

Recommended Planning Commission Amendments to EIR Impact & Policy Consistency Analysis, Las Varas Ranch, Gaviota Coast, CA



Appendices 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E and 1F

September 16, 2014



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
Trails Council

Appendices

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Appendix 1A

Recommended Findings of Significant Impacts to Recreation

The Planning Commission disagrees with the EIR regarding impacts to Recreation and finds that impacts to Recreation due to loss of existing coastal access are potentially significant and may be unavoidable and significant. Because of the scarcity of coastal access, the difficulty and high cost of acquiring new coastal access and the high priority placed on coastal access in the State Coastal Act and County Local Coastal Plan (LCP), the Commission finds that the probable closure of existing well documented informal public access at Edwards Point due to construction of new homes would constitute a potentially significant impact under CEQA that may be unavoidable. This impact would be more severe as Edwards Point has also been planned for public access and acquisition for over 30 years in the LCP. This impact is not mitigated by the planned access at Las Varas Creek one mile east of Edwards Point. The Commission's reasoning for this finding is set forth below.

1. Documented Significant Existing Recreational Use of Edwards Point: The Santa Barbara County Trails Council (Trails Council) has submitted substantial evidence into the record that Edwards Point experiences historic and ongoing public use that appears to be both more diverse and extensive than indicated in the EIR (Attachment 2, Trails Council, 9/16/14). More than a dozen Trails Council surveys document cars parked along El Capitan Ranch Road a majority of the time with an average of from 3-2 cars and a high of 6 cars (Trails Council, 9/2014). .Photographic evidence shows 10 cars on one occasion. As documented by the Trails Council, photographic evidence and surveys document parking at El Capitan Ranch Road and/or use of Edwards Point on at least 15 different days. Existing user groups appear to include at least surfers, fishers, hikers, families and beach walkers, in parties sometimes as large as 3, 4 or 5 individuals. The Commission finds that past Trails Council surveys and photographic evidence of parking at El Capitan Ranch Road and ongoing public access provide compelling evidence of ongoing significant public access to and use of Edwards Point.
2. Inconsistency with State and County Policy: Provision and protection of coastal access IS a key goal of the State Coastal Act. Coastal Act Section 30211 states:

“Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use, custom, or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation. “

The County's adopted Local Coastal Plan Policy 7-1 states:

“The County shall take all necessary steps to protect and defend the public's constitutionally guaranteed rights of access to and along the shoreline. At a minimum, County actions shall include:

(a) Initiating legal action to acquire easements to beaches and access corridors for which prescriptive rights exist consistent with the availability of staff and funds.

(b) Accepting offers of dedication which will increase opportunities for public access and recreation consistent with the County's ability to assume liability and maintenance costs.

(c) Actively seeking other public or private agencies to accept offers of dedications, having them assume liability and maintenance responsibilities, and allowing such agencies to initiate legal action to pursue beach access.”

The Commission notes that Coastal act Section 30211 specifically enjoins development from interfering with access to the coast where acquired through use or custom. We find that such customary use of access to Edwards Point exists. We also note that LCP Policy 7-1 actions a-c are the minimum required of the County and that these policy inconsistencies combined with substantial evidence of historic and ongoing recreational use support the significance of existing recreational access at Edwards Point. The Commission also notes that provision of public access at Edwards Point is required in LCP Policy 7-18 which states in part:

“Expanded opportunities for access and recreation shall (underling added) be provided in the Gaviota coast planning area. Implementing Actions:

- a. In order to maximize access to the beaches, vertical easements connecting the proposed coastal bicycle trail (linking Santa Barbara and Gaviota) to the beach shall be acquired by a public agency at the following locations: (3) Edwards (near Gato Canyon). The trails connecting the bicycle path to the beach shall be well-marked and bicycle racks shall be provided. Where necessary, stairways from the top of the bluffs shall be provided. Public parking and other facility development, other than staircases, fences, improved trails, bicycle racks, and picnic tables, shall not be permitted at these accessways except as specified in section b.”*

The Commission finds that this policy is mandatory and not permissive and that failure to provide access at Edwards Point is another major inconsistency with adopted State and County Policy. These major policy inconsistencies when combined with substantial documented historic and ongoing access to and use of Edwards Point for public coastal access and recreation support a finding inconsistency with adopted policies and, as discussed below, significant impacts to recreation.

