

Open Space, Parks, and Resource Conservation

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Contents

- 5.1 Open Space and Public Parks
 - 5.1.1 Coastal Trail Connections
 - 5.1.2 Downtown Plaza and Farmers' Market
 - 5.1.3 Neighborhood Park
 - 5.1.4 Linear Park
- 5.2 Wetlands and Ponds
 - 5.2.1 Mill Pond Complex
 - 5.2.2 Maple Street Riparian Area
 - 5.2.3 Wildlife Corridor
 - 5.2.4 Pond 5 – Oak Street Pond
 - 5.2.5 Pond 9 – Firefighting Pond
 - 5.2.6 Ponds 1-4
- 5.3 Undeveloped Properties
- 5.4 Cultural Resources
- 5.5 Visual Resources
- 5.6 Biological Resources
- 5.7 Coastal Access
- 5.8 Conformance with the City's Coastal General Plan and Coastal Land Use and Development Code

5 OPEN SPACE, PARKS, AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

This chapter describes open space, park facilities, and resource conservation opportunities in the Plan Area and adjoining areas. Open space and park facilities will be located throughout the Plan Area, and the chapter provides policy guidance for minimum design requirements, project phasing, and operations issues for open space, park facilities, and wetlands. Additionally, as many parts of the Plan Area may develop slowly, this chapter addresses minimum maintenance and safety requirements for undeveloped areas that may function as a kind of open space until they are developed. Since the Plan Area also contains cultural and natural resources, this chapter identifies policies related to cultural and natural resource conservation.

5.1 OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC PARKS

The open space and parkland features of the Plan Area will provide a variety of important site amenities, including:

- Active and passive recreation;
- Multi-modal circulation connections;
- Preservation, restoration, and protection of many coastal resources, such as surface ponds, wetlands, riparian corridors, uplands, and coastal bluff habitats; and
- Coastal and visual access.

Over 101 acres of parks will be located in the Plan Area and adjoining properties. They will include the following:

- **Fort Bragg Coastal Trail Park Connections.** The 82-acre Fort Bragg Coastal Trail, located just outside the Plan Area on a separate property, provides much of the coastal access for the Plan Area, and therefore connections between the trail project and the Plan Area are discussed here. The Fort Bragg Coastal Trail, developed by the City of Fort Bragg in 2012-2013, provides 4.5 miles of multi-use trails, parking areas, picnic areas, and miles of scenic ocean viewing.
- **Downtown Plaza and Farmers' Market.** This five acre Central District park will provide a town plaza or town square for Fort Bragg. It will also connect the Central Business District with the scenic and recreational resources of the Coastal Trail.
- **Neighborhood Park.** This three acre park will serve 500 new residential units in the Northern and Central Districts.
- **Linear Park.** This park will provide important pedestrian and bicycle connections through the Northern District.

Mill Pond Complex Restoration Area. This 20-acre site will include the restoration of the historic site drainage features and a mix of restored and enhanced wetlands and open spaces that will provide integrated wetland, stream, and terrestrial habitat.

5.1.1 COASTAL TRAIL CONNECTIONS

The Fort Bragg Coastal Trail, a 82-acre, 3.5-mile stretch of the California coastline, adjoins the western edge of the Plan Area. This parkland, owned by the City of Fort Bragg, will consist of 4.5 miles of multi-use paths and two parking areas. The Coastal Trail will connect Glass Beach and the Pudding Creek Trestle at the north end of the Plan Area to Main Street, Noyo Beach and Pomo Bluffs Park at the south end of the Plan Area. The Fort Bragg Coastal Trail will ultimately connect 11 miles of coastal multi-use trails and will be a key link in the California Coastal Trail.



Access to the shoreline is guaranteed by the California Constitution and further defined by the Coastal Act, which requires that new development provide public access to the California coastline. Development in the Plan Area will increase the need for public shoreline access. The following policies will guide developers in meeting Coastal Act requirements.

Coastal Trail Policies:

Policy MSOS-1. Pedestrian Connections to Coastal Trail. Development shall provide pedestrian connections to the City's Coastal Trail. Required pedestrian improvements include crosswalks at all road intersections along the Coastal Drive, trail connections from the crosswalk/sidewalk to existing trails, and installation of trailhead signage and amenities (e.g., bike racks, dog bag dispensers, trash cans).

