



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

ITEM NO. 6.1

DATE: November 3, 2026

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Steve Riley, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Consideration of General Plan Consistency Determination (CD26-004) for the acquisition of real property for open space and conservation purposes.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt separate resolutions in the following sequence:

1. Find the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, acquisition of land for conservation purposes and Direct the Planning Manager to file a Notice of Exemption in accordance with the provisions of CEQA, subject to project approval;
2. Approve Consistency Determination (CD) 26-004, for the acquisition of the Corbett property for open space and conservation purposes, consistent with the General Plan.

SUMMARY

Government Code Section 65402(a) requires that if a General Plan has been adopted, no real property shall be acquired by dedication for public purposes or disposed of until the location, purpose, and extent of such acquisition or disposition have been reported upon by the planning agency as to conformity with its adopted General Plan. The role of the Planning Commission is to determine whether the acquisition of the Corbett parcels (hereon referred to as the "Property") is consistent with the General Plan.

The property is approximately 817 acres (see Attachment 1), spanning north and south of I-580 in the Altamont Hills east of the city limits. The property contains suitable biological habitat and has the potential to function as a critical wildlife linkage, including a potential over/under crossing of the I-580 freeway, within the region. Staff recommend the Planning Commission find the acquisition of the Property consistent with the General Plan.

DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND

The City of Livermore actively pursues the acquisition of land for open space preservation and

conservation, utilizing a range of dedicated funding sources for open space acquisition. Staff works collaboratively with willing property owners on the open market to purchase land and secure it as open space in perpetuity. The City coordinates these acquisitions with partner agencies, including Tri-Valley Conservancy (Conservancy), Livermore Area Recreation Park District (Park District), Alameda County Resource Conservation District (Resource Conservation District) and other organizations, to establish conservation easements and ensure long-term stewardship of the land.

The City has acquired or facilitated the protection of over 1,000 acres of land surrounding Livermore. These acquisitions support the City's strategic goals, which include:

- Maintaining and enhancing biological diversity
- Securing land for agricultural conservation
- Supporting climate resilience and mitigation programs
- Providing non-motorized recreational opportunities
- Preserving scenic value
- Managing watersheds and addressing flood control

Following the acquisition of open space land, the City prioritizes stewardship to ensure proper management for conservation values. This is accomplished by encumbering the land with a conservation easement (held by the Conservancy, for example) and establishing a non-wasting endowment to fund ongoing land and natural resource management in perpetuity.

On April 27, 2026, the City Council authorized staff to enter negotiations with Corbett property owners to acquire fee title for open space and conservation purposes. The Planning Commission's role is to determine whether the acquisition is consistent with General Plan Policy. The City Council is responsible for authorizing a Purchase and Sale Agreement and appropriation of funds.

SITE CONTEXT

The subject property is generally situated south of Altamont Pass Road and lies outside and east of City boundaries. The site comprises approximately 817 acres of vacant land, divided into eight irregularly shaped parcels.

Parcels North of I-580	Parcels South of I-580
099B-6300-003-01 (68 acres)	099B-5650-001-04 (79.03 acres)
099B-6300-003-02 (16.1 acres)	099A-1785-001-14 (204.79 acres)
099B-6300-003-03 (26.6 acres)	
099B-6500-002-01 (230.6 acres)	
099A-1780-001-05 (16.44 acres)	
099B-6425-002-04 (174.64 acres)	

Two parcels, totaling roughly 284 acres, are located along the south side of I-580, while six parcels, encompassing approximately 533 acres, are positioned along the north side of I-580. Access to the northern parcels is provided via Altamont Pass Road, and access to the southern parcels is available from Flynn Road. The property features rolling hills and is currently zoned Agricultural under the jurisdiction of Alameda County (see Attachment 1 - Property Map).

Municipal water, gas, electricity, sanitary sewer, telephone, and other commonly used services are not currently available to the property. Water service is provided by a solar-powered well. The Property is not classified as prime farmland and only passive agricultural uses, such as cattle grazing, occur on the Property.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Topography

The Property ranges in elevations from 740 feet to a high of 1,560 feet. The parcels south of I-580 are extremely steep with elevations ranging from approximately 900 feet in the northwest corner (adjacent to I-580) to 1,560 feet at the peak in the southeast corner of the property. The parcels to the north of I-580 have a more diverse topography, with elevation ranging from 1,240 feet in the northwest corner to approximately 740 feet on the southern edge of the property adjacent to I-580.

Improvements

The Property contains existing windmills and telecommunications facilities. The property owner has requested to retain ownership of the area containing these facilities; therefore, these areas would be excluded from the acquisition and the owner will maintain access, ownership, and management of the existing facilities. The total site area to be purchased will be in the range of approximately 700 to 750 acres, which excludes the area containing the windmills and telecommunication facilities from the total of 817 acres. The purchase and sale agreement will reflect the accurate site area and purchase price for the acquisition once the boundaries are finalized by a surveyor.

Biological and Natural Resources

A Conservation Values Assessment was completed for the Property, identifying several significant natural resource attributes (see Attachment 2). The assessment found that the site contains critical habitat for special-status species, supports important watershed functions, and provides key wildlife connectivity and conservation linkages. The Property is also recognized as a regional conservation priority within the Altamont Pass, where open landscapes connect Mount Diablo and the East Bay hills to the broader Diablo Range. The Property is an important wildlife movement corridor in the region, functioning as a pinch point constrained by I-580.