3. Significant Impacts to Public Recreation: The Commission finds that the records supports a identifying project impacts to existing public coastal access and recreation (Impacts Rec-2 and Rec-3) as significant and potentially unavoidable for the following reasons:

- Importance of Existing Access:** The Commission finds that existing access appears to be more important and substantial than acknowledged in the EIR. Existing dedicated public access along County's shoreline, particularly the Gaviota Coast is limited. The County's LCP notes that "existing County and state beaches are used to capacity, especially on summer weekends". As noted by the Trails Council, new public access is difficult and expensive to provide. This is supported by the fact that none of the proposed 8 public coastal access points along the Gaviota Coast identified in the County's 1983 LCP have been acquired or developed over the last 32 years. As documented by the Trails Council in the Gaviota Coastal Trail and Access Study (Trails Council 2013), existing informal access along the Gaviota Coast plays an important role in public access to the shoreline for County residents and visitors alike. Therefore, existing informal access to Edwards Point which has been acquired by the public through *use and custom* should be considered as a significant resource under CEQA.
- Use of a Low Threshold:** The importance of coastal access in the State Coastal Act and County's LCP, the limited availability of such access, the difficulty of acquiring and providing new access and guidance provided in CEQA and court cases (e.g., No Oil Inc vs City of LA) and Coastal Act/ LCP policy importance warrant use of a low resource protective threshold of significance for recreation and coastal access.
- Impacts of Proposed Blufftop Homes:** The proposed project would facilitate development of large residential estate compounds west of Edwards point. These residential estate compounds, including guest homes, walls or fences would lie across routes historically used by the public to gain access to shoreline at this location, effectively physically blocking public access. In addition, based on similar situations along the eastern Gaviota Coast (e.g., Paradiso del Mare, McCaw property) and at locations such as Broad Beach in Malibu, the real potential exists for new development to use security guards, cameras and other security measure to interfere with or eliminate historic public access to the coast at Edwards Point.
- Reliance on Expert Opinion and Surveys:** The EIR provides no expert analysis of recreational and coastal access issues or surveys of existing use, relying instead on second hand information for this important issue. In contrast, the Commission has received substantial evidence of ongoing access and expert input from the County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee (CRAHTAC) and the Trails Council which have both recommended that the loss of coastal access at Edwards Point be considered a significant impact. CRAHTAC is charged by the Board of Supervisors with advising the County on trail matters and is an expert on County recreational and trail policies. The Trails Council is expert at trail design, permitting and construction. Both CRAHTAC and the Trails Council are recognized in the County's LCP as important advisors to the County on trail matters. Further, given its publication of the Gaviota Coastal Trail and Access Study, its extensive work regarding trail construction and planning efforts for the County and other agencies, including

coastal access at Elwood Mesa, and planned coastal trail construction at Paradiso del Mare, the Trails Council must be considered an expert on public access and trail design issues. Therefore, based upon input from these bodies and the substantial evidence in the record cited in this discussion and as submitted by the Trails Council, the impacts of loss of existing access at Edwards Point must be considered as significant impact.

- **Failure of Proposed New Access to Mitigate:** If and when completed, the proposed Las Varas Creek Trail would provide access to the coast one mile east of Edwards Point. However, this trail is unfunded and faces permit obstacles with the UPRR and potentially state and federal agencies. Therefore, the certainty and timing of its completion cannot be ascertained and it cannot be contrasted too act as mitigation for the loss of existing access at Edwards Point. Further, due to the strongly intertidal nature of the beaches fronting the Las Varas Ranch as documented by the Trails Council, this proposed access would not allow regular public access at medium and higher tides west to Edwards Point, particularly during the winter surf season when sand levels are low. For surfers, prevailing currents, particularly during major north or northwest swell events, would prohibit all or most surfers from completing an already challenging mile long paddle to Edwards Point. Because Edwards Point is the current and planned location of public access in this area and the destination of a substantial portion of existing and potential future user groups, the Commission finds that, even if successfully completed and opened, access at Las Varas Creek would not replace existing access at Edwards Point and would not address the inconsistency with adopted County policy.

Appendix 1B

Recommended Findings of Significant Land Use Impacts

The Planning Commission finds that the EIR fails to disclose two potentially significant land use impacts associated with the proposed Project regarding the provision of coastal access at and the acquisition of Edwards Point and the location of the California Coastal Trail.

