

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

**DATE:** May 13, 2015

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Parks Department Staff

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Designations of Priority Conservation Areas in San Mateo County

**PROPOSAL**

Consider proposed designations of Priority Conservation Areas in San Mateo County.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Planning Commission recommends to the Board of Supervisors that they approve a resolution recommending to the Association of Bay Area Governments the designation of ten Priority Conservation Areas in San Mateo County by adopting the findings contained in Attachment A.

**BACKGROUND**

The designation of Priority Conservation Areas (PCA; PCA Program) was created through Plan Bay Area, a long range, integrated transportation and land use/housing strategy through 2040 for the San Francisco Bay Area, approved by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Executive Board and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in July 2013. The PCA Program was updated in July 2014 to provide a public process for nominating new PCAs.

PCAs are intended to identify lands of conservation significance that are broadly supported by public and local jurisdictions to be eligible for future PCA Program funding. PCA designations are strictly for grant funding purposes only. PCAs are neither regulatory in nature, nor do they have any effect on land use or zoning designations or future local land use decisions. They are intended to align with and build upon local General Plan strategies for open space conservation to remain consistent with local policies and objectives. This PCA designation process creates a list of regionally significant areas that have the potential for conservation, restoration, agriculture, and/or public access. Specific projects within a designated PCA may be eligible and/or better positioned for future funding. In fact, specific funding sources may favor PCAs.

Report Prepared By: Sam Herzberg, Senior Planner, AICP, Telephone, 650/363-1823

Applicants: San Mateo County Parks; Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Location: Countywide

General Plan Designation: Various

Existing Land Use: Various

Environmental Evaluation: Not applicable, but not considered a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

## **DISCUSSION**

### **A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) is proposing the following six PCAs be designated: (1) Miramontes Ridge, (2) North Skyline, (3) Teague Hill, (4) Southern San Mateo County Coast, (5) Windy Hill, and (6) South Skyline. The County is recommending the following four PCAs be designated: (1) San Bruno Mountain, (2) Pedro Point Headlands, (3) California Coastal Trail, and (4) San Francisco Bay Water Trail.

Park staff has been working with Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) staff on two of their proposals for PCA designation that have a direct County Park impact: (1) Teague Hill and (2) South San Mateo County Coast. Teague Hill is unplanned open space located between Huddart and Wunderlich County Parks. The Huddart/Wunderlich Master Plan recommends collaboration with MROSD when a Master Plan is proposed for Teague Hill and parking lot and trail improvements are considered.

MROSD is also proposing the South San Mateo County Coast be designated a PCA from a regional recreation and agriculture protection standpoint as the California Coastal Trail is developed. County Parks' interests in this area include a scenic 14-acre parcel south of the Pigeon Point Lighthouse where the Parks Department recently had a fence and bollards installed to prevent off-road access, and will be restoring compacted areas from prior vehicle access.

The Coastal Conservancy has requested County support for the California Coastal Trail and San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail PCA designations in San Mateo County. The Coastal Conservancy is soliciting resolutions in support of California Coastal Trail designation from the cities of Half Moon Bay, Pacifica and Daly City. Types of County Parks' projects that may benefit from this designation include completion of gaps in the California Coastal Trail such as the 1-acre property south of the Pigeon Point Lighthouse, Green Valley Trail, and Point Pedro Headlands in the future. The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail PCA

designation may help with future improvements at the Eastern Coyote Point Promenade and Coyote Point Marina.

The County has worked with San Bruno Mountain Watch to secure resolutions from the cities of Brisbane, Colma, Daly City, and South San Francisco on a PCA proposed within the San Bruno Mountain State and County Park. The cities of Brisbane and South San Francisco are also interested in some additional lands within their jurisdiction being included outside of the State and County Park for habitat and watershed protection purposes as well as to facilitate regional recreational trail (Bay Trail and Ridge Trail) as well as public transit access.