Policy MSOS-2. Pocket Parking on Coastal Drive. The development of Coastal Drive shall include pocket parking on the west side of the road to facilitate coastal access. The placement of this parking shall be coordinated with existing and planned access points for the Coastal Trail.

Policy MSOS-3. Restoration of Areas Adjoining Coastal Drive. Development of Coastal Drive shall include restoration of areas between Coastal Drive and the edge of the City's Coastal Trail with native coastal bluff vegetation. Such restoration shall include a monitoring plan to ensure an effective restoration project.

Policy MSOS-4. Stormwater System on Coastal Drive. Development of Coastal Drive shall include installation of stormwater infrastructure as needed to effectively convey stormwater runoff from the Plan Area across the Coastal Trail property.

5.1.2 DOWNTOWN PLAZA AND FARMERS' MARKET

The proposed downtown park/plaza is envisioned as an important site amenity that will connect the Central Business District along Redwood Avenue with the natural and scenic resources of the site. The approximately 5-acre park will provide a variety of amenities and facilities for passive recreation and social gathering activities, including facilities for:

- A farmers' market;
- Festivals and events; and
- Facilities for walking, resting, informal gatherings, and socializing,



Downtown Plaza Policies:

Policy MSOS-5. Downtown Plaza Amenities. The downtown park/plaza shall include the following amenities:

- Benches and picnic tables;
- A covered facility for the farmers' market and other community events;
- Sidewalks along the park perimeter;
- Walking paths that cross the park ;and
- Native landscaping and low-water-use landscaping.

Policy MSOS-6. Downtown Plaza Phasing. The downtown park/plaza shall be phased according to the following schedule:

- A Downtown Plaza Plan shall be completed by the subdivision applicant and submitted for approval as part of the first major subdivision in the Central District. The Downtown Plaza Plan shall include (1) a site map that details the location of all amenities and infrastructure, elevations and floor plans for any proposed structures, a grading plan, and a landscaping plan; and (2) a financing plan for funding Phases I, II, and III which costs shall be advanced by the subdivider and reimbursed by future developments pursuant to cost advancement or reimbursement agreements.
- Phase I of the downtown plaza shall be developed and dedicated to the City prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for any development that equals or exceeds 100,000 square feet (residential and commercial) in the Central District. Phase I shall consist of a graded and seeded field, sidewalks, pathways, benches, and picnic tables as defined in the Downtown Plaza Plan.

- Phase II, the farmers' market facility, shall be added to the downtown plaza and dedicated to the City prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for any development that equals or exceeds 200,000 square feet (residential and commercial) in the Central District.
- Phase III, the small amphitheater, shall be developed and dedicated to the City prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for any development that equals or exceeds 250,000 square feet (residential and commercial) in the Central District.

Policy MSOS-7. Downtown Plaza Hours of Operation. The downtown plaza shall be open to the public from sunrise until sunset.

Policy MSOS-8. Downtown Plaza Funding. Operation and maintenance of the downtown plaza shall be funded as described in Chapter 8, Implementation and Phasing.

5.1.3 NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Implementation of the Specific Plan will add 520 new residential units and an estimated 1,200 new residents to the City of Fort Bragg. The neighborhood park will serve the active recreational needs of these new Fort Bragg residents.



Neighborhood Park Policies:

Policy MSOS-9. Neighborhood Park Amenities. The minimum three-acre active recreation park in the Northern District shall include:

- A tot lot for small children;
- A ball field sufficient to accommodate a baseball diamond and/or a half-court soccer field; and
- A public restroom.

Policy MSOS-10. Neighborhood Park Phasing. The Neighborhood Park may be built in its entirety at the Northern District subdivision stage or developed in stages according to the following schedule:

The Neighborhood Park Plan and location shall be submitted by the property owner for approval by the City as part of the Master Tentative Subdivision Map. The Neighborhood Park Plan shall consist of a site plan, elevations, a landscaping plan, and a financing plan for funding construction of the ball field, restroom, and tot lot. The costs of the preparation of the Neighborhood Park Plan shall be advanced by the first subdivider in the Northern District and may be reimbursed by future developers under a cost advancement or reimbursement agreement.

