

Open Space, Parks and Recreation

CONTENT OF THESE GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Santa Barbarans have always prized the open space and recreational opportunities found within the city and in nearby Santa Ynez Mountains and coastal waters. Because the city is essentially built out, it is critical to preserve and enhance open space, parks and recreational opportunities.

The following goals, policies and implementation actions were either developed during the *Plan Santa Barbara* General Plan update process, carried over from the Land Use or Housing Elements in effect in 2011, or were EIR mitigation measures. These new goals, policies and implementation actions are operational with adoption of the General Plan, however, until the existing Open Space and Parks and Recreations Elements are comprehensively updated, they also remain in effect and combined with the following.



Goals, Policies and Implementation

GOAL

- ***Open Space Opportunities.*** Protect and enhance the city's livability, accessibility and character, and the community's health, through the generous provision of a variety of accessible public open space opportunities.

Open Space, Parks and Recreation Policies

OP1. **Variety and Abundance.** Provide ample open space through a variety of types, including nature reserves, parks, beaches, sports fields, trails, urban walkways, plazas, paseos, pocket parks, play areas, gardens, and view points, consistent with standards established for this city.

Possible Implementation Actions to be Considered

OP1.1 Park and Open Space Standards and Planning. Establish or update standards for:

- The number of acres for each type of open space per increment of population (e.g., 1,000 residents) appropriate for Santa Barbara;
- Optimal walking distances to parks, recreational areas and gardens, including pocket parks and small play areas; and
- Types of open space, parks or recreational facilities to satisfy different needs, or appropriate in different locations (e.g., multi-purpose pocket park for infill vs. tot lot in single family residential neighborhood) suitable for the demographics of each neighborhood.

Using these service ratio standards, develop accessibility goals, identify facility deficiencies, establish priorities, and determine options for addressing needs, such as through joint use (and funding) of school districts' recreational facilities.

OP1.2 Remaining Key Open Space. Use the information in the Master Environmental Assessment Visual Resource Maps and other data to identify key areas within the City and its sphere of influence that merit long-term protection, and take appropriate actions to preserve such areas as passive open space. Focus on larger areas of contiguous open space including areas in the Las Positas Valley, Elings Park, El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park, east slopes of Hope Ranch, north Mesa hillsides, the Riviera, and throughout the foothills, particularly in lower Mission Canyon and the watersheds of Arroyo Burro and Barger Canyon creeks, as well as the Atascadero and Cieneguitas creek watersheds adjacent to the San Marcos Foothills Preserve.

- OP1.3 Protect Contiguous Open Land. All new development within identified key open space areas shall be sited and designed to preserve contiguous tracts of open space and connectivity with open space on adjacent parcels. Connectivity includes connected habitats and wildlife corridors.
- OP1.4 Public Lands. As part of the next Recreation Facilities Master Plan Update and/or in each Sustainable Neighborhood Plan, identify all publicly owned vacant or underutilized property (e.g., parking lots, road rights of way, etc.) and assess the potential for conversion of all or a portion of these properties for park, open space, and recreational use, such as pocket or neighborhood park, play area, plaza, public seating area, trail or community garden, habitat restoration, and/or other publicly accessible green space as well as water quality improvement projects.
- OP1.5 Community Gardens on Vacant Land. Establish a program for use of vacant or underutilized properties for temporary community gardens throughout the City, to enable residents who do not have access to land to grow food, orchards or other crops. Community gardens shall not be sited within a creek setback.
- OP2. **Open Space, Park, Recreation and Trails Acquisition and Maintenance Funding.** The City shall develop a variety of ways and options to support acquisition and maintenance of public open space, and new development and re-development shall contribute commensurate with the incremental need generated. Access and connectivity between open spaces shall be considered in future acquisition and maintenance funding.

Possible Implementation Actions to be Considered

- OP2.1 Acquisition Funding. Establish funding mechanisms (e.g., conservation easements, assessment districts) for preservation of key open space areas including Quimby Act and Park Development Fees to reflect the actual costs of providing such facilities, and actively pursue State, Federal, and private grants to enable acquisition.
- OP2.2 Maintenance Funding. Develop funding mechanisms for maintaining public parks, recreational facilities and/or usable open space in the urban center. Require a contribution by all larger projects, towards public parks, recreational facilities, and/or other usable open space on site, off site, or through in lieu fees, to offset the impact of increased density/intensity of use.
- OP2.3 Preservation of Regional Open Space. Coordinate with the County, School District, and recreational service providers of Goleta and Carpinteria on regional open space protection in the Las Positas Valley, foothills, and other areas determined to be appropriate by the City. In particular, work with the County to consider options for:
- Expanding the San Marcos Foothills Preserve by siting and clustering any new development south of the Preserve to set aside steep hillsides and creek corridors as additions to the Preserve. Consider potential options to expand the Preserve northward during any future proposed subdivisions of larger adjacent ranches by considering use of agricultural clustered development or other techniques to permit preservation of larger areas of contiguous open space while permitting reasonable development of such properties.