The Point Pedro Headlands currently owned by the California Coastal Conservancy and City of Pacifica are expected to be transferred to San Mateo County Parks in the future. While the County is not the property owner at this time, the agencies owning the property are in agreement that the County should be the applicant to nominate Pedro Point Headlands for a PCA. The City of Pacifica has adopted a resolution supporting PCA designation. A PCA designation would create opportunities for not only California Coastal Trail funding, but also grant funding for restoring prior motorcycle park legacy erosion impacts and vegetation management.

There is considerable consensus about the proposed PCA designations Countywide. The only concerns raised have been from the Agricultural Advisory Committee who was supportive of MROSD's proposed Southern San Mateo County PCA designation because it could benefit agriculture, but also expressed concerns that there could be potential conflicts with working agricultural lands and future development of the California Coastal Trail. The County Parks Regional Trail Master Plan has design and management guidelines for regional trail development that meet County General Plan policies to prevent trail conflicts on working agricultural lands.

## B. GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY

### 1. Vegetative, Water, Fish, and Wildlife Policies

- a. Policy 1.25 (Protect Water Resources): Requires the County to ensure that development will: (1) minimize the alteration of natural water bodies; (2) maintain adequate stream flows and water quality for vegetative, fish and wildlife habitats; (3) maintain and improve, if possible, the quality of groundwater basins and recharge areas; and (4) prevent to the greatest extent possible the depletion of groundwater resources. The PCA designation process has the potential to attract grant funding to encourage projects that protect and improve County vegetative, water, fish and wildlife policies.

- b. Policy 1.49 (Support Resource Management Efforts of Other Agencies): Requires the County to recognize, encourage and cooperate with the efforts of public agencies and private groups which are consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of this chapter. Following designation of PCAs either the County of San Mateo, MROSD, or Resource Conservation District will likely be potential grant applicants with private or public property owners and will work with other agencies to ensure projects proposed are in line with the goals, objectives, and policies of the County General Plan Vegetative, Water, Fish and Wildlife policies either as applicant or should permits be required for specific projects.

2. Soil Resources Policies

Policy 2.29 (Promote and Support Soil Erosion Stabilization and Repair Efforts): Requires that the County promote and support efforts aimed at stabilization of ongoing soil erosion and repair caused land scars. PCA designation of the southern San Mateo County Coast by MROSD or the Pedro Point Headlands by San Mateo County would create grant opportunities to address soil stabilization and minimize erosion by the Resource Conservation District working with the agricultural community or the County addressing historical land use respectively.

3. Park and Recreation Resources Policies

- a. Policy 6.12 (Minimize Agricultural Land Use Conflicts): Requires that agricultural lands be preserved for agricultural uses and that recreation improvements include clearly defined buffers between these two uses to minimize land use conflicts. Where potential agriculture and the California Coastal Trail may be improved in the MROSD proposed designation of the Southern San Mateo County Coast, the County Parks Trail Master Plan also provides Design and Management Guidelines: (1) 6.12.1 to improve signing to minimize private/public conflicts and trespassing, and (2) 6.12.2 to avoid conflicts between recreational and agricultural use by means of distance, barriers (i.e., fences), or other non-disruptive methods.
- b. Policy 6.38 (Trail System Coordination): Supports, encourages, and recommends participation in the development of a system of trails that link park and recreation facilities within this County and adjacent counties. All of the proposed PCA designations have the potential to secure grant funding to implement regional trails identified in the County Regional Trail Master Plan, and the new San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail.

- c. Policy 6.40 (Alternative Revenue Sources): Requires initiation, promotion and support liaisons with other governmental agencies and the private sector to develop alternative revenue sources. By designating the ten proposed PCAs in San Mateo County, it creates the opportunity for grant funding. If these PCAs were not designated, they would not otherwise be eligible for grant funding based on new requirements that are only available to designated PCAs.