The ball field and restroom shall be developed and dedicated to the City prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for development that equals or exceeds the 100th residential unit.

The tot lot shall be developed and dedicated to the City prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for development that equals or exceeds the 150th residential unit.

Policy MSOS-11. Neighborhood Park Funding. Operation and maintenance of the Northern District neighborhood park shall be funded through a Mello-Roos district or other financing mechanism, as described in Chapter 8, Implementation and Phasing.

5.1.4 LINEAR PARK

The linear park will serve as a location for neighborhood gatherings and for bicycle and pedestrian circulation. The linear park is envisioned to include a multi-use trail, landscaped areas, and benches.

Linear Park Policies:

Policy MSOS-12. Linear Park Amenities. The linear park shall include, at a minimum, a 25-foot-wide public right-of-way, a 10-foot-wide multi-use trail with a bench on each block, native drought-tolerant landscaping, and park signage at each entrance. Trees and stormwater treatment swales are encouraged.

Policy MSOS-13. Linear Park Phasing. The linear park may be built in its entirety at the Northern District subdivision stage or phased according to the following schedule:

- The Linear Park Plan and location shall be submitted for approval as part of the Northern District Tentative Subdivision Map. The Linear Park Plan shall include a site plan, grading plan, and landscaping plan.
- The Linear Park shall be developed, by the adjoining residential site developer, prior to approval of a Certificate of Occupancy for the 50 percent unit of housing on each adjacent block



Policy MSOS-14. Development Adjoining Linear Park. Development adjacent to the linear park shall comply with the following guidelines:

- Fencing of not more than 4 feet in height may be installed on private property adjacent to the linear park
- Trash and storage sheds are not allowed within the 20-foot setback from the linear park; and
- Front yards are encouraged to face the linear park.

5.2 WETLANDS AND PONDS

The Plan Area includes 31 acres of open space with the following key features:

- **Mill Pond Complex.** The largest of the open spaces at 20 acres, the Mill Pond Complex provides surface water conveyance, including Plan Area surface runoff and flow from the City of Fort Bragg Alder and Maple Creek drainages, which are routed into the man-made Mill Pond (Pond 8) and then out to Fort Bragg Landing. Through the Mill Pond Complex Restoration Project, the Mill Pond will be closed, the Mill Pond Dam will be removed, and the Mill Pond Complex area will be restored to reflect pre-mill development aquatic and terrestrial habitat conditions including seasonal wetlands, a perennial stream, riparian habitat, and coastal grassland and shrub habitats.
- **Maple Street Riparian Area.** This 11.5-acre riparian area includes perennial wetlands at the end of Maple Street and a spring-fed perennial stream channel that provide surface water conveyance and water quality improvement benefits as well as wetland and upland riparian habitat.
- **Wildlife Corridor.** This 200-foot-wide wildlife corridor connects the Maple Street riparian area with the Mill Pond Complex and provides space for the daylighting of Maple Creek from the Maple Street Riparian Area to Fort Bragg Landing.
- **Pond 5.** This former man-made fire-fighting pond, located at the end of Oak Street, currently provides some surface runoff detention functions for upgradient areas adjacent to the pond. It also provides habitat for water fowl and aquatic vegetation.



Additional pond features in the Plan Area include:

- **Pond 9.** This man-made above-ground former firefighting pond in the Northern District is currently fed with pumped waters from Pudding Creek. A wetland has formed at the western edge of this pond due to ongoing seepage of water from the earthen berms that retain the pond.
- **Industrial Ponds 1-4.** These former industrial ponds (South Ponds) in the Southern District are Coastal Act wetlands and will be retained. They currently capture surface runoff from the central portion of the Southern District. Pond 3 is fed by perennial emergent groundwater.

These aquatic features are a mix of man-made ponds and historical habitats that will be restored and/or enhanced to provide open spaces that range from small, simple ponds and

wetlands to larger integrated wetland, stream, and terrestrial habitat areas providing substantially greater ecological function and complexity.

