including the recommendations provided in the Plan.

#### **Upper Point Vicente**

The Upper Point Vicente Park that is part of the Vision Plan encompasses approximately 22 acres of non-preserve area, which is currently comprised of City Hall, the temporary Palos Verdes Peninsula Senior Center, and the former Nike site area. Based on Council and community input, the proposed Vision Plan identifies Upper Point Vicente as the civic and cultural heart of Rancho Palos Verdes. The Vision Plan goal for Upper Point Vicente is to advance the design scheme previously presented to the City Council by providing space for a cultural and/or art center, City Council Chambers, enhanced/expanded City Hall facilities, a pool/gymnasium complex, a village green, centralized parking, and an amphitheater. Furthermore, the goal is to ensure that the Civic Center is connected by a network of high quality, vibrant public landscapes that is visually integrated into the surrounding Preserve land, so that the Civic Center is linked to Lower Point Vicente and the City's trail system. The following is a partial list of the proposed site improvements:

- Rehabilitated and expanded public parking with overflow parking for yearly events (July 4<sup>th</sup> Festival).
- Picnic tables and benches
- Trash bins
- Restroom facilities
- Trailhead serving the City's trails network
- Village Green (amphitheater / Veteran's Memorial)
- Enhanced City Hall facilities (including a possible City Council Chamber)
- Temporary City Yard
- Community Center (recreational facilities and meeting rooms / classrooms)
- Cultural Arts Center
- Enhanced native planting

The concept for Upper Point Vicente is designed to retain the existing park like setting and views, while providing enhanced public opportunities and access to the park grounds and Preserve in the form of a destination point.

As previously noted, the Vision Plan is a planning tool that sets forth guidelines for any future development. As such, the Plan provides specific recommendations to implement the design concept for Upper Point Vicente by initiating a formal master plan process, which should include a market analysis and utility study. The Plan acknowledges the complexity involved in implementing the various development components identified for Upper Point Vicente and recommends that future development be divided into the following three phases:

- Short-term
- Mid-term
- Long-term

The proposed phasing is contingent on the interest of stakeholders and the availability of funding. The proposed phasing is a recommendation that could be restructured as resources for implementation become available.

Upon adoption of the Vision Plan, the Council may wish to direct Staff to initiate the development of a Master Plan for Upper Point Vicente.

### **Lower Point Vicente**

Based on Council and community input, the Vision Plan identifies Lower Point Vicente as a key site for educating community and school visitors on the relationship of animal life on the Peninsula in terms of ocean and land, and people and animals. Expanding upon this theme, the design concept for Lower Point Vicente proposes to construct a complementary public educational facility and outdoor history museum that would integrate with the existing Point Vicente Interpretive Center (PVIC). The Plan also suggests that the site be connected to the Point Vicente Lighthouse as an added amenity to the experience at Lower Point Vicente. The design concept for this site, as identified in the Vision Plan, can be achieved with the following site improvements:

- An expanded parking lot.
- An expanded network of trails that will connect with the trail routes and uses identified in the Council-adopted PUMP trails plan for the portions of the property that fall within the Preserve boundary limits.
- A trail connection to Upper Point Vicente
- The construction of a trailhead.
- The installation of new signs.
- The construction of an overlook and a donor recognition site.
- Improved park facilities including upgraded and additional picnic benches and trash bins.
- Enhanced native plantings

The proposed animal educational facility is to be dedicated to animal life on the Peninsula, including domestic and indigenous animals. This facility will be an inspiring and welcoming space that would serve the community by helping people increase their understanding of the role animals play in daily life on the Peninsula. The facility would focus on providing education, volunteer and community service opportunities, behavioral modifications programs, and animal adoption services together in a state-of-the-art facility. The facility would consist of interactive exhibits that would provide opportunities to learn about animal science, behavior, and care. The educational facility envisions providing resources to the school district, as well as animal care specialists.

