

Date: May 28, 2014

To: Regional Planning Committee

From: Laura Thompson and Mark Shorett, ABAG

Subject: REVISIONS TO PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREA CRITERIA

Background

At the April 2, 2014 Regional Planning Committee (RPC) meeting, ABAG staff presented a proposed update to the Priority Conservation Area (PCA) program. The update included four designations to recognize the role of different kinds of PCAs—Natural Landscapes; Agricultural Lands; Regional Recreation; and Urban Greening. The update also included a proposed process for confirming existing and adopting new PCAs. During the meeting, RPC members raised several issues that were tabled for further discussion at the June 4, 2014 RPC meeting. This memo discusses those issues and presents a revised PCA application form and set of requirements.

For reference, the April PCA Update staff report is attached to this memo.

Priority Conservation Area Program Criteria and Goals

Issue: A number of RPC members asked to verify the goals of the PCA program in relation to the four proposed PCA designations—in particular Urban Greening, which some members perceived as categorically different from the others.

Discussion: Three PCA criteria were identified at the program’s inception in 2007: regional significance, local consensus, and need for protection. The 101 PCAs adopted by the Executive Board are diverse, ranging from the Napa County Agricultural Lands, which includes thousands of acres of the world’s most profitable vineyards, to the East Bay Greenway, which if completed would increase tree cover, vegetation and the quality of pedestrian and bicycle connections in urban communities between East Oakland and unincorporated Alameda County.

Four PCA designations are proposed to address the three program goals and to capture the unique qualities of the existing PCAs:

- **Natural Landscapes**—areas critical to the functioning of wildlife and plant habitats, aquatic ecosystems and the region’s water supply and quality.
Existing PCA Examples: Upper Stevens Creek Watershed Area (Santa Clara County); Napa Valley River Corridor (Napa County); Acalanes Ridge Open Space (Walnut Creek and Lafayette)

- **Agricultural Lands**—farmland, grazing land and timberland that support the region’s agricultural economy and provide additional benefits such as habitat protection and carbon capture.
Existing PCA Examples: Suisun Valley (Solano County); Napa County Agricultural Lands and Watersheds (Napa County); Coastal Agriculture area (Sonoma County)
- **Urban Greening**—existing and potential green spaces in cities that increase habitat connectivity, improve community health, capture carbon emissions, and address stormwater. Many existing and likely Urban Greening areas are not within PDAs.
Existing PCA Examples: East Bay Greenway (Oakland/San Leandro/Hayward/Unincorporated Alameda County); Hercules Waterfront (Hercules); and Palou-Phelps, Bayview park/open space connector (San Francisco)
- **Regional Recreation**—existing and potential regional parks, trails, and other publicly accessible recreation facilities.
Existing PCA Examples: Bay Trail (multi-county, multi-jurisdiction); Boethe-Napa Valley State Park to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park (Napa County); Russian River Access (Sonoma County)

The inclusion of Urban Greening in the set of designations recognizes the continuum of natural systems across the region’s landscapes and the intent of the adopted PCAs within urban communities.

The discussion of urban greening in the context of overall PCA program criteria and goals at the April meeting suggests two options:

- 1) Remove existing PCAs that are consistent with the Urban Greening PCA designation, and remove Urban Greening as a proposed designation.
- 2) Retain existing PCAs consistent with the Urban Greening designation, retain Urban Greening as a proposed PCA designation.

Staff recommends retaining existing PCAs consistent with the Urban Greening PCA designation and retain Urban Greening as one of the four proposed PCA designations. This approach insures a holistic approach to the PCA program and respects the breadth of existing PCAs. As discussed below, the different benefits provided by different types of PCA designations (e.g. protecting a continuous greenbelt, connecting wildlife corridors through rural and urban areas) can be addressed through criteria attached to funding sources.

PCA Funding

Issue: Several committee members requested clarification about the relationship between the PCA designations and funding opportunities.

Discussion: In our assessment of potential funding sources, we found that most include specific criteria tailored to habitat preservation, farmland conservation, regional recreation and parks, and urban greening. In addition to recognizing the qualities of PCAs, the introduction of designations

helps position the PCAs for future funding opportunities by placing each within a regional implementation framework. In similar fashion to the recently completed round of OBAG PCA funding, future regional funding programs may identify specific objectives supported by different PCA designations.

Staff recommends prioritizing future OBAG PCA resources for projects that cannot be funded with OBAG PDA funds, with the exception of transportation improvements that complete portions of the Bay Trail and other regional trails. Staff also recommends that PCAs within high-need PDAs receive priority for funds dedicated to urban parks and other forms of urban greening not eligible for OBAG PDA funding.

PCA Application Process: Resolution Requirement and Completing Applications

Issue: A number of RPC members expressed concern that the proposed PCA application process may be unnecessarily onerous—in particular the level of local staff effort required to complete the applications and the requirement for local resolutions of support.

