

CITY OF FAIRFIELD

RESOLUTION NO. 93-63

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF FAIRFIELD APPROVING THE FAIRFIELD OPEN SPACE APPROVAL GUIDELINES AND THE FAIRFIELD OPEN SPACE COMMISSION RULES OF PROCEDURE

WHEREAS, Chapter 12D of the Fairfield City Code provides for the development of "guidelines and procedural criteria for open space approval..."; and

WHEREAS, the Fairfield Open Space Commission has prepared said procedural criteria (Rules of Procedure, Exhibit A) and guidelines (Open Space Approval Guidelines, Exhibit B); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on February 10, 1993 regarding said Rules of Procedure and Open Space Approval Guidelines and unanimously forwarded said documents to the City Council with a recommendation for approval; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that such guidelines and procedural criteria are necessary for the operations of the Fairfield Open Space Commission; and

WHEREAS, the proposed guidelines and procedural criteria are within the scope of the Program Environmental Impact Report prepared for the General Plan and no new environmental documentation is required in accordance with Section 15168n(c)(2) of the California Environmental Quality Act; and

WHEREAS, City Staff has recommended additional revisions to the Open Space Commission Rules of Procedure and the Open Space Approval Guidelines as contained in Exhibit "C"; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has held a duly-noticed public hearing on this item on March 16, 1993.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the City Council of the City of Fairfield hereby approves the Open Space Commission Rules of Procedure ("Exhibit "A"), the Open Space Approval Guidelines (Exhibit "B"), and the revisions to the Rules of Procedure and the Guidelines (Exhibit "C").

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 17th day of April, 1993, by the following vote:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS: HAMMOND/CHIKAWA/PETTYGROVE/POLK/FALATI

NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS: none

ABSTAIN: COUNCILMEMBERS: none

ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: none

Mayor [Signature] MAYOR

ATTEST: [Signature] CITY CLERK

EXHIBIT B

OPEN SPACE APPROVAL GUIDELINES

Fairfield Open Space Commission-December 10 , 1992

Fairfield Planning Commission-February 10, 1993

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I. INTRODUCTION

Section 12D of the Fairfield City Code defines open space as any essentially unimproved parcel or area of land or water located within or around Fairfield devoted to an open space use. Such uses include agriculture, wildlife habitat and natural resource preservation, protection of public health and safety, public recreation, shaping urban growth, and preserving scenic landscapes and views. Thus, there are a variety of open spaces in the Fairfield area, including woodlands, hillsides, orchards and vineyards, marshes, greenbelts, and grasslands.

During the preparation of the 2020 General Plan, an Open Space Task Force was formed to identify open space resources and preservation mechanisms. One of their recommendations was to establish a permanent body to advocate open space preservation. In response, the City Council established an Open Space Commission (Ordinance No 90-28). This Commission is charged with providing open space recommendations pertaining to all development proposals located in any of the eleven Open Space Planning Areas (OSPAs) identified in the enabling ordinance and listed below. These areas were identified by the City Council and the Vision 2020 Open Space Task Force as being particularly sensitive for open space issues. A conceptual map of the areas is attached as Exhibit 1. The Open Space Administrator (the Planning Director or his designee) will determine if a project is subject to the Open Space Commission's review.

OPEN SPACE PLANNING AREAS

Area 1	Benicia/Fairfield/Vallejo Community Separator
Area 2	Lower Green Valley
Area 3	Green Valley Falls/Vallejo Lakes
Area 4	Rockville Hills
Area 5	Upper Suisun Valley
Area 6	Lower Suisun Valley
Area 7	Nelson Hill
Area 8	Rolling Hills
Area 9	Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt
Area 10	Travis AFB/Jepson Prairie
Area 11	Suisun Marsh

To guide the review of development projects in these Open Space Planning Areas, the City Council directed the Commission to prepare "guidelines and procedural criteria." This document is the result of the Commission's efforts. The guidelines will help developers understand the City's objectives for open space preservation.

The document is divided into five chapters, including Chapter I, this Introduction:

Chapter II is an annotated bibliography of the planning documents which address open space issues.

Chapter III, General Guidelines, contains guidelines which address eight broad topic areas:

1. Growth Shaping, Hazards and Safety
2. Recreation and Trails
3. Preservation of Agriculture
4. Trees
5. Scenic Vistas
6. Wetlands, Streams, and Watersheds
7. Wildlife
8. Historic Preservation

The document then compiles the General Plan objectives, policies, and programs relevant to each topic area. The Discussion section then explains terms and the rationale for the policies, and it describes how the policies will be used by the City.

Chapter IV includes a list of General Plan objectives, policies, and programs, and a Discussion section, which specifically applies to individual Open Space Planning Areas.

Finally, Chapter V discusses open space preservation tools appropriate for Fairfield.

While the guidelines are based on the General Plan, the final authority on open space issues rests with the General Plan, other adopted plans and ordinances, the Open Space Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. The list of policies under each topic area is not intended to be inclusive but only contains the objectives, policies, and programs which most directly apply. Any relevant amendments, new plans or ordinances adopted by City Council will be automatically incorporated into these Guidelines without formal action.

All applicants for development within an OSPA must submit an application for Open Space Commission Review. The application will be reviewed for consistency with Open Space Guidelines. As open space preservation is a complex issue which will require substantial discussion between interested parties and the City, landowners and developers are encouraged to communicate early with staff and the Commission to resolve issues and questions in a manner acceptable to all parties.

II. SOURCES

The following sources have been used in the preparation of these guideline. Some of these documents have not yet been adopted by the Fairfield City Council. Any changes made during the adoption process will be integrated into these Open Space Guidelines.

The Vision 2020 Open Space Task Force Final Report

The Vision 2020 process was initiated by the City to encourage a strong public role in identifying a vision for the future of the City. There were five Task Forces: Neighborhood Preservation, Youth, Open Space, Traffic, and General Plan. Where appropriate, the recommendations of these task forces were integrated into the new proposed General Plan.

The Vision 2020 Open Space Task Force was charged to identify important open space resources and recommend methods of preservation. The Task Force identified its mission as the development of a "strategic plan to establish, preserve, and protect agricultural, ecological, recreational, and scenic lands in Fairfield and surrounding areas for now and future generations." *The Vision 2020 Open Space Task Force Final Report* provided recommendations on fifteen topics, including hillside development, scenic preservation, public access, and establishment of an Open Space Commission. The report also identified issues and opportunities facing eleven "Open Space Planning Areas."

The General Plan Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element contains the official guiding policies for open space preservation. The Element incorporates many of the suggestions of the Open Space Task Force and input from staff and the General Plan Task Force.

The Fairfield Urban Design Plan was prepared in 1990 by staff with the assistance of POD Sasaki. The Plan has four sections: *Setting* reviews the natural setting, land use and growth patterns, issues, and opportunities. *The Concept Plan* divides the City into thirteen "Design Districts." The plan provides a description, a goal, design objectives, and a suggested streetscape model for each district. *Plan Implementation* reviews implementation tools available to the City. Finally, *Design Guidelines* includes standards for site planning, hillside development, commercial development, and residential design. The Plan has not yet been adopted.

The General Plan Land Use Element will guide the future land use pattern of the City. The Element encourages a balanced community, provides for new growth areas, and includes policies for open space, agriculture, and environmental preservation.

Special Studies: The Fairfield City Council established task forces and committees to study open space and planning issues associated with three areas: 1. The Benicia-Vallejo-Fairfield Triangle, 2. Green Valley, and 3. The Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt. These task forces have been meeting to identify open space resources, development areas, and preservation mechanisms for each study area. Consultants working with the task forces have prepared reports which inventory resources, identify issues, and suggest potential implementation methods. While the consultant reports have not been officially adopted by the City, many of the concepts have been adapted for use in these guidelines. The Fairfield-Vacaville Committee has produced a Final Report containing its recommendations for greenbelt alignment and financing methods.

The General Plan Health and Safety Element regulates development in potentially hazardous areas such as active fault zones, wildfire hazard areas, and floodplains.

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES.

This chapter lists General Plan objectives, policies, and programs which most directly apply to each topic area. The General Plan also contains other objectives, policies, programs, and references to other documents which might be relevant in particular cases. The General Plan is the fundamental authority for land use planning in Fairfield.

A. GROWTH SHAPING, HAZARDS, AND SAFETY

1. Community Separators/Shaping Urban Growth

LU 2.4: Establish and maintain a greenbelt buffer around the City.

OS 2: Create a greenbelt/open space buffer around the perimeter of the city that provides a clear sense of identity for the City of Fairfield as separate from other urban areas and incorporates the hills, the Jepson Prairie, and the Suisun Marsh.

OS 2.1 All future specific plans shall include adequate provisions for incorporating open space buffers. View corridors, watersheds, and prominent ridges shall be protected, and development on unstable soils shall be discouraged.

OS 2.6 Maximize open space preserved to enhance City identity and preserve surrounding natural environments.

