



## **PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

**APPLICATION:** GPA2020-0001/ZA2020-0001    **AGENDA ITEM:** PH-4  
**PREPARED BY:** Craig Jimenez, Director    **MEETING DATE:** December 11, 2019  
Community Development

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**SUBJECT:** General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001(Resolution No. 2020-01)  
Zone Amendment ZA2020-0001 (Ordinance No. 2020-01)  
General Plan Conformity GPC2019-0006  
Planning Commission Resolutions PCR2019-0019 and PCR2019-0020;  
APN 8503-001-020 and 8503-016-009

**REQUEST:** The City recently acquired two vacant parcels of hillside property through a donation for open space preservation. This request is to change the General Plan and Zoning designations that allow 1 residence for every 3 acres to Hillside Wilderness Preserve (HWP) for APN 8503-001-020; and to change the General Plan and Zoning designation from Residential Foothill (RF) to Hillside Wilderness Preserve (HWP) for APN 8503-016-009. Determine that the acquisition of the property and the proposed HWP designation to limit the use of the property for permanent open space is in conformity with the Monrovia General Plan.

**APPLICANT:** City of Monrovia

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** Exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR §15061(b)(3))

**BACKGROUND:** As a result of a decade-long planning process, the Hillside Wilderness Preserve (HWP) and Hillside Recreation (HR) land use designations were adopted and added to the General Plan and the HWP and HR zones were added to the Zoning Ordinance by the City Council in 2000. The actions of the City Council were ratified through the passage of Measure A in a special election on July 11, 2000. The intent of these designations is to identify and preserve open space in perpetuity. The HWP designation specifically, was created to be applied to hillside property owned and acquired by the City in future years for this purpose.

Since that time, the City has acquired over 550 acres of hillside property through purchase and donation; the Monrovia Hillside Wilderness Preserve now encompasses over 1,400 acres.

Earlier this year, the City received a donation of two undeveloped hillside parcels from Eric Janssens and Violet Ouyang. As a condition of the donation, the City agreed to designate this property as permanent open space. A General Plan Amendment and Zone Change are proposed to change the land use and zoning designations of this property to Hillside Wilderness Preserve and HWP, respectfully.

**SUBJECT PROPERTY:** The subject property is comprised of two contiguous vacant hillside parcels. The topography is moderately steep with a prominent ridgeline.

**Parcel 1** (APN 8503-001-020): This parcel is 154,923 square feet in area (3.6 acres) and irregular in shape. It does not have street frontage. The property is within the Cloverleaf Canyon Specific Plan and has an allowable residential density of one dwelling unit per three acres (1du/3ac) which is the land use designation as well as the zoning designation. Based on the provisions of the Cloverleaf Canyon Specific Plan, the maximum density of this property is one dwelling unit. The west property line abuts the Monrovia Hillside Wilderness Preserve. To the north and east are residential properties in the Cloverleaf Canyon Specific Plan and the RL (Residential Low Density) zone, respectively. The properties to the south (including the other subject parcel) are in the RF (Residential Foothill) zone.

**Parcel 2** (APN 8503-016-009): This parcel is 83,331 square feet in area (1.9 acres) and is irregularly shaped. Access is provided via an alley at the northern terminus of Highland Place. The property is zoned RF (Residential Foothill). Based on the provisions in the Zoning Ordinance, the parcel could be developed with one dwelling unit. To the west are single family developed parcels fronting on Highland Place in the RF zone. To the north is the other subject parcel which is in the Cloverleaf Canyon Specific Plan. To the east and south are parcels in the RF Zone.

**DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:** Since the passage of Measures A and B in 2000, the City has aggressively pursued the acquisition of vacant hillside property as well as explored various additional funding opportunities. This has resulted in the acquisition of over 550 acres of hillside land which brings the total amount of hillside open space property owned by the City of Monrovia to 1,416 acres (excluding City-owned property within the Angeles National Forest).

The City was approached by the property owners of the 5.5 acre subject property regarding the possible donation of the property for open space. Over the past year, staff has been working with the owners to finalize the donation, which was recorded on September 3, 2019. As a condition of the donation, the City is required to designate the property as Hillside Wilderness Preserve within 180 days of recordation.

