

## **CONSERVATION ELEMENT**

### **A. CONSERVATION GOALS**

1. Minimize environmental harm and the disruption of natural features, particularly in hillside and unstable soil areas.
2. Protect creeks from pollution and against any unnecessary disturbance of the natural contours and vegetation of the banks.
3. Establish policies and practical guidelines for the prevention of erosion, the stabilization of soils, and the protection of the watershed necessary to minimize excessive water runoff.
4. Preserve and protect significant habitats for fish, wildlife, and flora.
5. Preserve ridgetops and other locally important natural or man-made historic areas or features.
6. Preserve historic or architecturally important buildings.
7. Protect the scenic value of San Anselmo by reasonably regulating signs, billboards, unsightly uses, and the placement of utilities.

### **B. CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY GUIDELINES**

This plan recommends that the following policies apply throughout the planning area. Specific standards will be developed for applying these principles where they do not already exist.

1. Air, water, and noise pollution shall be prevented or minimized.
2. Radioactive, chemical, and biological health hazards shall not be created, and existing levels shall be reduced.
3. Activities causing damage to hydrological and biological processes shall be discouraged.
4. Streams shall be maintained in or restored to their natural state. A flood channel maintaining the natural settings on San Anselmo Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek shall be of adequate width and properly maintained to allow

passage of flood waters and preservation of riparian vegetation and habitat. Removal of vegetation on the hillsides should be closely controlled in order to minimize erosion, siltation of watercourses, and runoff.

5. Unique geological, ecological, and historic sites shall be protected:
  - a. Significant natural features shall be included for preservation in their natural state and in an appropriate setting in any design or plan.
  - b. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the Town to preserve all buildings of architectural or historical merit, as may be designated by the Council from time to time, and to that end the Town shall withhold any razing permit for a period of one (1) year allowing time for the people of San Anselmo to consider whether they wish to assist in the maintenance or acquisition of such properties.
6. A diversity and abundance of wildlife and waterlife shall be maintained or encouraged where it does not now exist. Vegetation and animal habitats shall be preserved wherever possible.
7. Construction shall be located and designed to avoid or minimize the hazards from earthquake, erosion, landslides, floods, fire, and accidents.
8. Adequate parks and recreation facilities and open space shall be provided.
9. Structures, parks, and other areas modified by man, where people spend most of their time, shall be healthful, safe, quiet, and of good design, both functionally and aesthetically.
10. Projects shall not overburden the water supply, fire protection, waste disposal, schools, traffic and circulation, or other services and facilities, or adversely affect the financial or social environment of the community.
11. Water supply, flood control, waste water and solid waste disposal, soil conservation, and open space preservation shall be coordinated to create the greatest public benefit and the least degree of environmental damage.
12. Visual qualities and view potential of both natural and man-made settings shall be an equal consideration with other factors in any project review. Tree cutting and other activity detrimental to trees that enhance the character of the town or neighborhood shall be avoided wherever possible.

13. The Town and County shall take measures to reduce existing and future inefficient or unnecessary energy or natural resources consumption.\* Recyclable and biodegradable materials shall be utilized and used materials shall be recycled or reused whenever possible.
14. A residential and commercial review policy consistent with the goals of the San Anselmo General Plan and Marin Countywide plan should be developed to control rapid or disruptive population and economic growth.
15. The Town and County intend to cooperate in preserving contiguous open space areas within the San Anselmo planning area and each agency should refer any proposed rezoning, development, or subdivision in its area to the other for appropriate hearings and recommendations.
16. It is the intent of the Town Council and Board of Supervisors to provide for only such urbanization as is necessary to achieve community goals and carry out the adopted San Anselmo General Plan by specifically adopting the accompanying map entitled "San Anselmo Conservation and Open Space Plan" as a specific plan and element of the General Plan for the planning area and to commence hearings immediately, leading to the rezoning and pre-zoning of open space as indicated by the map.

**C. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS**

1. **Fire Hazard:** In areas which lack sufficient water pressure, and/or access for fire-fighting equipment, or areas which have a concentration of inflammable materials the development review process should require proper remedial measures as a condition of approval.
2. **Smog:** The Air Pollution Control District has estimated that if further increases in pollutant emissions were to continue at the rate which occurred during the '50s and '60s there is a strong likelihood that air quality standards in the Ross Valley would be violated a significant number of times per year. For this reason, in addition to those specified in the Circulation Element, it is recommended that further increases in auto travel in the Ross Valley be avoided.

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\* The State Secretary for Resources has recently required that Environmental Impact Reports contain mitigation measures to reduce inefficient and unnecessary consumption of energy.