OS 4.7 Utilize development projects as a means for permanently preserving open space by encouraging mechanisms such as land pooling and transfer of development rights within Open Space Planning Areas for the preservation of significant open space features and lands.

OS 4.7 A Require dedication of appropriate open space land or development rights as a condition of approval for proposed development projects.

OS 4.7 B Establish a method for permanent preservation of open space acquired through a land pooling program. Such designations shall be registered on the property title and shall be maintained should the property be sold.

PF 18.1 All new residential development shall be required to annex to a Mello-Roos Community Facilities District or to otherwise financially contribute for the purpose of acquiring land or development rights to preserve open space buffers between Fairfield and its neighboring cities and to preserve open spaces as defined in the Open Space

and Conservation Element. Developers shall be given the option of delaying development until sufficient open space is acquired to mitigate proposed residential development.

Discussion: Physical and visual separation from our neighboring cities, by means of a perimeter greenbelt, is a prime goal of the City. Development projects in open space planning areas may be required to contribute to establishing this greenbelt either financially or by land dedication. Area specific plans will include more detailed objectives and programs to achieve this goal.

2. Hazards and Safety

a. Wildfires

HS 4.1: Prohibit residential development in areas of Extreme Wildfire Risk (represented on Exhibit HS 2)

HS 4.7: Avoid siting structures on hilltops and upper slopes in areas of high fire potential due to the danger and difficulty of providing adequate fire protection.

Discussion: The Fire Hazards Map (Exhibit HS-2) in the General Plan identifies significant portions of the ridgelines, slopes, and hillsides that surround Fairfield as being susceptible to wildfire risk. Fire prevention and control in these hillside areas is often difficult or unfeasible. Since these areas also have significant open space value (for example, as scenic vistas or wildlife habitat), development may be inappropriate.

b. Steep Slopes and Unstable Soils

LU 15: Preserve identified prominent topographical features, including ridgelines, steep slopes and hillsides...

HS 2.2: Require soils and geological studies by qualified professionals for development within Slope Stability Zone 2 identified on Exhibit HS 1.

HS 2.3: Require detailed geologic studies and detailed mitigation measures for development projects located within Zone 3 and Zone 4 of Exhibit HS 1. Property insurance for development in Zone 3 and Zone 4 should be considered as a potential risk mitigation measure.

HS 2.4: Development is discouraged on slopes in excess of twenty (20) percent and/or unstable slopes.

HS 2.4A: Soon after adoption of the General Plan, adopt hillside and ridgeline grading and development standards that minimize geologic hazards. Require compliance with these standards.

OS 2.1 All future specific plans shall include adequate provisions for incorporating open space buffers. View corridors, watersheds, and prominent ridges shall be protected, and development on unstable soils shall be discouraged.

OS 6.3 A Require studies that document slope suitability and grading requirements as a condition of approval for development projects impacting open space areas.

Discussion: Many of the surrounding hillsides in the Fairfield area have been identified as being susceptible to landslides and soil flows. The Department of Planning and Development has on file California Division of Mines and Geology Landslide Hazard Identification Maps (Open File Reports 87-9 and 88-22) for portions of the planning area. In areas where slope stability is a concern, detailed soil and geologic studies, and mitigating engineered solutions will be required in order to reduce the danger of property loss. Areas where engineering measures do not satisfactorily mitigate natural hazards should be preserved as open space.

In the low-lying, valley regions of the Fairfield area, sandy soils associated with a high water table are subject to liquefaction during earthquake tremors. This can cause the soils to flow and result in ground failure. If development is proposed in such areas, an engineering study should be conducted. Areas where engineering measures will be ineffective should be set aside as open space.

c. Seismic Hazards

HS 1.3: No structure for human occupancy, other than one-story, wood frame structures, shall be permitted within 100 feet of an active fault trace as designated in maps compiled by the State Geologist under the Alquist-Priolo Geologic Hazards Zone Act, or fifty feet for one-story wood frame buildings.

HS 1.4: Require detailed geologic studies by certified geological engineers for projects within areas of potential seismic activity. All studies prepared shall identify the location of all surface fault traces within 100 feet of any proposed structure and determine their relative activity. Adequate provisions for mitigation of potential hazards to human life or property shall also be included.

Discussion: In order to reduce the risk of property damage in areas of potential seismic activity, detailed geologic studies will be required to locate and assess any fault trace. If a recently active fault is identified, mitigation measures may include the establishment of a buffer zone along the fault trace. Such buffer zones may be used as recreational corridors.

B. RECREATION AND TRAILS

1. Recreational Open Space

OS 7.6: Avoid the potential negative impacts of increased human activity on sensitive habitat areas when establishing new recreational facilities or programs.

OS 7.6 A Prepare guidelines for approval by the Open Space Commission and the Community Services Commission for human use of habitat areas.

OS 11: Maximize public value from open space for recreational uses.

OS 11.1: Secure public access to open space to the maximum extent feasible

OS 11.3: Require recreation and trails programs as a condition of approval for future development projects within phasing areas. Plans should provide access to trail heads located on adjacent public lands. Equestrian facilities should be considered as open space for planning purposes.

OS 12 Develop park areas to serve the needs of all residents.

OS 12.5 Establish regional parks to meet regional open space and recreation needs.

Discussion: Unlike urban parks, with their ballfields, playgrounds, swimming pools, and manicured grounds, recreational open space areas emphasize their natural setting. Activities appropriate for recreational open space areas include hiking and bicycling, picnicking, wildlife observation, and enjoyment of the natural scenery. However, some regional parks may also provide for limited developed recreational uses. The City recognizes the need for a balance between urban parks and recreational open space. In addition to the policies listed above, there are several General Plan objectives and policies which address urban recreational facilities.

Fairfield will also be preparing an Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan. This Plan will include policies for public access to open space areas. The Plan will also address security issues associated with open space areas.

2. Trails

OS 6.7 D Develop trails along scenic roadways within the Planning Area. Establish design guidelines for such trails.

OS 7.6: Avoid the potential negative impacts of increased human activity on sensitive habitat areas when establishing new recreational facilities or programs.

OS 11.1: Secure public access to open space to the maximum extent feasible

OS 11.2: Promote trail systems throughout the open spaces.

OS 11.3: Require recreation and trails programs as a condition of approval for future development projects within phasing areas. Plans should provide access to trail heads located on adjacent public lands. Equestrian facilities should be considered as open space for planning purposes.

OS 11.7: Maintain water courses within the General Plan Area as components of the recreation corridor system. Public access within sensitive habitat areas of the waterway shall be considered individually to ensure protection of the habitat resource.

OS 11.7A: Develop a program for establishing pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails with frequent access points along the urban stream corridors.

OS 11.8: Preserve public access corridors for walkers, bicyclists, and equestrians along future floodway improvements whenever feasible.

OS 11.9 Utility easement corridors shall be designated for recreational corridors unless an acceptable trail alternative is included in a development plan.

OS 12.7: Preserve and develop the entire Linear Park system, from Solano Community College into Phasing Area D, as illustrated on the Land Use Diagram, exclusively as a recreation facility in order to provide an alternative non-motorized vehicular linkage among recreation and parks, schools, shopping, industry, residential, and other community activity centers.

Discussion: Trail programs are required by the General Plan for all development within Phasing Areas (OSPA's 3, 8, 9, 10). They can provide access to community facilities, shopping, important natural features, recreational opportunities, and scenic vistas. Trail systems should be provided where appropriate security and management can be provided.

C. PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURE

LU 2.1 A: In order to protect agriculture and the visual character of Suisun Valley, the City, in cooperation with the County, shall establish an open space buffer along its perimeter. This buffer will serve to separate agriculture from development. Agriculture and recreational uses will be allowed within the buffer. This buffer shall incorporate existing landforms and features, such as the ridges east of Mankas Corner Road and Clayton Road, and groves of trees so as to take advantage of these features to visually screen development from the Valley. If existing features prove inadequate, the development shall use trees, berms, and other methods to minimize visibility from the Valley. The buffers shall include a strip of land at least 200 feet in width:

1. Along the north side of the Putah South Canal between Mankas Corner Road and the existing Rancho Solano open space area.
2. Along the south side of Rockville Road between Suisun Creek and Suisun Valley Road.

LU 2.1 B: The City, in cooperation with the County, shall establish similar buffers between productive permanent agricultural lands and development in other areas undergoing development.

LU 9.1: Very low density residential development shall be encouraged within the City's urban limit line. The intent is to provide a transition between agricultural or rural areas and urban development.

OS 1.1 Preserve agricultural enterprises by...separating and buffering agricultural lands from development areas.

ED 8.2: Coordinate open space preservation and conservation programs with economic development programs to enhance agriculture

ED 8.3: Development shall not encroach upon or consume productive croplands in areas such as the Suisun Valley.

Discussion: Agriculture plays a major role in our area, both economically and as part of our cultural heritage. The City intends to preserve and protect agricultural enterprises in the Suisun Valley and other lands designated in the General Plan for agriculture.

