

# Plan could turn greenbelt into public parkland

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Santa Cruz officials and developers who have spent years fighting in court have come up with an idea that could save most, but not all, of a coveted, privately owned greenbelt property as public parkland.

Now they want to know what their development-leery constituents think of the plan for the 246-acre Bombay Corp. property on the city's western edge, which boasts spectacular ocean vistas

and rolling meadows. At today's meeting, the city council is expected to schedule an official launching of its trial balloon at a special Oct. 7 public hearing.

"I think there is reason to be optimistic," said Councilman Scott Kennedy.

The proposed deal would allow Bombay Corp. to build 15 to 25 homes on the property in exchange for leaving 88 percent to 95 percent of the land undevel-

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## Hearing expected Oct. 7 on greenbelt property

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oped, with most dedicated as public parkland. City officials first floated the idea in June, but misunderstandings between the city and the developers derailed earlier plans for hearings.

The plan is likely to prove controversial. Four years ago, public outcry shot down a similar proposal to allow 10 homes on 13 acres along the property's northeastern edge.

"I hope people will look at what is being achieved and not just what is being compromised," Kennedy said. "I think the potential of procuring 90 to 95 percent of that land is a pretty significant accomplishment."

City officials have been eyeing the Bombay property since the late 1970s under a public initiative to surround the city with a greenbelt of parkland. Most of the targeted greenbelt properties have since been acquired, and the Bombay land is the largest remaining in private ownership.

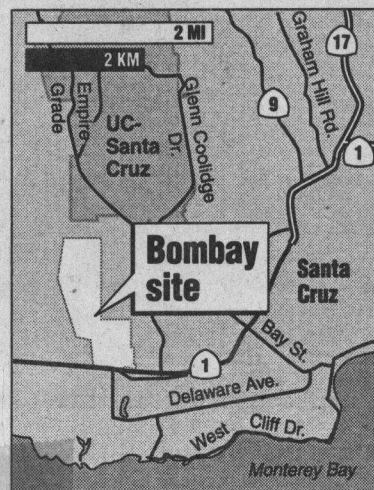
For the past five years, the city and Bombay Corp. have been locked in litigation over development plans for the land. The

Fresno-based corporation bought the land in 1991 for a reported \$1.5 million, hoping to build a golf course and luxury homes there. They then sued the city over its zoning.

A year ago, Bombay Corp. submitted plans to build 11 luxury homes scattered throughout the spacious property, something city officials said they would oppose. After losing a round in their legal battle, company officials agreed to postpone their appeal in hopes of reaching a settlement with the city. The current proposals stem from those settlement discussions.

One plan would carve 15 lots, each between one acre and 2.5 acres, out of 29 acres of the property and set aside 195 acres as public parkland. Homes would be capped at 4,500 square feet plus a garage, limiting total development to 12 percent of the land.

An alternative plan calls for 25 lots of 15,000 square feet each on 12 acres, with 195 acres dedicated to public parkland and 39 acres of private open space. It would limit homes to 3,000 square feet plus a garage, and development would cover 5 percent of the entire property.



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Both proposals would concentrate development on the lower portion of the property in an area deemed the least environmentally sensitive. In each case, the developers would give the city about three acres of the property bordering Grandview Street for up to 18 units of affordable housing. The city would waive development fees.

Bombay attorney Charlene Attack said public sneak previews of the plan in the last few weeks have been well-received.

"We tried to meet a lot of the goals, both of the neighborhood and environmentally," Attack said. "We've gotten great feedback. We're very enthusiastic about it."