### **Land Use/Zoning Designations**

When the City acquires hillside property intended for open space, the Land Use designation in the General Plan as well as the zoning is changed. The determination of the appropriate designation depends on the anticipated use of the property based on the definitions in the Land Use Element of the General Plan:

- “Hillside Wilderness Preserve: This classification is designated for preserving open space land left in its natural state including preservation of endangered habitats and species, wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors, open space for passive recreation uses such as hiking and nature studies, utility easements and reservoirs, and nature centers and educational facilities. The HWP designation is only assigned to land owned by or conveyed to a public agency, Public Trust or conservancy and for lands with irrevocable offers to dedicate to the City.”
- “Hillside Recreation: This classification is designated for public wilderness parks and private recreational camp facilities. Recreational uses such as hiking and riding trails, nature centers, educational and incidental facilities associated with outdoor recreation are permitted. Monrovia Canyon Park, Arcadia Wilderness Park, and Trask Boy Scout Camp are currently within this designation.”

### **General Plan Amendment/Zone Change**

As the long term use of this property is intended for passive open space, staff recommends that the land use and zoning designations be changed to Hillside Wilderness Preserve and HWP. This requires two actions by the City:

- General Plan Amendment. Amend the land use designation for subject property to Hillside Wilderness Preserve. This requires a “map amendment”, as opposed to a “text amendment”, to the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The General Plan is amended by resolution of the City Council. The proposed General Plan Amendment is contained in (City Council) Resolution No. 2020-01. The Planning Commission’s recommendation on the General Plan Amendment is contained in Planning Commission Resolution No. PCR2019-0019.
- Zoning Amendment. Amend the Official Zoning Map referenced in the Zoning Ordinance of the Monrovia Municipal Code to change the zoning designations on the properties to HWP. The Municipal Code is amended by an ordinance of the City Council. The proposed zoning amendment is contained in Ordinance No. 2020-01. The Planning Commission’s recommendation on the Zoning Amendment (Ordinance) is contained in Planning Commission Resolution No. PCR2019-0020.

When a property is designated either HWP or HR, voter approval is required to change it to another designation. Also, just as a housekeeping note, the entitlements are numbered “2020” which reflects the anticipated year that the request will be acted on by the City Council.

### ***General Plan Conformity***

Section 65402 of the California Government Code requires the Planning Commission to consider the acquisition of real property by a public agency to determine whether the acquisition conforms to the General Plan. The City’s intent for this property is to incorporate it into the Monrovia Hillside Wilderness Preserve to be maintained as open space in perpetuity. Once the ownership of the property is transferred to the City, the Land Use and zoning designations will be changed from a residential designation to Hillside Wilderness Preserve (HWP). Therefore, the acquisition of these parcels conforms to the General Plan.

### ***California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)***

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Staff has determined that this request falls under the “general rule” of CEQA that states, “that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.”

Staff has determined that the designation of the subject property as Hillside Wilderness Preserve will not have a significant effect because the new General Plan designation and zoning designation will limit the use of the property as passive open space, which will prohibit residential or commercial development of the property in perpetuity meaning that no development of the subject property can occur. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001, Zoning Amendment ZC2020-0001 and General Plan Conformity GPC2019-06. If the Planning Commission concurs with this recommendation then, following the public hearing, following motion is appropriate:

**Close the public hearing and adopt the Planning Commission Resolution Numbers PCR2019-0019 and PCR2019-0020, pursuant to the recommendations in the Staff Report.**

## PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2019-0019

### A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT GPA2020-0001, AMENDING THE LAND USE MAP OF THE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN TO CHANGE THE LAND USE DESIGNATION OF TWO PARCELS TO HILLSIDE WILDERNESS PRESEVE (HWP)

#### RECITALS

(i) On September 9, 2019, a Donation Grant Deed was recorded that conveyed two vacant hillside parcels (APN 8503-001-020 and APN 8503-016-009) (“property”) to the City of Monrovia from Eric Alois Janssens and Violet L. Ouyang. Pursuant to the terms of the Grant Deed, the City will hold and use the property as publicly owned open space in perpetuity and would undertake the public hearing processes required to change the General Plan and zoning designations applicable to the property to Hillside Wilderness Preserve.

(ii) The City of Monrovia has initiated an application to amend the land use map of the Land Use Element of the General Plan to change the residential designation for Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 8503-001-020 from 1 dwelling unit per 3 acres (1du/3ac) to Hillside Wilderness Preserve; and to change the designation for APN 8503-016-009 from Residential Foothill to Hillside Wilderness Preserve as depicted on the map attached as Exhibit “A”, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.

(iii) On December 11, 2019, the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the project, including General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001. At the hearing, all interested persons were given an opportunity to be heard. The Planning Commission received and considered the staff report and all the information, evidence, and testimony presented in connection with this project. At the close of the public hearing, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. PCR2019-0019 recommending approval of GPA2020-0001.