The concept of a public educational facility and outdoor museum at Lower Point Vicente has been the topic of a study by a Community Advisory Cabinet established by the Annenberg Foundation. The Annenberg Foundation, under a separate request to be considered by the Council, is requesting to construct this facility and other related improvements at Lower Point Vicente. The concept of the education facility on animal life was vetted through the discussion and input provided by the Council and the public during the three workshops on the Vision Plan. Additionally, the Advisory Cabinet met on numerous occasions to provide input on the development of the design concept and its benefits to the community. Working in collaboration with the Vision Plan, the design for Lower Point Vicente includes an area that could accommodate an educational facility with minimal impacts to the site, as well as outdoor amenities intended to cohesively integrate the proposed facility with the existing Interpretative Center. The design concept includes, among other things, the following improvements:

- An outdoor exhibit area
  - Reconstructed Tongva Village
  - An interactive archaeological dig
  - A water conservation garden
  - Ecology stations
- Expanded group picnic areas
- Restroom facilities
- Vehicle drop-off areas
- Pedestrian pathways
- Grassland and habitat restoration

The Vision Plan document recommends that the City Council initiate the planning process to improve Lower Point Vicente with the design concept identified in the Plan, including the educational facility on animal life. Furthermore, it is also recommended that City engage in discussions with the Coast Guard on possibly making the lighthouse site available for a public access trail that would improve the connection between Lower Point Vicente and the Terranea Resort.

### **Abalone Cove Shoreline Park**

The proposed Vision Plan identifies Abalone Cove as a gateway to nature, both on land and at sea. The Vision Plan goal for Abalone Cove (outside the State designated Ecological Reserve area) is to improve public access and beach amenities.

Implementation of the Vision Plan goal for Abalone Cove includes the following proposed improvements:

- Construction of restrooms/storage areas
- Construction of a new gatehouse at the parking lot.
- Rehabilitation of the parking lot.
- Rehabilitation of the existing public access that connects the parking lots to the two beaches.
- Installation of new public amenities, such as:
  - Picnic tables and benches
  - Trash receptacles
- Two overlooks along the trail routes
- An expanded network of trails that will connect with the trail routes and uses identified in the Council adopted PUMP Public Trails Plan for portions of the property that fall within the Preserve boundary limits.
- Trailhead improvements
- Updated signs including an entry sign

In addition to the above, it is a site goal to implement an invasive species removal program and the restoration of native planting including a shade tree planting program.

The Vision Plan recommends that the City pursue public/private partnerships and/or grant funding to implement the design concept, including re-vegetation programs, for Abalone Cove.

### **Gateway Park**

When the 424-acre Portuguese Bend property was acquired in 2005 from Barry Hon, an approximate 25-acre area of the property was excluded from the NCCP Preserve in order to be set aside for active recreational and educational purposes. The 25-acre area, previously referred to as the Active Recreation Area, lies within the boundaries of the City's landslide moratorium area in an area located landward of Palos Verdes Drive South, east of Klondike Canyon and the Seaview Tract.

The proposed Vision Plan identifies this area as a Gateway Park, which will serve as a portal to outdoor education and recreation. The Gateway Park would serve as a staging area for users and visitors of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve. In addition, the area would accommodate active recreational activities, such as equestrian riding facilities, and outdoor educational opportunities for school and community groups. The proposed improvements for the Gateway Park are as follows:

- A key access entry point to the Preserve
- Access to the Preserve's network of trails
- Parking to accommodate both equestrians (trailers) and trails users
- An Equestrian Park
  - Multipurpose riding ring

- Conditioning track
- Corrals
- Cross country riding area
- Picnic tables and benches
- Trash bins
- Restroom facilities
- Overlooks
- Trailhead
- An Outdoor Educational Center
  - Portable classroom building (no permanent foundation)
  - Demonstration garden

Because this site is located in an active geologic area, the proposed improvements, especially the use of portable buildings, are to be temporary in nature and will be able to be relocated periodically, if necessary.

The Vision Plan recommends that the City Council authorize the equestrian community to proceed with the development of an equestrian park for this site that would address design and operational details. In order to implement this design concept, the planning process would need to be initiated by the City Council based on a formal request by the equestrian community. It is recommended that the discussion of an equestrian park involve Staff from the Planning Department (including the City Geologist) and the Parks and Recreation Department. The development program for an equestrian park at this site should include a complete analysis on fiscal impacts to the City especially with regard to on-going and future maintenance costs.