4. Water Supply Policies

Policy 10.22 (Developing Off-Stream Storage for Agriculture): Encourages the construction of small off-stream impoundments that draw water from peak winter stream flow for agricultural irrigation. PCA designation of the Southern San Mateo County Coast by MROSD would create grant opportunities for the agricultural community to address off-stream storage impoundments for agricultural use if the property owners work with the Resource Conservation District or Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

5. Energy and Climate Change Element Goals and Policies

Goal 7: Support sustainable agricultural practices.

Policy 7.1 (Collaborate with Partners to Encourage Voluntary Sustainable Agricultural Practices that Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions), and Implementing Strategy 7.1C: Work with agricultural stakeholders to encourage the preparation and dissemination of tools for sustainable agricultural practices, including new technologies. PCA designation of the Southern San Mateo County Coast by MROSD would create grant opportunities for the agricultural community to address sustainable agricultural practices and new technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions if the property owners work with the Resource Conservation District or Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

C. LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM CONFORMITY

Recreation/Visitor Serving Facilities Component

Policy 11.13 (Trails): Recommends establishing a trails program for the Coastal Zone with the objective of: (1) connecting major shoreline to inland park and recreation facilities and trails, and (2) linking existing and proposed recreation facilities along the coast. PCA designations of the Pedro Point Headlands, California Coastal Trail, and Southern San Mateo County Coast by MROSD would create grant opportunities for the development of park and trail facilities if the property owners work with the County of San Mateo, Cities of Daly City, Pacifica,

and Half Moon Bay, State Parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, or Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This is not a project under CEQA. This action would not change any land use designations or cause any development entitlements.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Recommended Findings to the Board of Supervisors
- B. Chronology
- C. ABAG PCA Frequently Asked Questions
- D. MROSD Letter to County Manager John Maltbie
- E. Map of Existing and Proposed PCAs in San Mateo County

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County of San Mateo  
Planning and Building Department

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

Hearing Date: May 13, 2015

Prepared By: Sam Herzberg  
Senior Planner

For Adoption By: Planning Commission

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Find that:

1. The proposed designation of Priority Conservation Areas conforms to the County General Plan. Specifically, the proposed project conforms to the Vegetative, Water, Fish and Wildlife Resources, Soil Resources, Water Supply, and Climate Change Policies of the General Plan.
2. The proposed designation of Priority Conservation Areas conforms to the County Local Coastal Program. Specifically, the proposed project conforms to the Recreation/Visitor Serving Facilities Component of the Local Coastal Program.

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## **Chronology of Public Outreach regarding Priority Conservation Area (PCA)**

### **Designation:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
July 18, 2013	- The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Executive Board and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) approved Plan Bay Area, a long range, integrated transportation and land use/housing strategy through 2040 for the San Francisco Bay Area. Plan Bay Area includes the designation of Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) to balance housing and transportation demands with the need to preserve the region's diverse farming, recreational, scenic, and natural resource lands and their many ecological values and ecosystem functions for future generations.
July 17, 2014	- The PCA Program was updated in July 2014 to provide a public process for nominating new PCAs in the second round of PCA applications and confirming existing PCAs that were initially approved in the first round of PCA applications in 2007. Nominating parties are now limited to city and county jurisdictions, and park and open space special districts.
July 17, 2014	- City of Brisbane adopts Resolution No. 2014-32 in support of the San Bruno Mountain State and County Park being designated a regional PCA including specific properties within Brisbane.
October 14, 2014	- Town of Colma adopts Resolution No. 2014-45 in support of the San Bruno Mountain State and County Park being designated a regional Priority Conservation Area.
January 29, 2015	- Notification letter sent to the San Mateo County Manager from Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) re: proposed PCAs being nominated by MROSD staff in San Mateo County and PCAs that may be located within the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County within a City or Town's sphere of influence.
February 2, 2015	- San Mateo County Parks receives request from the California Coastal Conservancy that the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors supports designation of the California Coastal Trail as a Priority Conservation Area.