(iv) Environmental Review

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the City's local CEQA Guidelines, City Staff has determined that General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001 is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. City Staff has determined that the adoption of this General Plan Amendment will not have a significant environmental effect because the proposed Hillside Wilderness Preserve will limit the use of the property as passive open space that will prohibit residential or commercial development of the property in perpetuity. Therefore, adoption of this General Plan Amendment is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR § 15061(b)(3)). The Planning Commission has reviewed the project and based upon the whole record before it, in the exercise of its independent judgment and analysis, concurs that City staff has correctly concluded that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the General Plan Amendment may have a significant effect on the environment, and independently, that the General

Plan Amendment is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR § 15061(b)(3)).

(v) The custodian of records for all materials that constitute the record of proceeding upon which this decision is based is the Planning Division Manager. Those documents are available for public review in the Planning Division located at 415 South Ivy Avenue, Monrovia, California 91016.

(vi) All legal prerequisites to the adoption of this Resolution have occurred.

### **RESOLUTION**

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia hereby finds, determines and resolves as follows:

1. The Planning Commission finds that all of the facts set forth in the Recitals of this Resolution are true and correct.
2. Adoption of General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001 will not have a significant effect on the environment for the reasons stated above.
3. The project is in conformance with the environmental goals and policies adopted by the City.
4. The acquisition of this parcel with the intent of preserving it as open space conforms to the General Plan in that this property will be preserved as open space and the land use and zoning designations will be changed to Hillside Wilderness Preserve (HWP) after the property is purchased.
5. The Planning Commission in the exercise of its independent judgment hereby makes the following findings that the proposed General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001 is consistent with the objectives, policies, general land uses, and programs of the City of Monrovia General Plan, and adopted goals and policies of the City:
  - a. The Land Use Element encourages the preservation of open space left in its natural state through the establishment of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve land use designation. This classification is assigned to land owned by or conveyed to a public agency, Public Trust or conservancy for preserving open space land left in its natural state including preservation of endangered habitats and species, wildlife habitats, and wildlife corridors; open space for passive recreation uses such as hiking and nature studies; utility easements and reservoirs; and nature centers and educational facilities.
6. With the concurrent approval of Zone Change ZA2020-0001, the zoning regulations will be consistent with General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001. The subject property will be zoned HWP and will be regulated, consistent with the General Plan, through the standards in the Monrovia Municipal Code.
7. The subject property is physically suitable for the requested land use designation

and the anticipated land use development.

8. General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001 will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare in that it will not affect and, therefore, will provide for the orderly and consistent development in the City.
9. Pursuant to Government Code § 66300(b)(1)(A), affected cities shall not change the general plan designation for any specific parcel where housing is an allowable use to a reduced density or less intensive use below that which was allowed on January 1, 2018. The change in the land use designation to Hillside Wilderness Preserve on these two parcels will reduce the intensity and residential development potential from a total of two dwelling units to zero. However, these properties are located within a very high fire hazard severity zone and pursuant to Government Code § 66300(f)(4), this action is exempt from the provisions of §66300.
10. Based upon the findings and conclusions set forth above, the Planning Commission hereby recommends approval of General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001 to the City Council, which amends the Land Use Element by designating the subject property Hillside Wilderness Preserve
11. The Secretary of the Planning Commission shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** this 11<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2019.

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Gary Schaeffler, Chair  
Monrovia Planning Commission

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

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Craig Jimenez, AICP, Secretary  
Monrovia Planning Commission

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Craig A. Steele, City Attorney  
City of Monrovia



## PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2019-0020

### **A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF ZONING AMENDMENT ZA2020-0001, AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP FOR THE CITY OF MONROVIA TO CHANGE THE RESIDENTIAL ZONING DESIGNATIONS TO HWP (HILLSIDE WILDERNESS PRESERVE) ON TWO VACANT PARCELS RECENTLY DONTATED TO THE CITY**

#### **RECITALS**

(i) On September 9, 2019, a Donation Grant Deed was recorded that conveyed two vacant hillside parcels (APN 8503-001-020 and APN 8503-016-009) (“property”) to the City of Monrovia from Eric Alois Janssens and Violet L. Ouyang. Pursuant to the terms of the Grant Deed, the City will hold and use the property as publicly owned open space in perpetuity and would undertake the public hearing processes required to change the General Plan and zoning designations applicable to the property to Hillside Wilderness Preserve.