Much of the area surrounding the City, although presently in agriculture, will be developed. Urban neighborhoods or industries will border on the remaining agricultural activities. In many cases, agriculture and urban development are not compatible. Agricultural operations are often associated with noise, dust, chemicals, and unpleasant odors. Conversely, urban growth brings vehicle traffic, marauding pets, trespassing, and vandalism. To minimize these problems, development plans shall incorporate "transition zones" which, to the extent feasible, physically and visually separate urban development from agricultural activities. Within a transition zone, the City may permit low intensity land uses such as recreation, rural or very low density residential, and other agricultural enterprises.

D. TREES

OS 6.2: Adopt ordinances for...preserving trees...

OS 6.5: Identify and designate scenic features within the General Plan Area that merit preservation as Scenic Vista Areas. These may include, but are not limited to...significant stands of trees....

OS 7.7: Promote the preservation of existing mature trees...

OS 7.7B: Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation banking program for oak savannah and oak woodland habitat during the areawide planning process for each phasing area. The Plan should identify habitat preservation and enhancement sites and criteria for incorporating and protecting oak savannah habitat and individual valley oaks as part of development projects, and would establish predictable mitigation requirements for developers, mitigation funding mechanisms, and interagency agreements on mitigation measures and priorities. Preparation of the plan would include tasks described in the General Plan EIR.

UD 6.1: Preserve existing significant trees and extensively plant new trees where appropriate.

Discussion: Trees, like the hills, are a vital part of the City's visual and cultural environment. Preserving this environment is a City goal, and this means judiciously protecting trees and other native vegetation. The General Plan emphasizes the preservation of significant trees and significant groups of trees.

The City will generally find the following trees significant:

1. Healthy native oak trees
2. Mature non-native trees with significant historic, aesthetic, or habitat value. For example, a large, healthy eucalyptus tree in a windrow associated with a historic ranch would be considered a significant tree, while an unattractive, dying fruit tree in a long-abandoned orchard would not.
3. Trees adjacent to natural streams or drainage channels which provide habitat, and contribute to the stability of the streambank may be considered significant.

The City recognizes that some trees may be lost during development. The intent of the City is to minimize or mitigate this loss. The criteria for preserving oak trees will be defined in more detail by the conservation plans and mitigation banking programs which will be prepared for each phasing area during the areawide planning process. These plans and programs may require setting aside certain oak savannah or oak woodland areas as open space and/or contributing to off-site mitigation.

In addition, the General Plan directs the City to prepare a tree preservation ordinance. This ordinance may impose additional standards and requirements for tree preservation and mitigation.

E. SCENIC VISTAS

1. Visual Background

LU 2.1 C: The City shall continue to work with the County to plan for the preservation of the hills to the west of Suisun Valley as open space.

OS 2.1 All future specific plans shall include adequate provisions for incorporating open space buffers. View corridors, watersheds, and prominent ridges shall be protected, and development on unstable soils shall be discouraged.

OS 6.1: Preserve the views of hills and other vistas surrounding Fairfield.

OS 6.5: Identify and designate scenic features within the General Plan Area that merit preservation as Scenic Vista Areas. These may include, but are not limited to: hilly areas, significant stands of trees, marsh views, grasslands, roadside creeks, riparian or stream courses, vineyards, orchards, and areas of wildlife concentrations.

OS 6.5A: Develop a Scenic Vista Area Plan for approval by the Open Space Commission, Planning Commission, and adoption by the City Council.

OS 6.9: Maintain the scenic vistas of the rolling hills that are seen from the urban areas of Fairfield.

OS 6.7: Identify, designate, and preserve Scenic Roadways within the General plan Area

OS 6.7A: Develop a Scenic Roadway Plan that a) identifies and promotes the preservation of scenic roadways and b) establishes scenic designation criteria and preservation policies for land adjacent to scenic roadways. This plan should be submitted to the Open Space Commission and Planning Commission for approval, and the City Council for adoption.

OS 7.7 A: Develop and adopt standards to require the planting of an adequate number of shade trees in new residential and commercial developments.

UD 5: Preserve the natural quality of the surrounding setting.

UD 5.2: Restrict development from significantly encroaching on public views of ridgelines, agricultural areas, the Cement Hill Range, and the Suisun Marsh.

UD 5.3 Develop hillside areas in a manner which respects their topography and maintains their visual integrity.

Discussion: The most significant natural features in the Fairfield area are the productive agricultural lands, the outlying prominent hillsides and ridgelines, and the ecologically important Suisun Marsh. The City intends to preserve the scenic views of these natural features as seen from urbanized Fairfield. The City will be preparing a Scenic Vista Plan and a Scenic Roadways Plan which will provide guidelines and mechanisms for achieving this goal. In addition the Plans will identify the scenic landscapes and roadways which should be preserved.

In particular, the City plans to preserve the visual integrity of the open hills and ridgelines. Therefore, development proposed in visually sensitive hillside areas will be restricted from significantly encroaching upon the public views. Site design which focuses development on lower slopes and inner valleys will be encouraged. During the initial planning process developers are also encouraged to thoroughly investigate the impact of a hillside development on views from future and existing developments and roads below.

The City also strongly supports the preservation of other landscapes, including the Suisun Marsh, orchards, vineyards, and grasslands. The Scenic Vista Area Plan will provide further guidance on which viewsheds should be preserved, as well as preservation guidelines and mechanisms. In general, development should be designed to minimize visual intrusiveness. Where possible, development should take advantage of existing vegetation for screening. New screening vegetation should be planted in a natural pattern and emphasize appropriate and native plants.

2. Preserving Prominent Natural Features

LU 13.1: New development shall preserve and enhance, to the extent possible, natural vegetation, landscape features, and open space.

LU 15: Preserve identified prominent topographical features, including ridgelines, slopes and hillsides, and natural features such as tree stands and riparian areas.

LU 16: Development of identified hillside areas should be sensitive, to preserve natural features.

OS 6.5: Identify and designate scenic features within the General Plan Area that merit preservation as Scenic Vista Areas. These may include, but are not limited to: hilly areas, significant stands of trees, marshlands views, grasslands, roadside creeks, riparian or stream courses, vineyards, orchards, and areas of wildlife concentrations.

OS 6.5 A: Develop a Scenic Vista Area Plan for approval by the Open Space Commission, Planning Commission, and adoption by the City Council.

OS 6.6: Significant natural features shall be preserved wherever development is allowed in a Scenic Vista Area, and views of these significant features shall not be obstructed.

OS 6.6 A: Development projects within or adjacent to Scenic Vista Areas shall be subject to planned unit development procedures in the City's zoning code to promote building and siting solutions that protect the scenic resources of the area.

UD 5.2: Restrict development from significantly encroaching on public views of ridgelines, agricultural areas, the Cement Hill Range, and the Suisun Marsh.

Discussion: A primary goal of the City is to preserve prominent natural features as visual open spaces. Such features may include knolls (the rounded top of a hill or mountain), rock outcroppings, ponds and marshes, riparian zones, significant trees

or groups of trees, and cliffs. The Scenic Vista Area Plan prepared by the City will aid in identifying those features considered important as visual open spaces. Areawide or master development plans will also include a list of these features. Subdivision design should recognize the value of such features by setting them aside as open space. In addition, site design should recognize and protect views of the features from nearby roads and other public access points.

While the General Plan emphasizes preservation, the Plan also recognizes the role of sensitive design. In certain limited cases, changes associated with development may actually improve a significant natural feature. For example, a trail project along a natural stream may restore habitat and provide public access.

3. Open Hillsides and Ridgelines

LU 15: Preserve identified prominent topographical features, including ridgelines, steep slopes and hillsides, and natural features such as tree stands and riparian areas.

OS 2.1 All future specific plans shall include adequate provisions for incorporating open space buffers. View corridors, watersheds, and prominent ridges shall be protected, and development on unstable soils shall be discouraged.

OS 4.6: Promote clustering of housing units to preserve the hillsides, ridgelines, and a maximum amount of open space.

OS 6.1 Preserve the views of hills and other vistas surrounding Fairfield.

OS 6.2 Adopt ordinances for: hillside development, preserving trees, streams, and drainage courses.

OS 6.9: Maintain the scenic vistas of the rolling hills that are seen from the urban areas of Fairfield.

UD 5.2: Restrict development from significantly encroaching on public views of ridgelines, agricultural areas, the Cement Hill Range, and the Suisun Marsh.

UD 5.3: Develop hillside areas in a manner which respects their topography and maintains their visual integrity.

Discussion: The City considers ridgelines and hillsides significant natural features and intends to preserve and protect them as open space. Development should not significantly encroach upon public views of ridgelines and hillsides. To maintain

visual integrity, no development should interrupt the visual crest of a prominent hill or ridgeline. The hillside, not the development should be the visually dominant element. For example, development in the Rolling Hills community is tucked into valleys and lower slopes. Prominent hills remain open, visually dominating the area and serving to separate and define individual neighborhoods in the Rolling Hills community.

