

**STAFF REPORT
C43**

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10/19/17
PRC 3716.1
J. Holt

GENERAL LEASE – RECREATIONAL USE

APPLICANT:

Phillip R. Peterson and Tonja Sue Peterson

PROPOSED LEASE:

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land located in the Petaluma River, adjacent to 35 Hillside Terrace, near Novato, Marin County.

AUTHORIZED USE:

Continued use and maintenance of an existing boathouse, pier, and walkway.

LEASE TERM:

10 years, beginning October 19, 2017.

CONSIDERATION:

\$170 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

1. Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
2. Lessee agrees and acknowledges hazards associated with sea-level rise may require additional maintenance or protection strategies regarding the improvements on the Lease Premises.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

Authority:

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6501.1, 6503, and 6503.5; California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 2000 and 2003.

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Public Trust and State's Best Interests Analysis:

On February 25, 1993, the Commission authorized a 20-year General Lease – Recreational Use to Phillip R. Peterson and Robert L. Peterson ([Item C24, February 25, 1993](#)). That lease expired on November 28, 2012. On May 6, 2004, Robert L. Peterson executed a Quitclaim Deed, terminating his 50 percent interest in the upland parcel. On October 26, 2006, Phillip R. Peterson transferred 50 percent of his interest in the upland parcel to Tonja Sue Peterson. The Applicant is now applying for a General Lease – Recreational Use for the continued use and maintenance of an existing boathouse, pier, and walkway in the Petaluma River.

The proposed lease contains the same facilities as the prior lease. These facilities are used for recreational boating and fishing purposes. The boathouse provides on-site storage for water-oriented equipment. The existing facilities have existed at this location for many years. Recreational boating and fishing are water-dependent activities, generally consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine. The California Legislature has identified private recreational boating facilities as an authorized use of Public Trust lands (Pub. Resources Code, § 6503.5).

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 10-year term, does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises, and reserves an easement to the public for Public Trust-consistent uses. Upon termination of the lease, the lessee may be required to remove all improvements from State land.

The proposed lease requires the lessee to insure the lease premises and indemnify the State for any liability incurred as a result of the lessee's activities thereon. The lease also requires the payment of annual rent to compensate the people of the State for the occupation of the public land involved.

Climate Change:

Climate change impacts, including sea-level rise, more frequent and intense storm events, and increased flooding and erosion, affect both open coastal areas and inland waterways in California. The subject facilities are located on the Petaluma River, in a tidally influenced site consisting of low-elevation reclaimed floodplains. This area is vulnerable to flooding at current sea levels and will be at higher risk of flood exposure given projected scenarios of sea-level rise.

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The lease premises consist of a boathouse, walkway, pier, and supporting facilities for these structures. The existing facilities are in good condition. The fixed components of these facilities could be susceptible to damage from rising seas and flooding events.

The risk of flood exposure for the lease premises is likely to increase with time. The region could see up to 1 foot of sea-level rise (from year 2000 levels) by 2030, 2 feet by 2050, and possibly more than 5 feet by 2100 (National Research Council 2012). Rising sea levels can lead to more frequent flood inundation in low lying areas and larger tidal events. In addition, as stated in *Safeguarding California* (California Natural Resources Agency 2014), climate change is projected to increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters related to flooding, fire, drought, extreme heat, and storms (especially when coupled with sea-level rise). In rivers and tidally influenced waterways, more frequent and powerful storms can result in increased flooding conditions and damage from storm-created debris. Climate change and sea-level rise will further influence coastal and riverine areas by changing erosion and sedimentation rates. Near-coastal riverine areas will be exposed to increased wave force and run-up, potentially resulting in greater bank erosion than previously experienced. Finally, in rivers and tidally influenced waterways, flooding and storm flow will likely increase scour, decreasing bank stability and structure.

The combination of these projected conditions could increase the likelihood of damage to structures within the lease premises during the term of the lease. All of the facilities within the lease area are fixed, and could need reinforcement in the future to withstand higher levels of flood exposure and more frequent storm events. In addition, the boathouse, pier, and walkway may experience periodic or continuous inundation with rising water levels and more frequent flooding, creating a public safety hazard. Finally, the salt marsh habitat that currently provides some bank protection is at risk of accelerated deterioration from higher and stronger currents and floods.