Discussion: Resolution Requirement

During the past two years, elected officials have expressed a desire for greater transparency in the PCA program. Staff and elected officials from some jurisdictions indicated that they were not aware of PCA designations within their boundaries during the first round of PCA nominations in 2007. Requiring a resolution of support ensures that all PCAs are sponsored or co-sponsored by a public entity—a city, county, open space district, or park district—and that this support is affirmed by a publicly elected body. Extending this requirement to both existing and new PCAs (except for those with existing resolutions) provides consistency. PCAs sponsored by a non-profit will need a local co-sponsor.

Three options emerge from this discussion:

- 1) Do not require a local resolution for *existing* or *new* PCAs. For *existing* PCAs, institute an “opt out” process:” send written and electronic notification to the jurisdiction in which the PCA is located indicating that PCAs in their jurisdiction will be automatically retained unless the City Council or Board of Supervisors adopts a resolution in opposition to the PCA within a set time period (i.e. 90 days). For *new* PCAs, require a letter of support from staff from a local jurisdiction, open space district, or park district.
- 2) Do not require a local resolution for *existing* PCAs. For *new* PCAs, require a local resolution of support from a City Council, Board of Supervisors, or open space district or park district board.
- 3) Require a local resolution of support from a City Council, Board of Supervisors, or open space district or park district board for *existing and new* PCAs.

Staff recommends option three. This is responsive to the vast majority of input we have received from ABAG Executive Board members, and helps insure that PCAs truly represent a local consensus. To reduce local staff burden, ABAG will provide sample resolutions.

Discussion: Completing PCA Applications

In recognition of the time constraints faced by many local staff, ABAG will complete a draft application for existing PCAs for local review, identifying an appropriate designation and set of benefits and co-benefits. Sponsoring agency staff will be responsible for reviewing the checklist, concurring or editing the designation/benefits selection, and if needed, providing a resolution or map. ABAG staff has already collected numerous online resources to address the benefits and these will be available to local jurisdictions. The PCA application follows this memo as Attachment 1.

The sponsors of new PCAs will fill out the application form, with ABAG staff available to answer questions and provide assistance.

Following adoption of the updated designations and application process by the Executive Board, ABAG will send an email notification to staff at the sponsoring agency of existing PCAs notifying them of the required steps for submitting applications (drafts of which will be completed and sent by ABAG staff). The ABAG PCA webpage will serve as a comprehensive resource for all information related to PCAs.

Requested Action

Staff requests that the RPC recommend that the ABAG Executive Board adopt the proposed PCA program update, including: a) The proposed application process and requirements (see Attachment 1); and b) The four proposed PCA designations—Natural Landscapes; Agricultural Land; Regional Recreation; and Urban Greening—and criteria (see Attachment 3, pp. 1-3)

Attachments

- 1) Updated PCA Application
- 2) List and map of existing PCAs
- 3) April 2014 RPC Staff Report

ATTACHMENT 1

Priority Conservation Area Designation Application Form

As part of the broader Plan Bay Area Implementation effort, over the past six months, ABAG staff worked with local jurisdictions, the ABAG Administrative Committee, and stakeholders to develop a PCA program update. The update includes more detailed guidelines for PCA applications, review, and adoption.

This updated application process introduces four types of PCA designation to recognize the role of different kinds of PCAs in supporting the vitality of the region's natural systems, rural economy, and human health. Applicants will select a designation type for each PCA being nominated. The updated application also asks applicants to identify benefits and potential co-benefits for each designation. Applicants are required to discuss how the PCA provides these benefits – referencing data and maps. ABAG has provided a table of resources to assist applicants in this process. For existing PCAs, ABAG staff will fill out the form with information on file for each PCA, pre-select designations and benefits, and ask the PCA sponsor to review, verify, approve or revise the information.

Sponsors of existing PCAs can reference original applications to meet the requirements. Jurisdictions seeking to remove an existing PCA do not need to take any action other than choosing not to submit a new application for the PCA.

Timeline for New and Updated PCA Applications

June 2014: PCA Program update – including Application Process and PCA designations – recommended by the RPC to the Executive Board for adoption.

July 2014: PCA Program update adopted by Executive Board.

August 1, 2014: Beginning of PCA application period. New and existing PCA's must submit application. Existing PCAs can reference portions of previous PCA applications (i.e. adopted resolution to support by local jurisdiction) to meet relevant requirements.

May 30, 2015: Deadline for PCA applications. Existing PCA designations will be removed if no application has been filed.

June 2015: Following staff review, RPC recommends PCA nominations to the Executive Board for adoption.

July 2015: Executive Board adopts PCA nominations recommended for adoption by the RPC.

For questions regarding the application form, please contact JoAnna Bullock at 510 464-7968 or joannab@abag.ca.gov.