Prominent topographical features such as ridgelines and hillsides which are to be preserved will be identified during the areawide and master planning process. The prominence of hill or ridgeline will depend on its location, the surrounding topography, and its visibility. A hill or ridgeline will generally be considered prominent if:

1. It is visibly higher than surrounding terrain (e.g. the hills east of Peabody Road).
2. It is an isolated natural feature (e.g. Nelson Hill).
3. It forms the boundary between hilly terrain and a level or gently rolling valley (e.g. the Cordelia Hills or the hills bordering Rolling Hills).
4. If it is highly visible from urbanized Fairfield, the Suisun Valley, Interstate 80, or adjoining arterial roadways (e.g. Cement Hill).

4. Grading in Open Space Areas

OS 6.3 A Require studies that document slope suitability and grading requirements as a condition of approval for development projects impacting open space areas.

OS 6.4: All grading shall be integrated and compatible with adjacent areas so as to create a natural topographical appearance and avoid abrupt changes in slope.

OS 6.4 A: Adopt hillside grading standards.

OS 6.4B: Modify the existing grading standards to require contour grading in transition areas between development and open space that avoids abrupt grade changes adjacent to development projects and provide guidance for sensitive land form modification within open space areas.

HS 2.4: Development is discouraged on slopes in excess of twenty (20) percent and/or unstable soils.

HS 2.4 A: Soon after adoption of the General Plan, adopt hillside and ridgeline grading and development standards that minimize geologic hazards. Require compliance with these standards.

UD 5.1: Development should be designed to provide continuity with features of the surrounding area.

UD 5.3: Develop hillside areas in a manner which respects their topography and maintains their visual integrity.

Discussion: Development in hillside areas will inevitably be placed next to open space lands. In order to maintain visual integrity and to preserve existing natural features, the City requires that project grading plans be integrated and compatible with the surrounding landscape so as to create a natural topographic appearance. In particular, abrupt changes in grade will be discouraged. Site grading plans which minimize grading and follow the natural contours of the land will greatly reduce the visual impacts of residential development in open hillside areas and avoid significant modification of open space lands.

F. WETLANDS, STREAMS, AND WATERSHEDS

OS 7.5: Identify and protect vernal pools located in the entire General Plan Area. For vernal pools located in Phasing Areas D and E, establish a habitat reserve similar to the Jepson Prairie Nature Preserve.

OS 7.5 A: Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation monitoring program for vernal pools and seasonal wetlands during the areawide planning process for each phasing area. The components of this program are described in the General Plan EIR.

OS 9: Maintain existing waterways in their natural state if possible.

OS 9.1: Promote restoration and establish permanent mechanisms to protect wetlands and riparian corridors

OS 9.2: Manage all seasonal creeks and other drainage courses so as to protect and enhance the Suisun Marsh.

OS 9.6: Continue to endorse the integrity of the Suisun Marsh Secondary Management Zone.

OS 9.8: Preserve natural watercourses through requirement of land dedication and open space improvement imposed during the land development process.

OS 9.9 The proponents of new development projects along important freshwater marsh, open water, or riparian habitat areas that are not already covered by the City's Creekside Protection Ordinance shall provide an assessment of the habitat. Based on the assessment, an enhancement or restoration plan would be required to be prepared by a qualified person(s) experienced in the development and implementation of riparian restoration and enhancement plans.

OS 11.7: Maintain water courses within the General Plan Area as components of the recreation corridor system. Public access within sensitive habitat areas of waterway shall be considered individually to ensure protection of the habitat resource.

OS 11.7A: Develop a program for establishing pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails with frequent access points along the urban stream channels.

OS 11.8: Preserve public access corridors for walkers, bicyclists, and equestrians along future floodway improvements whenever feasible.

HS 2.8: Require an erosion control and rehabilitation plan to be prepared for projects requiring substantial ground breaking activities to control short-term and long-term erosion and sedimentation in nearby streams and rivers.

HS 3.5: Development that interferes with channel capacity or causes erosion and siltation shall not be allowed.

PF 8.4: Improve long-term drainage management in the watersheds affecting the City of Fairfield by establishing cooperative relationships with other jurisdictions and coordinating drainage programs and policies on a regional basis.

PF 9.4: Utilize a variety of means for floodplain management, including structural improvements, land use and zoning controls, erosion control techniques, set backs, levees, floodways, detention and retention of storm runoff, and other measures as circumstances dictate. Priority will be given to those measures which provide results in a cost-effective way while complying with the Goals of this General Plan, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements, and aesthetic, environmental, and recreational considerations.

Discussion: These policies focus on the preservation of the natural character of streams, watersheds, and wetlands. Developments which affect any of the above must comply with relevant City rules, including the Creekside Protection Ordinance and the regulations of other government agencies, such as the State Department of Fish and Game, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Regional Water Quality Board, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Streams and riparian corridors not specifically addressed by the Creekside Protection Ordinance shall be studied to determine what preservation and/or enhancement activities are necessary and appropriate. The City will evaluate these studies and may require the developer to restore or enhance any riparian corridor impacted by his project. Such activities may include revegetation, removing exotic vegetation, installing sediment capture basins and other measures to control runoff, restoration of natural channels, and dedicating a buffer strip along the waterway to preserve riparian growth. The City may request dedication of additional space for trails adjacent to streams and channels.

Urban runoff can have an adverse impact on waterways and wetlands, including the Suisun Marsh. Specific and master plans for each phasing area will assess the impact of urban runoff on waterways, drainage systems, and wetlands.

The City is fortunate to be surrounded by a variety of wetlands. These areas include portions of riparian corridors, the Suisun Marsh and its protection zones, bogs, and vernal pools. Wetlands provide many benefits including flood control, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities (hiking and hunting) and visual open space. Development is discouraged in wetlands.

G. WILDLIFE

OS 7.1: Establish policies to protect indigenous wildlife and their habitats.

OS 7.1 A: Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation banking program for annual grassland wildlife habitat during the areawide planning process for each phasing area. The plan should identify sites for habitat preservation and enhancement and establish predictable mitigation requirements for developers, mitigation funding mechanisms, and interagency agreements on mitigation measures and priorities. Preparation of the plan would include tasks described in the General Plan EIR.

OS 7.1 B: Require surveys of active raptor nests and protection of nest trees, if found, on a project-by-project basis as a condition of project approval. The surveys should be conducted in accordance with the General Plan EIR. If no raptor nests are found during the surveys, grading may proceed unconstrained by conflicts with raptors. If a raptor nest is found, implement one of the measures described in the EIR.

OS 7.4: Provide for the permanent protection of wildlife habitat areas.

OS 7.5: Identify and protect vernal pools located in the entire General Plan Area...

OS 7.5A: Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation banking program for vernal pools and seasonal wetland habitats during the areawide planning process for each phasing area. The components of this program are described in the General Plan EIR.

OS 7.6: Avoid the potential negative impacts of increased human activity on sensitive habitat areas when establishing new recreational facilities or programs.

OS 7.6 A: Prepare guidelines for approval by the Open Space Commission and Community Services Commission for human use of habitat areas.

OS 7.7B: Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation banking program for oak savannah and oak woodland habitat during the areawide planning process for each phasing area. The Plan should identify habitat preservation and enhancement sites and criteria for incorporating and protecting oak savannah habitat and individual valley oaks as part of development projects, and would establish predictable mitigation requirements for developers, mitigation funding mechanisms, and interagency agreements on mitigation measures and priorities. Preparation of the plan would include tasks described in the General Plan EIR.

OS 9.9 The proponents of new development projects along important freshwater marsh, open water, or riparian habitat areas that are not already covered by the City's Creekside Protection Ordinance shall provide an assessment of the habitat. Based on the assessment, an enhancement or restoration plan would be required to be prepared by a qualified person(s) experienced in the development and implementation of riparian restoration and enhancement plans.

OS 11.7: Maintain water courses within the General Plan Areas as components of the recreation corridor system. Public access within sensitive habitat areas of waterway shall be considered individually to ensure protection of the habitat resource.

Discussion: Native plants and animals are an important part of the heritage of the Fairfield area. The City is firmly committed to the conservation of significant wildlife habitat areas which surround the City. For the purpose of these guidelines, significant wildlife habitat includes:

- 1) Habitat for "special status" species. Special status species are listed or are candidates for listing on State or federal lists as rare, endangered, or threatened species. Habitat for these species includes all lands vital to their survival, including nesting sites and foraging grounds.
- 2) Locally significant communities. The General Plan defines several communities as particularly important for preservation. These include oak

savannahs and woodlands, freshwater marshes, riparian corridors, open water habitats, and local grasslands. In many cases, these communities include special status species.