Coastal Act Section Policy 30221, LCP Policy 7-18 and LCP Table 3-5: Coastal Act Section 30221 states:

“Oceanfront land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreational activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area.”

Further, County LCP Policy 7-18 in part:

“Expanded opportunities for access and recreation shall (underling added) be provided in the Gaviota coast planning area. Implementing Actions:

- a. In order to maximize access to the beaches, vertical easements connecting the proposed coastal bicycle trail (linking Santa Barbara and Gaviota) to the beach shall be acquired by a public agency at the following locations: (3) Edwards (near Gato Canyon). The trails connecting the bicycle path to the beach shall be well-marked and bicycle racks shall be provided. Where necessary, stairways from the top of the bluffs shall be provided. Public parking and other facility development, other than staircases, fences, improved trails, bicycle racks, and picnic tables, shall not be permitted at these accessways except as specified in section b.”*

Suggested New Land Use Impact LU-4; Loss of Existing and Planned Coastal Access:

The Commission finds that the loss of long planned recreational access to and acquisition of Edwards Point Edwards Point when combined with documented ongoing public access to and use of Edwards Point is a potentially significant Land Use Impact that may be unavoidable.

Edwards Point is oceanfront land highly suitable for recreation, such coastal recreational land is in very short supply and Edwards Point has long been planned for access and acquisition in the County’s LCP. The Commission finds that policy 7-18 is specific and **requires** access to Edwards Point and is not permissive to allow its substitution with alternate access. The Commission also notes that the County’s LCP finds that “existing beach parks owned by the County and State are being used to capacity, especially on summer weekends” and that reliance on existing facilities to determine consistency with Coastal Act Section 30221 is not substantiated by the facts. Further, none of the eight public access points planned in the LCP

for Gaviota have been acquired by the public and Edwards Point is one of only two such proposed Coastal Parks identified in the entire County in the 1982 LCP. Such oceanfront land is increasingly scarce and highly valued by the public. Therefore, the Commission finds that these policy inconsistencies combined with loss of existing access constitute a major conflict with adopted State and County plans and policies which are therefore considered a significant Land Use Impact under CEQA. Notwithstanding the County's ability to exact dedication of or to purchase Edward's Point at this point in time, the permanent foreclosure of the potential to acquire this key coastal open space would be considered *a potentially significant impact under CEQA which may be unavoidable.*

LCP Policies 7-1 and 7-25: LCP Policy 7-1 states:

*"The County shall take all necessary steps to protect and defend the public's constitutionally guaranteed rights of access to and along the shoreline. **At a minimum** (emphasis added), County actions shall include:*

(a) Initiating legal action to acquire easements to beaches and access corridors for which prescriptive rights exist consistent with the availability of staff and funds.

(b) Accepting offers of dedication which will increase opportunities for public access and recreation consistent with the County's ability to assume liability and maintenance costs.

(c) Actively seeking other public or private agencies to accept offers of dedications, having them assume liability and maintenance responsibilities, and allowing such agencies to initiate legal action to pursue beach access."

Policy 7-3 States:

*"For all new development between the first public road and the ocean, granting of lateral easements to allow for public access along the shoreline shall be mandatory. In coastal areas, where the bluffs exceed five feet in height, all beach seaward of the base of the bluff shall be dedicated. In coastal areas where the bluffs are less than five feet, the area to be dedicated shall be determined by the County, based on findings reflecting historic use, existing and future public recreational needs, and coastal resource protection. **At a minimum, the dedicated easement shall be adequate to allow for lateral access during periods of high tide** (emphasis added). In no case shall the dedicated easement be required to be closer than 10 feet to a residential structure. In addition, all fences, no trespassing signs, and other obstructions that may limit public lateral access shall be removed as a condition of development approval."*

Suggested New Land Use Impact LU-5; loss of lateral access, inconsistency with PRT Maps and State Coastal Trail Siting Guidelines: The Planning Commission finds that the project would eliminate existing lateral access along the ranch bluffs, that proposed easements on the dry sand beach would not permit lateral coastal access during periods of

medium and high tides and that the proposed location of the California Coastal Trail is inconsistent with the County's Parks Recreation and Trails (PRT) Maps.

