

City of Piedmont
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: March 16, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Rosanna Bayon Moore, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Consideration of Approaches and Council Direction for a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for One or More City-Owned Parcels Located within the Moraga Canyon Specific Plan Area, known as Assessor Parcel Numbers 050457908000, 050457901900, 048A700200303, and 050457906100

RECOMMENDATION

Review framework regarding a Moraga Canyon developer Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and provide direction to staff on the recommended approaches for the following RFQ components:

1. developer selection ranking criteria
2. transfer and/or lease of City-owned land
3. review committee membership and process
4. other priorities of interest to the Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The intent of this agenda item is to facilitate development of one or more City-owned parcels located within the Moraga Canyon Specific Plan (MCSP) area, Assessor Parcel Numbers 050457908000, 050457901900, 048A700200303, and 050457906100.

The City's team of staff and consultants from Economic Planning Systems (EPS) are in the process of drafting an RFQ to solicit responses from one or more real estate developers to build housing and other improvements in Moraga Canyon, and the City Council's input is requested on the following key topic areas in an RFQ:

1. developer selection ranking criteria
2. transfer and/or lease of City-owned land
3. review committee membership and process
4. other priorities of interest to the City Council

This agenda item also presents the City's approaches to additional topic areas described in the Discussion section of the staff report below. The overall approach to an anticipated RFQ is intended to maintain local control and elicit quality development of City-owned land consistent with the Moraga Canyon Specific Plan.

BACKGROUND

On March 20, 2023, the City Council adopted the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element which spans the planning period of 2023-2031 and provides for the development of 587 new housing units allocated as part of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The Housing Element includes "Program 1.L Specific Plan," which sets forth the intent to develop a Specific Plan to accommodate 132 dwelling units with a density ranging from 40 to 60 dwelling units per acre, and housing for seniors, disabled persons, single-parents, low-income families, and/or people requiring supportive services.

On October 6, 2025, the City Council adopted the Moraga Canyon Specific Plan (MCSP) to implement Housing Element Program 1.L Specific Plan. The MCSP sets forth the regulations and standards governing:

- the development of a minimum of 130 multifamily housing units, including 60 housing units affordable to households earning low, very low and extremely low incomes,
- the development of two new single-family units on two lots to be created on Maxwellton Road and Abbott Way,
- the maintenance and improvement of City facilities,
- improvements to utilities, infrastructure, and recreational amenities on City-owned land in Moraga Canyon, and
- improvements in bicycle, pedestrian, traffic, and wildfire safety.

Approximately 4.78 acres of the total acreage of City-owned land in the MCSP area are identified for the development of multifamily housing units, either on the south side of Moraga Avenue (Option A) or the north side of Moraga Avenue (Option B). In addition, 0.31 acres of City-owned land are identified for development of two single-family units in either of the two MCSP development options.

Since November 2024, EPS has provided technical assistance to the City of Piedmont. At a City Council study session on November 17, 2025, EPS presented their preliminary findings for the priority development area in Moraga Canyon, and the Surplus Land Act. Available development pathways were also explored.

Following a thorough review of the Surplus Land Act, the City of Piedmont found that it maintains greatest local control in implementing the requirements of the MCSP by pursuing the exempt surplus pathway. On January 20, 2026, the City Council approved a resolution declaring its intention to determine portions of City-owned land in Moraga Canyon, pursuant to the MCSP, to be Exempt Surplus Land pursuant to Government Code Section 54221(f)(1)(A). At the same meeting, the City Council authorized the City Administrator to proceed with preparation of a solicitation for development of housing on the City-owned land in Moraga Canyon.

DISCUSSION

The recommended RFQ approach is anticipated to generate the largest pool of well-qualified potential development partners. It would be designed to solicit detailed information, including financial capability and experience, as well as information about the respondents' general conceptual plans for development in Moraga Canyon.