The General Plan EIR requires conservation plans and mitigation programs for these communities. The plans and programs will inventory and evaluate the habitat types in each phasing area, define potential impacts on habitat, recommend mitigation programs and standards for each habitat type, and identify conservation areas.

Open space preserved primarily for habitat preservation purposes should be part of larger open space networks. Such systems of open space allow for greater species diversity and can help reduce conflicts between urban development and wildlife. On the other hand, isolated pockets of open space surrounded by urban development often cannot support many wildlife species, as these species' normal travel corridors and foraging grounds can be cut off by development. Where such pockets are unavoidably created, mitigation may be required. When effective, this mitigation may involve the preservation of wildlife travel corridors.

H. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

OS 10.1: Conserve valuable resources by promoting educational activities and encouraging conservation efforts by citizens, property owners, and builders.

OS 10.2: Assign to the Open Space Commission the responsibility for the official inventory of historical and archeological sites.

OS 10.3: Consult with the California Archaeological Inventory Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University on any project that could have an impact on cultural resources.

OS 10.4: Avoid impacts on cultural resources when archeological studies reveal the presence of cultural resources at a development site. If avoidance is infeasible, require site testing by a qualified archeologist to determine the significance of the resources, and implement recommended mitigation measures.

OS 10.5: Halt construction at a development site if cultural resources are encountered unexpectedly during construction and require consultation with a qualified archeologist to determine the significance of the resources.

OS 10.7: Require archaeological studies by a certified archaeologist in areas of archaeological significance prior to approval of development projects.

OS 10.9 Promote the preservation and restoration of historical sites and structures within the General Plan Area that are significant to the City's or the region's cultural or historic background. (See Policy UD 3.4)

OS 10.9 A: Develop and implement an historic preservation ordinance that considers incorporating the following:

- identify an historic district or a list of buildings to be protected;
- require the Open Space Commission to review historic buildings proposed for demolition, relocation, or rehabilitation;
- establish a mechanism for demolition, relocation or rehabilitation suspension during a review process;
- establish a mechanism to protect historic buildings from demolition, relocation, or rehabilitation; and,
- coordinate with the State office of Historic Preservation in developing the historic preservation ordinance.

Discussion: The City encourages the preservation of significant historic and archaeological sites, historic structures, and other landmarks; and will seek to save those of great historical importance as museums or other public facilities. In like manner, developers should consider ways of integrating historic structures into their projects; for example, a historic farmhouse might find new life as a community clubhouse or business office; an old stone wall could - and should - become a landscape feature.

In any area suspected of having archaeological resources, the City shall require an expert assessment prior to permitting excavation. Moreover, developers should be reminded of the law's requirement to stop work and seek qualified consultation if possible artifacts are encountered. Protection and proper mitigation are mandatory.

IV. PLANNING AREA GUIDELINES

1. Fairfield-Benicia-Vallejo Community Separator

OS 2.2: Establish and maintain open space buffer zones between Vallejo and Fairfield along I-80 and between Fairfield and Benicia along I-680, identified as Open Space Planning Area 1 on the Open Space Planning Area map.

OS 2.3: Incorporate the development constraints identified by the joint Fairfield/Benicia/Vallejo open space preservation study into any development plans that may be proposed in Open Space Planning Area 1, as conceptually represented on Exhibit OS-1.

OS 11.5A: Actively promote ridgetop and hillside trails along major north-south ridges connecting Benicia and eastern Vallejo, and between Benicia and Green Valley to become major links to the Bay Area Ridge Trail System.

Discussion: Policies for the area will be developed under the authority of the Joint Powers Agreement approved by the three cities on **/**/92. The cities will establish an open space buffer to visually separate the three communities. The parties to the agreement will also seek to establish a regional park in the planning area.

2. Lower Green Valley

OS 2.4: Incorporate the development constraints identified by the Green Valley Open Space Study into any development plans that may be proposed in Open Space Planning Area 2.

OS 11.5B: Actively promote trails for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians in the Green Valley Falls/Vallejo Lakes Planning Area that link the reservoirs, Green Valley Falls, Lower Green Valley, and the Rockville Hills area.

Discussion: An areawide plan will be prepared and adopted by the City Council prior to any development within this planning area. This plan will identify specific development and open space areas as well as policies for development within the valley. As in other Open Space Planning Areas, a trail system will be an important component of the recreational open space. The Open Space Commission will work with Community Services staff and the project proponents to identify the most appropriate trail corridors.

3. Green Valley Falls/Vallejo Lakes

OS 7.2: Work with the County to preserve Green Valley Falls as a nature reserve. Plan for limited public access in the environmentally sensitive areas of the Green Valley Canyon.

OS 11.5B: Actively promote trails for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians in the Green Valley Falls/Vallejo Lakes Planning Area that link the reservoirs, Green Valley Falls, Lower Green Valley, and the Rockville Hills area.

Discussion: This Planning Area is outside the City's Urban Limit Line and is not intended to be within the City's jurisdiction. A majority of the land is owned by the City of Vallejo and serves as a watershed for three small lakes.

The Fairfield General Plan designates the Falls area for Recreational Open Space. The City will work with the County, the City of Vallejo, local non-profits, and other landowners to identify and develop recreational opportunities and potential trail corridors.

4. Rockville Hills

LU 2.1 C: The City shall continue to work with the County to plan for the preservation of the hills to the west of Suisun Valley as open space.

OS 11.5B: Actively promote trails for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians in the Green Valley Falls/Vallejo Lakes Planning Area that link the reservoirs, Green Valley Falls, Lower Green Valley, and the Rockville Hills area.

OS 7.3: Work with the County to ensure that development projects within the Rockville Hills/Stoneridge Open Space Planning Area achieve minimal alteration of existing land contours and natural drainage channels.

Discussion: The Fairfield General Plan designates OSPA 4 as a mixture of Recreational Open Space (Rockville Hills Park) Very Low Density Residential, and Extensive Agriculture. The area is outside of the City's Urban Limit Line except for Rockville Hills Park. Thus, development in this area will occur under the authority of the County. The City will review County development proposals to ensure that any development minimizes impacts on Rockville Hills Park. The General Plan commits the City to work with the County to minimize the alteration of the landscape and promote trails.

5. & 6. Upper and Lower Suisun Valley

OS 1.4: Permanently preserve productive agricultural lands within the Suisun Valley by continuing to direct urban development away from the Suisun Valley.

OS 1.4A Establish a permanent agricultural buffer between urban development in Fairfield and agriculture in the Suisun Valley. The City will seek to establish such a buffer through the acquisition of fee title, development rights, or conservation easements. The City may offer to lease back to farmers any lands acquired by the City.

OS 1.5: Strongly reaffirm the City of Fairfield's commitment to the basic goals of the 1974 "Solano Irrigation District Agreement," actively participate in any local measures that promote the preservation of agriculture adjacent to Fairfield, and encourage extension of the agreement past its present expiration date.

LU 2.1: Encourage the preservation of agricultural land surrounding the City and permanently preserve agriculture in the Suisun Valley.

Program LU 2.1 A: In order to protect agriculture and the visual character of Suisun Valley, the City, in cooperation with the County, shall establish an open space buffer along its perimeter. This buffer will serve to separate agriculture from development. Agriculture and recreational uses will be allowed within the buffer. This buffer shall incorporate existing landforms and features, such as the ridges east of Mankas Corner Road and Clayton Road, and groves of trees so as to take advantage of these features to visually screen development from the Valley. If existing features prove inadequate, the development shall use trees, berms, and other methods to minimize visibility from the Valley. The buffers shall include a strip of land at least 200 feet in width:

1. Along the north side of the Putah South Canal between Mankas Corner Road and the existing Rancho Solano open space area.
2. Along the south side of Rockville Road between Suisun Creek and Suisun Valley Road.

In addition, the policies for Phasing Area C address the protection of Suisun Valley agriculture:

5. New development and traffic improvements shall not conflict with the existing agricultural and farming activities in Suisun Valley.

6. New development shall be physically separated from farmland and agricultural uses. In order to protect existing farmland and farming activities from urban development, an open space and recreation buffer shall be established along the perimeter of the Valley. Only agricultural or passive recreational uses will be allowed in this buffer. (See Policy LU 2.1 and Program LU 2.1 A)

7. No new streets shall be built which intersect Mankas Corner Road or Clayton Road. All new roads and streets serving new development shall connect into the existing Rancho Solano or City street system.

Discussion: The General Plan clearly indicates that the City will not support urban development in the Suisun Valley. The City has made a commitment to the permanent preservation of the Suisun Valley in agriculture and open space.

7. Nelson Hill

Nelson Hill is designated a Master Development Plan Area in the General Plan. The policies relevant to open space are as follows:

1. The General Plan designation of the area is low density residential/open space.
2. After adoption of the General Plan, a master development plan will be prepared for the entire Nelson Hill site. This plan shall evaluate the open space, recreation, and residential development potential of all land.
3. Development shall be comprehensively planned and integrated with the adjoining residential designated properties to the west; particularly with respect to circulation.