- Coordinating with the County and private property owners to restore foothills and other lands degraded by past inappropriate grading or agricultural activities.
- Recreational facilities including ball fields, sport courts, trails and bike paths.
- Providing linked open space and trail corridors through incorporated and unincorporated areas of the Las Positas Valley and eastern Hope Ranch.

OP2.4 Acquisition of Existing Buildings for Community Use. Establish funding mechanisms for acquisition of existing buildings and property (e.g. Army Reserve National Guard Armory) for community use or establishment of a new community center.

OP2.5 Citizen Involvement. Coordinate with interested citizen groups on appropriate conservation and passive recreational activities that should occur in existing and newly acquired open space areas.

OP2.6 Youth Involvement. Work with local education institutions (e.g. high schools, colleges) and community organizations to foster youth appreciation for and participation in open space protection and management.

OP2.7 Private Open Space. Coordinate with private landowners on the management and restoration of private hillside lands so that such lands are managed to preserve open space values of significant stands of native vegetation and mature trees. Explore costs and benefits of transfer of such lands to public ownership with willing property owners.



OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The parks and recreation element of the General Plan dealt with the provisions of parks and recreation facilities within the community for the leisure use and enjoyment of the people. The open space element of the General Plan is concerned primarily with conserving, providing, and improving, as appropriate, land and water spaces significant in the Santa Barbara landscape.

For purposes of this element, an open space has, or is proposed to have, the following characteristics:

1. Essentially open. The open space can contain a limited amount of development, provided the land maintains the characteristic of being predominately open.
2. Natural. Some open spaces (e.g. Mesa bluffs and beaches) are completely natural and are proposed to be conserved in that form. Other open spaces (e.g. the freeway) are completely altered and contain significant improvements. As an open space, however, it is proposed that natural characteristics be created in such a space in order to reduce the adverse impacts of the development and activities in the space.
3. Significance. An open space is significant to the entire City or to a major portion of it.

Goal

The purpose of this open space element and the goal that it seeks to attain is elemental. It is to protect the character of Santa Barbara, as defined in the section of this report on principles and goals, by conserving and providing significant open and natural landforms through and around the community.

There are many overlaps between open space and other community features which share the goal of conserving the Santa Barbara character. The protection of mature trees on private property, the landscaping of major developments, the policies on architectural and sign control, and many other subjects in the General Plan serve a function parallel with that of open space. Only those segments of open space meeting the criteria of Citywide significance are discussed here.

Neighborhood parks and other smaller scale public open spaces are identified in the “Parks and Recreation” section but are, however, shown on the Open Space map.

Categories of Open Space

The open space segments fall into several categories because of the differences in their nature, manner of usage, maintenance, and methods of implementation. The “Ocean” and “Mountain” categories are perhaps so obvious as to be taken for granted and escape specific notice. To overlook them, however, would be a mistake, for they could be significantly compromised.

OCEAN

As an open space, the ocean has a profound effect on Santa Barbara and on all coastal communities. Much of Santa Barbara’s activities are oriented to it. It has already been partially despoiled by oil exploration, drilling, and extraction.

It must be firmly resolved and all possible actions taken by the City to gain the reversion of the ocean to its original state and to limit uses of the ocean to those natural to it (such as fishing and boating).

As an open space category the ocean extends from the horizon into the surf and to the harbor. From there inshore, the surf, beach and quiet water areas are covered in the Shoreline category.

MOUNTAINS

On the inland side of Santa Barbara is the coastal range of mountains which is the major Santa Barbara landform. The presence of this mountain open space contributes greatly to establishing the character of Santa Barbara and is one of Santa Barbara’s most important open space resources. Most of the steeper portions of the mountains which have a direct visual relationship to Santa Barbara are already in the national forest and are protected. Some steep lands, however, are privately owned. The City should encourage the Forest Service to acquire such privately owned lands for inclusion in the Los Padres National Forest.

MAJOR HILLSIDES

There are two areas within and adjacent to the City which have relatively steep topography and which are, for the most part, privately owned and contain or are subject to limited development.

The larger of the major hillside areas is in the foothills, generally in the Lauro Canyon Reservoir, upper Mission Canyon, Las Canoas Road, Mountain Drive, and Sycamore Canyon areas. There is a scattering of low-density residential development and one spot of inappropriate small-lot, single-family development (Conejo Road). The majority of the land, however, is vacant and natural and the overall effect is one of undeveloped foothill open space. As such, it is a valuable asset to the open space inventory of Santa Barbara. It can function as a transition between the residential areas of the community and the mountains. Suitable controls must be instituted to restrict the density and manner of future development in a way that would leave these foothills essentially open and unscarred.