ATTACHMENT 1
Priority Conservation Area Designation
Application Form

Enter information in the spaces provided. E-mail this completed application form and attachments requested as part of this form to ABAG Planning **by May 30, 2015**. If e-mailing is not possible, a hard copy of materials can be mailed to PCA Applications, Association of Bay Area Governments, P.O. Box 2050, Oakland, CA 94604-2050.

PART 1: AREA INFORMATION

Proposed Name	
Description	
Location (include map and text description)	
Total Acreage	

PART 2: SPONSOR(S)

Lead Nominating Agency/Organization	
Staff Person	
Address	
Phone Number(s)	
E-mail address	
Partnering Agency(ies)/Organization(s)	

PART 3: DESIGNATION

Selected Designation – Select one or more designation for the proposed PCA

Natural Landscapes **Agricultural Lands** **Urban Greening** **Regional Recreation**

PART 4: BENEFITS

Primary Benefit(s) – Select one or more benefits and co-benefits for the proposed PCA

PART 5: ATTACHMENTS

Required

1. Copy of adopted resolution by City Council, Board of Supervisors, or Open Space or Park District Board.
2. Attach a map showing the proposed general area boundaries and location. Include other relevant information, such as topography or an aerial photograph, to show the context for protection of this area.
3. Provide text, data, maps, etc. that demonstrate primary benefit(s) of the relevant designation and co-benefit(s).

Optional

4. Letters of Support from partner agencies or organizations.
5. Additional data, maps, supportive local policies.

ATTACHMENT 2
Priority Conservation Areas - June 2014

Area Name	Local Jurisdiction	County	Lead Sponsor Agency	Partnering Agencies/Organizations
Regional Trails System Gaps	Unincorporated Alameda and Contra Costa Counties	Alameda & Contra Costa Counties	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
Leona Canyon Creek Tributaries	Oakland	Alameda	City of Oakland	Potential partners: EBRPD and local community groups.
Temescal Creek/North Oakland	Oakland	Alameda	City of Oakland	Potential partners: Local community groups
Ridgemont West	Oakland	Alameda	City of Oakland	Potential partners: EBRPD, Friends of Two Creeks, Merritt College and other community groups
South Hills, San Leandro Creek	Oakland	Alameda	City of Oakland	Potential partners: EBRPD, Dunsmuir House and Gardens Inc., and Community Groups
North Livermore, South Livermore Valley	Livermore, Unincorporated Alameda County	Alameda	City of Livermore	
Albany Hill	Albany	Alameda	City of Albany	The non-profit organization Friends of Five Creeks has expressed support for this nomination.
Union City Hillside Area	Union City	Alameda	City of Union City	East Bay Regional Park District
Site 1-Coyote Hills	Fremont	Alameda	City of Fremont	
Chain of Lakes Area	Pleasanton, unincorporated Alameda County	Alameda	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
Bethany Reservoir Area	Unincorporated Alameda County	Alameda	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
Cedar Mountain Area	Unincorporated Alameda County	Alameda	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
Duarte Canyon Area	Unincorporated Alameda County	Alameda	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
Potential Oakland Gateway Area	Oakland	Alameda	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
Potential Tesla Area	unincorporated Alameda County	Alameda	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
East Bay Greenway	Oakland, San Leandro, Hayward, and unincorporated Alameda County	Alameda	City of Oakland	Urban Ecology, City of San Leandro, City of Hayward
Butters Canyon/Headwaters of Peralta Creek	Oakland	Alameda	City of Oakland	Butters Land Trust
San Francisco Bay Trail – Bay Area Ridge Trail	Fremont, Albany,	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma counties	San Francisco Bay Trail Project	Bay Area Ridge Trail Council
Sutro Tower, Inc	City & County of San Francisco	City & County of San Francisco	California Native Plant Society Yerba Buena Chapter	Nature in the City/Mt Sutro Stewards
Bayview Hill radio property	City & County of San Francisco	City & County of San Francisco	California Native Plant Society Yerba Buena Chapter	Nature in the City
Central Hercules and Waterfront District	Hercules, CA	Contra Costa	City of Hercules	