Open Space Preservation

4. Significant ridgelines, steep slopes, and native trees shall be protected from urban development and shall be preserved in their natural state. Site improvements and development shall not be located within prominent viewsheds. Any development on the hilltop shall be situated as not to be visible from surrounding areas.
5. As part of the master development planning process, land shall be dedicated for a City park. This land shall include a site to be located at the southern portion of the top of Nelson Hill, affording views of the Suisun Marsh and allowing access for handicapped, elderly, or very young persons not able to hike from the bottom of the hill.

6. On site open space shall be required as a condition of development approvals. Land to be dedicated shall also include the wooded hillsides at approximately sixty feet elevation and higher, and other significant open space resources. As part of the master development planning process, a publicly accessible trails system shall be designated. Trails shall be located at the higher elevations of the hillsides, preferably within wooded areas. These trails shall be designed to ultimately connect with the Linear Park.
7. No development shall be allowed at the northeast corner of the site which adjoins Suisun Valley agricultural land.

OS 6.8: Preserve the character of Nelson Hill through establishment of open space/recreation in conjunction with development projects.

Discussion: The General Plan policies for Nelson Hill emphasize preservation of natural features and trees, public access and trails, including dedication of a park site, and minimizing the visibility of development from the Suisun Valley and Interstate 80.

8. Rolling Hills

The Rolling Hills OSPA constitutes a portion of Phasing Area C. The relevant policies for this Phasing Area are listed below:

Areawide Plan Mandate

1. An areawide plan shall be prepared for the entire Phasing Area, including the proposed Rancho Solano expansion, Tooby Ranch, Hopkins land, Sengo Ranch, and all other land shown in the Land Use Diagram.
2. The areawide plan shall evaluate the open space and development potential of all the land without regard to property lines.
3. Preparation of the areawide plan will include a citizen participation effort, involving citizens and property owners representing a wide variety of interests and backgrounds.
4. Development in the area shall be comprehensively planned through the areawide plan with unified design concepts.

Natural Resources

9. Significant wildlife habitats and watersheds shall be preserved and protected.

Urban Limit Line

10. The urban limit line shall follow the final development area of Rancho Solano along the north and west sides of the Phasing Area. The City's urban limit line shall ultimately follow the path of final development. Until a areawide plan for the Phasing Area is prepared, the urban limit line shall extend to the Phasing Area's outer boundaries, but exclude any agricultural lands subject to the agreement between the City of Fairfield and Solano Irrigation District. Once the areawide plan is adopted, the urban limit line shall be configured to follow the outermost fringe of urban development at buildout. All land located beyond the ultimate urban limit line...shall not be included in the City's sphere of influence and shall not be annexed by the City in the future.

Open Space and Recreation

11. Creation of a regional nature park similar to Rockville Hills Park shall be incorporated into the areawide plan for Phasing Area C.
12. An integrated trail system shall be built which serves hikers, runners, bicyclists, equestrians, and those with special recreational needs.

Public and Site Improvements

14. All infrastructure improvements, such as sewer and water facilities, roads and streets, street lighting, and storm drainage improvements, shall be designed to visually blend into the natural setting.
15. All property designated for development in the Phasing Area shall be subject to a Mello-Roos district or other financing mechanisms capable of paying for all major public improvements, including open space acquisition, schools, parks, roads, sewer and water lines, and storm drainage improvements.
16. Site grading shall be done in a manner to minimize damage to natural land features and existing topographical contours. Substantial disturbance of existing features and contours shall only be allowed when the visual quality of the development is enhanced.
17. Site improvements and development should be located in lower lying elevations and shall not be located within prominent viewsheds when to do so would significantly

degrade the viewshed or the natural setting. Strict standards for development on higher hillsides shall be established.

OS 11.3 Require recreation and trails programs as a condition of approval for future development projects within Phasing Areas. Plans should provide access to trail heads located on adjacent public lands. Equestrian facilities should be considered as open space for planning purposes.

OS 6.1: Preserve the views of hills and other vistas surrounding Fairfield.

Discussion: In Phasing Area C, important issues include grading, preservation of wildlife habitat, minimizing of visibility, and trails. The policies also provide for the creation of a major new regional park.

9. Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt

The Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt OSPA includes a large section of Phasing Area D. A portion of the Greenbelt is also located within the boundaries of Area E. The policies for Phasing Area D are found in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Policies relevant to open space planning include the following:

35. Phasing Area D acknowledges that a permanent open space buffer will be established between Fairfield and Vacaville generally within Open Space Planning Area 9 as defined by the Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element. A limited amount of low density housing may be built within this Open Space Planning Area, but not within the open space buffer. Any such residential development will require dedication of development rights or fee title to lands within the open space buffer. The exact location and size of the open space buffer shall be determined by the areawide plan to be adopted pursuant to Phasing Area D Policy No. 2 or, in the vicinity of Peabody Road, by the Peabody Road/Cement Hill Road Corridor Study. The size and location of the buffer will be consistent with the Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt Study Committee Report and Recommendations of May 9, 1991 and any Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt Open Space agreement which may precede the completion of those studies. The intent of both the City of Fairfield and Vacaville is that the greenbelt achieve a minimum width of at least 3/4 mile. (See Policy OS 2.5)

36. Important natural features such as hills, ridgelines, creeks, wetlands, and vernal pools shall be preserved in their natural state.

37. Views and viewsheds to the surrounding Cement Hill range shall be identified and permanently preserved.

Phasing Area E, Policy 6: All development must protect the integrity of the environmentally sensitive Suisun Marsh and designated wetlands. In addition, the Fairfield-Vacaville open space buffer shall continue into Phasing Area E, conceptually following the alignment indicated in Exhibit LU 6. The exact location and size of the open space buffer shall be consistent with the Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt Study Committee Report and Recommendations of May 9, 1991.

OS 2.5: Establish a permanent open space buffer between Fairfield and Vacaville consistent with the Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt Study Committee Report and Recommendations of May 9, 1991.

OS 2.5A Establish and maintain an ongoing cooperative open space implementation program with the City of Vacaville.

OS 4.2: Require the dedication of open space lands for development projects in the Fairfield/Vacaville Greenbelt Open Space Planning Area in the northeastern area of Fairfield.

OS 6.11: Permanently preserve open space above the 200 foot contour on Cement Hill because of its dominant visual significance to the City. If the City ultimately acquires this open space, it shall develop publicly accessible trails and vista points on Cement Hill to take advantage of the outstanding views of Fairfield and the Valley.

OS 7.5: Identify and protect vernal pools located in the entire General Plan area. For vernal pools located in Phasing Areas D and E, establish a habitat reserve similar to the Jepson Prairie Nature Preserve.

OS 7.5 A: Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation banking program for vernal pools and seasonal wetland habitats during the areawide planning process for each phasing area. The components of the program are described in the General Plan.

OS 9.3: Secure wetlands designation for appropriate lands in the Fairfield/Vacaville Greenbelt and for lands in the Travis AFB/Jepson Prairie Planning Area.

OS 12.7: Preserve and develop the entire Linear Park system, from Solano Community College into Phasing Area D, as illustrated on the Land Use Diagram, exclusively as a recreation facility in order to provide an alternative non-motorized vehicular linkage among recreation and parks, schools, shopping, industry, residential, and other community activity centers.

UD 5.2: Restrict development from significantly encroaching on public views of ridgelines, agricultural areas, the Cement Hill Range, and the Suisun Marsh.

Discussion: Portions of OSPA 9 will be subject to the policies in the Peabody Road/Cement Hill Corridor Plan, the Phasing Area D Areawide Plan, the Phasing Area E Northeast Subarea Areawide Plan, and the Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt Open Space Agreement. Area D policies emphasize the preservation of important natural resources such as ridgelines and hills (as much of the area consists of level prairies), vernal pools, and seasonal wetlands. The Fairfield Linear Park will also be extended into OSPA 9, providing linkages between Central Fairfield and regional trails in the Davis and Sacramento areas. The Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt Open Space Agreement will define the roles of the two cities with regards to the acquisition and maintenance of greenbelt lands and will establish guidelines for the coordinated planning. Note that the General Plan also requires the establishment of a habitat preserve for vernal pool wetlands similar to the Jepson Prairie Nature Preserve off Route 113.

10. Travis AFB/Jepson Prairie

OSPA 10 is included within Phasing Area E. The relevant policies for this Phasing Area are listed here:

6. All development must protect the integrity of the environmentally sensitive Suisun Marsh and designated wetlands. In addition, the Fairfield-Vacaville open space buffer shall continue into Phasing Area E, conceptually following the alignment indicated in Exhibit LU-6. The exact location and size of the open space buffer shall be consistent with the Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt Study Committee Report and Recommendations of May 9, 1991.
 9. The area east of Travis AFB shall be retained for open space and agriculture, unless there is a significant change in the status of Travis AFB, such as conversion into a joint military and commercial facility. (See Objective CI 8)
 10. If the status of Travis AFB is changed, an areawide plan will be required prior to any development in the sub-area. Any development will be dependent upon a new north-south expressway being built, and the eastward extension of the east-west expressway.
 12. Any development occurring in the sub-area must preserve and protect designated wetlands, including the Jepson Prairie.
- OS 1.3: Maintain current agricultural zoning in the area east of Travis AFB, including the Jepson Prairie.