The other Major Hillside area is the north slope of the Mesa Hills, extending from the City College at Cabrillo Boulevard westerly between the Westside and the Mesa Hills, through the Las Positas Valley and into Hope Ranch. The form and function of this open space is somewhat different from the foothill areas. While quite narrow in horizontal projection (see the Open Space map), the impact on the community as a whole is quite pronounced. The slopes involved are steep and, in some cases essentially undevelopable. The natural landform and vegetation is mostly undisturbed and forms the southerly side of the bowl into which the City of Santa Barbara has grown. The dominance of this open space as one looks across the community from the north is (because of the steep slopes) larger in scale than would be apparent from the map. As with the foothills, it should not be necessary to acquire this open space to preserve it, for much of it is practically undevelopable. It is necessary, however, to provide certain development controls so that the density is held down to an appropriate level. Also, the location of development should be controlled in a manner that will preserve the natural characteristics of the terrain and the native vegetation.

There are steep hillsides in other sections of the City which are not part of the two Major Hillside areas but which, in their natural forms, contribute to the City's open space resource. Controls should be adopted to protect the natural characteristics of all steep hillsides in the City. A good example of this is the north slope of the "Wilcox" property, southerly of Cliff Drive at Las Positas Road, which is covered with oak trees and is an important open space in the southerly portion of the Las Positas Valley. This slope can be preserved by controls which would limit development to the level land on top. The City should retain the development rights on the slopes.

CREEKS

The major drainage channels which pass through the City are San Roque, Arroyo Burro, Mission Canyon, and Sycamore Creeks. These drainage channels should remain in their natural state, providing recreation facilities as proposed in the Parks and Recreation section as well as open space corridors through the community. It is recognized that certain maintenance, clearing, and alignment work may have to be done in order to minimize flood damage. However, all such flood control work should be done in a manner that will maintain the natural qualities of the creek open space. Further artificial channelization and/or lining, in any form, must not occur.

Implementation of the creek open space category involves the City's establishment of firm policies to preserve these channels in their natural state. These policies must be enforced by the City, the County Flood Control District, and the Army Corps of Engineers. The acquisition of rights-of-way for trails, while important to the recreation system, is not essential to the protection of these corridors for open space purposes. Special regulations for development adjacent to the major creeks should be enacted to prevent construction in creek open space areas and to protect development from known flood hazards. While much of the land adjacent to these creeks is already developed, most will be redeveloped. New construction should respect the creeks as important community open spaces.

SHORELINE

The Shoreline consists of the surf, the harbor, harbor facilities, beaches, bluffs, and adjacent park areas. The shoreline complex is an actively used open space, but is also important visually to the community. The protection and development of the shoreline area is covered in the Harbor and Shoreline section. The preservation of the shoreline as an open space will require care in the types of improvements that are allowed to be sure that the natural qualities are not destroyed or obscured. The Harbor and Shoreline

discussion notes that excessive development for one particular group of users could easily deprive the community as a whole of the shoreline as an open space.

MAJOR PARKS

This category contains the major park and other park-like public and quasi-public open spaces in the community.

1. Montecito Golf Course, Bird Refuge, Santa Barbara Cemetery, Clark Estate and A Child's Estate. Efforts are underway, and should continue, to acquire an option or first right of refusal for the City to acquire Montecito Country Club so that it can be preserved as major park open space. The complex of which this is a part forms a beautiful entrance to the City from the south as well as containing important recreational facilities. The Clark Estate is shown as a part of this major park open space, although it would not be necessary to acquire the entire property. The northerly and westerly slopes of the Clark Estate should be acquired, leaving the upper portion of the property for private development.
2. Las Positas Park. This is one of the largest park properties in the City. It is also included in the Open Space plan because of its relationship to the Mesa Hills and Arroyo Burro Creek.
3. Municipal Golf Course and MacKenzie Park.
4. The Old Mission lands, Museum of Natural History, Mission Park and Rocky Nook Park. No further action is needed to protect this open space complex, save for the retention of Mission Creek, which runs through it, in its natural state.
5. San Roque Park, Lauro Reservoir. This is included as a major park complex because of its relation to San Roque Creek and to the foothill areas.
6. Skofield Park, Rattlesnake Canyon. Both of these properties represent "acquisitions of opportunity." They were offered to the City by an organization in one case and an individual in the other at a time and under terms which made it feasible for the City to acquire the property.
7. Botanic Garden. This is the smallest of the individual open spaces, but is significant because of the uniqueness of the gardens themselves and because of its relationship to both Mission Creek and the Foothill areas. The Botanic Garden is maintained by a non-profit corporation and is well protected.

FREEWAY

The freeway is classified as an open space because, in addition to its being indeed open and of such scale as to be significant, it must be developed in a manner that will qualify it as open space in order that the adverse impact of the traffic through the corridor of the community will be minimized. In other words, the freeway must be so developed that it runs through an open space corridor within the community rather than simply running through the community itself.

While a freeway does not fit the traditional mold of an “open space,” it is obvious that the freeway has a significant impact on the community both in terms of area (300 – 400 acres) and activity (traffic, noise, air pollution, etc.). The challenge offered by including the freeway as an open space is to create a natural characteristic in the freeway corridor which will dominate the space and minimize the adverse impacts of the freeway development and activity.

To accomplish this, the City must exercise every available power and persuasion to cause the State Division of Highways to recognize that this manner of freeway development is the only one consistent with the character and quality of the City of Santa Barbara, as set forth in the principles and goals adopted by the City and included in this report.