Staff recommend City Council discuss and provide confirmation of the recommended RFQ approach and the following four topic areas:

1. **Developer Selection Ranking Criteria** – The recommended RFQ will provide criteria for evaluating and ranking the developer respondents as set forth below:
 - A. **Project Team Experience** - Experience completing market-rate and affordable rental and/or for sale housing projects of similar size and complexity as the proposed development concept, both on time and within budget. Preference will be given to those with the following characteristics: demonstrated knowledge; positive track record for collaborative negotiations with public agencies (as demonstrated by references); track record of positive cash flow and compliance with regulatory agreements, property reserves and property management standards for existing projects; and quality and track record of on-site management of rental properties, including ongoing upkeep and maintenance of the property, availability of conflict resolution programs, and highly trained on-site managers that maintain a crime-free, healthy and safe environment.
 - B. **Financial Capability** - Respondent’s financial strength and track record in securing financing for similar affordable and market-rate development in the past, and anticipated sources of funding.
 - C. **Project Understanding, Phasing, and Approach** – Respondent’s previous projects and success will be considered including development phasing, ability to gain community support for market-rate and affordable housing projects, resident services within the new development and practice of remaining sensitive to neighboring residents during construction and operations. Additional development detail may be required from respondents during future developer negotiations.
 - D. **Response Completeness, Accuracy and Quality** – An overall evaluation of the completeness, accuracy, and quality of RFQ response, including evidence of the respondent’s communication of the project’s purpose and objectives, and respondent’s knowledge of the field.
2. **Transfer and/or Lease of City-owned Land** – The planned RFQ is anticipated to describe the City-owned land and the intended lease and/or sale of City-owned land to the selected developer or development team. The recommended RFQ will require respondents to describe their proposed methods of transfer and terms. Disposition of City-owned land must comply with standards for exempt surplus land pursuant to State Surplus Land Act, Government Code Section 54221(f)(1)(A).
3. **Review Committee Membership**– After responses to the RFQ are received by the City, the review of RFQ responses is envisioned to consist of an internal review committee that includes senior City staff, as well as subject matter experts in one or more of the following fields: real estate finance, economics, law, housing development, land use planning, and architecture. The internal review committee is expected to recommend a single developer or development team to the City Council by August 2026.
 - After the Council’s receipt of a recommendation from the review committee, negotiations of an exclusive negotiating agreement would ensue with an expected conclusion by November 2026, allowing the City to consider seeking Measure A-

1 funding for a proposed development plan by December 2026 and to meet Housing Element timeline requirements.

4. **Other Priorities of Interest to the Council** – This staff report outlines the general topics and requirements of the recommended RFQ. The discussion provides the City Council an opportunity to comment on the topics described above and to direct staff to include other priorities of interest that may be identified during the March 16 meeting.

Alternatives

As an alternative to issuing an RFQ, the City could issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) requiring greater detail up front regarding the proposed project, project financing, due diligence documentation, and other details. Staff does not prefer the RFP approach as the advantages of a RFQ outweigh those of an RFP. In a RFP alternative, the City would have less opportunity to negotiate a mutually beneficial development agreement with a range of development partners.

The advantages of an RFQ are the following:

- The City can focus on the quality, track record, and experience of potential development partners rather than the specific (and potentially speculative) details of a development proposal.
- The City preserves more local control at the outset with the ability to negotiate the disposition and development of City-owned property and thus have a greater role in the design and features of a potential development project.
- The City anticipates attracting a greater number of responses with an RFQ compared to an RFP because the time and expense of preparing a response to an RFP – given the uncertain outcome – could limit the number of potential development partners willing to submit responses.

Further RFQ Topics and Requirements

In addition to the topics provided above, for which staff seek Council direction, the recommended RFQ requirements will be informed by the MCSP and the California Surplus Land Act, as well as best practices. Staff anticipate that the City's RFQ will encompass the following general topic areas:

1. **Project Vision** – The RFQ will describe the project area as consisting of one or more City-owned parcels, located within the Moraga Canyon Specific Plan Area. The RFQ will specify the project vision and requirements as being those of the MCSP. In addition, the RFQ will highlight the extraordinary opportunity to develop a new mixed-income neighborhood in Piedmont, one of the most desirable places to live in the Bay Area.
2. **Project Requirements** – The RFQ will specify that the development must comply with all development requirements set forth in the MCSP, as well as requirements of the City Charter, General Plan, and California Surplus Land Act Government Code Section 54221(f)(1)(A).