The EIR does not disclose a significant Land Use Impact associated with inconsistency of the proposed Project with County LCP Policies 7-1 and 7-3 and the County's (PRT). As demonstrated by Planning Commission and Board action on the draft Gaviota Coast Plan, the Commission finds that the appropriate location for the California Coastal Trail on the Las Varas Ranch is near the shoreline. Further, the Commission notes that, due to the often intertidal nature of beaches at Las Varas Ranch, and the presence of rocky outcrops (e.g., Edwards Point) dedication of lateral access along the beach would not guarantee the public's right to access along the shoreline during high tides as set forth in LCP Policy 7-3. The Commission finds that the Trails Council has submitted substantial evidence that during mid to high tides, which constitute the majority of daylight hours much of the season, especially during winter, such dedication of lateral beach access would not guarantee the public's right to access along the shoreline much of the time as required under Policy 7-3 (Trails Council, 9/18/14).

Further, it would be difficult and potentially hazardous for surfers to paddle the one mile from the newly proposed Las Varas Creek access point to Edwards Point, especially during high winter surf. Long term currents/littoral drift in along the south Coast are to the east, downcoast of Edwards Point. Paddling from the Las Varas Creek Trail upcoast would be against the prevailing current. Also, Edwards Point primarily breaks with big north or northwest swells, with waves sweeping downcoast, further increasing difficulty of paddling upcoast against such swells. Paddle **one mile** against a major current and prevailing swell would be exhausting, potentially exposing surfers to hazardous conditions. Further, other user groups would also be precluded from lateral access along the beaches much of the time. Finally, the proposal to locate the Coastal Trail located along US Hwy 101 far from the shoreline would also not meet the requirements to provide access "along the shoreline and would be inconsistent with the Commission's previous direction for location of the Coastal Trail as well as direction provided in State Guidelines.

Therefore, notwithstanding the County's ability to exact dedication of a nearshore Coastal Trail at this time, the proposed Project would create *potentially significant impacts under CEQA* due to inconsistencies with adopted LCP Policies 7-1 and 7-3, the County's adopted PRT Maps, State Coastal Conservancy Guidelines for siting the Coastal Trail as well as loss of existing physical public access along the bluffs. Depending upon the availability of mitigation, such impacts may be unavoidable.

Appendix 1C

Recommended Findings of Policy Inconsistencies

Recreation Facilities and Coastal Access; Consistency with Coastal Act Section 30221 and LCP Policy 7-18: The Planning Commission disagrees with the EIR and staff report regarding the consistency of the proposed Project with the following adopted policies and finds that the project is inconsistent as set forth below:

Coastal Act Section 30221 regarding preservation of oceanfront land suitable for recreation as the Commission finds that Edwards Point is oceanfront land highly suitable for recreation, that such coastal recreational land is in very short supply and that is permanent loss to residential development would be inconsistent with the intent of this Coastal Act Section. The Commission notes that the County's LCP finds that "existing beach parks owned by the County and State are being used to capacity, especially on summer weekends." As discussed below, Edwards Point has long been planned for acquisition and use as a major Coastal Park. Notwithstanding the County's ability to exact dedication of or to purchase Edward's Point at this point in time, the permanent foreclosure of the potential to acquire this key coastal open space is a clear inconsistency with the intent of Coastal Act Section 30221.

LCP Policy 7-18 **requires** provision of public access at Edwards Point and recommends its acquisition for low intensity camping as also set forth in LCP Table 3-5). The plain language of LCP Policy 7-18 means that the County shall provide coastal access at Edwards Point near Gato Creek and that this site should be acquired as a major Coastal Park (see also Table 3-5). Edwards Point is only one of two such proposed Coastal Parks identified in the entire County in the 1982 LCP and such oceanfront land is increasingly scarce and highly valued by the public. The Commission notes that the County's LCP finds that "existing beach parks owned by the County and State are being used to capacity, especially on summer weekends." Approval of the proposed Project, including reconfiguration of existing parcels and eventual construction of estate residential homes and other related improvements would forever preclude public access at and acquisition of this site as set forth in the LCP. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed Project is inconsistent with the County's adopted LCP including Policy 7-18 and the intent of Table 3-5. Notwithstanding the County's ability to exact dedication of or to purchase Edward's Point at this time, the permanent foreclosure of the potential to acquire this key coastal open space is a major inconsistency with the County's adopted LCP.