Implementation

OCEAN

1. Continue efforts to prohibit new oil exploration, drilling, and production in the channel and to cause the termination of existing leases and the removal of platform structures. Permit the continuation of drilling or production only as proved necessary for remedial purposes.
2. Establish and enforce a high water-quality standard.
3. Prohibit the use of the channel as a shipping lane for oil tankers and other vessels which present a potential threat of pollution from accidents or other causes.

MOUNTAINS

1. Examine the County zoning of those privately owned lands in the mountain areas to see if existing regulations are adequate to preserve and protect the mountain lands for open space purposes. If inadequate regulations are found, request that the County amend its ordinances accordingly. Complete by January 1, 1974.
2. Examine possible programs of water importation, grass seeding, reforestation and other programs to protect and enhance the watershed and scenic functions of the mountains. Complete study before January 1, 1974. Present findings to appropriate agencies and encourage their implementation of the recommendations developed.
3. Encourage Forest Service to acquire privately owned steep lands for inclusion in Las Padres National Forest.

MAJOR HILLSIDES

1. Adopt zoning, subdivision, building, and grading regulations for the Major Hillside areas by July 1, 1973.
2. Adopt suitable controls similar to those above for other hillside lands by July 1, 1973.

SHORELINE

1. Determine need for access to the shoreline. Acquire necessary rights-of-way by January 1, 1975.
2. Improve all access routes to the shoreline by July 1, 1977.
3. Prohibit the installation of any improvements which would change the nature of the tidal beaches at the base of the Mesa bluff.
4. Examine methods of preventing cliff erosion and institute any programs found to be effective.
5. Delineate all public beach areas and dedicate them for public open space and recreation purposes by July 1, 1973.

MAJOR PARKS

1. Adopt a firm policy of not allowing public park lands to be used for other than park, recreation, and open space purposes.
2. Acquire first right of refusal, development rights, or other appropriate agreements for the Montecito Country Club and the northerly and westerly slopes of the Clark Estate.

FREEWAY

1. Design and adopt standards for landscaping of the freeway by January 1, 1974. This process has already begun with the work currently underway by the crosstown freeway design committee, which includes representatives of the Division of Highways.
2. Work with the Division of Highways to implement the adopted standards.

CREEKS

1. Design and adopt standards for creek development by January 1, 1974. Work with those agencies involved with the creek areas to assure that all creek developments will comply with the adopted standards.
2. Adopt zoning regulations and other development controls necessary to protect the Creek Open Spaces from development encroachment and to protect adjacent development from flood hazards by July 1, 1973.

GENERAL

1. Adopt an effective tree preservation ordinance for the entire City, with emphasis upon preservation of trees in the various open space areas, by July 1, 1973.
2. Initiate a charter amendment to protect public park lands against inappropriate uses.

PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

The City of Santa Barbara, being primarily a residential community and a center of tourist activity, must consider Parks and Recreation as one of the most important elements of the General Plan. Some of the General Plan proposals relative to park and recreation facilities are far-reaching ones which involve, in some cases, the acquisition of land that is now developed for private use. The General Plan makes such recommendations because of the prime importance of this element in the environment.

At one time, in the nineteenth Century, the City of Santa Barbara owned virtually all of the land in the basin. As time passed this land was gradually sold and otherwise disposed of to the extent that the City now retains much less than is needed for its orderly growth. The time to reverse the process is now as public officials and citizens recognize the ultimate need for additional lands to devote to the public use and welfare. Steps must be taken to regain some of this precious and irreplaceable asset.

The standards for Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Park facilities as adopted by the City's Planning and Park Commissions have been set forth in the Technical Appendix (Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan) and are reasonable for the various types of parks and recreational facilities. The Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan (PRFPMP), adopted by the City Council on March 31, 1981, provides an in-depth inventory of existing Parks and Recreation facilities and programs, use and participation statistics, maintenance and operational cost analysis, land and building use alternatives, and recommendations for meeting future recreation, facility and programming needs. The Local Coastal Plan (LCP) adopted by the City Council on September 2, 1981, and by the State Coastal Commission on January 22, 1982, also sets policies that relate to Park and Recreation activities in the Coastal Zone. One of the major implementation policies of the LCP is to zone for public recreation and open space publicly-owned property where recreation is the primary use.

There are eight classifications of park and recreation facilities: Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Regional Parks, Special Use Facilities, Golf Courses, Riding and Hiking Trails, Beaches and Bikeways. These categories are explained as follows:

Neighborhood Parks

The General Plan Map indicated proposed Neighborhood Parks where no specific location is shown, existing neighborhood parks, and specific sites which are recommended. Whether or not adequate facilities exist on any of the neighborhood parks shown is not a subject for this General Plan report.