3. **Developer Team** – The RFQ will specify that eligible respondents may include a single developer or development teams consisting of partnerships between nonprofit and for-profit housing developers. The RFQ will require respondents to: describe their team; identify the entity with the legal authority to contract directly with the City, including all joint ventures/limited partners and their percentage ownership interest (if applicable); provide resumes of key individuals and their roles; and identify the person who has the legal authority to enter into a contractual agreement with the City on behalf of the respondent.
4. **Minimum Developer Experience Requirements** – The respondents must have demonstrated experience and capacity in the development and management of both market-rate rental and for-sale housing and affordable rental housing. Respondents must have experience completing market-rate and affordable housing projects of similar size and complexity as the development envisioned by the MCSP. A minimum of three references shall be required. The RFQ will require minimum developer documentation including evidence of past project experience, particularly with developing and coordinating construction of market-rate and affordable housing rental projects.
5. **Terms of Agreements with City** – The RFQ will list the anticipated terms of agreement(s) with a developer, including an exclusive negotiating agreement (ENA), disposition and development agreement (DDA) and development agreement (DA). The RFQ will describe the City’s interest in participating in the financing of infrastructure and other improvements through a Community Facilities District and pursuit of grants to support planned improvements in compliance with the MCSP.
6. **Description of Proposed Development Concept** – The RFQ will require respondents to provide a description of their proposed project, including the following: scale of development (estimated number of housing units); general building typologies (e.g. townhomes, stacked flats, podium); approach to meeting project affordability requirements; and type of amenities. Respondents will be required to describe how their approach will comply with the MCSP, including the development of 130 housing units, signalized intersection at Moraga Avenue and Red Rock Road, roadway improvements, drainage improvements, and utility infrastructure improvements. The RFQ will also require respondents to provide their proposed development concept plan, including preferred development location (MCSP Option A or Option B). In addition, the RFQ will ask respondents to describe how the project is anticipated to be managed.
7. **Response Timeline** – The RFQ is anticipated to provide 90 days for potential respondents to learn about the opportunity, form any team partnerships, participate in a pre-proposal conference with City staff, conduct at least one site tour with staff, develop general conceptual plans, and submit a complete response electronically.
8. **Project Financing and Draft Proforma** – The RFQ would require respondents to provide a narrative description of the proposed method of financing the proposed development plan including expected sources of debt and equity, including any tax credits or other sources. Given the competitive nature of many of the available county, state and federal funding programs, the narrative must describe the respondent's approach to alternative financing scenarios as a contingency to the preferred plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

Engaging with real estate developers as part of a RFQ process has no immediate fiscal impact beyond the cost of the services of professionals with real estate law and development expertise to augment staff capacity. These services are anticipated to cost less than \$70,000. Potential financial effects, including costs to negotiate an exclusive negotiating agreement, proceeds from sale or lease, and associated administrative or infrastructure costs, will be addressed in future reports when the potential disposition of the property is brought before the City Council.

NEXT STEPS

With the direction provided by the City Council's discussion of the RFQ approaches, the City Administrator is expected to issue a developer RFQ in Spring 2026. This will begin a public process outlined in the RFQ and described in this report. City staff expect to bring an update to the City Council in August 2026. Once the development RFQ is released, the City Administrator will manage communications with the real estate development community and members of the public to coordinate the process and comply with transparency and open meeting requirements.

REVIEW BY CITY ATTORNEY

This report has been reviewed and approved by the City Attorney.

By: Kevin Jackson, Planning & Building Director
Pierce Macdonald, Senior Planner

Links to Online Resources:

[*City of Piedmont Housing Element*](#)

[*City of Piedmont General Plan*](#)

[*City of Piedmont City Charter*](#)

[*Moraga Canyon Specific Plan*](#)

[*Surplus Land Act Guidelines*](#)