Regular maintenance, as required by the lease, will reduce the likelihood of severe structural degradation or dislodgement. Pursuant to the proposed lease, the Applicant acknowledges that the lease premises are located in an area that may be subject to effects of climate change, including sea-level rise.

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Conclusion:

For all the reasons above, Commission staff believes the issuance of this lease will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs, at this location, at this time, or for the foreseeable term of the proposed lease, is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine, and in the best interests of the State.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. This action is consistent with Strategy 1.1 of the Commission's Strategic Plan to deliver the highest level of public health and safety in the protection, preservation, and responsible economic use of the lands and resources under the Commission's jurisdiction.
2. Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15300 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905.

3. This activity involves lands identified as possessing significant environmental values pursuant to Public Resources Code section 6370 et seq., but such activity will not affect those significant lands. Based upon staff's consultation with the persons nominating such lands and through the CEQA review process, it is staff's opinion that the project, as proposed, is consistent with its use classification.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Land Description
- B. Site and Location Map

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 as a categorically exempt project, Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

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PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

Find that the proposed lease will not substantially interfere with the Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, or for the foreseeable term of the lease, is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine, and is in the best interests of the State.

SIGNIFICANT LANDS INVENTORY FINDING:

Find that this activity is consistent with the use classification designated by the Commission for the land pursuant to Public Resources Code section 6370 et seq.

AUTHORIZATION:

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning October 19, 2017, for a term of 10 years, for the continued use and maintenance of an existing boathouse, pier, and walkway, as described in Exhibit A and shown on Exhibit B (for reference purposes only) attached and by this reference made a part hereof; consideration: \$170 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

EXHIBIT A

PRC 3716.1

LAND DESCRIPTION

A parcel of tide and submerged land situate in the bed of the Petaluma River, lying adjacent to Rancho De Novato, patented April 10, 1866, Marin County, State of California and more particularly described as follows:

All those lands underlying an existing pier, walkways and boathouse lying adjacent to those parcels as described in Grant Deed, recorded May 30, 2006 in Document Number 2006-0067143 in Official Records of said County.

EXCEPTING THEREFROM any portion lying landward of the ordinary high water mark of the right bank of said river.

Accompanying plat is hereby made part of this description.