In many cases a proposed site is shown adjacent to an elementary school. This suggests a close relationship between park and the school as a policy that should be maintained wherever possible. The park and the school serve approximately the same type and size of service area, and it is possible for the facilities of one to efficiently complement the facilities provided by the other. They both serve the same children. They could also provide for extended neighborhood services to both children and adults. In many cases, however, this close relationship does not exist where park and school are both in existence. In these cases the General Plan has accepted the location of these facilities as being separated and makes no recommendation for the relocation of either one.

Many of the existing Neighborhood Parks are along major drainage channels. Every opportunity to utilize these wooded drainage channels for park purposes should be taken. In the Wilson area, for example, such a location represents the best available opportunity for the provision of park facilities.

In the medium- and high-density residential areas, the Neighborhood Park facilities should be supplemented by small, passive landscaped parks oriented to the older citizen. These can be quite small, providing no more than benches in addition to the landscaping. De La Guerra Plaza is a good example of this level of facility.

Community Parks

The Community Park serves an area coincident with that adjacent to a high school or a junior high school and is desirable from the standpoint of the complementary use of the facilities.

Three Community Parks are shown on the General Plan. MacKenzie Park at State Street and Las Positas Road, although very limited in size, is shown as ultimately providing for this recreational function because it is the only land available that would serve the Northside well in terms of location. There may be possibilities that the Army Reserve property which occupies a portion of this land could ultimately be devoted to park use. The acquisition of this land for park purposes could involve a trade between the City of Santa Barbara and the Federal Government for another parcel of land suitable to the Army Reserve. Such a trade would not be disadvantageous to the City from an economic standpoint, for the existing buildings which now house the Army Reserve could be used as community buildings which are a necessary part of a Community Park.

The Las Positas Park site is a highly diverse property including a sanitary land fill, rolling hills, and steep valleys with abundant chaparral, live oaks and digger pines. The park is being developed in three phases. Phase I, completed in 1972, includes six tennis courts, a practice area, shower and locker rooms, parking area, and an office. The land fill was closed for construction of Phase II, which began

in October 1980. Phase II, currently under construction, provides a multiplicity of uses including softball and soccer fields, restroom facilities, passive recreation areas, picnic grounds, hiking trails, and necessary parking and access roads. Phase III will include recreation facilities to complement those included in Phase II. This park is expected to serve the entire City for local sports events and more directly serve the Mesa, Westside, Las Positas, Braemar, Veronica Springs, and Hidden Valley areas.

Ortega Park serves the Downtown area and the Eastside. It is well located to serve the high-density residential area to the north. Its location relative to Santa Barbara High School and Santa Barbara Junior High School and its location between the high-density residential area and the Industrial Park make it an outstanding location for park uses. Acquisition of Hope School located on La Colina Road and the expansion of Spencer Adams Park located on De la Vina Street is recommended in the PRFPMP.

Regional Parks

Although much of the oceanfront park and recreation facilities provide many of the essential components of a Regional Park, this complex has not been shown as such. It is more accurately defined as an accumulation of Special Use Park and Recreational facilities. The City encourages continuing efforts by the County for a Regional Park site on the County Land Fill site near El Sueño Road and Calle Real. The Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan (PRFPMP) recommends future acquisition of the Clark Estate located west of the Santa Barbara Cemetery for regional park purposes and to add to the existing park system in the area (e.g., East Beach, Andree Clark Bird Refuge, Santa Barbara Zoological Gardens, "A Child's Estate" and Dwight Murphy Field). The PRFPMP recommends expansion of the Chase Palm Park north of Cabrillo Boulevard for regional purposes through the utilization of a portion of the Southern Pacific Railroad property. The City Council has approved a Specific Plan for this property which requires the dedication of 4.6 acres of park land.

Special Use Facilities

The Special Use Facilities include, but are not limited to, the Municipal Golf Course, Earl Warren Showgrounds, County Bowl, Municipal Tennis Courts, Andree Clark Bird Refuge, "A Child's Estate," Dwight Murphy Field, Cabrillo Ball Park, all of the beach areas, Harbor and related facilities, Moreton Bay Fig Tree Park, Pershing Park, Cabrillo Pavilion Bathhouse, Cabrillo Arts Center, Carrillo Gymnasium, Carrillo Recreation Center, Los Baños Pool, and the Louise Lowry Davis Center. The following are comments relative to several of these facilities. If a Special Use Facility is not commented upon it is because the General Plan does not recommend any change in the existing development or in the policy for future development.

The large area which includes "A Child's Estate," Dwight Murphy Field, the adjacent beach areas, and the Andree Clark Bird Refuge is perhaps the most important of the Citywide park areas. It is enhanced by the Montecito Country Club and Municipal Tennis Stadium to the north and the Santa Barbara Cemetery to the east, which provide additional open space to complement the park and recreation area. Additionally, the Local Coastal Plan requires that interpretive centers be provided for information on the dynamics of the Andree Clark Bird Refuge to ensure continued compatibility of recreational use and habitat preservation. The Moreton Bay Fig Tree is a major landmark in the City. The park area surrounding this unique specimen should ultimately be expanded to provide an appropriate setting and protection. The General Plan proposes that the crosstown freeway design provide an appropriate setting

and protection. The General Plan proposes that the crosstown freeway provide for grade separations at State Street, but not at Chapala Street. It is recommended that Chapala Street be terminated at points above the freeway and below the railroad tracks so that additional land can be devoted to the park area around the Moreton Bay Fig Tree.

