

Greenbelt

Coastal meadow plan unveiled

City unenthusiastic over proposal on site eyed for greenbelt

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The largest piece of privately held open space in Santa Cruz could be subdivided into 11 spacious ranchettes on coastal meadows with sweeping ocean views under plans submitted by the owner.

The Bombay Corp. of Fresno, whose 246-acre property has been eyed by the city since 1979 for purchase as greenbelt land, turned in its first formal development proposal for the site last week.

The plans would create 11 lots ranging from eight to 60 acres and spread throughout much of the property, which stretches a mile inland from Highway 1 on the western edge of town. Three acres next to Highway 1 would be used for higher-density develop-

ment.

The proposed Bay View Ranch subdivision would set aside 107 acres, about 43 percent of the property, to be protected as open space. That land is mostly densely wooded canyon along Moore Creek, which runs along the eastern edge of the property. An additional 20 acres on the property's northeast corner would also be left undeveloped.

But that is unlikely to satisfy many city officials and residents who hope to see the land pre-

served as public open space.

"It's the largest piece of greenbelt land left, and there's strong sentiment in the city for protecting greenbelt land," Councilwoman Celia Scott said. "I don't think this proposed plan will do that."

The Bombay Corp. bought the land in 1991 for a reported \$1.5 million with plans for a golf course, luxury homes and possibly an equestrian center and bed-and-breakfast inn.

But the company, whose principals are Ed Kashian and Frank

Parr, is now locked in a legal battle with the city over its restrictive zoning of the property.

Current zoning, for agriculture and grazing, limits development on most of the land to 20-acre residential lots, though it would also allow such things as country clubs, guest ranches and group homes.

Bombay Corp. sued the city in 1992 alleging that the general plan adopted that year was improperly approved. A proposed

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settlement in December 1994 would have allowed the company to build 10 homes on 13 acres and a stable on the property's northeast corner. In exchange, the company would leave the rest of the land as pasture until the city could afford to buy it.

But the council dropped the settlement offer and the lawsuit was resumed. City Attorney John Barisone said a trial date is pending.

The Bombay Corp. said in a statement Tuesday that the subdivision satisfies current zoning while preserving much of the land as open space. The subdivision includes "building envelopes" that limit the size and location of homes and stables on the lots, clustering them along woodlands to leave most of the meadows open. The roads and structures would amount to 4 percent of the total property acreage, the statement said.

"This project is the result of many months of intensive study of the site to ensure compliance

with land use and environmental requirements and issues," the statement said. "There will be very little change in the overall appearance or use of this property as a result of the proposed subdivision."

But Councilwoman Scott disagreed.

"I'm not enthusiastic about it, to put it mildly," Scott said. "I can't see that it's going to fly."

The city's 1979 greenbelt initiative, Measure O, designated the Bombay property for open space by providing greenbelt zoning that limited development. Though the ordinance expired in December 1994, the land is still identified in the city's greenbelt master plan for open space.

Other lands in the greenbelt plan include the 614-acre Pogonip, 565-acre Delaveaga Park and 63-acre Arana Gulch, all of which are now owned by the city. The remaining privately held greenbelt lands are Wavecrest, 25 acres between Pogonip and Harvey West Park, and Westside Kinzli, 49 acres just east of the Bombay property.