### **Del Cerro Park**

The proposed Vision Plan identifies Del Cerro Park as an area to celebrate environmental stewardship. The Vision Plan goal for Del Cerro Park is to establish a donor recognition site educating the public about the origins of the Preserve that includes an area in which to view the Preserve. Furthermore, the goal is to augment and improve the existing visitor facilities and to provide an ADA-accessible path to the Preserve overlooks. The site improvements utilize vernacular materials so as to keep with the natural setting of the site. Such materials include the use of a decomposed granite pathway and natural stone-clad seating. Specifically, the improvements consist of the following:

- The construction of an overlook(s) at the southern edge of the park consisting of a donor recognition concrete wall sign with engraved metal signs, stone clad bench seating with an engraved stone top, and minor low profile landscaping.
- The construction of a decomposed granite pedestrian trail, designed in accordance with ADA guidelines, connecting the existing parking lot to the proposed overlook and improvements to the existing trail that goes directly to the site.
- The installation of stone-clad bench seating along the proposed trail route.
- The installation of an “entry welcome” sign and a donor recognition sign.

As proposed, there will be minimal earth movement. The park's existing vehicular ingress and egress and parking lot configuration will not be changed. However, the parking lot may be re-striped to add a parking stall for persons with disabilities. The proposed trail is located on the site so as to minimize grading while providing views and the grades required for ADA-compliant access. There will be no removal of existing mature trees and a majority of the large grassy play area will remain intact. Furthermore, the design concept does not interfere with the existing use of the park by the "Silent Flyers" model airplane group nor interferes with the landing pad for the Los Angeles County Fire Department helicopters (see attached letter from the Fire Department).

The Vision Plan recommends that the City Council, under a separate process, authorize the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy to construct the donor recognition site improvements. It is also recommended that the City explore the possibility of improving the park in the future with restroom facilities and additional parking that would provide the least possible impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods, but would benefit park and Preserve visitors. Lastly, it is recommended that if funding is available, that the southern bluff edge include native plants (subject to fuel modification).

#### 4. Connections

This section of the Vision Plan document addresses a network of connections between the different areas and elements within the coastline, including the key sites, Preserve, parklands, and other coastal destinations. The network of connections discussed in this section includes major roadways, bikeways, and trails with the intent to enhance the experience of the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast.

#### 5. Design Guidelines

The Vision Plan includes design guidelines intended to create a cohesive connection with the open space areas along the City's coastline. Some of the goals for the design guidelines include implementing a low-impact approach to the development of facilities and amenities, including context-sensitive architecture and materials, shielded lighting that is dark sky compliant, implementing sustainable design techniques (such as water runoff bioswales), and constructing ADA compliant improvements.

The Vision Plan design guidelines encompass the following:

- Signs
  - Entry gateway signs
  - Site area signs
  - Park signs
  - Roadway signs
  - Wayfinding signs
  - Informational signs
- Public Gathering Areas
  - Major and Minor Trailheads

- Donor recognition sites
- Overlooks
- Vistas
- Rest Areas
- Materials and Colors
  - Natural Materials (PV Stone, etc.)
  - Earth-tones and natural colors
  - Avoid reflective materials
- Building Elements
  - Building Overhangs
  - Covered gathering and walking areas
  - Historical details
  - Green building standards
  - Natural lighting
  - Shade structures
- Furnishings
  - Trash bins
  - Bench seating
  - Dog bag kiosks
  - Drinking fountains
  - Picnic tables
  - Safety lighting
  - Bike racks

Adoption of the Vision Plan does not mandate that the above amenities be purchased and installed. The guidelines identified in this section are a “planning tool” intended to provide the decision makers a guide to the future planning and improvements of the key open spaces site along the City’s coastline. In order to implement the purchase and installation of the amenities identified in the Design Guidance section of the Vision Plan, the City Council will need to authorize Staff to create an “infrastructure master plan” that calls for the location and style of these amenities which Staff can then use to pursue grants to fund the improvements.

## 6. Appendix

The Appendix section includes supplemental information gathered during the planning process of the Vision Plan. This section includes past public notices, public comment letters, maps, the issues matrix, and other related materials referenced by the design team.

### iii. Approval of the Vision Plan Document

The adoption of the Vision Plan does not mean that any of the design concepts are approved for construction or implementation. The concepts contained in the plan are not based on any feasibility studies nor needs assessments, nor does the Plan evaluate the fiscal consequences associated with the proposed improvements or identify possible funding opportunities. Furthermore, the Plan does not assess potential

impacts to the environment of each of the possible components pursuant to the criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Vision Plan is simply a concept document that could help steer the design of future private and public projects in the area as funding opportunities become available. Implementation of the Vision Plan, whether in its entirety or on a project-by-project basis, is ultimately dependant on three factors. These factors are:

1. The willingness of the City Council to fund and move projects forward based on community needs;
2. The motivation of project stakeholders to come forward and fund an individual project; and,
3. The availability of monetary resources, such as competitive grants.