OS 7.5: Identify and protect vernal pools located in the entire General Plan area. For vernal pools located in Phasing Areas D and E, establish a habitat reserve similar to the Jepson Prairie Nature Preserve.

OS 7.5 A: Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation banking program for vernal pools and seasonal wetland habitats during the areawide planning process for each phasing area. The components of the program are described in the General Plan.

OS 9.3: Secure wetlands designation for appropriate lands in the Fairfield/Vacaville Greenbelt and for lands in the Travis AFB/Jepson Prairie Planning Area.

OS 9.3A: Support the establishment of a regional or State wildlife preserve within the Travis AFB/Jepson Prairie OSPA that will complement the existing Jepson Prairie Reserve.

Discussion: These policies focus on preservation of agriculture and protection of the vernal pools prevalent in the area. The General Plan calls for the creation of another habitat reserve similar to the Jepson Prairie wildlife preserve operated by the Nature Conservancy on SR 113. Any development within this Phasing Area will require preparation of an areawide plan(s). Such plans will address in greater detail the environmental and open space issues significant to the area.

11. Suisun Marsh

OS 9.6: Continue to endorse the integrity of the Suisun Marsh Secondary Management Zone.

OS 9.7: Promote only low-intensity recreational activities which are compatible with the marsh environment adjacent to Suisun Marsh.

OS 9.4: Allow no development on the east side of I-680 between Parish Road and the Cordelia Historic Area.

OS 9.5: Support acquisition of key parcels on the periphery of the Suisun Marsh to ensure the integrity of the entire marsh.

Discussion: State and federal law are the primary governing factors for development in the Suisun Marsh watershed. These policies serve to limit the intensity and nature of development on the fringes of the marsh proper. The Secondary Management Zone standards require development to control runoff which might have a negative impact on the Marsh.

V. OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general introduction to open space preservation methods which may be used in Fairfield. The chapter does not define specific open space acquisition methods which will be used in each case. The Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan will provide more detail on funding methods.

Objective OS 4: Maximize open space through appropriate acquisition methods

OS 4.1: Establish policies requiring new development to pay for preserving part of the open space that it consumes.

OS 4.2: Require dedication of open space lands for development projects in the Fairfield/Vacaville Greenbelt Open Space Planning Area in the northeastern area of Fairfield.

OS 4.3: All future areawide plans shall include appropriate mechanisms for acquisition of open space.

OS 4.4: An equitable balance shall be sought between development density and open space to be preserved.

OS 4.6 Promote clustering of housing units to preserve the hillsides, ridges, and a maximum amount of open space.

OS 4.7: Utilize development projects as a means for permanently preserving open space by encouraging mechanisms such as land pooling and transfer of development rights within Open Space Planning Areas for the preservation of significant open space features and lands.

OS 4.7A: Require dedication of appropriate open space land or development rights as a condition of approval for development projects.

OS 4.7B: Establish a method for permanent preservation of open space acquired through a land pooling program. Such designations shall be registered on the property title and shall be maintained should the property be sold.

Objective OS 5: Generate funds within the community for the acquisition and management of open space lands.

OS 5.1 Immediately upon adoption of the General Plan, a study shall be conducted by staff to identify, analyze, and establish open space funding mechanisms.

OS 5.2 Through one or more of the following programs, generate funds for acquisition and management of open space.

OS 5.2 A: Establish Mello-Roos or Marks-Roos financing districts and programs for areas of proposed development to preserve open spaces.

OS 5.2 B: Impose an annual bond repayment property tax at an appropriate level for public open space purposes on all new Fairfield residences.

OS 5.2 C: Impose an annual parcel tax on existing homes and properties not currently subject to open space assessments. These monies shall be used primarily to maintain public open spaces and associated recreational programs.

OS 5.2 D: Revise the bedroom tax to generate a net increase in total revenues for open space funding.

Policy OS 5.3 Place appropriate funding mechanisms on the local ballot.

Discussion: These policies recognize the role which will be played by new development in financing open space acquisition. However, new development will not provide all of the funding necessary for open space acquisition and management. Special taxes and bonds will be contribute to the preservation of open space lands. The General Plan also introduces some new methods of open space preservation planning, such as land pooling.

A. ACQUISITION METHODS

1. Dedication or Sale (In-Fee) of Land

In many cases, open space will be acquired through dedication, where the developer gives land to the City of Fairfield, a neighborhood association, or a non-profit conservation organization in exchange for development approvals. The City may as a condition of development require dedication of sensitive areas such as steep wooded hillsides and riparian corridors. In other cases, the City or another body may purchase the land outright. In both cases, the new owner assumes all responsibility for the land, including security and maintenance.

2. In-Lieu Fees or Dedication of an Off-Site Open Space Area.

Developers may contribute to the acquisition of open space outside the development itself. In Fairfield, new development must participate in a Mello-Roos District. Cities establish Mello-Roos Community Facilities Districts to fund the development and operation of community facilities, including open space, necessitated by the development. Mello-Roos Districts are approved through a vote by landowners in the proposed district. Subsequently, each property owner is assessed an annual fee.

Fairfield has established three Open Space Mello-Roos Districts. All new development will be required to join a Mello-Roos District. Funds from the Districts may be used to support the operations of the Solano County Farmlands and Open Space Foundation, purchase open space directly, leverage open space acquisition financing, or serve as matching funds for federal, state, and non-profit grants.

3. Open Space Easements and Conservation Easements

A property owner can grant or sell an open space easement or a conservation easement to the local government or a non-profit organization. An easement makes sense for a landowner interested in preserving open space while reducing taxes. Easements recognize that land ownership consists of a "bundle of rights." "Development rights" or the right to construct improvements on the land, are one of these rights, as are the right to enter the property, the right to farm the land, etc. An easement "encumbers" the development rights of a property. Easement holders have a "negative easement" on the property, which allows them to restrict what the landowner can do with the land. The landowner has relinquished to the holder of the easement the right to control the construction of improvements. The price of the easement is typically evaluated by comparing the value of the land for agriculture or open space uses to the land's value as development property. Other property rights such as access and the right to use for agriculture are retained by the owner.

4. Transfer of Development Rights

In a transfer of development rights program, development rights from one parcel (the sending property) are transferred to another parcel (the receiving property). The owner of the receiving parcel effectively purchases additional density for his land from the sender. Thus, the community can direct development away from sensitive areas to areas targeted for growth. At the same time, the owners of the sending property share in the profits obtained from the development of the receiving area.

5. Pooling of Development Rights

In a development rights pooling program, several landowners consolidate their landholding and develop the land under a master plan. Development is clustered on the least sensitive portions of the site, preserving open space assets on the remainder of the land. The profits from development would be shared among all of the property owners, including those whose properties remain as open space.

6. Bargain Sales

A landowner who enters into a bargain sale agrees to grant an easement on a portion of the development value of the land. At the same time, the interested government or organization agrees to purchase from the developer the remaining development rights. This method allows property owners to receive a tax write-off for the value of the easement. In addition, the owner receives partial compensation from the government or non-profit organization. At the same time, such a bargain sale reduces the cost of open space acquisition for a city or conservation group.

7. Purchase/Saleback and Purchase/Leaseback Programs

The City purchases farmland at market value, records a deed restriction on future use of the land, and then sells the land for agricultural or open space use. Or, the city retains ownership of the land while leasing it to farmers for agricultural uses. Both methods enable the City to recoup a portion of the costs of open space preservation while keeping the land in a productive open space use.

B. MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT FINANCING METHODS

1. Mello-Roos Districts

Funds from Mello-Roos Districts may be used for both acquisition and maintenance and management of the open space resource.

2. Special Taxes

Some communities have established special open space taxes assessed on each property to pay for the maintenance of open space. Taxes earmarked for specific purposes must be approved by the voters of the City by a 2/3 majority. Special taxes can also be used to pay for the acquisition of open space.

3. Purchase/Leaseback Agreements

Purchase/Leaseback Agreements (described above) allow the community the opportunity to maintain visual (agricultural) open space in productive use. Maintenance and upkeep is performed by the lessee. If the land is grazed, the cattle can help reduce fire danger by removing dry grass.

4. Homeowners Associations

In some cases, maintenance of open space should be assigned to neighborhood or homeowners' associations. Small, neighborhood-oriented open space areas with limited or restricted public access should be maintained by such an association. Typically, a developer agrees to establish an association to fund neighborhood facilities such as open space. A deed restriction is usually recorded which requires homeowners to pay an annual fee to the association, which is responsible for all maintenance and upkeep of common areas, including open spaces.