3. **Rift Zones and Earthquake Faults:** The geological information now available does not indicate the presence of active faults or rift zones in the planning area. However, when the text of the State Division of Mines survey of the San Anselmo area is completed, it will deal with earthshaking and other seismic hazards disclosed by the field investigations. This information, plus the regulatory measures to ensure public safety, should be incorporated into a more detailed seismic safety element. It is highly probable that most of the areas with seismic hazards are closely correlated with the areas of geologic hazard and steep slopes already designated as open space.
4. **Emergency and Evacuation Routes:** In addition to Red Hill Avenue and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, special access for emergency vehicles is recommended via Fawn Drive in Sleepy Hollow to Ridgewood Drive in San Rafael and Esmeyer Drive in Terra Linda, and via Sunnyhills Drive to 5th Avenue in San Rafael (as depicted in the San Rafael General Plan). Another special "emergency vehicles only" route should be maintained open to connect Oak Springs Drive in San Anselmo and Willow Avenue in Fairfax.

#### **D. IMPLEMENTATION**

Outlined below are some means of implementing the recommendations of this element. Achievement of the land use goals involves the use of government regulation, principally zoning and land use management methods to achieve the objectives desired from open space and conservation programs. Acquisition techniques mainly involve use of government fiscal resources including tradeoffs for tax reductions.

1. **Regulation**
  - a. **Health and Safety zoning including:**
    - (1) Geologic risk zones (fault and landslide);
    - (2) Flooding risk zones (floodplain, stream and bank protection; and
    - (3) Fire risk zones (grass, dry brush, dead-end canyons, and inadequate water supply).
  - b. **Noise and flight path safety zones (airport, freeway).**

- c. Special recreation-visitor zoning (golf courses, hunting preserves, special event areas, etc.)
- d. Agricultural and rural zones.
- e. Designation of historic preservation sites and structures (including archaeological sites and structures of unusual architectural design).
- f. Riparian and wildlife resource conservation reserves.
- g. View protection zones.
- h. Density transfer zones and planned unit (cluster) zones.
- i. Scenic travel corridor and parkway zones.
- j. Development of contractual land use agreements given in return for assessment freezes.
- k. Review of proposed residential and commercial development.

## 2. Management

The following methods of achieving the goals of this element may be attained by management techniques as opposed to regulation.

- a. Countywide management board to administer management programs for public and private open space.
- b. Agricultural/rural management plan.
- c. Multi-use management plan (recreation, marsh, wildlife, flood control, water, sewer, fire, school, etc.)

## 3. Acquisition

Where public uses, not established by prescriptive rights,\* require acquisition of part or all of the development rights in the land the following techniques may be used:

- a. Outright purchase.
- b. Purchase in advance (landbank) with leaseback.
- c. Use of lands excess to the needs of road, school, flood district, etc.

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\* Rights legally established where public access has occurred for the requisite number of years.

- d. Purchase option to buy in future (first right of refusal).
- e. Purchase right of entry plus floating trail easement.
- f. Partial purchase (development rights) for specific limited use easement.
- g. Require open space dedication as a condition of development approval.
- h. Trade or transfer of land ownership with other public/private bodies.
- i. Long-term lease.
- j. Voluntary land donations.
- k. Gift by will or immediate transfer reserving a life estate for the donor.
- l. Tax sales.
- m. Purchase by private or semi-public, non-profit land trust.
- n. Voluntary agreements to permit scenic, recreational uses.
- o. Tax reduction contracts, agreements, and write-offs.

## **TOWN PARKS, RECREATION, AND PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

The Town does not need to anticipate a significant increase in public park, recreation and facility needs under the growth projections of this plan. However, there are a number of deficiencies in each area which should be remedied by a public acquisition program.

### **A. PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS**

"Provide Recreational Areas for the Residents."

Discussion: The National Recreation Association minimum standard of four (4) acres of usable recreation space for each 1,000 residents would require about 56 acres (14 x 4) of playgrounds or parks\* in the Town. If Sorich Ranch Park is relegated to its proper classification as public open space (see definitions in chapter on open space), then the Town has only about 16 acres of parks. This deficiency will be hard to overcome in a community with most of its flatland already developed. However, this lack of opportunity is partially offset by opportunities for outdoor recreation in the open spaces surrounding the Town, provided access to them is expanded and maintained in conformity with the plan.