It is for this reason, that if the City Council ultimately approves the Vision Plan this evening, the logical next step would be for a needs assessment and marketing study to be prepared for a select project, or for the plan as a whole, regarding whether the proposed improvements identified in the Vision Plan are true demands or needs of the community, to avoid creating under utilized improvements. Such studies could be spearheaded by the City, by individual stakeholders, and/or as a public/private partnership with major community stakeholders.

Since all of the Vision Plan projects are on City-owned land, the City Council will have the ultimate discretion over which projects may move forward. It would be expected that the City Council would not authorize any projects identified in the Vision Plan to move forward until the City Council is aware of all fiscal impacts, including a marketing and needs analysis. If determined to be unequivocally feasible, then a project would be required to go through the City's planning entitlement process (condition use permit, grading permit, etc.), including environmental review to determine a project's potential impacts to the surrounding environment, if any.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### **Public Notification**

In order to ensure that the public is aware of the Council's review of the Vision Plan document, City Staff took extensive measures to make sure the public has been notified. A notice was published in the *Peninsula News* on Saturday, August 14, 2008 and nearly 900 notices were mailed to property owners residing within approximately 500-feet of each of the key sites identified in the Vision Plan. Furthermore, the Vision Plan document was posted on the City's website nearly one month before tonight's meeting and a message was sent to multiple list-serve subscribers informing them of the availability of the Vision Plan document and the September 2<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting on the Vision Plan.

### Public Comments

At this time, the City has received two comment letters from members of the public addressing concerns with specific components of the Vision Plan. The comments are as follows:

- Dr. Thomas Olson (1 Park Place) – Dr. Olson is requesting additional information from the City regarding environmental review for the Vision Plan, and its potential impacts to the surrounding environment. As previously stated (and reiterated in the following section), the adoption of the Vision Plan document does not approve any of the projects identified in the Plan, but rather provides guidance to the City decision makers, City Staff, and community stakeholders on future proposals. As such, the preparation and adoption of the Vision Plan document is considered to be exempt from CEQA based on Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies) of Article 18. As individual projects identified in the Vision Plan move forward, environmental review in accordance to CEQA will be required. The Vision Plan document also is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (“CEQA,” Public Resources Code §§ 21000 et seq.)), because it can be seen with certainty that there is no likelihood that this conceptual plan will cause a significant negative effect on the environment. (Section 15061(b) (3) of the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 CCR § 15061(b) (3)).

The PVPLC will be formally requesting the City Council authorize the construction of the Donor Recognition Site at Del Cerro Park at the September 16<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Environmental issues relating to the donor recognition site will be addressed at that time.

- Reverend Harvey Tafel (Wayfares Chapel / 5755 Palos Verdes Drive South) – On behalf of Wayfarers Chapel, Rev. Tafel is indicating complete support of the Vision Plan and its positive future impacts to the City’s coastline. However, he goes on to express a concern with individuals who park at Wayfarers Chapel to visit the beach across the street. He is requesting that the City ensure that visitor parking be addressed to minimize adverse parking impacts at Wayfarers Chapel.

The Vision Plan document identifies the existing parking facilities at the five Key Sites, including Abalone Cove. According to the Vision Plan, there are 150 parking spaces available for a fee (\$5.00) at Abalone Cove. The Vision Plan does not recommend creating additional parking spaces at Abalone Cove. Based on the average use of Abalone Cove, the existing 150 parking spaces appear to be adequate. However, as indicated in Rev. Tafel’s letter, individuals who do not want to pay the parking fee at Abalone Cove seek alternative parking locations such as Wayfarers Chapel. Since the parking fee at Abalone Cove is a City Council policy decision, the Council may wish to discuss this issue at a future meeting.

If additional comments are received before the September 2<sup>nd</sup> City Council meeting, Staff will provide these comment letters to the Council and the public at the meeting.