EXHIBIT C

STAFF RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO OPEN SPACE COMMISSION RULES OF PROCEDURE AND OPEN SPACE APPROVAL GUIDELINES

NOTE: ADDITIONS ARE IN **BOLD**; DELETIONS ARE IN ~~STRIKEOUT~~

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Page 3, Old Business 1 e. 2.: Approve the application with conditions or modifications. The conditions and modifications shall be stated so as to be clearly understandable to other City bodies **and the applicant.**

Page 4, New Business 1. e. 2.: Approve the application with conditions or modifications. The conditions and modifications shall be stated so as to be clearly understandable to other City bodies **and the applicant.**

Page 7, D Disqualification from Voting 2.: In the event that any member of the public believes that a Commission member has a conflict of interest in a matter before the Commission, he shall state the reasons for this belief to the Commission. ~~The other members of the Commission shall decide whether a conflict of interest exists. If such a conflict is determined to exist, the affected member shall withdraw from the table.~~ **The Commission member should respond to the member of the public. If the member of the public continues to believe that the Commission member has a conflict, the chair shall decide whether to continue the matter to request the advice of the City Attorney.**

OPEN SPACE APPROVAL GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Page 2, 2nd paragraph from the bottom

~~While the guidelines are based on the General Plan, the final authority on open space issues rests with the General Plan, other adopted plans and ordinances, the Open Space Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council.~~ **The guidelines are not to be more or less restrictive than the General Plan and shall be interpreted so as not to be in conflict with the General Plan. In the event of a conflict, the General Plan will control. The list of policies under each topic area is not intended to be inclusive but only contains the objectives, policies, and programs which most directly apply. Any relevant amendments to the General Plan, new plans or ordinances adopted by City Council will be automatically incorporated into these Guidelines without formal action. The Guidelines will be interpreted in a manner consistent with the Constitutional protection accorded property owners.**

Page 6, A2a. Wildfires

Discussion: The Fire Hazards Map (Exhibit HS-2) in the General Plan identifies significant portions of the ridgelines, slopes, and hillsides that surround Fairfield as being susceptible to wildfire risk. Fire prevention and control in these hillside areas is often difficult or unfeasible. Since these areas ~~also~~ can have significant open space value (for example, as scenic vistas or wildlife habitat), development may be inappropriate.

Page 7, A2 c. Seismic Hazards

HS 1.3: No structure for human occupancy, other than one-story, wood frame structures, shall be permitted within 100 feet of an active fault trace as designated in maps compiled by the State Geologist under the Alquist-Priolo Geologic Hazards Zone Act, or fifty feet for one-story wood frame ~~buildings.~~ **dwellings.**

Page 8, B.1 Recreational Open Space

Discussion: ~~Unlike urban parks, with their ballfields, playgrounds, swimming pools, and manicured grounds, recreational open space areas emphasize their natural setting. Activities appropriate for recreational open space areas include hiking and bicycling, picnicking, wildlife observation, and enjoyment of the natural scenery. However, some regional parks may also provide for limited developed recreational uses. The City recognizes the need for a balance between urban parks and recreational open space. In addition to the policies listed above, there are several General Plan objectives and policies which address urban recreational facilities.~~

The General Plan land use category "recreational open space" includes both traditional "developed" parks, with their ball fields and manicured grounds, and open space areas, which emphasize an undeveloped, open setting and nature-oriented recreation such as hiking, mountain biking, and bird-watching. In certain cases, developed parks and open space areas used for recreation may be adjacent or intermixed. The City recognizes the need for both developed parks and open space areas with recreational access. While the General Plan contains standards for developed parks, including neighborhood and community parks, such developed parks are not under the direct purview of the Open Space Commission. The Open Space Commission is primarily concerned with ensuring that open space areas with significant recreational value are identified and, where appropriate, preserved.

Fairfield will also be preparing an Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan. This Plan will include policies for public access to open space areas. The Plan will also address security issues associated with open space areas.

Page 13, E. 1. Visual Background

Discussion: The most significant natural features in the Fairfield area are the productive agricultural lands, the outlying prominent hillsides and ridgelines, and the ecologically important Suisun Marsh. The City intends to preserve the scenic views of these natural features as seen from urbanized Fairfield. The City will be preparing a Scenic Vista Plan and a Scenic Roadways Plan which will provide guidelines and mechanisms for achieving this goal. In addition the Plans will identify the scenic landscapes and roadways which should be preserved.

In particular, the City plans to preserve the visual integrity of the open hills and ridgelines. ~~Therefore, development proposed in visually sensitive hillside areas will be restricted from significantly encroaching upon the public views.~~ Site design which focuses development on lower slopes and inner valleys will be encouraged. During the initial planning process developers are also encouraged to thoroughly investigate the impact of a hillside development on views from future and existing developments and roads below.

The City also strongly supports the preservation of other landscapes, including the Suisun Marsh, orchards, vineyards, and grasslands. The Scenic Vista Area Plan will provide further guidance on which viewsheds should be preserved, as well as preservation guidelines and mechanisms. In general, development should be designed to minimize visual intrusiveness. Where possible, development should take advantage of existing vegetation for screening. New screening vegetation should be planted in a natural pattern and emphasize appropriate and native plants.

Page 15, E. 3. Open Hillsides and Ridgelines

Discussion: The City considers prominent ridgelines ~~and hillsides~~ to be significant natural features and intends to preserve and protect them as open space. ~~The City also considers prominent hillsides to be significant natural features and intends to preserve and protect their visual integrity.~~ Development should not significantly encroach upon public views of ridgelines and hillsides. To maintain visual integrity, no development should interrupt the visual crest of a prominent hill or ridgeline. The hillside, not the development should be the visually dominant element. For example, development in the Rolling Hills community is tucked into valleys and lower slopes. Prominent hills remain open, visually dominating the area and serving to separate and define individual neighborhoods in the Rolling Hills community.

Prominent topographical features such as ridgelines and hillsides which are to be preserved will be identified during the areawide and master planning process. The prominence of hill or ridgeline will depend on its location, the surrounding topography, and its visibility. A hill or ridgeline will generally be considered prominent if:

1. It is visibly higher than surrounding terrain (e.g. the hills east of Peabody Road).

2. It is an isolated natural feature (e.g. Nelson Hill).
3. It forms the boundary between hilly terrain and a level or gently rolling valley (e.g. the Cordelia Hills or the hills bordering Rolling Hills).
4. If it is highly visible from urbanized Fairfield, the Suisun Valley, Interstate 80, or adjoining arterial roadways (e.g. Cement Hill).

Page 20, G.Wildlife

Discussion: Native plants and animals are an important part of the heritage of the Fairfield area. The City is firmly committed to the conservation of significant wildlife habitat areas which surround the City. For the purpose of these guidelines, significant wildlife habitat includes:

1) Habitat for "special status" species. Special status species are listed or are candidates for listing on State or federal lists as rare, endangered, or threatened species, as defined in the General Plan EIR on pages 11-10 and 11-20. Habitat for these species includes all lands vital to their survival, ~~including nesting sites and foraging grounds.~~ Environmental review may determine that lands necessary for breeding and foraging are vital to the survival of special status species.

2) ~~Locally significant~~ Plant Communities and Wildlife Habitats. The General Plan EIR defines several plant communities and wildlife habitats in the Fairfield planning area, ~~including as particularly important for preservation.~~ These ~~include~~ oak savannahs and woodlands, freshwater marshes, riparian corridors, open water habitats, and ~~local~~ grasslands. In many cases, these communities ~~include~~ may be habitat for special status species.

The General Plan EIR recognizes that certain communities might be impacted by development allowed under the General Plan. To mitigate the loss of plant communities, the General Plan EIR includes a variety of programs. For grasslands, oak savannahs and woodlands, and vernal pools and seasonal wetlands, the EIR recommends the preparation of conservation plans and mitigation banking programs as part of the areawide planning for each phasing area. The General Plan includes programs which require the preparation of such plans. ~~The General Plan EIR requires conservation plans and mitigation programs for these communities.~~ The plans and programs ~~will~~ are to include an inventory and evaluation of the habitat value of these plant communities types in each phasing area, define potential impacts on habitat, recommend mitigation programs and standards for each habitat type, and identify conservation areas. Mitigation requirements will vary depending on the habitat value of the land. In some cases, mitigation may be minimal, as the land has been so degraded by past agricultural practices as to have little or no habitat value. In other

cases, special status species may be present, requiring substantial mitigation measures.

Open space preserved primarily for habitat preservation purposes should be part of larger open space networks. Such systems of open space allow for greater species diversity and can help reduce conflicts between urban development and wildlife. On the other hand, isolated pockets of open space surrounded by urban development often cannot support many wildlife species, as these species' normal travel corridors and foraging grounds can be cut off by development. Where such pockets are unavoidably created, mitigation may be required. When effective, this mitigation may involve the preservation of wildlife travel corridors.

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