### **B. PARKS AND RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Isabel Cook School multi-purpose building should be refurbished and used as a community center in order to provide a meeting place for many of the local groups who do not have an adequate facility at present.
2. Park and Recreation offices should be located at the Isabel Cook School or moved into quarters vacated by other civic functions, depending on the Town Hall site alternatives finally chosen. Memorial Park would still require an office, but Isabel Cook School's multi-purpose building would provide more space.
3. The community's needs for a swimming pool, tennis courts, and adjacent play fields could be met at Sorich Ranch provided these facilities could be made

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\* Parks are defined for the purpose of this plan as "public lands developed or planned for development, which will contain public facilities for active and passive recreation for residents and groups engaging in programmed recreation activities."

compatible with the open space amenities of the rest of the area. Other possibilities which should be explored in providing for these needs are the possible acquisition of the entire Isabel Cook School site or acquisition of the Fairfax Town and Country Club by the County with maintenance and management jointly provided by the Towns of Fairfax and San Anselmo.

4. Neighborhood mini-parks and playgrounds should be acquired for the Hawthorn Hills, Sequoia Park, and Hilldale areas of the Town.
5. Public art of a durable kind should be an addition to the Town park system.
6. The Log Cabin site adjacent to Memorial Park should be incorporated into the park, when surplus to the needs of the present owner.
7. Resting spaces along trails and street approaches to trails and bikeways should be part of the recreational facilities provided in support of public non-auto use of open spaces. This would be even further facilitated by trailhead and bike-way terminal amenities.

**C. PUBLIC FACILITIES**

1. Town administration, public works, and public safety functions are presently conducted in inadequate or rented space. Recommendations\* for alleviating this condition are:
  - a. Relocate the present Fire Department headquarters and Firehouse No. 1 to the corner of San Rafael Avenue and San Anselmo Avenue. Firehouse No. 2 on Butterfield will remain at its present location.
  - b. The present Town Hall site should be expanded by the acquisition of 15 Magnolia Avenue, plus perhaps the five parcels between City Hall Avenue, Library Place, and Tunstead Avenue.
  - c. A further acquisition of the business properties between the present Town Hall site, Magnolia and San Anselmo avenues should be explored for future acquisition to square off the Town's government center, particularly if other public functions are to be accommodated in the Town.

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\* Based on discussions with the Town's site consultants (Wagstaff & McDonald), Town Administrator, and Public Works Director.

- d. City Hall Avenue adjacent to the Civic Center site should be closed and made a part of the Center.
- e. Library Place should be extended as appropriate to serve the public facilities area.
- f. The present corporation yard and municipal shop should be made visually compatible with the Sorich Ranch Park setting by use of fencing, landscaping, and the demolition of obsolete and visually disturbing buildings. One possibility which should be explored further in capital improvement programming would be to leave the site as a corporation yard only and farm out auto maintenance.

## 2. Sanitary Service

The present collection system is operating near capacity. Population growth should not exceed the progress made in bringing the sanitary sewer system up to regional standards and expanding its capacity for collection and treatment of wastes.

## 3. Storm Drainage and Flood Control

The natural appearance and runoff capacity of stream channels should be protected, preserved, and enhanced by the development of small improvements (e.g., small earth-fill dams for storm water retention) and landscaping rather than a major flood-control project such as the concrete channel in lower Corte Madera Creek. The channel lines on both sides of San Anselmo Creek should be protected from encroachment by development.

## **NOISE ELEMENT**

### **A. NOISE GOALS**

Reduce noise level throughout the community in general with special efforts aimed at our major circulation arteries.\*

### **B. IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Promulgate information to all residents of the need for and methods of obtaining reduced noise levels.
2. Adopt, budget for, and enforce an effective noise ordinance and other ordinances relating to noise reduction.
3. The Town shall cooperate in the establishment of a countywide program of noise abatement when it has been developed.
4. The Town will work actively with the California Highway Patrol to police noise levels on moving vehicles.

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\* The objective of the Town should be to reduce the noise levels approximately 5 or 6 decibels in the next few years, based on the contours of present noise levels which have been mapped in quantitative, numerical terms by Roger Maineri and the Town Public Works staff.

## **SCENIC HIGHWAYS (PARKWAY) ELEMENT**

### **A. DEFINITION**

The Scenic Highways through San Anselmo are: Red Hill Avenue, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from Ross line to the Fairfax Town limits, and Center Boulevard from the Hub to the Fairfax Town limits.

### **B. GOALS**

Improve the appearance and aesthetic quality of the planning area's main thoroughfares, especially the entryways to the community.

Discussion: There are no state highways and therefore no possibilities for state designated scenic highways in San Anselmo, nor are any contemplated.

### **C. IMPLEMENTATION**

1. San Anselmo has three entryways, all of which could be improved by landscaping, improved signing, lighting, and other outdoor design features.
2. Divided highways in the planning area should have their landscaping, lighting, and street furniture upgraded in keeping with a common design theme that will visually signal that one has arrived and is moving through a different community.