Recreation and Public Access; Consistency with Coastal Act Sections 30211; 30212 and LCP Policies 7-1, 7-3, Coastal Conservancy Guidelines for Completing the California Coastal Trail and County PRT Maps: The Planning Commission *disagrees* with the EIR and staff report regarding the consistency of the proposed Project with the following state and county policies and finds that:

Coastal Act Policy 30211 protects the public's right of customary and ongoing access to the sea at Edwards Point. The proposed development would interfere with or prohibit this customary use and is therefore inconsistent with the intent of this Coastal Act Section.

LCP Policy 7-3 requires that dedication of lateral beach access where bluffs are present account for and allow passage at high tides. The Trails Council has submitted substantial information that due to the largely intertidal nature of the majority of beaches at Las Varas Ranch, that lateral access would be largely limited to periods of low and in some area moderate tides (Attachment 3; Trails Council, 9/18/14). Public lateral access would not be available much or most of the time during higher tides. In the absence of a dry sand beach in many years and seasons, Project offers to dedicate lateral beach access and a Coastal Trail far from the shoreline would not allow public access along the beach at periods of medium to high tides; therefore the project is inconsistent with this policy.

Coastal Conservancy Guidelines for Completing the California Coastal Trail requires that the Coastal Trail to be located as close as aesthetically and physically feasible to the shoreline. The proposed lateral access easement for the Coastal Trail would be located far from the shoreline and would be inconsistent with the primary goal of Proposition 20 and Coastal Conservancy Guidelines for completing the Coastal Trail "as close to the shoreline as physically and aesthetically feasible". The Commission finds that construction of a nearshore Coastal Trail would be most consistent with the intent of these State Policies and Guidelines and that there are no insurmountable physical constraints that would prevent constructing a nearshore Coastal Trail. Therefore, the Commission finds that the applicant's proposed Coastal Trail is inconsistent with Conservancy Guidelines regarding the proposed location of the California Coastal Trail. The staff identified alternative is also inconsistent with intent of State Policies and Guidelines for location of the Coastal Trail. Notwithstanding the County's ability to exact dedication of a nearshore alignment of the Coastal Trail, the proposed location of the Coastal Trail far from the shoreline is inconsistent with the intent of Coastal Act Section 30212 and adopted Coastal Conservancy Guidelines.

County PRT Maps: as discussed above, the Commission finds that the proposed location of the Coastal Trail far from the shoreline is inconsistent with the County's adopted PRT Maps. Where physically feasible, the Coastal Trail should be near the shoreline. As demonstrated by Planning Commission and Board action on the draft Gaviota Coast Plan, the Commission finds that the appropriate location for the California Coastal Trail on the Las Varas Ranch is near the shoreline. Further, the Commission notes that, due to the often narrow and ephemeral nature of beaches on the Gaviota Coast, and the presence of numerous points (e.g., Edwards Point) dedication of lateral access along the beach would not guarantee the public's right to access along the shoreline as set forth in LCP Policy 7-3. The Commission finds that at mid-to-high tides, especially during winter, such dedication of lateral beach access would not guarantee the public's right to access along the shoreline. Further, a Coastal Trail located along US Hwy 101 far from the shoreline would also not meet the requirements to provide access "along the shoreline." Therefore, notwithstanding the County's ability to exact dedication of a nearshore coastal trail at this time, the proposed Project would be inconsistent with adopted LCP Policies 7-1, 7-2 and 7-25 and the County's adopted PRT Maps.

Appendix 1D

Recommended Findings of Significant Impacts to Agriculture and Grazing

The Planning Commission *disagrees* with the EIRs finding regarding impacts to agriculture as follows:

- The proposed reconfiguration and subdivision of parcels and construction of large residential compounds across the site would substantially increase the potential for grazing operations to be discontinued on much of the ranch, especially on the coastal portions of the property.
- The County cannot control the actions of new, potentially non-agricultural owners who would purchase these very high end homes, and that cattle grazing may not be viewed as consistent with exclusive residential development.
- Potential impacts to grazing cannot be mitigated by the adoption of CC&Rs which the County cannot enforce, even if made a recorded condition of approval. The Commission finds that reliance on difficult to enforce or infeasible measures would not mitigate impacts.
- Although it would not guarantee continue grazing operations, the Commission finds that imposition of a conservation easement would help reduce impacts to agriculture as well as many other issues such as protection of view corridors, cultural landscapes and biological resources (see discussion of Conservation Easement).

