

**RENEWED MEASURE M PROPERTY  
ACQUISITION/RESTORATION/MANAGEMENT CRITERIA (REVISED)**

**Renewed Measure M Property Acquisition Criteria**

These acquisition criteria were prepared for discussion with members of the Renewed Measure M Environmental Oversight Committee. The criteria are separated into four distinct categories.

**BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The following criteria are intended to guide the permitting/resource agencies in the recommendation of sites for the mitigation of habitat impacts by Renewed Measure M freeway projects. Each criterion includes a brief definition to clarify any potential misunderstandings. At a future date, and after more research and input, it is expected these criteria will include a mechanism for evaluating potential acquisitions.

- Aligns with Impacted Habitats**  
An inventory of the property shows it includes the same vegetative communities as those habitats lost to freeway projects, including habitats such as: coastal sage scrub, riparian woodlands, grasslands, etc.
- Conserves Sensitive Habitats**  
The property's habitat includes the conservation and possible restoration of species, sub-species, and natural communities ranked as sensitive under California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB).
- Considers Property Acreage**  
Generally larger properties are better.
- Contains Target Species**  
The potential property includes the presence of endangered, threatened, species of special concern, and other sensitive species impacted by freeway projects.
- Considers the Potential of Development and Urgency**  
The evaluation considers where the landowner is in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other permitting processes, quantifies the degree of the development threat, and determines if this acquisition creates an opportunity for leveraging expiring conservation funding.
- Enhances Natural Lands Connectivity, including significant Wildlife Corridors**  
Acquisition of this property would connect to existing protected areas, examine the effects on multiple taxa (such as birds, large mammals) and could be identified as an essential habitat linkage in regional or local plans.
- Enhances Natural Lands Contiguity**  
The property borders existing open spaces and acquisition increases the amount of core habitat or reduces edge effects.

- Includes Species/Habitat Diversity**  
The property includes a wide variety of habitat types and species (including subspecies, if known). Special emphasis would be provided for properties with examples of various stages of vegetative structural diversity and functional ecosystem diversity present (e.g., habitat with a natural flood regime).
- Provides for Quality Habitat or Potential for Quality Habitat**  
The property includes mature habitats or property constraints are minimal and property has a high potential to support high-quality habitat after acquisition.

**OTHER CRITERIA**

This list includes the secondary tier of evaluation criteria after the biological criteria are considered. It is expected that these criteria would require a simpler evaluation (such as yes, no, maybe) and the answers may merely play an informational role.

- Aligns with Resource Agency Priorities**  
The property is included on the Department of Fish and Game and United States Fish and Wildlife Service’s list of acquisition priorities.
- Includes a Cooperative Landowner**  
The landowner effectively coordinates with the entity responsible for acquisition to complete tasks required for acquisition.
- Includes Support from Local and State Governments**  
This acquisition is supported by local cities, appropriate Joint Powers Authority (JPA), the county or other governmental entities.
- Includes Support from the Community**  
This acquisition is supported by the public, environmental and community organizations.
- Utilizes Partnership and Leveraging Opportunities**  
Working on this acquisition would be enhanced by existing conservation efforts, partnerships and/or includes existing funding.

**CO-BENEFITS**

The following criteria would assist in the event the above criteria are roughly equal. These may take on a simpler evaluation (such as yes, no, or maybe) and the answers may merely play an informational role.

Includes:

- Archeological Sites
- Cultural and Historical Sites
- Paleontological Sites
- Watershed Protection
- Proximity to Underserved Area
- Scenic/Viewshed

- Trail Connectors
- Economic Benefits (supports local businesses)
- Public Access

## **PROPERTY CONSTRAINTS**

The following criteria are potential constraints to property acquisition, but detailed information regarding some of these constraints may not be available until later in the evaluation process.

- Considers Cost**  
In addition to streamlining OCTA’s regulatory process, the intent of the comprehensive environmental mitigation program is to provide the greatest possible biological benefit for the region with the available funding. Consequently, the cost of potential acquisitions will be an important factor in selecting mitigation sites.
- Consider Conflicting Easements or Inholdings**  
The property may have restrictive deeds, easements, other agreements, and/or inholdings that would limit management/public use options.
- Considers Neighboring Land Uses**  
Neighboring land uses may decrease the habitat mitigation value of the mitigation property.
- Considers Other Complications**  
The property may have unidentified complications associated with acquisition and management including, vector control, vandalism, inadequate access, significant obstacles to restoring water quality (toxics, pesticides, salts), etc.
- Considers the extent of Isolation or Habitat Fragmentation**  
The property may be fragmented or isolated from other valuable habitats that may impede its long-term biological value. Fragmented or isolated habitats would make it challenging to have a variety of flora and fauna.
- Determines Hazardous Conditions**  
Through a Phase I – Environmental Site Assessment, determine the property’s historical use and any potential or known hazardous materials on-site.
- Understands Management Encroachments**  
The property may have unauthorized users; there are adopted plans for future infrastructure that may be inconsistent with habitat mitigation; or the type and quantity of public use inside or adjacent to the property (e.g. vegetative fuel modification zones are adjacent).