5.2.1 MILL POND COMPLEX

As the dominant feature of the open space in the central portion of the Plan Area, the Mill Pond Complex will provide restored perennial and seasonal wetlands, surface water conveyance, and terrestrial habitat. This open space is designed to provide for the ecological integration of several isolated and degraded habitats that exist on the site and will provide a central focus for nature-based recreation and community stewardship. The Mill Pond Complex open space will be achieved through implementation of the Mill Pond Complex Restoration Project, which provides for the closure of the man-made Mill Pond, removal of the dam and related features, restoration of historical wetlands in the lowland area adjacent to Fort Bragg Landing, and restoration of the former Maple Creek that connected the Maple Street riparian area and the Maple Creek watershed with the beach at Fort Bragg Landing. This restoration project will result in the establishment of significant seasonal and perennial wetlands and riparian habitats that will continue to provide surface water conveyance and water quality benefits. The site will also provide public access, ocean and beach access, and opportunities for passive recreation.

Mill Pond Complex Policies:

Policy MSOS-15. Mill Pond Complex Amenities. *The Mill Pond Complex, upon completion, shall include:*

- *A multi-use trail alignment that connects to the north and south components of the Fort Bragg Coastal Trail. The trail shall include a spur that provides beach access at Fort Bragg Landing.*
- *Drainage features that safely convey surface runoff from of the Plan Area and the Alder and Maple Creek watersheds.*
- *Re-establishment and restoration of the historic creek from the Maple Street Riparian Area and the urban Maple Creek watershed to Fort Bragg Landing.*

5.2.2 MAPLE STREET RIPARIAN AREA

This wetland at the end of Maple Street provides surface flow conveyance and water quality benefits and wetland habitat. This area includes a perennial wetland, a spring-fed stream channel, the confluence of the Maple Street Riparian Area stream, and the discharge from the City Fort Bragg Basin C Maple Creek watershed storm drain \as well as forested upland



riparian habitat. Improvements to the confluence of the Maple Creek storm drain and the Maple Street Riparian Area stream are proposed as components of the Mill Pond Complex

Restoration Project. These improvements are intended to control the high energy discharge from the Maple Creek watershed storm drain and improve channel conditions at the head of the daylighted Maple Creek (See Section 5.2.3).

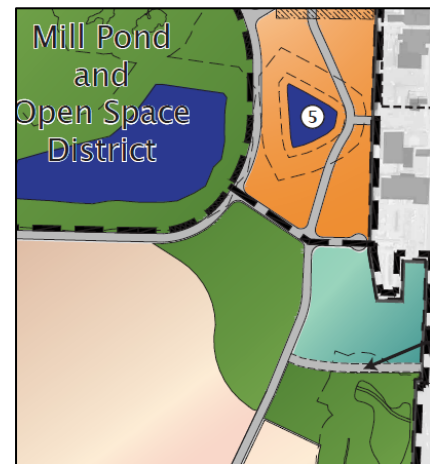
No development is proposed for this location.

Maple Street Riparian Area Policies:

Policy MSOS- 16. Maple Street Riparian Area Habitat Enhancement. *The property owner shall develop and implement a plan to enhance the riparian habitat on the west side of the Maple Stream Riparian Area at the time of any proposed adjacent development requiring a Coastal Development Permit (CDP).*

5.2.3 WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

A 200-foot-wide wildlife corridor will be a component of the Mill Pond Complex area and will connect the Maple Street Riparian Area with the Mill Pond Complex and Fort Bragg Landing. The wildlife corridor will be aligned to daylight Maple Creek. The restored Maple Creek will convey surface flow from the urban Maple Creek watershed east of the Mill Site (Defined as Basin C in the City of Fort Bragg Storm Water Management Plan) and from the Maple Street Riparian Area within the Plan Area to the Mill Pond Complex wetland and Fort Bragg Landing. The Maple Creek channel will replace the existing culverted storm drain that conveys these flows to Pond 8 and then to Fort Bragg Landing. The restored Maple Creek channel, flood plain, and riparian corridor will provide a protected link between the Maple Street Riparian Area at the eastern perimeter of the Plan Area and Fort Bragg Landing. The riparian corridor will also improve habitat diversity, density, and vertical structure in the Plan Area.