While such a conservation easement would help keep undeveloped areas from being developed or used for non-agricultural purposes, the County cannot compel future owners to continue grazing which may be viewed as inconsistent with desired estate residential oriented uses. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed development would create *unavoidable and significant* impacts to agriculture.

Appendix 1E

Role of a Conservation Easement in Mitigation Multiple Project Impacts

The Planning Commission finds that the project would create multiple potential future impacts associated with loss of agriculture and grazing, impacts to designated scenic view corridors, disruption of a significant cultural landscape and impacts to biological resources. These impacts would be associated with development or roads, infrastructure and the residential compounds, but also related to development of future agricultural outbuildings (e.g., equestrian barns, agricultural employee units), walls, fences, and infrastructure and also removal of key biological resources, historic features, scenic trees, etc.

The Commissions finds that use of a Conservation Easement outside of building envelopes is the most feasible enforceable mechanism to protect such resources, mitigate project impacts and ensure consistency with County policy. If a Conservation Easement is unavailable, the Commission finds that preparation of a specific plan may be required to ensure such mitigation. Key elements of the Conservation Easement would include:

- Prohibition of agricultural support buildings, facilities, walls, fences and other structures outside of designated areas, unless specifically allowed for support of primary agricultural operations and permitted under the language of this easement.
- Prohibition of alteration of, or damage to, historic structures, trees or other elements of the cultural landscape.
- Retention of mature scenic trees, agricultural outbuildings, water towers, etc
- Prohibition of removal of, or alteration to, designated significant biological resources.

The Commission directs staff to draft required language for and maps depicting such an easement reflective of the above or any additional concerns. The easement shall be held by the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County or another recognized and qualified land conservation organization acceptable the Planning Commission.

Appendix 1F

Examples of Rural Area Specific Plans

The Trails Council discovered at least 7 examples of rural area specific plans, most of which addressed issues similar to those associated with Las Varas Ranch; agricultural and open space protection, clustering and transfer of development and provisions of recreation. Taken together with the County's own successful use of specific plans for the Ellwood Joint Proposal, Santa Barbara Shores, More Mesa and Rice Ranch, there is ample evidence that specific plans could be used to address major project concerns, including acquisition of Edwards Point.

Alhambra Valley Specific Plan

Middle Green Valley Specific Plan

Specific Plan Examples

Alhambra Valley Specific Plan

Contra Costa County, California | Adopted October 1992

Key Plan Goals

- ▶ Preserve agricultural and rural residential atmosphere.
- ▶ Enact strict regulation for protection and enhancement of natural resources, agricultural preservation, and scenic beauty.
- ▶ Preserve rural cultural landscape of low density development, hillsides and ridgelines, historic structures, and open spaces.
- ▶ Improve access to parks, trails, and other public attractions from scenic routes.
- ▶ Prioritize agricultural uses, including grazing and cultivated lands.

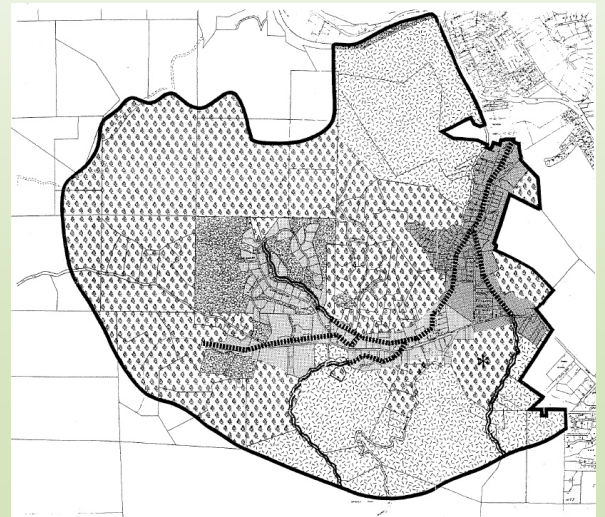


The Plan's Toolbox

- ▶ Clustered low-density development pattern to preserve open spaces and agricultural areas.
- ▶ Hillside and ridgeline preservation techniques, including design guidelines and grading requirements.
- ▶ Rural roadway design standards and scenic route/gateway designations.
- ▶ Rural design guidelines, including required open rail fencing along scenic roadways.
- ▶ The use of public dedication or granting of scenic or conservation easements to preserve open lands, including agricultural and park lands.
- ▶ Brione Hills Agricultural Preservation Agreement to prevent urban development or annexation for approximately 4.5 square miles of the Specific Plan area.

