

OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Open Space Element of the General Plan identifies open space resources in and around Redwood City, examines their importance to the future well-being of the local inhabitants, and puts forward a set of goals, objectives, and policies designed to protect and enhance those resources. At a past point in time, open space is all that there was in this area. Open space as we know it today is what is left of land and water after the progression of urbanization. As urbanization spreads, open space is diminished. The protection of open space requires deliberate actions. Redwood City needs to concern itself with open space and commit to an action program that will assure adequate open space now and in the future.

Redwood City's open space goal is to:

RESERVE OPEN SPACE AREAS WITHIN THE URBAN COMPLEX TO ENHANCE THE VALUE OF OTHER LANDS AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY.

Open space serves a variety of functions. It helps to prevent the premature and unnecessary conversion of land to urban use. It helps to discourage non-contiguous development patterns which unnecessarily increase the costs of community services to community residents. It helps supply land for recreational use. It helps to conserve natural resources, wildlife habitats, areas with scenic value, and historical and archaeological sites. It helps to protect and enhance human life by preserving watershed lands, aiding in flood control, protecting agricultural resources, and limiting development in areas susceptible to fire, earthquake, or soil stability hazards.

The number and sizes of open space parcels in Redwood City, both publicly and privately owned, are tabulated in the City's electronic data base.

The data base file should be counted on for up-to-date information on the zoning and assessed valuation for each parcel, as well as the names and addresses of the current owners. Access to this informational resource should be routine when considering open space issues, in connection with this plan and with the implementation of its policies.

"Open space land" is any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use as defined in this section, and which is designated in the Redwood City General Plan as any of the following:

- (1) Open space for the preservation of natural resources including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecologic coastal beaches, lakeshores, banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands.
- (2) Open space used for the managed production of resources, including but not limited to, forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for recharge of ground water basins; bays, estuaries, marshes, rivers and streams which are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply.
- (3) Open space for outdoor recreation, including but not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.
- (4) Open space for public health and safety, including, but not limited to, areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earth-

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quake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.

OPEN SPACE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life including habitat for fish and wildlife: The low-lying baylands are still largely open space, characterized by water areas, marsh lands, diked-off areas, managed wetlands, and streams and sloughs; while other open space areas can be found in the hillside areas such as Stulsaft and Edgewood County Parks.

Areas required for ecologic and other scientific study: The San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the Edgewood County Park are two large areas of public open space that lend themselves to ecologic and other scientific study.

Rivers, streams, bays, and estuaries: Cordilleras Creek originating opposite the Edgewood County Park flows through Cordilleras Creek Canyon and into Steinberger Slough, a tributary of San Francisco Bay. Upper and Lower Emerald Lakes feed Arroya Ojo de Agua which, in turn, flows into Redwood Creek near City Hall. Redwood Creek which originates at Canada College flows under Interstate Route 280 twice before traversing Redwood City from south to north, mostly in a concrete channel or box culvert, on its way past the Port of Redwood City and into San Francisco Bay. Belmont Slough, Steinberger Slough, Westpoint Slough, Smith Slough, Corkscrew Slough and Redwood Creek are all tidal areas connected to San Francisco Bay.

Coastal beaches, lakeshores, banks of rivers and streams, and watersheds: Portions of Redwood City lie within the watersheds of Belmont, Pulgas, Cordilleras, Redwood, and Francisquito Creeks. There are no significant developed bayfront beaches, lakeshores, or creek banks in Redwood City.

OPEN SPACE USED FOR THE MANAGED PRODUCTION OF RESOURCES

Forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber: Not applicable, or of little significance to Redwood City.

Areas required for recharge of ground water basins: Not applicable, or of little significance to Redwood City.

Bays, estuaries, marshes, rivers and streams which are important for the management of commercial fisheries: Not applicable, or of little significance to Redwood City.

Areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply: Not applicable, or of little significance to Redwood City.