- February 9, 2015 - City of Daly City adopts Resolution No. 15-20 in support of the San Bruno Mountain State and County Park being designated a regional PCA including the newly acquired Sand Dune properties.
- February 25, 2015 - City of South San Francisco adopts Resolution No. 19-2015 in support of the San Bruno Mountain State and County Park being designated a regional PCA including specific properties within South San Francisco's jurisdiction.
- March 24, 2015 - Town of Woodside adopts Resolution No. 2015-7037 in support of MROSD nomination of Woodside Open Space as a PCA within their sphere of influence.
- March 27, 2015 - Town of Portola Valley adopts Resolution No. 2647-2015 in support of MROSD nomination of Portola Valley Open Space within their sphere of influence.
- April 6, 2015 - Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District gives a presentation on their proposed PCA designations to the County Farm Bureau.
- April 9, 2015 - San Mateo County Park and Recreation Commission hearing to recommend PCA designations to County Board of Supervisors.
- April 13, 2015 - San Mateo County Parks and MROSD give a presentation to Agricultural Advisory Committee on proposed PCA designations with focus on southern San Mateo County coast.
- April 14, 2015 - MROSD gives a presentation to Pescadero Municipal Advisory Committee on proposed PCA designations with focus on southern San Mateo County coast.
- April 27, 2015 - Pacifica City Council approved Resolution No. 10-2015 in support of the Pedro Point Headlands PCA designation
- May 13, 2015 - Planning Commission hearing to recommend PCA designations to County Board of Supervisors.

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# Priority Conservation Areas

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What types of agencies/organizations are eligible to apply for PCAs?**

Cities, counties and park/open space districts are eligible to apply to ABAG for PCA designation. Federal and state agencies, as well as non-profit organizations, are not eligible to apply, but may work with local jurisdictions or park/open space districts to encourage a PCA application to ABAG.

### **Is a PCA a land use designation? Does it change the local zoning requirements or restrict development rights?**

No. A PCA designation does not in any way change the land use status for a piece of property. The local jurisdiction maintains planning and permitting authority over the property and private property owners maintain their development rights.

### **Can PCAs be designated on private property?**

Yes. Designation of a PCA on private property does not change the local land use designation, zoning or the ability for the property to be developed in the future.

### **Is the PCA designation process also a grant program?**

No. The PCA designation process creates a list of regionally-significant areas that have the potential for conservation, restoration and public access. Specific projects within these designated PCAs may be eligible for future funding.

### **What types of future funding sources would designated PCA's qualify for?**

The One Bay Area PCA Grant Program requires that all projects be located within a designated PCA. Other sources of funding for natural landscapes, agricultural lands, urban greening and regional recreation may or may not use the PCA designation in the set of criteria for grant awards. It is possible that other grant funding sources, such as a potential new state park bond, would also include PCA designation as part of the evaluation criteria.

### **When will the next One Bay Area Grant Program start?**

The first PCA grant program was launched in 2013. A new PCA grant program has not been scheduled yet.

### **If a regional open space district nominates a PCA in a local jurisdiction and it is approved, can the local jurisdiction use this PCA designation for future grant applications?**

Yes.

### **Does modifying an existing PCA boundary require that it go through the designation process as if it was a new PCA?**

The process of identifying designations and community benefits for existing PCAs presents an ideal time to modify PCA boundaries. A two to three sentence request to modify PCA boundaries and a clear description of the proposed boundary modification should be included with the submission identifying the PCA category designation and community benefits selection.

### **What city and county departments should be notified of new or existing PCAs?**

PCA notifications should be sent to county planning administrators and city planning directors.