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Big Canyon Preserve	City of San Ramon	Contra Costa	City of San Ramon	
MOSO and NON-MOSO Open Space	Town of Moraga	Contra Costa	Town of Moraga	
Point Edith Wetlands Area	Unincorporated Contra Costa County	Contra Costa	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
Delta Recreation Area	Oakley	Contra Costa	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
Potential Pinole Watershed Area	Hercules and Pinole	Contra Costa	East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	
Pinole Creek Fish Passage Corridor	Pinole	Contra Costa	Contra Costa Resource Conservation District	
Acalanes Ridge Open Space	Walnut Creek and Lafayette	Contra Costa	City of Walnut Creek	
Indian Valley	Moraga	Contra Costa	East Bay Municipal Utility District	California Department of Fish and Game, Lori Salamack 329 Rheem Blvd, Moraga, CA 94556 925-376-5202
Burton Ridge	Lafayette, CA	Contra Costa	City of Lafayette	
Lafayette Ridge	Lafayette, CA	Contra Costa	City of Lafayette	
Contra Costa County Agricultural Core	Unincorporated Contra Costa County	Contra Costa	Contra Costa County Community Development Department	Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust Kathryn Lyddan, Executive Director 1120 2nd Street, Brentwood, CA 94513 (925) 634-6738 brentwoodagtrust@sbcglobal.net
East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan (ECCC HCP/NCCP)	Brentwood, Oakley	Contra Costa	Contra Costa County	Cities of Brentwood, Clayton, Oakley and Pittsburg, Contra Costa County, Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, East Bay Regional Park District, East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
3rd Valley Creek/Chicken Ranch Beach Conservation Area	Inverness	Marin	Tomales Bay Watershed Council	Point Reyes National Seashore, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, State Lands Commission, California Department of Fish and Game, Coastal Commission, California State Parks, Marin County, Inverness Public Utility District, Environmental Action Committee of West Marin, Inverness Association, and private property owners.
San Geronimo Valley headwaters of the Lagunitas Watershed and shore of Tomales Bay	Unincorporated Marin County	Marin	Salmon Protection And Watershed Network	Point Reyes National Seashore (National Park Service)
Marin County Agricultural Lands	Unincorporated Marin County	Marin	Marin Agricultural Land Trust	State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Conservation Farmland Conservancy Program, Marin County, Marin Resource Conservation District, Marin Farm Bureau, Tomales Bay Watershed Council, National Park Service
Marin City Ridge	Marin City	Marin	National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area	

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North GGNRA Lagunitas Creek Parcels	Unincorporated Marin County	Marin	National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area	Marin County Open Space District, Marin County Bicycle Coalition, Point Reyes National Seashore
Central Marin Ridge lands	Central urban Marin, San Anselmo, Fairfax, Ross, County, San Rafael	Marin	Marin County Parks and Open Space Department	San Anselmo, Ross, Fairfax, San Rafael, Marin Conservation League, County Flood Control, TPL
North County Gateway	Unincorporated Marin County	Marin	Marin County Parks and Open Space Department	Marin Conservation League, Sierra Club, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, Bay Trail, SCAPOSD, State Parks
Bothin Waterfront	Unincorporated Marin County	Marin	Marin County Parks and Open Space	County Flood Control, City of Mill Valley, Marin Audubon, Bay Trail, MCL, Sierra Club
Big Rock Ridge Lands	Unincorporated Marin County	Marin	Marin County Parks and Open Space Department	Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, City of Novato
Tiburon Ridge Lands	Unincorporated Marin County	Marin	Marin County Parks and Open Space Department	Town of Tiburon, Native Plant Society, Marin Conservation League
Bowman Canyon	Unincorporated Marin County	Marin	Marin Conservation League	Marin County Open Space District, Marin County Flood Control District, Marin Agricultural Land Trust, California State Parks, Sierra Club, Friends of Novato Creek, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council
St. Vincent's and Silveira Properties	Unincorporated area of San Rafael	Marin	Marin Audubon Society/Marin Baylands Advocates	Sierra Club, Marin Conservation League
Central Marin Bayfront, Madera Bay Park	Town of Corte Madera	Marin	Marin Audubon Society/Marin Baylands Advocates	Marin County Open Space District, Sierra Club, Marin Conservation League, Priority Conservation Area Committee
Central Marin Bayfront, Canalways	Unincorporated Marin County	Marin	Marin Audubon Society	Sierra Club, Marin Conservation League, Priority Conservation Area Committee, Marin County Department of Parks and Open Space
Napa Valley - Napa River Corridor	Unincorporated Napa County	Napa	Land Trust of Napa County	Friends of the Napa River, Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
Napa County Agricultural Lands and Watersheds	Unincorporated Napa County	Napa	County of Napa	Napa County Farm Bureau, Land Trust of Napa County, Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, City of Napa
Blue Oak Woodlands of the Lake District	Unincorporated Napa County	Napa	Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District	Land Trust of Napa County, The Nature Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Game, Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area Partnership
Interior Mountains – Moore Creek to Milliken Creek	Unincorporated Napa County	Napa	Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District	Bay Area Ridge Trail Council
Palisades—Mt St Helena to Anqwin	Unincorporated Napa County	Napa	Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District	Land Trust of Napa County, California State Parks
Southern Mountains -- Skyline Park to Newell Preserve	Unincorporated Napa County	Napa	Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District	County of Napa, County of Solano, Land Trust of Napa County, City of American Canyon
Bothe-Napa Valley State Park to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park Priority Conservation Area	Unincorporated Napa County	Napa	Save-the-Redwoods League	multiple
Redwood & Dry Creek Watersheds Priority Conservation Area	Unincorporated Napa County	Napa	Save-the-Redwoods League	multiple