OPEN SPACE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams: Areas available for park and recreation purposes on the west side of the Bayshore Freeway have already been acquired and developed for park and recreation purposes. Some of these areas lend themselves to expansion and improvement, however. There is a vast range of areas suitable for park and recreation purposes on the east side of the Bayshore Freeway, particularly in the sense of areas set aside for environmental protection, education, and the enjoyment of scenery as opposed to grassed areas and playing fields.

Areas which serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors: Portions of the Hetch Hetchy right of way are used for parks and recreation, notably Red Morton Community Park, George Garrett Memorial Park, Hawes Park, and several small neighborhood parks and totlots. In turn, these right of ways lend themselves to being developed with trails as scenic corridors connecting neighborhoods to these parks and other recreation and open-space

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areas.

OPEN SPACE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Areas that require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for protection of water quality and water reservoirs and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality: Redwood City is located in a major seismic hazard region. Since man cannot stop earthquakes from happening, he must learn to live with the problems they cause. Landslides also pose a threat in the hilly areas of the community. Slides are most prevalent in the areas having steep slopes, underlain by low-strength material. An obvious answer to minimizing earthquake and landslide damage is to limit development in the areas where the potential for the greatest damage exists, and to allow only development that is compatible with the conditions. Unique geologic and soil conditions in the baylands demand special building requirements and portend exaggerated long-term maintenance problems and costs for roads and utilities. The inherent community values of open space in risk-prone areas are enhanced by the avoidance of costs that accompany ill-considered development.

DEMANDS FOR TRAIL-ORIENTED RECREATIONAL USE AND THE FEASIBILITY OF INTEGRATING CITY AND COUNTY TRAIL ROUTES WITH APPROPRIATE SEGMENTS OF THE CALIFORNIA RECREATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM

Hiking and bicycle trails satisfy society's new demands for exercise and non-polluting transportation. Opportunities for trails in Redwood City are numerous, among them: Edgewood County Park, the Hetch Hetchy right of ways, and the bayfront dikes. A future bicycle trail along Redwood City's waterfront is in the San Mateo County Bikeways Plan, a trail that ultimately will encircle San Francisco Bay.

OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES

1. Achieve and maintain a harmonious relationship between the natural environment and man's use of the land.
2. Preserve or restore the visual access to scenic resources of Redwood City and its environs through a system of Scenic Routes.
3. Provide a network of trails and pathways through Redwood City in order to enhance the City's recreational opportunities.

OPEN SPACE POLICIES

- O- 1. The City should accept and/or encourage acceptance, by open space districts, land dedications when public ownership will preserve the natural and scenic beauty, protect natural and man-made landmarks, or provide a land supply to meet future recreational needs.
- O- 2. The City should discourage the unnecessary or premature conversion of open space lands to urban use, and should discourage urban development patterns which are either environmentally or monetarily costly to the community. Conversion of open space land to urban use should be based on fiscal impact analysis and environmental impact analysis.
- O- 3. Open space areas which are primary wildlife habitats or which have major or unique ecological significance should be protected and conserved.
- O- 4. The City should preserve and enhance the natural terrain, vegetation, and beauty of Redwood City's various geographical areas.
- O- 5. The City should maintain existing "Tidal Plain" Zoning in those Bayfront areas which are, or can be used for salt harvesting, shell dredging, or other types of mineral extraction.
- O- 6. Major recreational areas and significant open space resources should be linked together through the use of pedestrian ways, bicycle paths, and the Hetch-Hetchy right-of-way.

O- 7. The City should preserve and enhance small parcels of open space in developed areas, wherever practical, especially in those neighborhoods with the greatest park deficiency.

O- 8. Encourage the preservation of heritage trees as defined in the tree preservation ordinance.

O- 9. The City shall cooperate with County, Regional, State, Federal, and other public agencies on open space issues. (A partial listing of such agencies includes the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Commission, the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the California Fish and Game Department, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the San Francisco Bay San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and the San Francisco, Water Department.)