END OF DESCRIPTION

Prepared 06/19/17 by the California State Lands Commission Boundary Unit



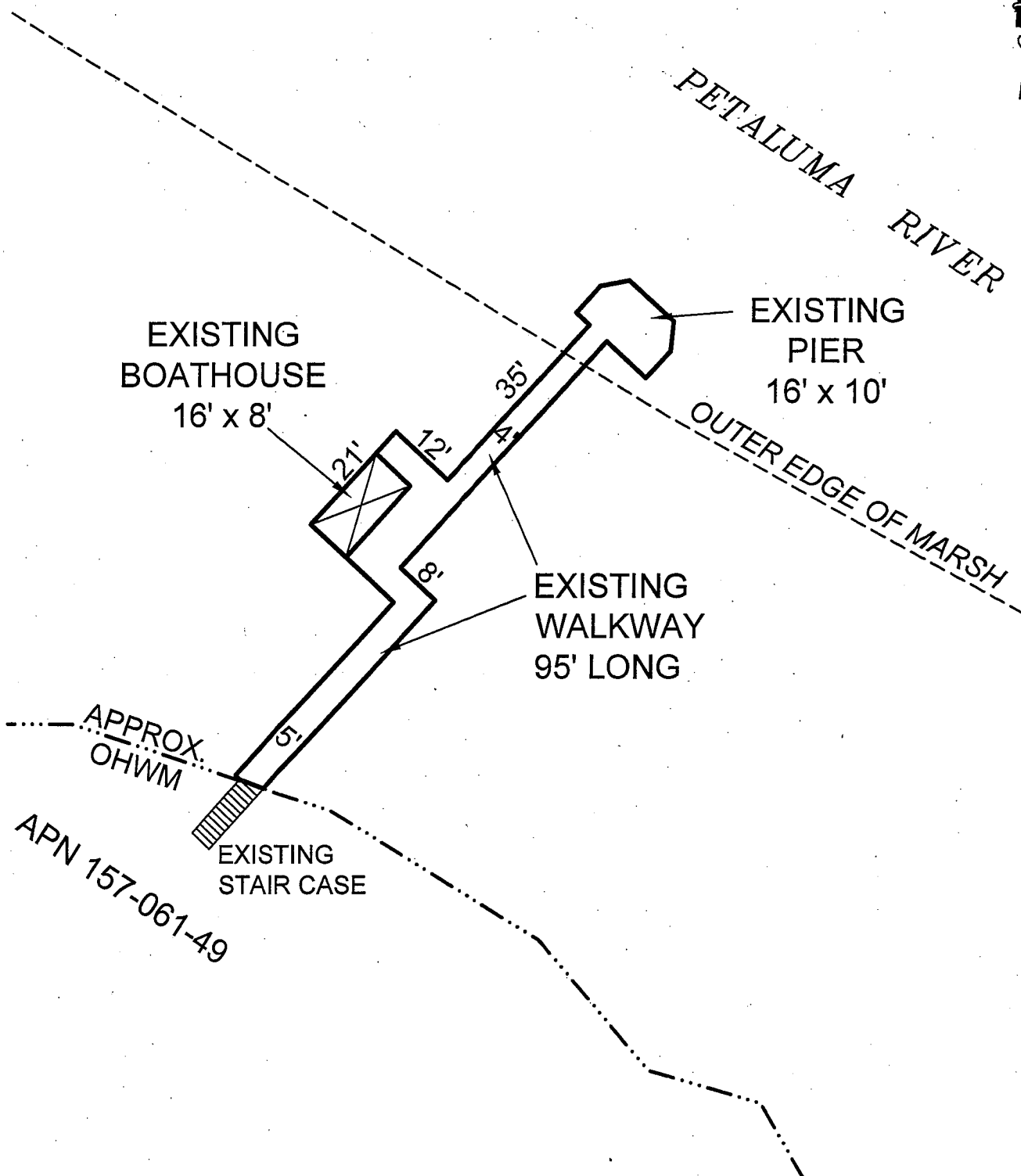


EXHIBIT A

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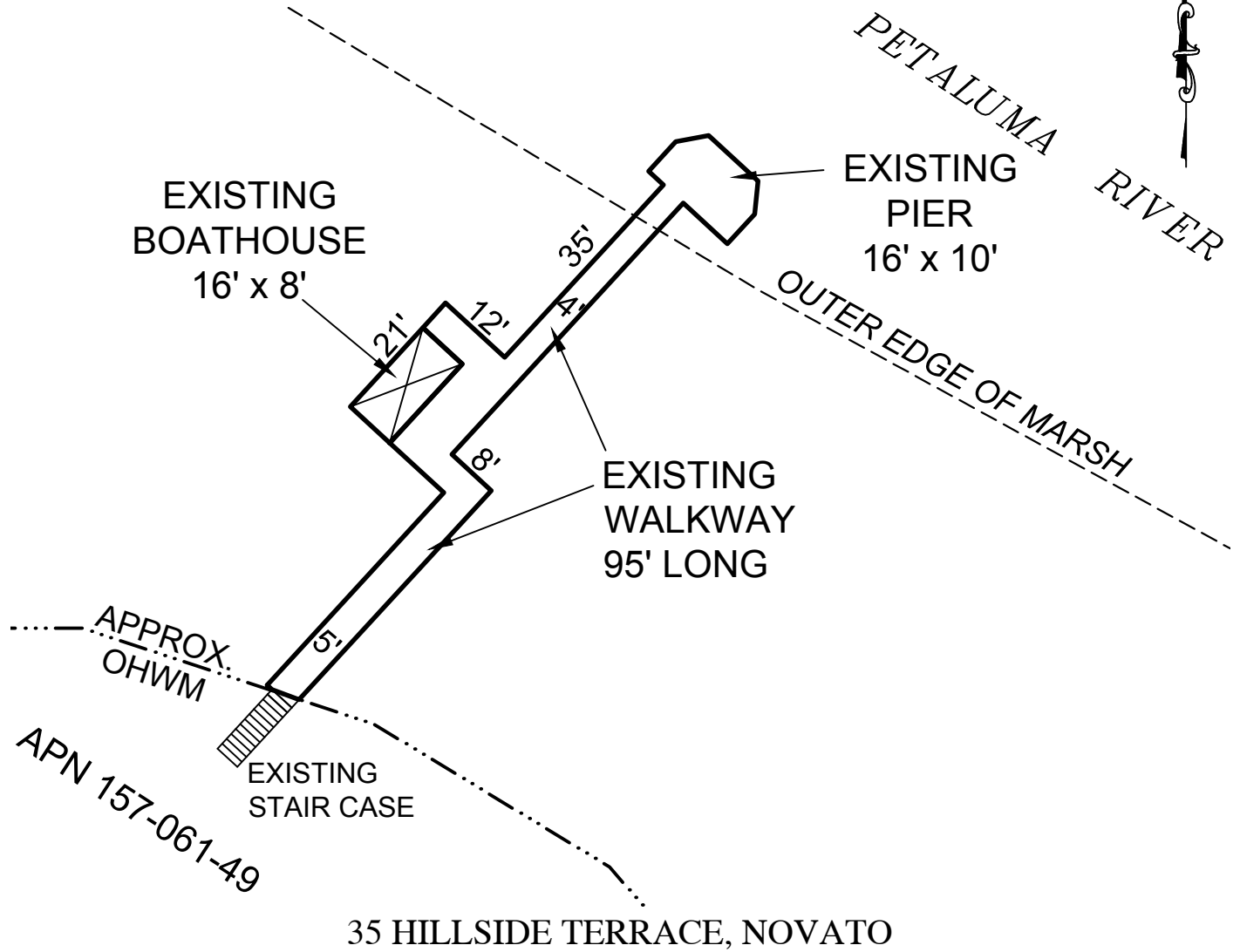
LAND DESCRIPTION PLAT
PRC 3716.1, PETERSON
MARIN COUNTY

CALIFORNIA STATE
LANDS COMMISSION



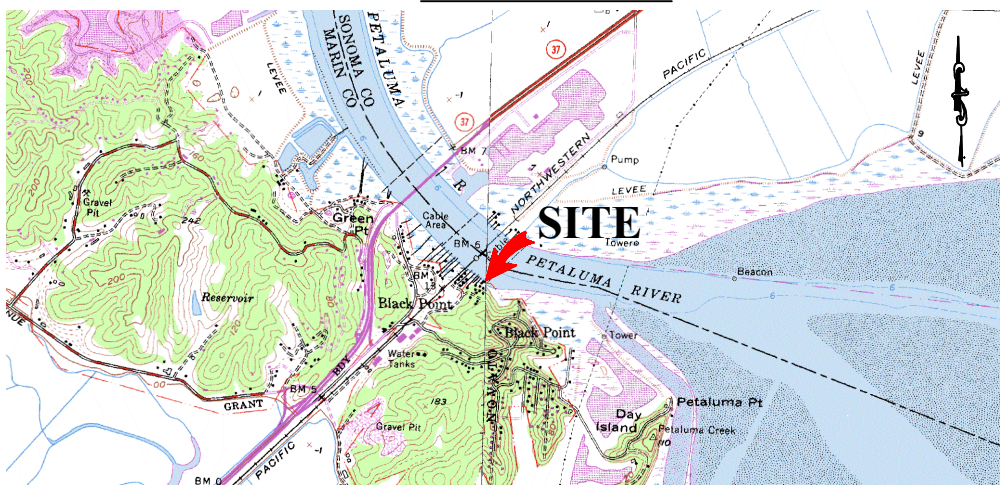
NO SCALE

SITE



NO SCALE

LOCATION



MAP SOURCE: USGS QUAD

This Exhibit is solely for purposes of generally defining the lease premises, is based on unverified information provided by the Lessee or other parties and is not intended to be, nor shall it be construed as, a waiver or limitation of any State interest in the subject or any other property.

Exhibit B

PRC 3716.1
PETERSON
APN 157-061-49
GENERAL LEASE -
RECREATIONAL USE
MARIN COUNTY



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