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Lake Curry/Suisun Creek Watershed	Unincorporated Napa County	Napa	Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District	County of Solano
Aquavista/Twin Peaks	San Francisco	San Francisco	City of San Francisco Planning Department	(Jake Sigg of CA Native Plant Society submitted PCA nomination for same parcel - agreed to go w/SF nomination - deleted SF7)
Palou-Phelps, Bayview	San Francisco	San Francisco	City of San Francisco Planning Department	SF Parks + Rec, California Native Plants, Nature In the City
San Francisco Watershed Lands to Wilder Ranch State Park Priority Conservation Area	Unincorporated San Mateo County	San Mateo	Save-the-Redwoods League	multiple
Office of Education Loma Mar Property	Unincorporated San Mateo County	San Mateo	San Mateo County Department of Parks	
Montara Mountain Complex	Montara/El Granada/Moss Beach. Affects Half Moon Bay, Pacifica.	San Mateo	Peninsula Open Space Trust	Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Mateo County Parks, California Coastal Conservancy
Lobitos Ridge Corridor	South of Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County. Affects Half Moon Bay.	San Mateo	Peninsula Open Space Trust	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, California Coastal Conservancy
Gateway to the San Mateo County Coast	Affects Half Moon Bay.	San Mateo	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	City of Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, Committee for Green Foothills, San Mateo County Resource Conservation District
Pacifica Conservation Area: South of Mussell Rock to McNee Ranch State Park	Pacifica	San Mateo	National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area	Potential partners could include the Pacifica Land Trust, City of Pacifica, City of San Francisco, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Upper San Gregorio Creek Headwaters	Includes parts of Portola Valley	San Mateo	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	Peninsula Open Space Trust, San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, San Gregorio Environmental Resource Center, Natural Heritage Institute
Upper Stevens Creek Watershed Area	Unincorporated Santa Clara County	Santa Clara	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	Santa Clara County Parks & Rec Department, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Santa Clara Valley Water District, State Coastal Conservancy
Upper Los Gatos Creek Watershed	Unincorporated Santa Clara County	Santa Clara	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	Peninsula Open Space Trust, Santa Clara County Parks & Rec Dept., Santa Clara Valley Water District, Neighbors Against Industrial Logging, Sierra Club Ventana Chapter
East Berryessa Foothills	San Jose	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and County of Santa Clara Habitat Conservation/Natural Communities Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP), San Francisco Bay Trail (ABAG), National Park Service – Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

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Alum Rock Foothills	San Jose	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP)
Joseph D. Grant to Coyote Ridge	San Jose	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP)
East Coyote Foothills to Almaden Quicksilver	San Jose	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP); Silicon Valley Land Conservancy
Anderson/Coyote Connection	Morgan Hill	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP)
East Gilroy Foothills	Gilroy	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP)
South County Regional Trail Connection	Unincorporated Santa Clara County	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP)
Lexington Hills	Los Gatos	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Mid-peninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP)

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Sanborn Skyline	Uncorporated Solano County	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Mid-peninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP)
Baylands	San Jose	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), San Francisco Bay Trail (ABAG), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP), National Park Service – Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail Program
Rancho Canada	Uncorporated Santa Clara County	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority	
South County Agriculture	Uncorporated Santa Clara County	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority	
Pescadero/Tar Creek	Uncorporated Santa Clara County	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP)
Paradise Valley to Calero	Uncorporated Santa Clara County	Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department	Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA), Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Program (HCP/NCCP)
Soap Lake	Gilroy	Santa Clara	The Nature Conservancy	Pajaro River Watershed Flood Protection Authority, Silicon Valley Land Conservancy
Vacaville-Fairfield-Solano Greenbelt and Cement Hill	Uncorporated Solano County	Solano	City of Fairfield	City of Vacaville, County of Solano
Western Hills (including part of the Vallejo Lakes Property)	Uncorporated Solano County	Solano	Solano County	Solano Land Trust; Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District (supports nomination); City of Fairfield; City of Benicia
Tri City and County Cooperative Planning Area	Uncorporated Solano County	Solano	Solano County	Solano Land Trust; City of Fairfield; City of Vallejo; City of Benicia

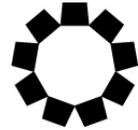
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Blue Ridge Hills (Vaca Mountains)	Unincorporated Solano County	Solano	Solano County	Solano Land Trust; City of Fairfield; City of Vallejo; City of Benicia (Napa County Regional Park & Open Space District supports this nomination)
Suisun Valley	Unincorporated Solano County	Solano	Solano County	
Upper Mark West Watershed	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sotoyome Resource Conservation District	Friends of the Mark West Watershed, Department of Fish and Game, Sonoma County Water Agency, NASA, Monan's Rill Institute
Petaluma Watershed Southeastern Portion	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District • Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space • Sonoma Land Trust • Infineon • USDA
Laguna de Santa Rosa	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation	Sonoma County Water Agency, City of Santa Rosa
Santa Rosa Plain	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation	Sonoma County Water Agency, City of Santa Rosa
Coastal Sonoma to Armstrong Redwoods	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Save-the-Redwoods League	multiple
Pitkin Marsh – Atascadero Creek Watershed	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sonoma Land Trust	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Sonoma Baylands	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sonoma Land Trust	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, City of Sonoma, Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
The Cedars	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sonoma Land Trust	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Northern Mayacamas	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sonoma Land Trust	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Coastal Access and Resource Protection	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Greg Carr, Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department; Elizabeth Tyree, Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
Coastal Agriculture	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Greg Carr, Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department; Elizabeth Tyree, Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
Sonoma County Gateway	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Greg Carr, Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department; Elizabeth Tyree, Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
Russian River Access	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sonoma County Regional Parks Department	Tom Robinson, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District; Greg Carr, Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department; Wendy Eliot, Sonoma Land Trust

