OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE
STAFF REPORT

DATE: **December 12, 2011**

TO: **Open Space Task Force**

FROM: **Debbie Chamberlain, Division Manager, Planning Services**

SUBJECT: **Open Space Task Force Work Program**

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Provide direction to staff.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

November 3, 2011 Meeting

At the November 3, 2011 meeting, staff from the Planning/Community Development, Parks and Community Services and Engineering Services Departments provided an overview of the Committee's Bylaws, the General Plan 2030 as it relates to the establishment of the Open Space Task Force (OSTF), background and past efforts of the Task Force in meeting the Open Space and Conservation policies of the General Plan as they relate to their charge. Staff discussed the underlying premise of the General Plan that it was designed to ensure "smart growth" by focusing on intensifying infill properties by limiting development around the edge of the City and establishing an Urban Growth Boundary and preserving open space.

Prior to and since the adoption of the Measure G (1999) Open Space and Preservation Action Plan, staff has been proactive in acquiring open space dedication through the approval of development applications, such as the Northwest, Westside and Dougherty Valley specific plans, Thomas Ranch and Old Ranch Summit residential developments. In addition, project approvals have required funding mechanisms be established to ensure that the ongoing operation and maintenance is not borne by the City's General Fund. These funding mechanisms range from assessment districts, endowments to Geological Hazard Abatement District. In addition staff discussed how the General Plan promotes the preservation of open space through the Open Space Land Use Designation, Urban Growth Boundaries and the General Plan Policies requiring the adoption of a new Hillside and Creek Preservation Ordinance which embodies the tenants of Ordinance 197. Staff concluded by noting that there may be limited opportunities to acquire open space within San Ramon city limits and the Task Force should consider focusing its preservation efforts on prioritizing properties contiguous to the City of San Ramon that have a regional benefit.

Work Program

The following is a summary of items that the Task Force requested staff prepare for discussion at future meetings:

1. Examples of Land Trust (e.g., Walnut Creek, Livermore, Tri-Valley Conservancy).

2. Overview of the Draft Hillside and Creek Protection Ordinance.

3. Spreadsheet/Map of open space properties contiguous to the City with ownership, general plan information, acreage and jurisdictional information by subarea (Westside, Northwest, Tassajara Valley).

4. Invite owners of open space properties to discuss their future plans for their properties.

5. "Virtual" tour of properties.

6. Provide information on Geological Hazard Abatement District (GHAD's), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's) and Williamson Act.

7. Provide information on development opportunities on the Westside under the jurisdiction of Contra Costa County.

Additionally, the Task Force asked staff to facilitate:

1. Posting all staff reports and information to the City's Website.

2. Notify and solicit participation from the environmental community.

To assist the Task Force in prioritizing their work program and a reasonable approach to implement the Open Space and Preservation Action Plan of the General Plan 2030, staff recommends the following topics for discussion at future meetings:

<u>December 2011</u>
Discussion of Open Space Task Force Work Program

<u>January 2012</u>
Overview of Westside Specific Plan
Overview of Westside Open Space Properties and Opportunities for Preservation
Overview of the Draft Hillside and Creek Protection Ordinance

<u>February 2012</u>
Overview of Northwest Specific Plan, Las Trampas and Tassajara Valley Open Space Properties and Opportunities for Preservation

<u>March 2012</u>
East Bay Regional Park District – Acquisition Opportunities/Operation & Maintenance
Overview of Parks Masterplan

April 2012
Overview of Geological Hazard Abatement District (GHAD's), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's), Williamson Act and Overview of Land Trusts, Conservancies and Open Space Foundations

May 2012
Develop Recommendations on Open Space Preservation Opportunities to the Parks and Community Services Commission

June 2012
Presentation to the Parks and Community Services Commission on Open Space Preservation Opportunities

STEPS FOLLOWING TASK FORCE REVIEW

Following direction from the Task Force on their Work Program, staff will work with various City departments and outside entities to assemble the necessary information and obtain speakers for the above topics.