## **Renewed Measure M Property Restoration Criteria**

These restoration criteria were prepared for discussion with members of the Environmental Oversight Committee. The criteria are separated into four distinct categories.

### **BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The following criteria are intended to guide the permitting/resource agencies in the recommendation of restoration for the mitigation of habitat impacts by Renewed Measure M freeway projects. Each criterion includes a brief definition to clarify any potential misunderstandings. At a future date, and after more research and input, it is expected these criteria will include a mechanism for evaluating potential restoration projects.

- Benefits Targeted Species**  
The potential restoration site includes a net benefit (both immediate and long term) in the ecological value for target species through increased breeding/foraging habitat and increases connectivity between areas of suitable habitat.
- Considers the Threat of Habitat Degradation and Urgency**  
The threat of increasing the amount and coverage of non-native species determines restoration urgency, and there may be unique opportunities for restoration, such as burn areas.
- Enhances Natural Lands Contiguity**  
Restoration of this site will limit edge effect, supplement existing open space and improve the quantity and quality of core habitat.
- Enhances Already Conserved Lands for Habitat and Wildlife Connectivity**  
Allows funding of restoration and management endowments on previously conserved lands to benefit species and wildlife connectivity in situations deemed appropriate by the permitting/resource agencies.
- Evaluates Adequacy of Protection and Management**  
The existing level of protection, anticipated public use inside and adjacent to the restoration site should be considered.
- Restores Impacted Habitats**  
An inventory of the property shows it includes the same vegetative communities as those habitats lost to freeway projects, including habitats such as: coastal sage scrub, riparian woodlands, grasslands, etc. and possibly includes ties to historical land coverage.
- Restores Sensitive Habitats**  
The property's habitat restoration includes the restoration of species, sub-species, and natural communities ranked as sensitive under the CNDDB.

## **OTHER CRITERIA**

This list includes the secondary tier of evaluation criteria after the biological criteria are considered. It is expected that these criteria would require a simpler evaluation (such as yes, no, maybe) and the answers may merely play an informational role.

- Aligns with Resource Agency Priorities**  
Proposed restoration meets resource agencies' particular requirements (e.g., the restoration satisfies the agencies' (Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Department of Fish and Game) definition of habitat creation for the purposes of no-net loss policies for wetlands) and/or is determined to otherwise benefit fish and wildlife resources and the habitats upon which they depend.
- Includes Support from Local and State Governments**  
This acquisition is supported by local cities, appropriate JPAs, the county or other governmental entities.
- Includes Support from the Community**  
This acquisition is supported by the public, environmental and community organizations.
- Utilizes Partnership and Leveraging Opportunities**  
Working on this restoration project would be enhanced by existing conservation efforts, partnerships and/or includes existing funding.

## **CO-BENEFITS**

Where applicable, the following criteria would assist in the event the above criteria are roughly equal. These may take on a simpler evaluation (such as yes, no, or maybe) and the answers may merely play an informational role.

Includes:

- Watershed Protection
- Proximity to Underserved Area
- Scenic/Viewshed/Enhanced recreation experience
- Economic Benefits (supports local businesses)
- Public Access
- Archeological Sites
- Cultural and Historical Sites
- Paleontological Sites
- Trail Connectors

## **RESTORATION CONSTRAINTS**

The following criteria are potential constraints to restoration, but detailed information regarding some of these constraints may not be available until later in the evaluation process.

- Considers Cost**  
In addition to streamlining OCTA's regulatory process, the intent of the comprehensive environmental mitigation program is to provide the greatest possible biological benefit for the region with the available funding. Consequently, the cost of potential restoration will be an important factor in selecting mitigation sites.
- Determines Hazardous Conditions**  
Through a Phase I – Environmental Site Assessment, determine the property's historical use and any potential or known hazardous materials on-site.
- Includes Access to Site**  
The restoration site is accessible for restoration work, maintenance and management.
- Includes Availability and Delivery of Water**  
The water used for the restoration is available, does not increase environmental impacts when delivered to the site and works with local water agencies to ensure groundwater sources are not impacted by water withdrawal.

## **Renewed Measure M Property and Habitat Management Criteria**

Endowments will be provided through Renewed Measure M funding for long term management of the acquired and restored properties. The amount of funding provided will be determined in each case through the preparation of Property Analysis Record (PAR) or an equivalent method. A PAR analysis involves application of a computer database methodology developed by the Center for Natural Lands Management for estimating the required amount for endowments. Every effort will be made to work with partners to leverage the available Renewed Measure M funding to accomplish the necessary long-term management of acquired and restored habitat.