(ii) The City of Monrovia has initiated an application to amend the Official Zoning Map (ZA2020-0001) to change the residential zoning designation for Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 8503-001-020 from 1 dwelling unit per 3 acres (1du/3ac) to HWP (Hillside Wilderness Preserve); and to change the designation for APN 8503-016-009 from RF (Residential Foothill) to HWP as depicted on the map attached as Exhibit “A”, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.

(iii) On December 11, 2019, the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia conducted a duly noticed public hearing on Ordinance No. 2020-01, which implements Zone Change ZA2020-0001 by amending the Official Zoning Map as described above. At the hearing, all interested persons were given an opportunity to be heard. The Planning Commission received and considered the staff report and all the information, evidence, and testimony presented in connection with this project. Following the close of the public hearing, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. PCR2019-0020 recommending approval of this Ordinance No. 2020-01.

(iv) Environmental Review

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the City’s local CEQA Guidelines, City Staff has determined that Ordinance No. 2020-01 is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. City Staff has determined that the adoption of Ordinance 2020-01 will not have a significant environmental effect because the proposed HWP zoning designation will limit the use of the property as passive open space that will prohibit residential or commercial development of the property in perpetuity. Therefore, adoption of Ordinance 2020-01 is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR §15061(b)(3)). The Planning Commission independently reviewed and considered the record of this matter and concurred with Staff’s analysis. The City Council has reviewed the project and based upon the whole record before it, in the exercise of its

independent judgment and analysis, concurs that City Staff has correctly concluded that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that adoption of Ordinance No. 2020-01 may have a significant effect on the environment, and independently, that Ordinance No. 2020-01 is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR § 15061(b)(3)).

(v) The custodian of records for all materials that constitute the record of proceeding upon which this decision is based is the Planning Division Manager. Those documents are available for public review in the Planning Division located at 415 South Ivy Avenue, Monrovia, California 91016.

(vi) All legal prerequisites to the adoption of this Resolution have occurred.

### **RESOLUTION**

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Planning Commission of the City of Monrovia hereby finds, determines and resolves as follows:

1. The Planning Commission finds that all of the facts set forth in the Recitals of this Resolution are true and correct.
2. Adoption of Ordinance No. 2020-01 will not have a significant effect on the environment for the reasons stated above.
3. The project is in conformance with the environmental goals and policies adopted by the City.
4. The Planning Commission in the exercise of its independent judgment hereby makes the following findings that the proposed Ordinance No. 2020-01 is consistent with the objectives, policies, general land uses, and programs of the City of Monrovia General Plan, and adopted goals and policies of the City:
  - a. The Land Use Element encourages the preservation of open space left in its natural state through the establishment of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve land use designation. This classification is assigned to land owned by or conveyed to a public agency, Public Trust or conservancy for preserving open space land left in its natural state including preservation of endangered habitats and species, wildlife habitats, and wildlife corridors; open space for passive recreation uses such as hiking and nature studies; utility easements and reservoirs; and nature centers and educational facilities.
5. With the concurrent approval of General Plan Amendment GPA2020-0001, the zoning regulations will be consistent with the General Plan. The subject property will be zoned HWP and will be regulated, consistent with the General Plan, through the standards in the Monrovia Municipal Code.
6. The subject property is physically suitable for the requested land use designation and the anticipated land use development.
7. Ordinance No. 2020-01 will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare

in that it will not affect and, therefore, will provide for the orderly and consistent development in the City.

8. Pursuant to Government Code § 66300(b)(1)(A), affected cities shall not change the general plan designation for any specific parcel where housing is an allowable use to a reduced density or less intensive use below that which was allowed on January 1, 2018. The change in the zoning designation to HWP on these two parcels will reduce the intensity and residential development potential from a total of two dwelling units to zero. However, these properties are located within a very high fire hazard severity zone and pursuant to Government Code § 66300(f)(4), this action is exempt from the provisions of §66300.
9. Based upon the findings and conclusions set forth above, the Planning Commission hereby recommends approval of Ordinance No. 2020-01 (ZA2020-0001) to the City Council which amends the Official Zoning Map by designating the subject property HWP.
10. The Secretary of the Planning Commission shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** this 11<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2019.