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[Contact Us](#)



Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

GENERAL MANAGER  
Stephen E. Abbors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Pete Siemens  
Yoriko Kishimoto  
Jed Cyr  
Curt Riffle  
Nonette Hanko  
Larry Hassett  
Cecily Harris

January 29, 2015

County Manager John L. Maltbie  
County of San Mateo  
400 County Center  
Redwood City, CA 94063

SUBJECT: Proposed Priority Conservation Area within San Mateo County

Dear County Manager Maltbie:

In July 2013, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Executive Board and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) approved Plan Bay Area, a long-range, integrated transportation and land-use/housing strategy through 2040 for the San Francisco Bay Area. Plan Bay Area includes the designation of Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) to balance housing and transportation demands with the need to preserve the region's diverse farming, recreational, scenic, and natural resource lands and their many ecological values and ecosystem functions for future generations.

PCAs are intended to identify lands of conservation significance that are broadly supported by the public and local jurisdictions to be eligible for future PCA Program funding and potentially other conservation-based funding. PCA designations are strictly for grant funding purposes only, to identify lands of key open space importance that merit grant funding. PCAs are neither regulatory in nature, nor do they have any effect on local land use or zoning designations or future local land use decisions. They are, however, intended to align with and build upon local General Plan strategies for open space conservation to remain consistent with local policies and objectives.

PCAs are of high importance to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen), as these designations will affect future funding opportunities for land conservation and recreation on the Peninsula. Midpen is reaching out to the County of San Mateo at this time to notify you of the proposed new PCA designation that is being considered within your jurisdiction, for which Midpen has already initiated conversations with staff from the County Planning Department and County Parks and Recreation Department (see Attachment 1 for PCA Map and Attachment 2 for PCA description). Over the next three (3) months, Midpen will continue to work alongside County Planning and County Parks and Recreation Department to further develop and refine these PCAs to ensure that the PCAs are aligned with the County's conservation strategies. Midpen anticipates submitting an application to ABAG by the May 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for PCA nominations.

If you have questions about the PCA Program and Midpen's proposed PCAs within San Mateo County, please do not hesitate in contacting me at (650) 691-1200 or via email at [SAbbors@openspace.org](mailto:SAbbors@openspace.org).

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve E. Abbors for SEA".

Stephen E. Abbors  
General Manager

Attachments: Map of proposed PCAs within San Mateo County  
Table of PCA Designations

CC (email): Joanna Bullock, Association of Bay Area Governments  
Steve Monowitz, Planning Director, County of San Mateo  
Marlene Finley, Parks and Recreation Director, County of San Mateo