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Sonoma Mountain	Unincorporated Sonoma County	Sonoma	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Greg Carr, Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department; Elizabeth Tyree, Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, Wendy Eliot, Sonoma Land Trust, David Goodison, City of Sonoma
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ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS



ABAG

Date: April 2, 2014
To: Regional Planning Committee
From: Laura Thompson and Mark Shorett ABAG staff
Subject: **Priority Conservation Area Program Update**

Summary

Staff is requesting that the RPC recommend that the Executive Board adopt an updated application process and criteria for Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs). This memo and its attachments provide context for the proposed update and introduces new application guidelines and criteria.

Background

The Priority Conservation Area (PCA) program was initiated in 2007 to identify Bay Area open spaces that: 1) provide regionally significant agricultural, natural resource, scenic, recreational, and/or ecological values and ecosystem functions; 2) are in urgent need of protection due to pressure from urban development or other factors; and 3) supported by local consensus. The PCAs were established at the same time as the locally nominated Priority Development Areas (PDAs) through the FOCUS program. Together, the PDAs and PCAs have informed the development of Plan Bay Area and implementation initiatives such as the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG).

The PCA program helped spur collaboration between local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations to nominate more than 100 PCAs. Nominations were reviewed by staff, regional committees, and local governments. The ABAG Executive Board adopted the first set of PCAs on July 17, 2008.

The first PCA projects were funded in 2013 and 2014 through OBAG. OBAG provided \$5 million in funding for a competitive program in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, and Contra Costa counties managed by the Coastal Conservancy. Another \$5 million in OBAG funding was divided between the North Bay county Congestion Management Agencies—each of which managed its own program.

During meetings in 2012 and 2013, the ABAG Regional Planning Committee and Executive Board requested that staff revise the PCA program to provide greater specificity about the qualities and function of different types of PCAs—using an approach more in line with the Place Types utilized to categorize PDAs. In addition, RPC and Executive Board members stressed the importance of urban parks and green spaces. This feedback was formalized in Plan Bay Area, which directs staff to update the program to define the role of different kinds of PCAs and ensure that local jurisdictions are consulted on updates to individual PCAs.

PCA Program Update

As part of the broader Plan Bay Area Implementation effort, over the past six months ABAG staff worked with local jurisdictions, the ABAG administrative committee and stakeholders to develop a proposed PCA program update. The update addresses the Open Space and Farmland implementation area. The attachments to this memo provide more detailed guidelines for PCA nominations, review and adoption. These are summarized below.

Updated PCA Application Process and Requirements (Attachment 2)

The proposed application process requires that PCA nominations include:

- 1) An adopted resolution of support from the jurisdiction(s) in which it is located
- 2) A map and text describing the general area and boundaries of the PCA
- 3) Selection of one or more of the PCA designations described below and text and supporting text and data
- 4) Discussion of the regional and local importance of the PCA

Following feedback from the RPC, staff will provide a revised application form for adoption by the Executive Board and sample resolution to assist applicants.

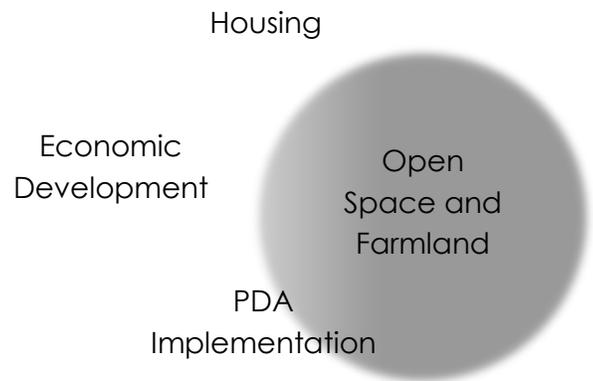
Sponsors of both existing and proposed PCAs are required to complete the application. Sponsors of existing PCAs can reference original applications to meet the first, second, and fourth requirements.

