

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

DATE: August 28, 2019

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

SUBJECT: Consideration of a request by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) to determine if SFPUC's proposed installation of weather sensing and forecasting equipment, and repair of existing radio equipment, on Montara Mountain conforms to the County's General Plan.

County File Number: PLN 2019-00227

PROPOSAL

Consideration of a request by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) to determine, per Government Code Section 65402(b), if SFPUC's proposed installation of weather sensing and forecasting equipment, and replacement and improvement of existing radio equipment, collectively known as the "Montara Mountain Rainfall Prediction and Radio Replacement Project," on Montara Mountain in unincorporated San Mateo County, conforms to the County's General Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission find that SFPUC's proposed installation of weather sensing and forecasting equipment, and replacement and improvement of existing radio equipment, collectively known as the "Montara Mountain Rainfall Prediction and Radio Replacement Project," on Montara Mountain in unincorporated San Mateo County, conforms to the County's General Plan

BACKGROUND

Report Prepared By: William Gibson

Applicant: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Owners: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Location: Rural Midcoast

APN: 093-030-050

Size: 555 acres

Existing Zoning: RM-CZ/DR/CD

General Plan Designation: Open Space

Existing Land Use: The parcel contains existing SFPUC radio equipment, as well as an existing County telecommunication and radio facility.

Flood Zone: X (Area of Minimal Flooding)

Environmental Evaluation: A determination that the proposed project conforms to the County General Plan is exempt from environmental review under the “common sense exemption” that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)). Any future action on the subject property would be subject to applicable CEQA requirements.

Setting: The parcel is atop one of the northwest peaks of Montara Mountain, in a rural setting that is primarily undeveloped and characterized largely by scrub and tree cover.

DISCUSSION

A. KEY ISSUES

1. Project Description

SFPUC proposes, as part of its Montara Mountain Rainfall Prediction and Radio Replacement Project, to replace an existing tower radio system used for emergency communications with an updated, more reliable and robust monopole and antennae system, and install a weather and atmospheric monitoring radar system to forecast rainfall. The project would also involve various improvements to the property, including installation of a generator, propane tank, fencing, and power lines. The site currently contains SFPUC’s existing radio antennae, as well as a County emergency communications facility, which will not be impacted by the project.

The overarching purpose of both components of the project is to better anticipate hazards, particularly natural hazards stemming from high rainfall, particularly flood incidents, and to better provide emergency communications, particularly during disaster events.

Per California Government Code Section 65402, prior to construction of a project in another jurisdiction, the jurisdiction sponsoring the project must request an analysis of the proposed project’s conformity with the General Plan of the jurisdiction in which the project is located.

2. Analysis

General Plan Goal 15.16, “*Support Research Programs, Efforts for Disaster Prediction and Emergency Preparedness,*” states the goal of:

Support[ing] appropriate and useful research programs being conducted by Federal, State and local agencies, and private consultants to improve knowledge of and define mitigation measures for natural hazards and to predict, prepare for and respond to natural disasters.

General Plan Policy 15.51, “*Flooding Hazards; Program Responsibilities; Role of Other Agencies; “Coordination,*” directs the County to:

Work with federal, State, and local agencies to achieve cooperative solutions to flooding hazards that are multijurisdictional in nature.

The proposed construction of an atmospheric monitoring system to better predict rainfall and consequent flooding events, and a more robust radio system to better provide emergency and disaster communications, both conform to the relevant policies of the County General Plan.

B. ALTERNATIVES

The alternative to a finding of conformity with the General Plan is for the Planning Commission to find that the proposed project does not conform to the policies of the County General Plan.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A determination that the proposed acquisition of property conforms to the County General Plan is exempt from environmental review under the “common sense exemption” that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)). Any future action on the subject property would be subject to applicable CEQA requirements.