ATTACHMENT

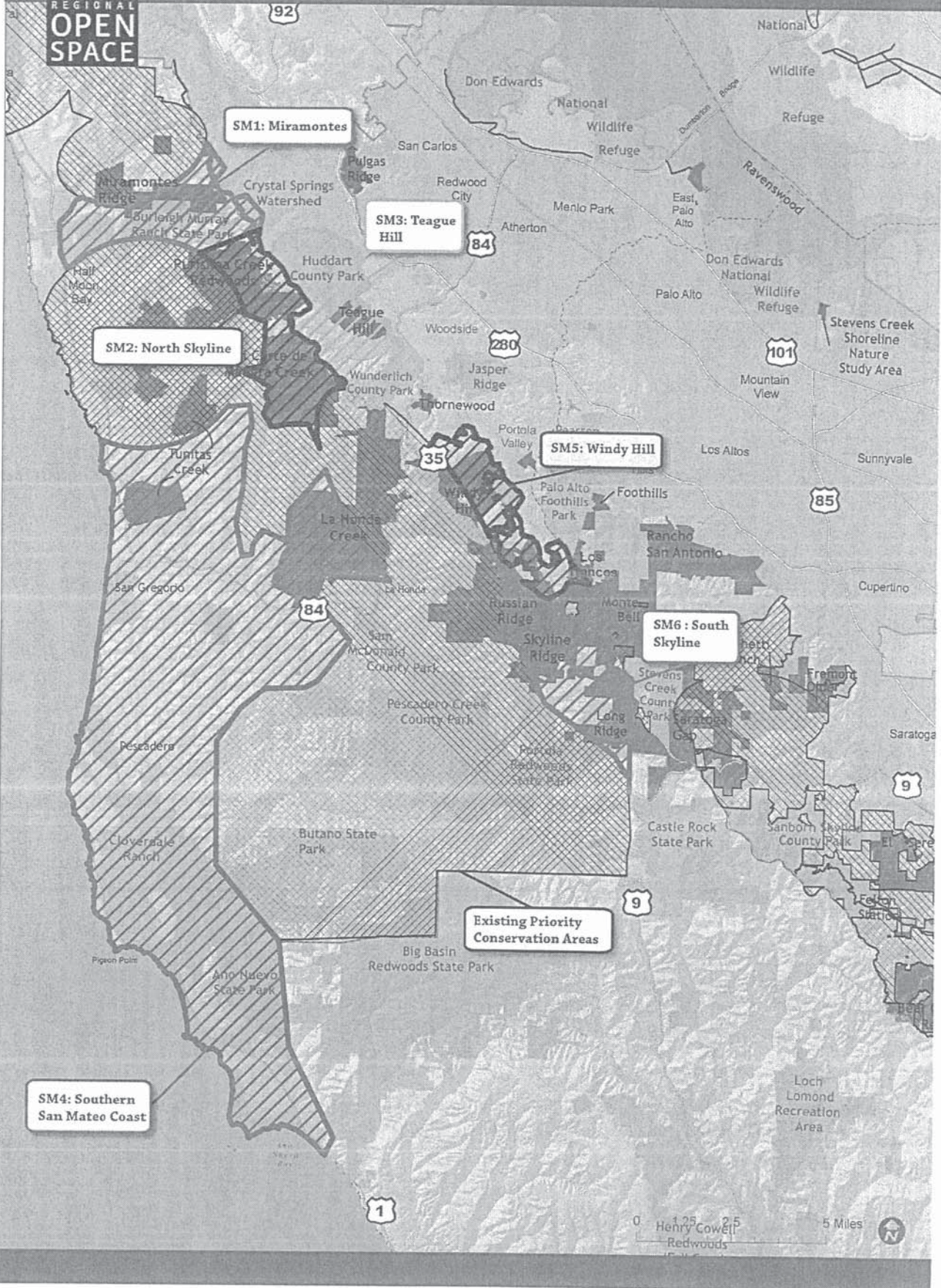
Proposed PCAs within San Mateo County

Map Key	Tentative PCA Name	Open Space Preserves	Affected Jurisdictions	Midpen Open Space Vision Plan Priority Areas	Proposed Designations
SM1	Miramontes	Miramontes Ridge	County of San Mateo	1, 27 & 28	Regional Recreation, Natural Landscapes, Agricultural Lands
SM2	North Skyline	Purissima and El Corte de Madera Creek	County of San Mateo	3, 4, & 33	Regional Recreation, Natural Landscapes
SM3	Teague Hill	Teague Hill	County of San Mateo, Woodside	34	Regional Recreation, Natural Landscapes
SM4	Southern San Mateo Coast	Tunitas Creek	County of San Mateo	3, 4 & 33	Regional Recreation, Natural Landscapes, Agricultural Lands
SM5	Windy Hill	Windy Hill	County of San Mateo, Portola Valley	7, 13, 14, 32, 39, 42, 43, 44 & 48	Regional Recreation, Natural Landscapes, Agricultural Lands
SM6	South Skyline	Russian Ridge, Skyline Ridge, and Long Ridge	County of San Mateo	15, 16, & 46	Regional Recreation, Natural Landscapes, Agricultural Lands





