



DATE: September 14, 2016

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

MEMO THROUGH: Steve Abbors, General Manager 

FROM: Kevin Woodhouse, Assistant General Manager-Visitor & Field Services
Brian Malone, Land & Facilities Services Manager

SUBJECT: Status of Housing Policy Revisions

Staff is continuing work on updating the District's policies related to structures and residences in District preserves for the Board's review beginning with the Legislative, Finance, and Policy Committee (LFPAC) in November. This memorandum outlines the scope of staff's work on this policy update and other related topics so that the Board is aware of this upcoming policy work and because the Board will be considering several time-critical decisions in the near future related to structures and residences in District preserves that the General Manager recommends are necessary to make based on existing policy and practice in order to keep projects on schedule.

Scope of Policy Update

The FY2016-17 Action Plan includes a project to review and update several District policies that govern the District's housing program, including three Board policies: *Employee Residence Policies*, *Improvements on District Lands*, and *Factors to Consider for Structures Disposition*. Staff began review during spring 2016, and has identified the following key policy considerations for Board deliberation, beginning with LFPAC in November:

- *Demolition vs. Restoration vs. Replacement*
 - a. Review the evaluation process and decision guidelines for assessing whether to demolish, restore, or replace a structure or residence.
 - b. Capital cost thresholds – Review current guidelines for when a project is cost-effective, decide if any changes should be made or should this decision be on a case-by-case basis?
 - c. On-going maintenance cost thresholds -- Review current guidelines on when maintenance costs outweigh the benefit, decide if any changes should be made or should this decision be on a case-by-case basis?
 - d. Define “major structures” that require Board action vs. structure decisions that can be authorized by the General Manager.

- e. Decide whether to change Board policy to allow the retention of structures for the primary purpose of providing housing and revenue that do not support other District needs.
- *New Residence Construction?*
 - f. Review circumstances under which the District would consider constructing (or installing modular) housing where a house did not previously exist.
 - g. Review circumstances under which the District would consider constructing (or installing modular) housing on the site of a structure that had to be demolished?
- *Housing for Whom and at What Rental Price?*
 - h. Develop occupancy criteria for District residences – employee operational need, grazing tenant need, farm labor need, other employee housing, other agency need, and general public;
 - i. Decision on whether to provide discounted housing to District employees that do not provide service for the District related to their housing, primarily for employee recruitment and retention.
 - j. Property management program financial considerations – How much does the program cost to manage vs. the revenue vs. fulfilling mission objectives;
 - k. Assess comparable property management programs at other public agencies;

The timeline for the policy work includes the following steps and milestones:

- November 2016: LFPAC provides policy direction on housing and structures disposition;
- December-January 2016/17: Additional LFPAC meetings as necessary to finalize recommendations to full Board;
- March 2017: Board consideration of LFPAC recommendations;
- April 2017- Administrative policies reflecting Board direction are implemented.

Other Action Plan Projects Concurrent with Housing Policy Update Work

While the Committee and Board are working on this policy update, the following important Action Plan projects are underway and require Board direction case-by-case based on existing policy and practice:

- *Demolitions in La Honda:* The demolition of unsound structures in the former Driscoll Ranch area of La Honda Creek Preserve (former Driscoll) that are required in order to prepare for public access at Sears Ranch Road. (*September 2016 Board authorization*)
- *El Sereno House:* The support structure of the former ranger residence at El Sereno is unsound. A recommendation will be brought to the Board for demolition of the structure. (*November 2016 Board authorization; April 2017 demo contract approval*)
- *Meyer Property Structure Evaluation:* The opening of Mt. Umunhum will increase the demand for ranger services in that area including for afterhours call-outs. There are currently no ranger residences in the Mt. Umunhum area of Sierra Azul Preserve. A recommendation will be presented to the Board for the use of the Meyer property and the structures on the property. (*June 2017 decision on use of property; pending use decision, April 2018 Construction contract approval*)

- *Farm Labor housing evaluation in La Honda:* The house used by a farm laborer and his family at the former Driscoll property is unsound and is proposed for demolition in the La Honda Creek Preserve demolitions report. He and his family have been moved to another District owned residence on the preserve. After a staff evaluation of the potential options, the Board will be presented with a recommendation for providing farm labor housing to support the Agco Hay LLC grazing lease on the former Driscoll property. *(December 2016 Board authorization of preferred alternative; March 2017 construction contract approval)*
- *Bear Creek Stables Site Plan:* The stables site plan includes the disposition of many structures at the stables. *(March 2017 award of stables site plan design contract)*

In addition, several other housing or structure related issues that are ongoing or have arisen recently include:

- Farm Bureau request to San Mateo County for a moratorium on demolitions on government and non-profit owned property within the county.
- Evaluation of the recently purchased Petersen property will be included in the ranger residence evaluation at same time as the Meyer property evaluation.
- Interim General Manager decision to open District residences to all District employees at full market value.
- The Memorandum of Understanding with the Field Employees Association includes a commitment to discuss updates to the District's policy governing employee use of District-owned housing; staff has held several meetings with the FEA's Housing Committee during the housing policy work to date.

Again, these updates are provided here about work underway or forthcoming to inform the Board with the full picture of housing and structures-related issues as the Board begins to make project decisions case-by-case under existing policies and practices.