D. REVIEWING AGENCIES

County Counsel

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Recommended Findings
- B. Location and Site Map

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County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Department

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Permit or Project File Number: PLN 2019-00227

Hearing Date: August 28, 2019

Prepared By: William Gibson
Project Planner

For Adoption By: Planning Commission

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS

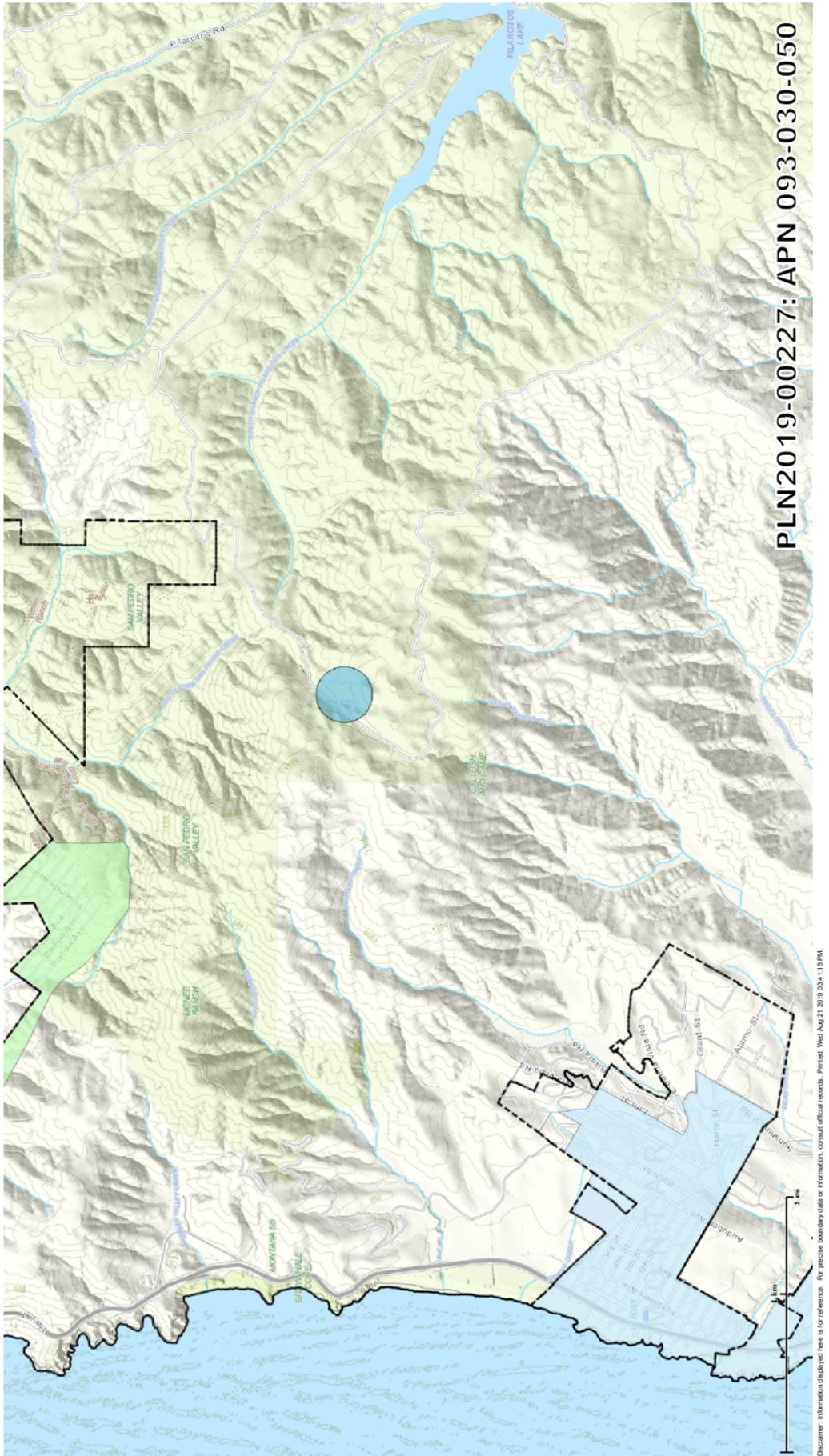
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COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

ATTACHMENT B



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