Wildlife Corridor Policies:

Policy MSOS-17. Wildlife Corridor Features. *The 200-foot-wide wildlife corridor shall include:*

- *A daylighted Maple Creek and riparian habitat extending from the Maple Creek drainage and Maple Street Riparian Area to the Mill Pond Complex; and*
- *Restored natural habitat along the length and width of the wildlife corridor.*

Policy MSOS-18. Wildlife Corridor Implementation. *The Wildlife Corridor restoration shall be implemented as follows:*

- *Maple Creek shall be daylighted and restored concurrently with the closure of the Mill Pond and may satisfy wetland mitigation requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of*

Engineers, the California Coastal Commission, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

- *All asphalt located in the wildlife corridor shall be removed at the time that the creek is daylighted, and the upland portion of the corridor shall be restored with native plants and grasses.*

5.2.4 POND 5 – OAK STREET POND

This former man-made firefighting pond is located at the end of Oak Street and currently provides limited surface runoff retention functions for adjacent upgradient areas. This pond does not have a natural contributing watershed, but captures sufficient runoff to sustain a pond that is used by water fowl and supports aquatic vegetation; as such, it is considered an environmental sensitive habitat area under the Coastal Act.

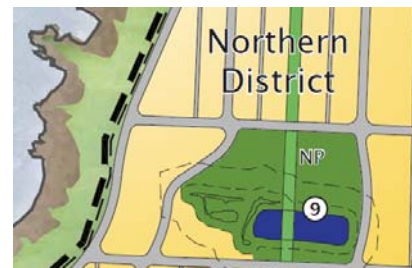


Pond 5 Policies:

Policy MSOS-19. Pond 5 Enhancement. The shoreline of Pond 5 shall be preserved in conjunction with development of the adjacent roadway (Coastal Drive or Oak Street eExtension) or the adjacent residential zone, whichever occurs first. Pond 5 shall be offered in dedication to the City of Fort Bragg upon completion of the improvements required by all permitting agencies and establishment of a permanent funding mechanism for operation and maintenance.

5.2.5 POND 9 – FIREFIGHTING POND

This former man-made firefighting pond, located above ground behind earthen berms, is in the Northern District. It is currently fed with water pumped from Pudding Creek and has no natural source of water other than rainfall. A wetland has formed at the western edge of this pond due to ongoing seepage of water from the earthen embankment.



Pond 9 Policy

Policy MSOS-20. Pond 9 Enhancement. Pond 9 shall be preserved and the habitat features enhanced at the time of the development of the adjacent roadway (Glass Beach Drive extension) and/or the residential district. Pond 9 shall be offered in dedication to the City of Fort Bragg upon completion of the pond improvements required by all permitting agencies and establishment of a permanent funding mechanism for operation and maintenance.

5.2.6 PONDS 1-4

These former industrial ponds were used to circulate Mill Site process waters. Ponds 1, 2, and 4 are man-made ponds. They are now seasonal aquatic habitats that capture surface runoff during the wet season and dry up during the summer months. Pond 3 consists of two perennial wetlands separated by a culvert. Pond 3, while formerly an industrial pond, is also a historical wetland feature that is shown on the 1873 Geodetic Survey map of the Mill Site. The South Ponds and upland between the ponds encompass approximately 2.4 acres.

Policy MSOS-21. Maintenance of Ponds 1-4 Wetlands. *Ponds 1 -4 are Coastal Act wetlands and shall be maintained as wetlands.*

Policy MSOS-22. Open Space Between Ponds 1-4. *The area between the ponds shall be retained as open space.*

Policy MSOS-23. Ponds 1-4 Open Space Plan. *An open space plan for the South Ponds shall be developed as part of the Southern District Tentative Subdivision Map and implemented prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for adjacent development projects in the Mill Site Industrial (IMS) zone.*

Policy MSOS-24. Ponds 1-4 Surface Runoff Management Plan. *A surface runoff management plan shall be developed and implemented to supply runoff to Ponds 1-4 during the wet season to sustain the existing wetland features and any enhanced wetland features developed through the open space management plan.*

5.3 UNDEVELOPED PROPERTIES

Many parts of the Plan Area will likely remain undeveloped for many years due to the relatively slow rate of growth in the City of Fort Bragg. The following policies will ensure that the undeveloped properties are maintained in a safe and aesthetically acceptable manner until such time as they are developed.