The Property contains essential habitat features for the California red-legged frog (CRLF) and California tiger salamander (CTS), including on-site and nearby ponds that serve as breeding habitat necessary to complete their life cycles. In addition, the site supports open grasslands with active burrows used by the western burrowing owl, a candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act. Other species of concern observed or potentially present include the American badger, tricolored blackbird, and loggerhead shrike, as well as three rare alkali associated plant species: caper-fruited tropidocarpum, California alkali grass and long-styled sand-spurrey. Cattle grazing in defined areas will be compatible with the sensitive habitat on site.

Hydrologically, the Property is situated within the headwaters of drainages that flow west toward Livermore, offering opportunities for stream restoration, channel stabilization, and protection of riparian corridors, wetlands, and ponds that support CRLF and CTS populations.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) assigns the Property a Level 5 ranking (its highest designation) as an Irreplaceable and Essential Corridor. Level 5 areas are defined as priority movement corridors where wildlife movement is funneled into narrow pathways with no viable alternative routes. Most of the Property carries this Level 5 designation, with the remaining areas ranked Level 4. These rankings underscore the Property's role as one of the most critical wildlife movement areas within the Altamont Pass. Acquisition of the Property would strengthen the existing network of protected lands in the Altamont Corridor and provide meaningful opportunities to expand regional connectivity and long-term conservation outcomes.

The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) mapping database, assigns parcel rankings on a scale from 0 to 1 based on various conservation attributes. The subject property receives the highest possible rating for Bird Areas, Red-legged Frog, Critical Linkage, Connectivity, Recreation, and View Shed. Habitat and species data from the California Natural Diversity Database indicate that the property may contain critical and upland habitat for the California red-legged frog (see Attachment 3). The property owners have an existing grazing agreement which would transfer to the City at the close of escrow. The City would continue cattle grazing to support biological resource objectives and continue working with partner agencies to pursue enhancements for wildlife movement.

Future Use and Partnerships

Future use of the property would be limited to open space and conservation related purposes. Having site control of both sides of I-580 could help to facilitate:

- Habitat conservation and enhancement
- Climate resilience and carbon sequestration activities
- Non-motorized recreation
- Grazing and land management
- Wildlife crossings and habitat connectivity

Staff would collaborate with conservation, cultural, and recreational organizations to bring expertise in habitat conservation, land management, and recreation. The goal would be to successfully acquire the property and facilitate the transfer of ownership and management responsibilities to another entity better equipped to own and manage the land, while still achieving the City's policy objectives. An example list of agencies that could fill this role is shown below:

Tri-Valley Conservancy	Land conservation and easement monitoring.
LARPD	Non-motorized, passive recreational opportunities.
Alameda County Resource Conservation District	Wildlife connectivity and monitoring along a major freeway; grant opportunities.
Confederation of Ohlone	Cultural ceremonies; education opportunities.

General Plan Consistency Determination

Assembly Bill 1889 (Room to Roam Act) amends Section 65302 of the Government Code to require consideration of wildlife, habitat connectivity, and fish and wildlife resources in local general plans beginning January 1, 2028. Although not yet mandatory, staff have incorporated policies supporting

wildlife movement into the General Plan in anticipation of these forthcoming requirements.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission find the proposed land acquisitions consistent with the Livermore General Plan 2045 goals and policies outlined below.

Open Space and Conservation Element

- Goal OS-1 - Conserve the value and function of Livermore's open space for natural resource protection, recreation and scenic value.
 - Policy OS-1.1 Diverse Open Space System
Foster an open space system that supports the natural function of the land, protects sensitive wildlife and plant species, preserves important viewscales, and creates opportunities for recreation.
 - Policy OS-1.2 Greenbelts
 - Secure and maintain a greenbelt of nonurbanized land surrounding Livermore to serve as a buffer between communities and to preserve, enhance, and expand an integrated network of open space.
 - Policy OS-1.3 Open Space Preservation and Restoration
Prioritize opportunities to preserve, restore, rewild, and enhance natural landscapes to support environmental and community health.
 - Policy OS-1.4 Open Space Acquisition and Connection
Prioritize land acquisition efforts that would result in the creation and expansion of permanent open spaces or corridors that link existing or create new protected natural resource areas.
 - Policy OS-1.6 Open Space Easement Designation
Work with local stakeholders and agencies to use open space easements to preserve sensitive habitat and resources.
 - Policy OS-1.8 Open Space Preservation Agency Coordination
Coordinate with the County of Alameda, East Bay Regional Park District, Livermore Area Recreation and Park District, Tri-Valley Conservancy, and other partner organizations to preserve and protect important resources inside and outside the urban growth boundary.
 - Policy OS-1.10 Preservation of Natural Amenities
Preserve and enhance, or work with other agencies, as appropriate (e.g., with joint grant applications, sharing of staff resources and legal services), to preserve and enhance natural amenities.
- Goal OS-2. Preserve and enhance biological resources
 - Policy OS-2.1 Biodiversity Preservation
Preserve biodiversity within the Planning Area, with special emphasis on species that are sensitive, rare, declining, unique, or represent valuable biological resources.
 - Policy OS-2.10 Wildlife Linkage
Coordinate with Caltrans, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other partners to plan for wildlife linkages to allow for the safe travel of wildlife across Interstate 580.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The Property acquisition is categorically exempt from CEQA in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, which exempts acquisitions of lands for wildlife conservation purposes including where

the purpose of the acquisition is to preserve the land in its natural condition.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Property Map
2. Conservation Values Study
3. Parcel Attributes
4. CEQA Resolution
5. Project Resolution

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