### Environmental Review

As previously stated, adoption of the Vision Plan document does not approve any of the projects identified in the Plan, but rather provides guidance to the City decision makers, City Staff, and community stakeholders on future proposals.

In accordance to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the preparation and adoption of the Vision Plan document is considered a Statutory Exemption from CEQA based on Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies) of Article 18. Section 15262 states that a project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency, board, or commissions has not approved, adopted or funded does not require the preparation of an EIR or a Negative Declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors. This section does not apply to the adoption of a plan that will have a legally binding effect on later activities.

In other words, because the adoption of the Vision Plan does not approve any project, and is not legally binding, since the Plan serves as a planning tool, CEQA does not require further environmental analysis. However, individual projects that seek entitlements from the Planning Department would require further environmental analysis in compliance with CEQA.

The Vision Plan document also is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (“CEQA,” Public Resources Code §§ 21000 et seq.), because it can be seen with certainty that there is no likelihood that this conceptual plan will cause a significant negative effect on the environment. (Section 15061(b) (3) of the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 CCR § 15061(b) (3)).

### PUMP Relationship to the Vision Plan

When the Vision Plan planning process was first initiated, Staff proposed that it also encompass the preparation of the Public Use Master Plan (PUMP), which is a requirement of the City’s NCCP. This is because the purpose of the PUMP is to establish the level of allowable public use in the Preserve, including trail use, and part of the Vision Plan goal is to integrate the public use of the Preserve with other nearby non-preserve open space properties. While Staff will continue to ensure that the Vision Plan is compatible and integrated with the PUMP, Staff has now separated the preparation and approval of the PUMP and Vision Plan into two separate approval processes. This is because the PUMP is a requirement of the NCCP and has to be completed by the City as an obligation of the NCCP, regardless of whether the City Council elects to move forward with the Vision Plan. In addition, the timing for preparation of the Vision Plan and the preparation of the PUMP has progressed, and will likely continue to progress, on two very different schedules. At this time, Staff intends to present the PUMP document to the City Council for approval in November of this year.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The eventual approval of the Vision Plan document will not result in fiscal impacts on the City's general fund since the document solely establishes a vision for public improvements but does not actual approve any projects. Actual implementation of the various components identified in the Vision Plan will require funding that currently does not exist. In the future, if the City and/or stake holder groups wish to move forward with a component of the Plan, as previously noted, the first step would be to prepare a needs assessment to determine whether a project will be utilized by the community and an economic feasibility study to determine the anticipated costs associated with the construction of such improvements, the on-going maintenance of the improvements (building and site maintenance, utility costs, etc) and the additional City services (police, rangers, fire, City Staff, etc) to support the improvements. Such studies would avoid creating under utilized improvements.

Approval of the Vision Plan would likely increase the chances of receiving public and private grants for implementing projects identified in the Plan. It has been Staff's past experience with grant funding that projects that are a part of a City-approved plan, such as the Vision Plan, have a much better chance of being funded. Receipt of such grant funds would help offset any future costs borne by the City with project implementation, including the construction and maintenance of such improvements.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Draft Resolution No. 2008-\_\_
- Vision Plan (transmitted to the City Council on August 13, 2008)
- Fire Department Letter
- Public Comments

**RESOLUTION NO. 2008-\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES ADOPTING THE RANCHO PALOS VERDES COAST VISION PLAN THAT CREATES AN INFORMATIONAL PLANNING DOCUMENT PROVIDING GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE CITY'S COASTLINE IN TERMS OF PUBLIC ACCESS, INTERPRETATIVE MATERIALS, AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES INCLUDING CONCEPTUAL DESIGN SCHEMES FOR FIVE KEY CITY SITES.**

WHEREAS, in 2005, the Annenberg Foundation awarded the PVPLC a grant to develop a plan, in collaboration with the City, that cohesively connects certain key open space properties along the coast, including the NCCP properties, through the use of trails, architecture, signs, and interpretative materials. This plan eventually became known as the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast Vision Plan, also known as the Vision Plan; and,

WHEREAS, Melendrez, a renowned landscape architecture and urban planning firm based in Los Angeles, was hired to integrate the existing planning documents, solicit public input and work with the City/PVPLC staff to create the RPV Coast Vision Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the planning process to create the Vision Plan involved the following steps:

- Data Gathering Phase (March to June 2006)
- Vision Plan Public Workshop No. 1 (June 2006) – This was attended by 85 persons.
- Creation of Vision Plan Alternatives (June to Oct. 2006)
- Vision Plan Public Workshop No. 2 (Oct. 2006) - This was attended by 80 persons and approximately 50 oral and/or written comments were submitted on the concept of the Vision Plan.
- Final Concept Development (Nov. 2006 to Oct. 2007)
- Vision Plan Public Workshop No. 3 (November 2007) - This was attended by approximately 125 persons and 103 oral and/or written comments were received on the concept of the Vision Plan.
- Issues Matrix (May 6, 2008) - The City Council reviewed an Issues Matrix, prepared by Melendrez, which identified issues raised by the public at the November 2007 workshop and in letters submitted to the City during the period for receiving public comments.

WHEREAS, the final Vision Plan represents the culmination of an extensive

public outreach effort, including public comments received over a two-year time period at three major day-long public workshops, which generated a total of approximately 300 participants and over 200 comments. Addition, a point was made of soliciting public input on the Vision Plan from a variety of community groups and organizations. Based on input from the above groups and organizations, plus input from the public and the City Council during the three public workshops, and input from City Staff, the Vision Plan was completed; and,

WHEREAS, on August 13, 2008, notice of a City Council meeting on the adoption of the Vision Plan document was published in the *Palos Verdes Peninsula News*, was mailed to over 900 property owners within a 500-foot radius of the key sites identified in the Vision Plan, and was sent via email to City list-serve subscribers;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes as follows:

**Section 1:** The adoption of the Vision Plan will not result in significant environmental effects because the document does not approve any of the projects or improvements that are identified in the Plan, but rather provides guidance to the City decision makers, City Staff, and community stakeholders on conceptual guidelines that can be incorporated into future proposals. Therefore, in accordance to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and based upon the analysis set forth in the Staff report, which is incorporated herein by this reference, the City Council finds that the preparation and adoption of the Vision Plan document is exempt from CEQA based on Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies) of Article 18 of the California Code of Regulations, which states that a project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions, which the agency, board, or commission has not approved, adopted or funded, does not require the preparation of an EIR or a Negative Declaration. The City Council further finds that the Vision Plan is exempt from CEQA, because it can be seen with certainty that the Vision Plan has no likelihood of causing a significant negative effect on the environment and, accordingly, both the City's action of adopting this Resolution and the Vision Plan are found to be exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b) (3) of the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 CCR § 15061(b) (3)).

**Section 2:** The Vision Plan document is hereby approved by the City Council as a "planning tool" that is intended to provide applicants, City Staff and decision makers with a conceptual guide that will assist with the future planning of improvements that could be located on five key open space sites along the City's coastline.

**Section 3:** The adoption of the Vision Plan does not mean that any of the design concepts contained therein are approved by the City Council for construction or implementation. The concepts contained in the Plan have not been based on any feasibility studies or needs assessments, nor does the Plan evaluate the fiscal consequences associated with the proposed improvements or identify possible funding opportunities.

**Section 4:** The projects stemming from the design concepts identified in the

Vision Plan have not been approved and will be subject to further review and approval through the planning entitlement process for each proposed project, including environmental review, along with City Council review and approval of any lease agreements and/or development agreements that are proposed for any improvements proposed on City property.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

State of California                    )  
County of Los Angeles            ) ss  
City of Rancho Palos Verdes     )

I, Carla Morreale, City Clerk of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, hereby certify that the above Resolution No. 2008-\_\_ was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the said City Council at a regular meeting thereof held on September 2, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk



County Of Los Angeles  
Fire Department

Date: August 7, 2008

To: Becky Harper, Conservation Director  
Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

From: Battalion Fire Chief Anthony J. Iacono  
Battalion 14, Division I, Los Angeles County Fire Station 106  
27413 Indian Peak Rd., Rolling Hills Estates 90274

**Subject: APPROVAL OF THE DEL CERRO PARK  
DONOR RECOGNITION SITE**

Dear Ms. Harper,

This memo is to confirm my approval of your plan to install the monuments for the Donor Recognition Site adjacent to the Los Angeles County Fire Department's pre-designated Helispot, Helispot 56-A, located at Del Cerro park.