Shoreline Drive is the primary scenic drive in the City and the existence of any private development between it and ocean effectively lessens its value. The Local Coastal Plan recognizes the need for blufftop preservation combined with passive park area. The LCP requires that the bluff areas traversed by Arroyo Burro Creek around the Wilcox property be dedicated to the City for park, habitat protection, and archaeological site protection and that a public parking facility be provided in the area north of the creek.

Golf Courses

The City of Santa Barbara now provides one publicly owned 18-hole golf course on Las Positas Road. There are four other 18-hole golf courses, privately owned, in the South Coast area, all of which are accessible to the public only through membership. In addition, two (2) privately owned 9-hole golf courses and one (1) 18-hole course are open to the public on a daily fee basis. It is apparent that this limited availability of golf courses for public recreation and enjoyment is inconsistent with the desire of the community, which depends on adequate recreational opportunities for both its residents and its visitors. Particularly in Santa Barbara, where retirement is such an important part of the economic base, the recreational opportunity provided by golf is much more important than it might be in another community where the average age is lower and the level of activity more energetic. Golfing offers opportunities for active participation in sports to the "senior citizen." Also, since a major support element of the economic base is tourism, a significant number of golf courses within easy reach of visitor accommodations will make this enjoyable sport a most rewarding community feature.

While private golf courses may, statistically, appear to provide the community with a broad angle of golfing opportunities, the fact is that these private courses, while valuable in our total recreation picture, do not provide opportunities to the majority of the population. Additional courses that are open to the public on a daily fee basis, whether publicly or privately owned, are necessary to fill this broad spectrum of need. Of these, the publicly owned courses should be controlled and managed in a manner that will offer recreational opportunities to the broadest cross-section of the community.

The General Plan recommends that the City enter into a joint venture with the County of Santa Barbara in providing a system of publicly owned golf courses in the South Coast area in sufficient quantity that Santa Barbara can compete with other recreational areas in attracting championship tournaments as well as the individual traveling or vacationing golfer. This cooperative endeavor between the City and County could be accomplished through a special recreation district established a fund, construct and operate a system of publicly owned golf courses and related facilities in the South Coast.

As the City and South Coast develop, opportunities to acquire large, appropriate pieces of land for golf course development will diminish. It is imperative, therefore, that a program for creation of the proposed public golf system be instituted as early as possible in order to take advantage of as many open land opportunities as now exist. There are, for example, several parcels or combinations of parcels of land in the low foothills which would be ideal for a fine, quality golf course. Another opportunity which should not be missed is the possibility of acquiring existing privately owned golf courses for inclusion in the public golf course system. A prime example of this is the Montecito Country Club.

The City or the joint powers organization established to operate the golf course programs should, as soon as possible, contact the owners of the Montecito Country Club with a view to assuring that this strategically located land remain as open space, preferably for golf course uses, in perpetuity, rather than being developed for alternative purposes.

Riding and Hiking Trails

The provision of trails for horseback riding is more applicable to the County areas where low-density residential and agricultural land uses are prevalent. Some activity of this nature is popular in the Sheffield, Foothill, upper Mission Canyon, and Braemar areas. Of broader interest to the majority of residents of the City is the provision of hiking trails. Happily, both activities can be accommodated at the same time, so in providing the walker with trails, riders can also be accommodated. The PRFPMP provides for future pedestrian and access trails in making recommendations for the acquisition of the following easements:

- Pedestrian easement from Portesuello Avenue through the Palm Grove to the end of Pedregosa Street in the Bel Air Subdivision;
- Access trail from La Cumbre Road to Hope School;
- Access easement from La Mesa Park to the beach;
- Access trail from Miramonte Drive to Thornbury (Hondo Valley), and Arroyo Avenue to Thornbury (Hondo Valley);
- Access trail from Hilda Ray Park to Escondido Park;
- Access trail between Parma Park and Mountain Drive and Parma Park and Coyote Road.

The primary objective of a trail system should be the provision of trails leading from the residential areas of town up to the foothills and down to the beaches. The major drainage channels shown on the General Plan provide the best locations to accomplish this. Those shown are Arroyo Burro Creek, Mission Creek, Sycamore Creek, and Cold Springs Creek. Efforts should be made to set these natural areas aside not only for the trails and the important recreational activity which they provide, but also for the preservation of the natural open space as a diversified factor in the urban scene. The modern techniques of channeling these drainage areas into a uniform and sterile concrete trough should be avoided. This intensity of urbanization is not characteristic of Santa Barbara environment.