Specific Plan at a Glance

- ~30% Agricultural Preservation - 840 acres
- ~30% Open Lands for Resource Preservation and Recreation - 840 acres
- ~18% Low Density Residential Land with 360 residential units at buildout - 504 acres
- **2,800 total acres** in rural area



Middle Green Valley Specific Plan

Solano County, California | Adopted July 2010

Key Plan Goals

- ▶ Create a framework for a rural community.
- ▶ Preserve cultural identity of working agricultural lands, vineyards, open space lands, and the Green Valley Creek corridor.
- ▶ Balance conservation and development approaches that determine housing, recreational, neighborhood commercial and agricultural tourism related opportunities in suitable areas.
- ▶ Negotiate the use of public and necessary private lands for use in a trail network, bike path, or trail alignments.



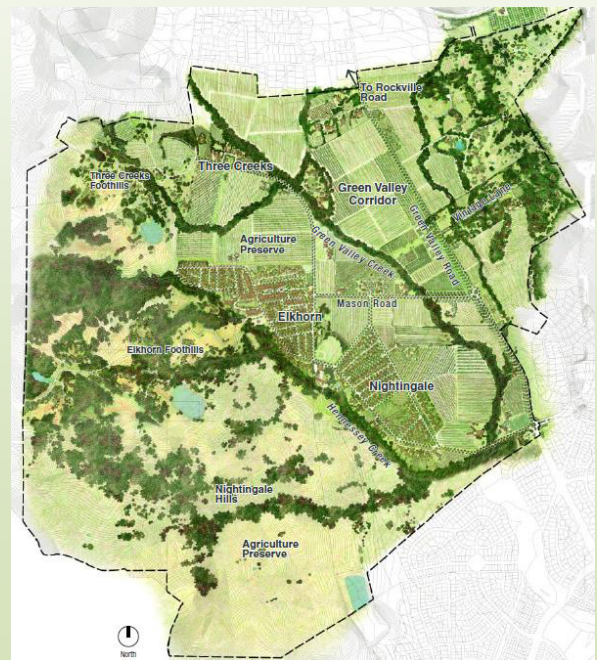
The Plan's Toolbox

- ▶ Clustered development pattern to preserve open spaces.
- ▶ Transect zoning for conservation, agricultural, rural residential, neighborhood edge, neighborhood core, and neighborhood center.
- ▶ The use of a transfer of development and conservation easements to set aside areas of contiguous, connected, agriculture lands.
- ▶ The establishment of an independent non-profit Conservancy to manage and monitor the operation of grazing and agricultural lands.
- ▶ Incentives and techniques to encourage property owners to preserve natural and visual resources.



Specific Plan at a Glance

- **73%** Agricultural Preservation - 1,390 acres
- **10%** Open Lands for Resource Preservation and Recreation - 192 acres
- **13%** Residential Land with Capped *Maximum* of 400 residential units - 249 acres
- **1,905 total acres** in rural area



Specific Plan Examples

From the Planning Toolboxes of California Communities

Hidden Valley Estates Specific Plan

San Diego County – Adopted 1991

- ▶ 1,460 acres of rural area
- ▶ 438 rural residential homes with 962 acres of dedicated open space.
- ▶ The use of design guidelines and clustering to maintain rural character.

Indian Valley Specific Plan

Marin County – Adopted 2003

- ▶ 630 acres comprising orchards, equestrian, livestock, opens space, and rural residential lands.
- ▶ 71 additional rural residential units.
- ▶ Development standards to control home size to retain rural character, address water quality issues associated with septic systems in rural area, and prevent encroachment onto adjacent agricultural and open space preserves.

Montecito Ranch Rural Estates Specific Plan

San Diego County – Adopted 2010

- ▶ 935 acres of scenic rural land.
- ▶ 64% (over 600 acres) preserved as nature preserve, public open space, and dedication of an 12 acre historic site as preserved cultural resource.
- ▶ 31% for rural residential with development standards to preserve rural character and resources.

Sonoma Mountain Plan

Sonoma County – Adopted 1993

- ▶ 65 square miles of agricultural land, open space, and exceptionally low density residential development.
- ▶ 45% maintained in agricultural preserves.
- ▶ Clustered development and neighborhood centers based on a Community Centered Concept to preserve agricultural and open space resources.