Undeveloped Property Policies:

Policy MSOS-25. Weed Control on Undeveloped Properties. *Invasive weeds shall be controlled on all undeveloped lands by the property owner of record.*

Policy MSOS-26. Security and Safety on Undeveloped Properties. *The preferred method for dealing with security and safety issues is the removal of all hazards from vacant and undeveloped parcels by the property owner. Security fencing is discouraged for vacant and undeveloped properties, however if such fencing is installed it shall comply with the fence design requirements of its district.*

Policy MSOS-27. Revegetation of Undeveloped Properties. As each block of street infrastructure is developed, existing asphalt shall be removed from the adjacent blocks and the blocks shall be planted with native grass seed and graded to facilitate stormwater infiltration. Revegetation of these undeveloped areas with native plant communities shall not be construed to represent environmentally sensitive habitat subject to protection under the Coastal Act.

5.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Portions of the Plan Area were formerly occupied and visited by Native Americans, and cultural resources have been discovered on the site. A portion of the Plan Area has been designated an archaeological district and the site has a number of National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP)-eligible archaeological deposits. The locations of cultural resource deposits must remain confidential under state and federal law.



Cultural Resource Protection Policies:

Policy MSOS-28. Archaeological Testing and Evaluation. A licensed archaeologist, hired by the City at the applicants' expense, shall complete pre-construction surficial and subsurface testing and evaluations to determine the extent and quality of cultural deposits and complete data recovery as required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

5.5 VISUAL RESOURCES

Reuse of the Plan Area will open areas with significant visual resources to the public for the first time in over 100 years. The Coastal Trail and Coastal Drive will provide public visual access to the ocean and the near-shore environment along the entire length of the Plan Area. However, the ocean is visible from various public rights-of-way throughout town. The policies in this section are designed to ensure that visual access will be retained as the Plan Area is developed.



Visual Resource Policies:

Policy MSOS-29. Visual Analysis of Development Adjoining Coastal Drive and Coastal Trail. A visual analysis shall be required for all new Coastal Development Permits for development located immediately adjacent to Coastal Drive and the Coastal Trail

Policy MSOS-30. Visual Analysis of Other Development That May Affect Ocean Views. A visual analysis shall be required for Design Review and or a Coastal Development Permit for all new development projects of more than 28 feet in height that are located on any east-west street and/or have the potential to affect distant views of the ocean from public rights-of-way within the City of Fort Bragg.

5.6 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Mill Site contains some biological resources, primarily located along the Coastal Trail and in wetlands throughout the Plan Area. The City’s Coastal General Plan policies are sufficient to ensure the protection of these biological resources.

5.7 COASTAL ACCESS

The City’s Coastal Trail will provide coastal access for Plan Area development. Policies MSOS-1, MSOS-2, and MSOS-3 provide for additional coastal access through implementation of the Specific Plan.



5.8 CONFORMANCE WITH THE CITY'S COASTAL GENERAL PLAN AND COASTAL LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CODE

The Specific Plan designates one-third of the Plan Area as open space and parkland. Much of the open space will provide habitat for native plants and wildlife. The City's Coastal General Plan and Coastal Land Use and Development Code include many policies and regulations for the protection and enhancement of natural resources, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and the protection of water quality. All development in the Plan Area will be required to conform to all resource policies and sections of the Coastal Land Use and Development Code and the Coastal General Plan. The following resource-specific sections and policies are particularly relevant to Plan Area development:

Topic Area	Coastal General Plan Provisions	Coastal Land Use and Development Code Provisions
Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area Policies and Implementation	Chapter 4: Policy OS-1.1 through Policy OS-1.16	Chapter 17.50.050 Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas
Stormwater Management	Chapter 4: Policy OS-9.1 through OS-14.5	Chapter 17.64 Stormwater Runoff and Pollution Control
Cultural Resources	Chapter 4: Policy OS-4.1 through OS-4.5	Chapter 17.50.030 Archaeological Resource Preservation
Open Space and Public Access	Chapter 4: Policy OS-15.1 through OS-16.22	Chapter 17.52 Creek and Riparian Resource Protection
Visual Resources	Chapter 6: Policy CD-1.1 through Policy CD-1.11	Chapter 17.50.070 Visual Resources