PCA Designations and Criteria (Attachment 3)

The update introduces four categories to recognize the role of different kinds of PCAs in supporting the vitality of the region's natural systems, rural economy and human health:

- **Natural Landscapes**—areas critical to the functioning of wildlife and plant habitats, aquatic ecosystems and the region's water supply and quality. Examples: wetland restoration, riparian corridor protection.
- **Agricultural Lands**—farmland, grazing land and timberland that support the region's agricultural economy and provide additional benefits such as habitat protection and carbon capture. Example: conservation easements.
- **Urban Greening**—existing and potential green spaces in cities that improve community health, capture carbon emissions, address stormwater, and enhance the public realm.

Figure 1. **Plan Bay Area Implementation Focus Areas**



Example: urban portion of riparian corridors, potential sites for parks and community gardens.

- **Regional Recreation**—existing and potential regional parks, trails, and other publicly accessible recreation facilities. Examples: regional trail networks, areas for potential regional park expansion.

Benefits and potential co-benefits are identified for each designation (i.e. wildlife and plant habitat, agricultural economy). Applicants are required to discuss how the PCA provides these benefits—referencing data and maps. ABAG will provide resources (e.g. maps, databases, etc) to assist applicants in this process, drawing upon data published by federal and state sources as well as scientific research.

Timeline for New and Updated PCA Applications

April 2014: PCA Program update—including Application Process and PCA Designations—recommended by the RPC to the Executive Board for adoption.

May 2014: PCA Program update adopted by Executive Board.

June 1, 2014: Beginning of PCA application period. New and existing PCAs must submit application. Existing PCAs can reference portions of previous PCA applications (i.e. adopted resolution of support by local jurisdiction) to meet relevant requirements.

May 30, 2015: Deadline for PCA applications. Existing PCA designations will be removed if no application has been filed.

June 2015: Following staff review, RPC recommends PCA nominations to the Executive Board for adoption

July 2015: Executive Board adopts PCA nominations recommended for adoption by the RPC.

Future funding sources

The PCA update does not address funding. However, the designations are designed to position PCAs for both cross-cutting and targeted funding sources. For example, an urban greening and a regional recreation project might be eligible for different sources of targeted grant funding, but both may be eligible for a broad funding source supporting projects that improve public health while creating green space.

Attachments

Attachment 1: PCA Program Overview

Attachment 2: Updated PCA Application Process and Requirements

Attachment 3: Proposed PCA Designations

ATTACHMENT 1: OVERVIEW OF CURRENT PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS

Overview of Current Priority Conservation Areas

There are currently 101 Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) throughout the Bay Area. The PCAs were nominated by jurisdictions, park and open space districts and non-profit organizations. The first 98 were adopted by the ABAG Executive Board in 2008 and three additional PCAs adopted earlier in December 2013 as part of applications for One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) funding.

The intent of the PCA program is to identify Bay Area open spaces that: 1) provide regionally significant agricultural, natural resource, scenic, recreational, and/or ecological values and ecosystem functions; and 2) are in urgent need of protection due to pressure from urban development or other factors; 3) and are supported by local consensus. The PCAs are envisioned as a framework for directing future regional funding for acquiring open space and conservation easements.

Most PCAs were nominated by local jurisdictions, park districts, or open space districts. A handful were nominated by non-profit organizations such as land trusts. The majority are natural resource or regional recreation areas, with a smaller number of agricultural areas and urban greenways and riparian corridors.