After review of your plans, several onsite inspections, and meetings conducted with your staff and City Officials, and discussions with our Air Operations Chief, it has been determined that your plan will not interfere with helicopter landing and take-off operations at the site.

At our onsite meetings, I requested that since this work is being done, improvements be made to the Helispot area. We are not requesting any dirt to be removed rather grading the area to produce a flatter helispot. This would not alter the landscape or terrain and would make the helispot safer to use. This is only about a fifty foot in diameter circle that would satisfy the need for a safer landing spot. It seems appropriate to do this work at the same time your project proceeds.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department appreciates all you do to protect our valuable land and the beauty of its landscape. Anything we can do to assist you in succeeding with your mission is our goal as your team player.

Very truly yours,

Anthony J. Iacono

CC: Andrea Vona

**Ara M**

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**From:** Thomas Olson [pvpprof@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 18, 2008 5:21 PM  
**To:** Ara M  
**Subject:** Del Cerro proposed construction project

Hello Ara,

My neighbors and I of the Park Place Homeowners Association have just received a written notice stating that the City of Rancho Palos Verdes (City) will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, September 2, 2008 to consider the adoption of the Vision Plan for the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast. On review of the Vision Plan on the City's website and the past few years minutes of the City Council meetings, the PPHA has a number of clarification questions / inquires regarding the proposed construction project.

To clarify whether to request information from the City or the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy, PVLC:

First, we understand from you that the City is the lead Public Agency regarding this project.

Second, we understand from you that the PVLC is the responsible agency.

Third, we understand from your comments and those of Bruce Biesman-Simons from the PVLC that there is no initial study regarding any environmental effects for this project. When asked in writing and in person on July 14th about such a study, you and Mr. Beisman-Simons each responded that there were no effects and hence no study.

Is each of the above correct? If not, please respond with what is accurate.

We request this confirmation for, following a full review of City Council meeting minutes and the Vision Plan website, we are unable to identify any mention of: 1. any entity being the Public Agency or 2. any entity being the responsible agency or 3. any initial study.

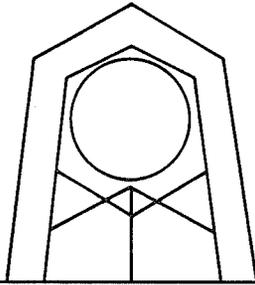
Inquiry:

Given the legal requirements of this project, we would like to know where in the City Council Minutes it is stated and in what words it is stated that the City has observed that it will not identify the lead or responsible agency or do any kind of an initial study.

Because of likely follow-up questions and the need to prepare statements for submission to the City in advance of the scheduled meeting on September 2, and in keeping with schedules given to the PPHA by the City, the PPHA respectfully requests that the City respond to us no later than Wednesday, 8/20.

Thank you in advance for your response.

Regards,  
Thomas Olson



THE  
WAYFARERS  
CHAPEL

AN ECUMENICAL MINISTRY OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

RECEIVED

AUG 21 2008

PLANNING, BUILDING AND  
CODE ENFORCEMENT

August 21, 2008

Mr. Ara Mihranian, Principal Planner  
City of Rancho Palos Verdes  
30940 Hawthorne Boulevard  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275

Dear Ara,

I thoroughly enjoyed the presentation of the Rancho Palos Verdes Coast Vision Plan you gave at the recent Palos Verdes Chamber of Commerce Breakfast meeting on August 6. I am enthused about the possibilities of preserving the coast for the enjoyment of people now and in future generations. The Wayfarers Chapel is an intimate part of this plan, and philosophically we are very attuned to the vision of being of use and serving our neighbors.

In light of this, I would like to bring up an issue that deeply concerns the Chapel. That is, the parking situation. As you may know, there are times when we are inundated with what we call "beach parkers." These are people who park in our lot, leave the Chapel property and walk across Palos Verdes Drive South to go to the beach. I am sure many people use the Chapel parking lot rather than pay the parking fee at the City lot right across the street. There are times when we are so inundated with beach parkers that visitors to the Chapel cannot find a parking stall.

I urge the City to take into consideration in its Coast Vision Plan to assure the integrity of the Chapel's parking lot for its intended purpose. I am sure that our concern is shared by other property owners.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. If there is anything I can do to help with the Coast Vision as it pertains to the Wayfarers Chapel please contact me.

Sincerely,

Rev. Harvey A. Tafel  
Chapel Administrator