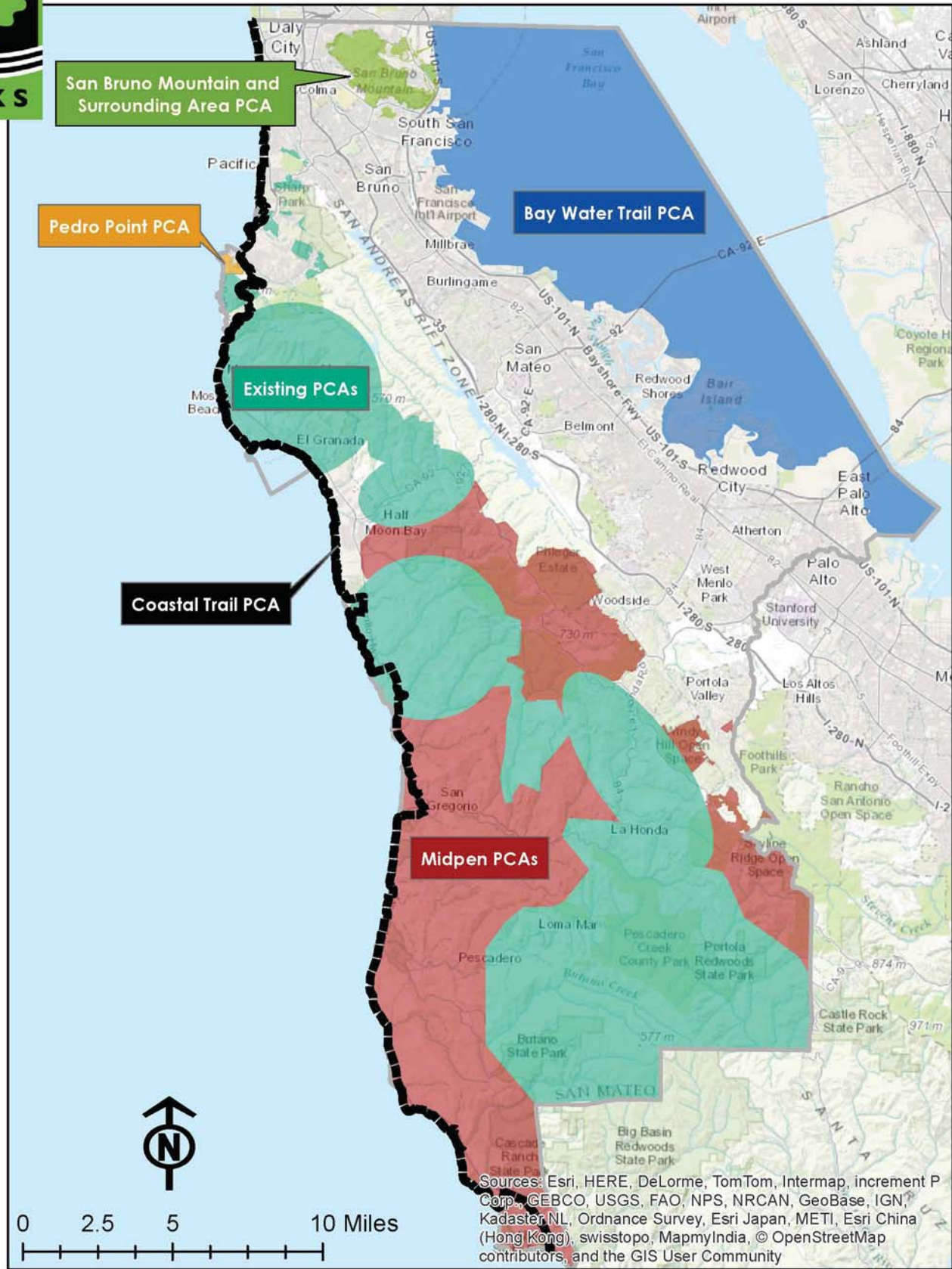
# Proposed Priority Conservation Areas San Mateo County







# Proposed and Existing Priority Conservation Areas



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

## Legend

- Existing Priority Conservation Areas
- Pedro Point PCA
- County Boundary
- San Bruno Mountain and Surrounding Areas PCA
- Bay Water Trail PCA
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District PCAs
- Coastal Trail PCA