Opportunities to link together park facilities, historical sites, riding and hiking trails, and other areas of public use and interest should be grasped as they occur. An excellent example is Skofield Park, located on Las Canoas Road and used for day camping, and Rattlesnake Canyon, which passes through Skofield Park and its route down from the mountains to join Mission Creek. The City acquired Skofield Park, which used to be owned and used annually by the Rancheros Visitadores, as a day camping facility. The Rattlesnake Canyon area above Skofield Park contains several sites of historical importance, established trails, and contacts U.S. Forest and City watershed lands. This land (approximately 450 acres) was acquired in the Spring of 1971 by joint effort of the City, County, and Federal Government and constitutes a valuable addition to the South Coast open space, parks and recreation, and historical site system.

Beaches

The City's beach system is one of its most important recreational assets. As distinguished from the overall parks and recreational system, the beaches relate closely to the basic character of Santa Barbara, being oriented primarily to the ocean and more sensitive to weather and climate. With this relationship the beaches are an important recreational focal point for the community as well as a source of attraction for visitors, who are an important element of the City's economic base.

There are approximately three miles of City-owned beaches extending from Shoreline Park on the Mesa to the Andree Clark Bird Refuge. In addition, several miles more of tidal beaches at the foot of the Mesa Bluffs offer a considerably different shoreline experience. Here the higher tides occasionally cover the entire beach to the base of the bluffs. At low tides the receding ocean exposes broad areas of smooth-packed sand, ideal for walking, and numerous shallow pools with their fascinating display of tidal marine life. Convenient access to these interesting beaches should be provided at several points, while still keeping most of the area as a secluded, quiet walking beach. Attempts to make improvements of any kind to these natural tidal areas, with the purpose of increasing the intensity of use, should be discouraged.

The City-owned multi-use beaches must be improved with facilities appropriate to the kinds and the intensities of use which each particular beach is intended to serve. In addition, all City beaches must be well maintained so that they can retain their attractiveness and realize their full recreational potential. Alterations to the natural ecological systems of the ocean shore must be avoided.

Recent studies have shown that by 1975, use of the beaches on an average summer Sunday will reach a level that can be considered the maximum desirable intensity of beach use for Santa Barbara. As the City's population grows toward the ultimate provided for by the General Plan residential densities, this intensity of beach use will exceed intensity of use now experienced on July 4th. This prospect requires that action be taken to ensure that all beach areas will be useable, and that any decision which would take beach areas for other use, such as parking and commerce, be avoided.

It is recommended that the General Plan include provisions for the retention and protection of the tidal beach at the base of the Mesa Bluff in its natural state, prohibiting the installation of any improvements which would change the nature or use of the area. Measures to prevent cliff erosion should be investigated.

To forestall any possible future misuse of the City's beaches for other than public beach purposes, the City should specifically delineate all public beaches and dedicate them for public recreation purposes. A protective charter provision should be offered for consideration by the electorate.

Bikeways

As concern for the environment increases on a national scale and as the role of the automobile in producing atmospheric pollutants is subjected to increasing criticism, the popularity of the bicycle as an alternative mode of transportation in urban areas is accelerating. This popularity has led to the recognition of the bicycle as an excellent recreational medium as well as a means of local transportation. Many beneficial advantages of bicycling, including health, economic savings and noise reduction have contributed to the increased consideration of bicycling as an important element in the circulation system in the cities.

Heretofore, emphasis has been placed on providing circulation facilities for only the automobile and the pedestrian. That is, our typical street cross-section is two or more traveling lanes for automobiles and two paths (sidewalks) for pedestrian travel. Provisions for accommodating the bicycle as a mode of transportation have not been considered. This is also true within most public recreation areas where no provision is made for bikeways.

There are two basic purposes in bicycle riding, recreation and transportation. Both of these functions can and do overlap, and bikeways which are provided specifically for one of these purposes can, in many instances, fulfill the other function.

RECREATION BIKEWAYS

Recreational bikeways should be primarily oriented in relation to areas of scenic recreational interest. Two prime "areas of interest" in Santa Barbara are: (1) The complex of the Old Mission, Museum of Natural History, and Rocky Nook Park; and (2) The shoreline, harbor, and beach area, where a bikeway has been developed. Major recreational bikeways, separated as completely as possible from automotive and pedestrian ways, should be developed in these two areas of interest. They should also be connected by a major transportation bikeway running through the heart of the community.

The setting of standards and the design of a recreation bikeway system should be an element of the specific plan for parks and recreation.

TRANSPORTATION BIKEWAYS

Transportation bikeways should be part of the circulation network, providing travel paths from one activity area in the community to another. Providing adequate transportation bikeways is more difficult than recreational bikeways, because the recreational bikeway can more easily be separated from conflict with automotive traffic, whereas the transportation bikeway must, in most cases, use the existing public street rights-of-way. A notable exception to this would be the provision of bikeways along major drainage channels, which could be both for recreation and transport. Even then, the crossing of some major arterials would be necessary. The setting of standards and design of a bikeways system for transportation should be an element of the Specific Plan for circulation.