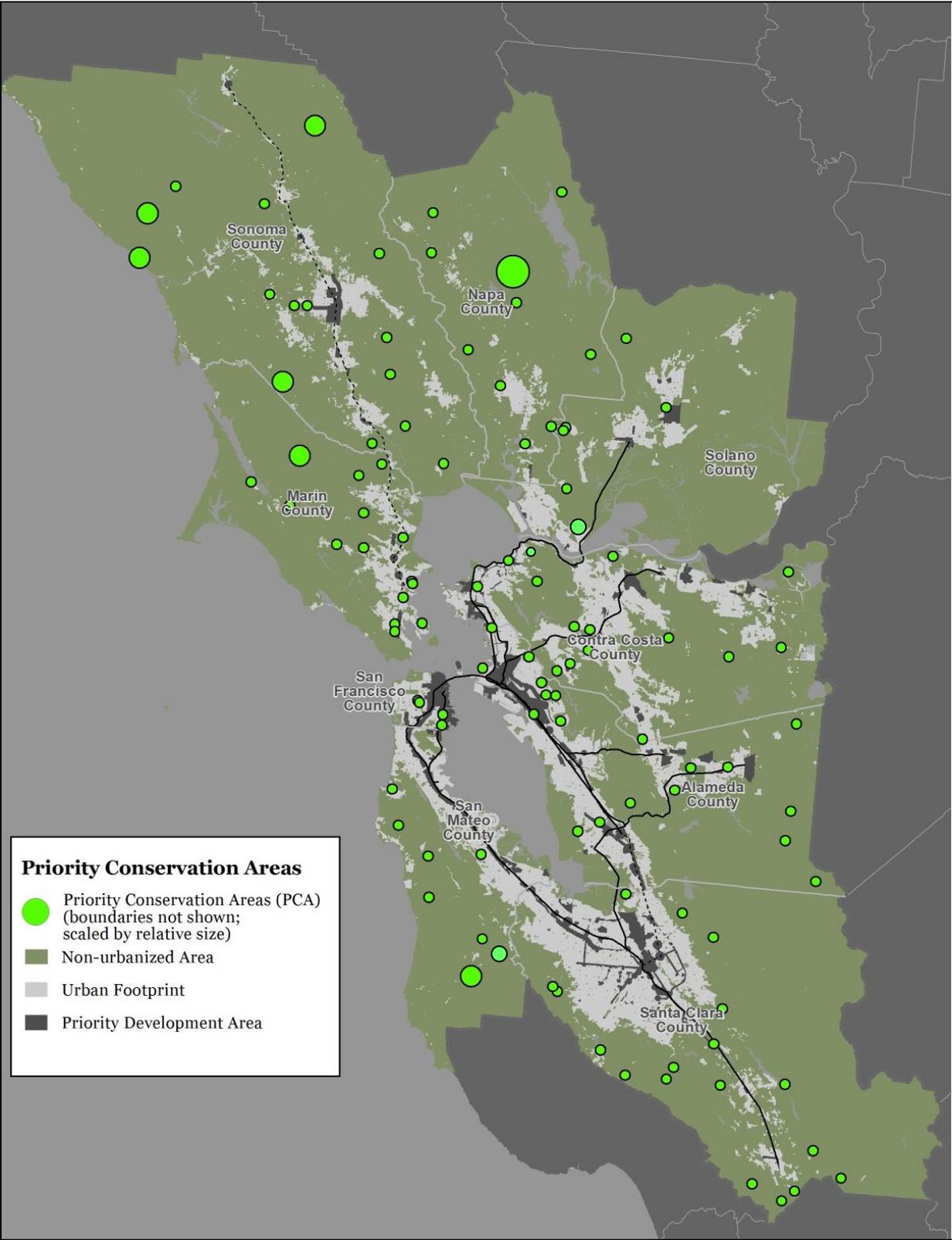
Map 1 shows PCAs throughout the region. The size of the dots representing each PCA reflects its relative size in acres. Table 1 shows the distribution of PCAs by County.

Table 1. Distribution of PCAs by County

County	Number of PCAs
Alameda	16
Contra Costa	13
Marin	14
Napa	9
San Francisco	4
San Mateo	7
Santa Clara	17
Solano	5
Sonoma	14
Multi-County	2
Total	101

ATTACHMENT 1: OVERVIEW OF CURRENT PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS

Map 1. Bay Area Priority Conservation Areas



ATTACHMENT 2: PCA APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Updated PCA Nomination Process and Requirements

This attachment outlines the steps required for Priority Conservation Area nominations. Following adoption by the RPC, staff will formalize this proposed process into an updated application form for adoption by the Executive Board. The form will be posted to the ABAG website and disseminated to local jurisdictions and stakeholders.

1. Complete Application Form

Each applicant must complete a full application including the following sections:

Area Information

- Proposed Name
- Description
- Location (include map and text description)
- Acreage

Sponsor(s)

- Lead jurisdiction/district/organization and staff contact
- Partner jurisdiction(s)/district(s)/organization(s) and staff contact

Eligibility

- Adopted resolution from City Council or Board of Supervisors of jurisdiction in which PCA is located
- PCA Type Designation
 - Selected Designation (Natural Resource Lands, Agricultural Lands, Urban Greening, or Regional Recreation)
 - Text, data and/or maps demonstrating how the PCA will provide the primary benefit of the relevant designation, as well as any additional co-benefits (*as determined by applicant*)

Attachments

- Copy of adopted City Council or Board of Supervisors resolution of support
- If any, support letters from partner agencies and organizations (*not required*)
- If any, additional data, mapping, supportive local policies or other materials documenting eligibility (*not required*)

2. Submit application to ABAG staff for review

Applicants must submit the completed application to ABAG staff for review. Relevant staff will be posted on the ABAG website and noted on the application form. Staff will contact the applicants with any questions or requests for additional information.

3. PCA Adoption

After confirming eligibility, staff will submit a recommendation to the ABAG Executive Board to adopt the PCA.

ATTACHMENT 2: PCA APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Clarifications

- **Land Use Control.** Adoption of a PCA does not change the zoning, general plan designation, or other land use designation of the geographic area encompassed by the PCA. Local jurisdictions retain full control over land use decisions. ABAG does not have authority over land use.
- **Eligible Applicants.** Non-profit organizations, park districts, open space districts, and other entities can submit a PCA application as long as it includes an adopted resolution from the City Council or Board of Supervisors in which the PCA is located.
- **Removing or Modifying PCAs.** Jurisdictions seeking to remove an existing PCA do not need to take any action other than choosing not to submit a new application for that PCA.