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Gary Schaeffler, Chair  
Monrovia Planning Commission

ATTEST:

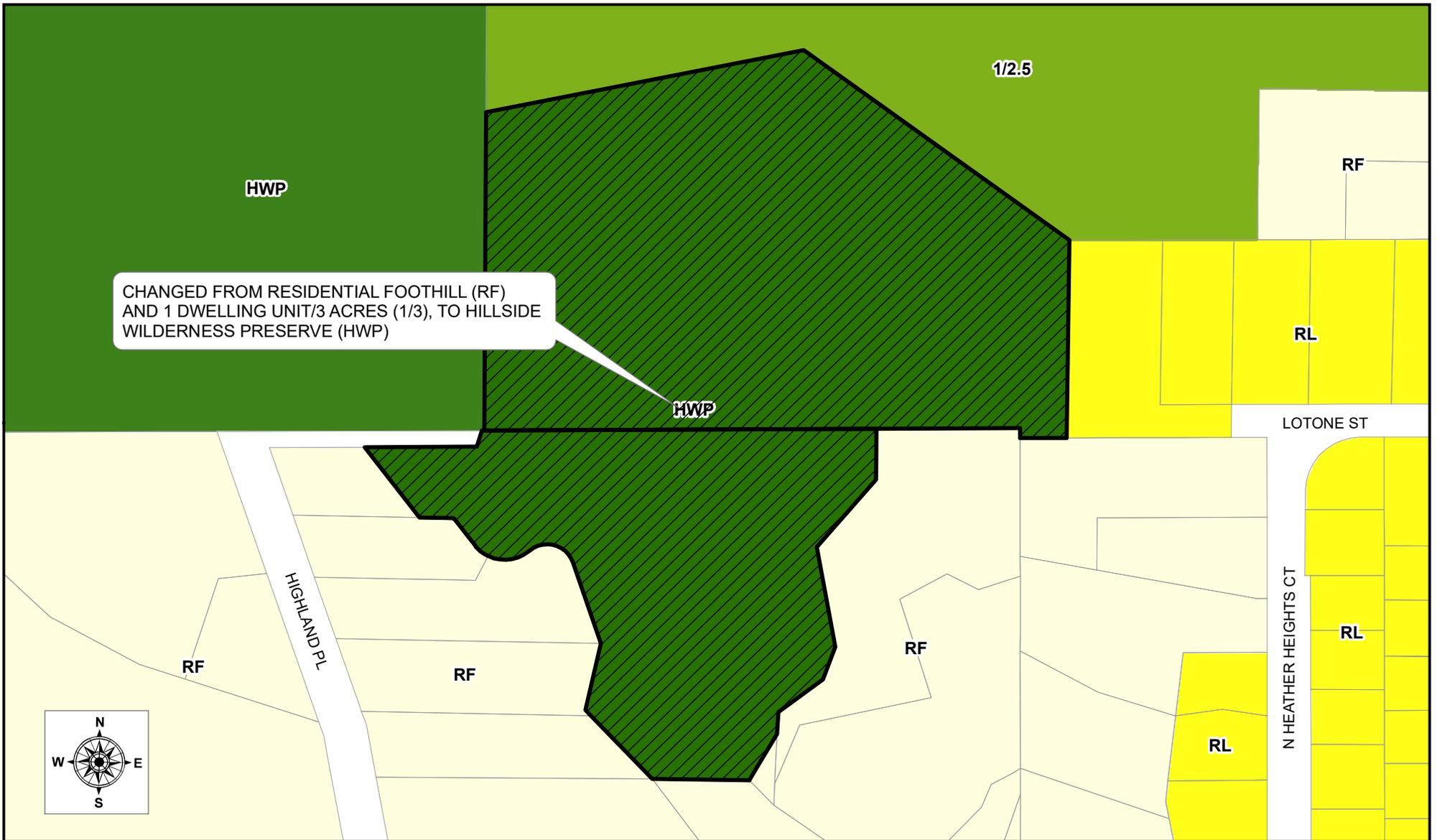
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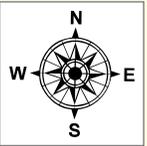
Craig Jimenez, AICP, Secretary  
Monrovia Planning Commission

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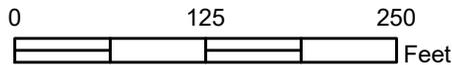
Craig A. Steele, City Attorney  
City of Monrovia



CHANGED FROM RESIDENTIAL FOOTHILL (RF) AND 1 DWELLING UNIT/3 ACRES (1/3), TO HILLSIDE WILDERNESS PRESERVE (HWP)



**EXHIBIT A**  
**PCR2019-0020**  
**Zone Amendment ZA2020-01**



-  HILLSIDE WILDERNESS PRESERVE
-  1 DWELLING UNIT/3 ACRES & 2.5 ACRES
-  RESIDENTIAL LOW
-  RESIDENTIAL FOOTHILL