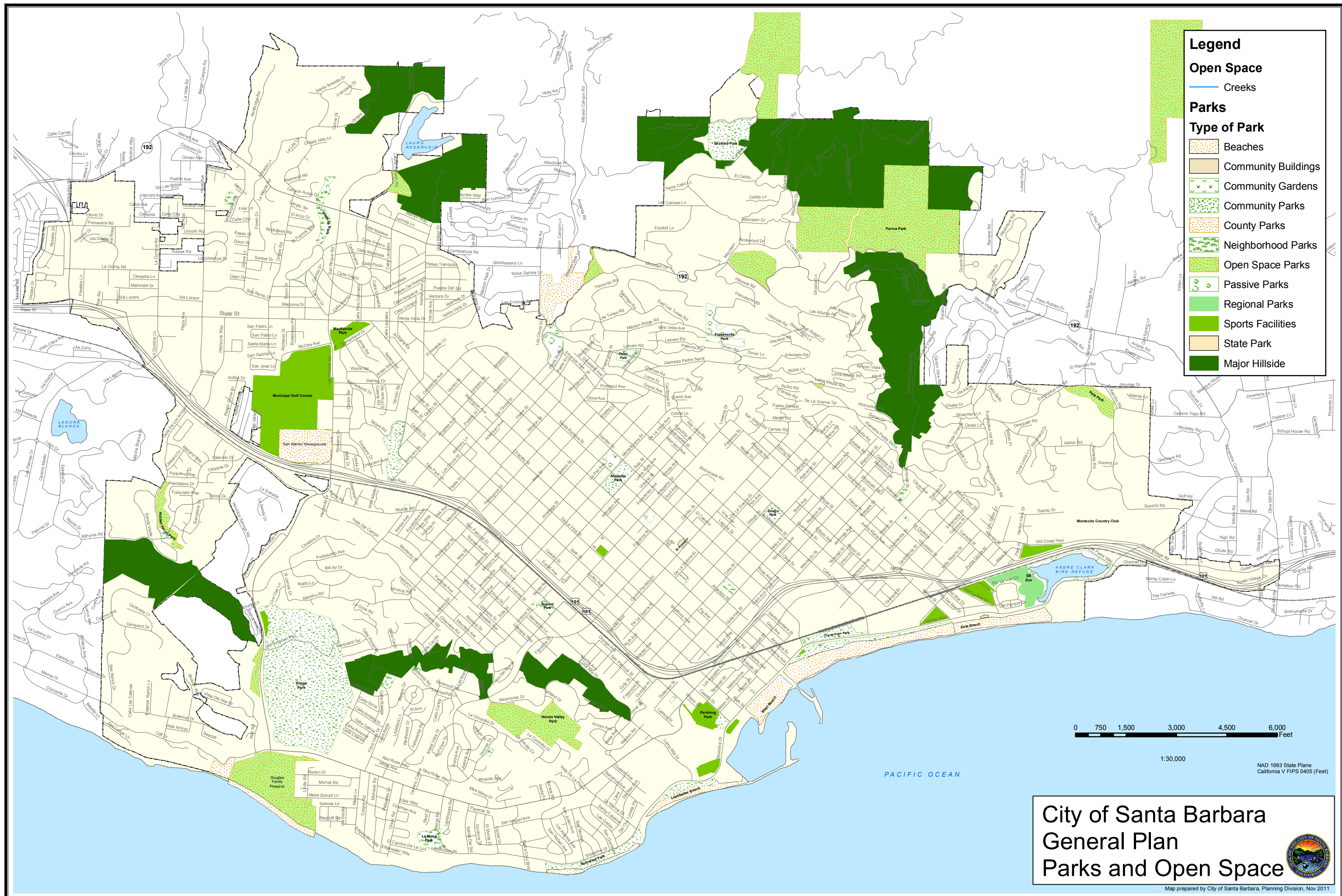
TECHNIQUES

Various techniques will have to be employed in providing bikeways. In some cases, it may be possible to start from scratch and construct bikeways which are totally and ideally separated from vehicular and

pedestrian traffic and proceed through park-like areas in a manner both safe and pleasing to the user. In other cases, it may be necessary to utilize existing streets or specially identified areas for bicycle traffic. In the latter case, every effort must be made to create a physical and psychological separation between bicycle and the other forms of transportation which share a particular corridor. Any street re-construction or new construction should include provision for a bikeway. Where physical separation between bicycle and auto is not possible, consideration should be given to assigning the right-of-way in certain situations to the bicycle in order to maintain reasonable safety standards.

BIKEWAY PARKING

Parking space should be provided at all terminal areas, including downtown and at shopping centers. Since bicycles are classified as "vehicles," their right to use streets and on-street parking areas especially provided for them would seem reasonable.



Legend

Open Space

- Creeks

Parks

Type of Park

- Beaches
- Community Buildings
- Community Gardens
- Community Parks
- County Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Open Space Parks
- Passive Parks
- Regional Parks
- Sports Facilities
- State Park
- Major Hillside

0 750 1,500 3,000 4,500 6,000 Feet

1:30,000
NAD 1983 State Plane
California V FIPS 0405 (Feet)

City of Santa Barbara
General Plan
Parks and Open Space

Map prepared by City of Santa Barbara, Planning Division, Nov 2011



